

Exploring Job Opportunity of Technical and Vocational Graduates in Bangladesh

Background of the study

As a developing country, Bangladesh has tremendous opportunities of economic development by creating its huge population as skilled human resources for internal and international labor market. Vocational and technical education in Bangladesh can play important role in the development of our national economy through the creation and supply of mid-level skilled manpower according to the present growing demands of the national and global labour market.

The current vocational and technical education system at the secondary level in Bangladesh is one of the major among three streams. Under the policies, decisions and guidance of the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) currently provides different types of formal vocational education and training (TVET) through its institutions spread all over the country. DTE generally offers different types of courses: Diploma courses and certificate courses. Degree course is also offered only Islamic University of Technology (IUT) in Bangladesh. Mainly public, private and NGO assisted institutions exist in the vocational and technical education sector. These institutions offer different trade courses. The courses are: (a) Refrigeration & Air Conditioning (b) Radio & Television (c) Fish Culture & Breeding (d) Welding Works (e) Computer (f) Dress Making & tailoring (g) Farm Machinery (h) General Electrical works (i) Automotive (j) Poultry Rearing & Farming (k) Drafting (Civil) (l) Machinist (m) Building Maintenance and (n) Wood Working. BANBEIS statistics shows that, in 2010, a number of 4, 47,927 boys and girls students were enrolled in 2848 vocational and technical institutions throughout the country where a number of 22,455 male and female teachers were employed (BANBEIS, 2011). In comparison to the existing scope of general education, and even to madrasa education at secondary level, the scope of vocational and technical education in Bangladesh is still narrow while this sector has vital potentialities to contribute to our economic and national development. This is the stream which is more effective than other two streams to provide the dropout children or children at risk to be dropped out from those two streams with employment opportunities.

Rationale of the study

In Bangladesh, the vocational and technical education has been contributing to the development of human resources since 1960s. However, still this education sector has wide scope for contributing to the economic development significantly where only a small fraction of young workforce enter into the job market with vocational, technical, or skills development training; very few workers have adequate technical and vocational skills or qualifications. Besides this, a large number of young children in every year are attached to the labour forces without having educational background. Moreover, Bangladesh supplies mainly non-skilled labours to the international job market. Those workers can easily contribute to the national development of Bangladesh at a large scale if they go for doing job in foreign countries with adequate specialized knowledge, skills and training. As the international labour market is very competitive like other businesses and trades, therefore, Bangladesh has no means rather than developing skilled manpower to compete in the international labour market as well as to get the highest benefit from this sector. The most important thing is that the influences of globalization in the present interdependent world is demanding new knowledge and skills of the workforces day by day in both local and international labour market where their traditional knowledge and skills are becoming ineffective to meet this demand. To face the challenges, vocational and technical education in Bangladesh have to be incorporated such knowledge, skills and training for the graduates which meet up the present demands.

However, based on the recent trends of increased local and international needs of the skilled workforces, Bangladesh Government has put highest importance on “turn our students into competent manpower through vocational and technical education with emphasis on science, technology and especially on information technology” (National Education Policy, 2010, p. 24). In relation to this, the government has determined the aims and objectives of technical and vocational education including new dimensions of skill development of TVET students and teachers. For this, 25 strategies have been planned for framing and strengthening the ability of vocational and technical education to build up competent manpower in view of national and international demands. All of these efforts require rigorous changes in vocational and technical education on existing situation of the institutions, their curricula, ongoing programs and trades, students’ learning, teachers’ ability and so on. In this context, mapping and need assessment of the current vocational and technical education system is needed for the government to implement it in accordance with the new policy and strategies. Especially

mapping and need assessment study is essential for gathering further information about the scope of vocational education and training in Bangladesh, and to identify and explore the priorities and needs for further training in keeping pace with the demand of current market.

This study will help to analyze current strengths and gaps, and enable policy recommendations to address the gaps which will also assist in developing flexible and demand driven curricula and methods for TVE. Furthermore, this study will support to design a comprehensive program with the TVE institutions both in public and private sectors to modify and adapt their programs towards a competency-based training curriculum to address the needs of the workforce in the formal and informal sectors.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to identify the job opportunity of the technical and vocational graduate in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study will be to-

- i. identify the relevancy of present job opportunity and existing curriculum of technical and vocational education in Bangladesh.
- ii. examine the existing competence, strengths, and constraints prevail in the current TVE institutions.
- iii. identify the challenges facing by the technical and vocational graduates for getting relevant jobs.

Methodology of the Study

This section presents the methodology employed in this study. The methodology consists of nature of the study, population and sample, sampling techniques, tools of data collection, field testing, and approach of data collection, data analysis and report writing, and limitation of the study.

Nature of the study

The study has integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the situation regarding all expected outcomes through collecting data from primary and secondary sources. Both approaches have applied in this study, however, special emphasized given to the participatory approaches in all aspects of the study. Moreover, triangulation approach was employed to ensure the validity of data.

Population and sample of the study

The target groups of the study are:

- All the TVE institutions located in the 7 divisions
- Teachers of the TVE institutions
- Students of the TVE institutions
- Employers
- Employees

The study covers the TVE institutions has located in the 7 divisions. Appropriate sampling techniques have employed to ensure representative sample selection where necessary. Thus, the sample size as follows as:

- The existing curriculum of TVE including private, public and NGO sectors have selected to analyze.
- A total of 15 TVE institutions including private, public and NGO sectors have been selected randomly in the study.
- A total of 15 Principals of the TVE institutions have been interviewed to collect data focusing the needs of the particular sector and their institutions as well.
- A total of 11 employers of the divisional city areas have been selected to collect data through interviews. The participants have the employer who employed TVE students or graduates in their institutions. In selecting the participants, different types of organizations have considered to find out different dimensions of their opinion.
- A total of 34 of employees have been selected to collect their opinion. The participants have the employees who studied in the TVE institutions. In selecting the participants gender equity have tried to maintain.
- A total of 90 students have been selected in groups for FGDs. The student groups have formed with current TVE students who are going to complete their degrees. The groups have consisted of 8-10 of the TVET students and participants. In selecting the student groups, gender equity have maintained.

Major Findings

- More than half of the principals informed that there are several opportunities for the TVE graduates to work in the nearer localities of their institutes and near of half students also support this statement.
- Majority employees come from technical and Vocational Education background and around one-third employees come from general education. Moreover, more than half of employees have diploma in vocational education and one-fourth of the employees have SSC/Dhakil vocational degree.
- Three-fourth employees are related to the TVE related jobs. The employers, the principals and the students also informed that most of the TVE graduate got relevant jobs in terms of their background. Moreover, nearly one-third students stated that electrical trades have more opportunities in the job market although every out of five students mentioned that house wearing, dress making, computer and mobile servicing trades have some opportunity in the job market also.
- Most of the principals informed that the courses under TVE are modern and up to date considering its contents and relevancy with works/jobs. But more than half students mentioned that their trades are not modern or up dated having contemporary knowledge.
- More than half of the employees can perfectly apply their achieved knowledge in their works. However, near of three-fourth employers and principals informed that the employees are able to apply their achieved knowledge moderately to their works. Majority of the students thought that they have moderate level of opportunities to apply their learned knowledge in their works.
- Most of the principals and near about tree-fourth employees and employers claimed that one of the strengthen sides of TVE is emphasized on practical learning. Moreover, near about half employees, more than every out of four employers and more than half of principals informed that trades are related to time is another strengthens parts of TVE.

- Most of the students think that the practical oriented education is the main strength of TVE. Although, near of half students mentioned that semester system of TVE as strength of TVE.
- TVE graduate faced various challenges such as lack of job, involvement of others in TVE market, involvement of TVE graduates in irrelevant jobs, lack of contemporary trades and contents, lack of qualified teachers, lack infrastructural facilities, lack of resources for practical oriented education, etc.
- Majority of employers, more than half of principals, a good numbers of employees and students claimed that the courses and trades are needed to be modernized to overcome challenges of TVE.
- More than half of the employers and majority of the principals are emphasized on practical education as the essential way to overcome challenges in this education. Moreover, majority principals and more than one-third employees suggested instigating new trades based on market demands.

Recommendations

- There should be taken more steps by government and different employer organizations to create job opportunities for the technical and vocational education related jobs fields. Besides the TVE institutions should have consultancy in increasing more opportunity for the TVE based employees.
- To remove the wastage of TVE skills, all the Technical and Vocational Education graduates should have mentality to join the TVE relevant jobs field. Besides general category of graduates should not be included in the technical and vocational education relevant jobs fields.
- Technical and Vocational Educational institutions should be launched contemporary trades and contents so that the graduates would be motivated and employers also would be agree to employee the TVE graduates in their institutions.

- The Technical and Vocational Institutes should recruit qualified teachers and they should be provided proper training on technical and vocational teaching learning activities related skills.
- For the development of practical skills of TVE graduates, there should have available infrastructural facilities and teaching materials in the institution area and the teachers should be skilled to use the facilities and teaching materials.
- The Government of Bangladesh might take initiatives to establish industries in different areas of Bangladesh especially in the areas where the TVE institutions are located.
- The NGOs can also initiate necessary scheme or programme to involve the TVE graduates to use their skills and capacity.