

Policy Recommendations *for* Advancing Gender and Social Inclusion

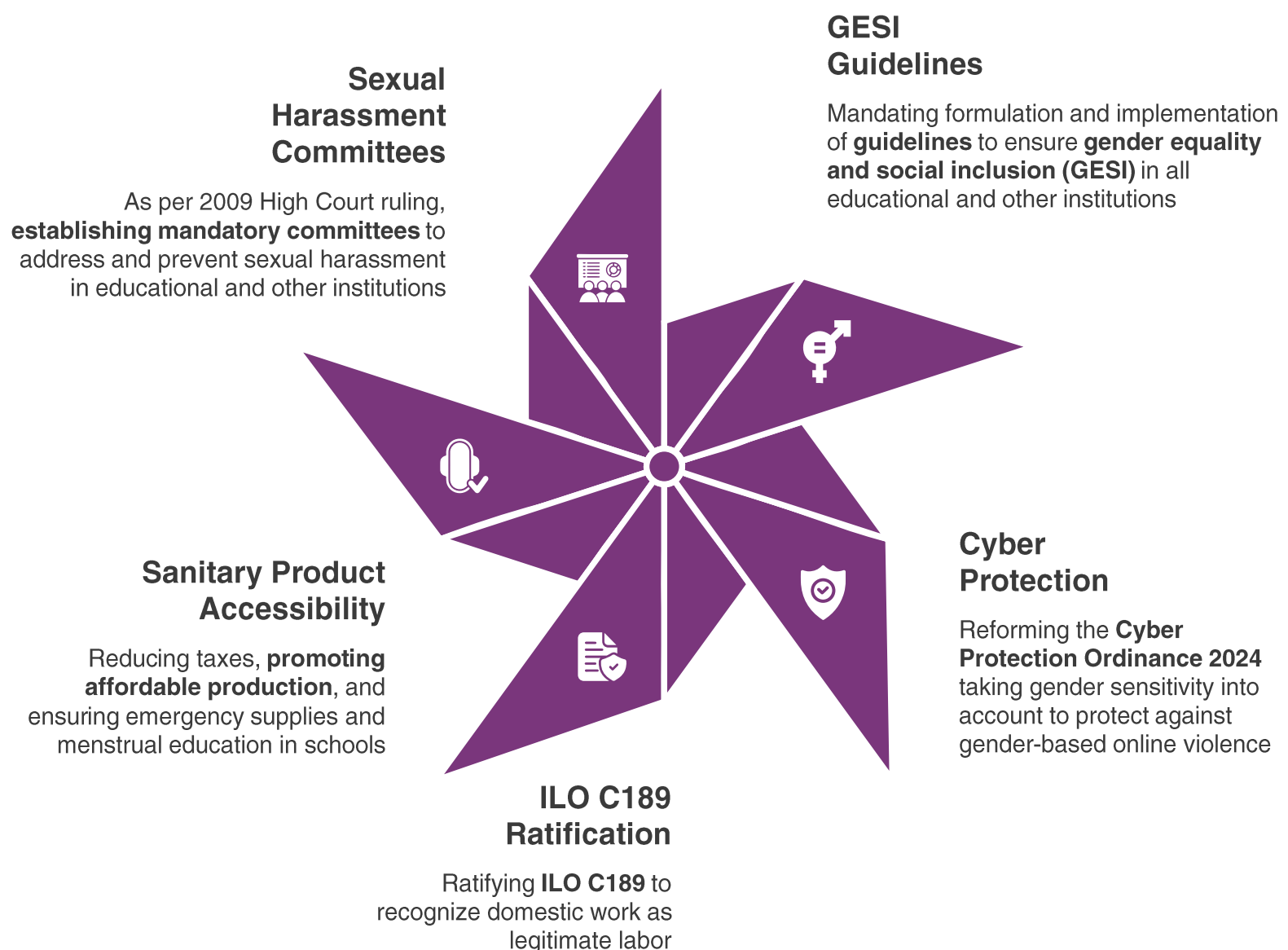
The anti-discrimination protests of July 2024 marked a turning point in Bangladesh, leading to significant changes and a series of reform initiatives. In response, the interim government has established key reform commissions, including those focused on women's affairs, economic reform, and constitutional matters, with a strong emphasis on gender and social inclusion.

This document presents **five key policy recommendations** from the **Institute of Informatics and Development (IID)** and **Youth for Policy (YfP)**, aimed at supporting these commissions and other stakeholders in ensuring equitable and sustainable development, with gender equality at the forefront.

For over a decade, IID and YfP have been strong advocates for gender equality, working to strengthen legal frameworks that promote women's participation in all areas of society, particularly empowering young women.

Building on IID's policy research and YfP's grassroots advocacy efforts, **this document offers practical recommendations** to drive gender equality and foster meaningful reform in Bangladesh.

5 Recommendations at a glance



5 Key Issues & Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Ensure the establishment and enforcement of Sexual Harassment Complaint Committees in all educational institutions and workplaces, as mandated by the 2009 High Court ruling.

Issue: Despite a 2009 High Court directive mandating Sexual Harassment Complaint Committees in all educational institutions and workplaces, implementation remains inadequate, leaving women and girls vulnerable to unchecked harassment, compromising their safety, rights, and well-being.

Recommendation 2: Mandate the formulation and implementation of comprehensive Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) guidelines in all educational institutions and workplaces.

Issue: Most workplaces and educational institutions in Bangladesh lack comprehensive GESI guidelines, creating environments that perpetuate discrimination, exclusion, and unsafe conditions, especially for vulnerable groups, hindering equal access and impacting well-being and academic success.

Recommendation 3: Reduce taxes and duties on sanitary products, invest in frugal innovations for low-cost production, and ensure emergency supplies and menstrual hygiene education in schools.

Issue: High costs, social stigma, and lack of awareness hinder many women in Bangladesh from accessing hygienic sanitary products. Additional taxes on imported and locally produced products, limited emergency supplies in schools, and missing investments in frugal solutions exacerbate the issue.

Recommendation 4: Reform the Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024 to ensure clear definitions, incorporate a gender-sensitive lens, safeguard freedoms, and protect the marginalized.

Issue: The Cyber Protection Ordinance 2024 aims to strengthen cybersecurity but faces criticism for vague definitions and broad provisions. These issues risk infringing on freedom of expression, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups, including women, while lacking a gender-sensitive approach.

Recommendation 5: Ratify ILO Convention 189 to ensure fair wages, protections, and dignity for women domestic workers, both nationally and internationally.

Issue: Bangladesh has not yet ratified ILO Convention 189, which ensures rights and protections for domestic workers, many of whom are women. This lack of ratification leaves workers, particularly female migrant domestic workers, vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and unsafe working conditions.

About IID

The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) is a public policy think tank committed to fostering an informed, inclusive, and democratic society. Through research, advocacy, and capacity-building, IID works to bridge the gap between policy and people, ensuring that public policies are shaped by evidence and public participation.

 www.iid.dev

About YfP

Youth for Policy (YfP) is a national network initiated by IID in 2013 to empower young people as policy advocates and changemakers. With a presence in over 40 districts and more than 12,000 engaged youth, YfP cultivates youth leadership in policymaking through Policy Camps, Policy Hackathons, Youth Policy Summits, and the Youth Manifesto initiative.

 www.youthforpolicy.org