

## Challenges of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh

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The coherence of social and economic developments indicates the need to emphasize the development in the TVET Systems in Bangladesh. With a view to establishing the sustainable development pattern associating the values of economically, environmentally and socially maintainable growth of the country, positive advancement of TVET is a pre-requisite.

### **Role of TVET**

Major role of the TVET is to provide training opportunities and career advancement avenues for the potential youth leaving the academic stream of education. This is done through providing skilled manpower needed at all levels of the economy. The skills so developed should be able to lead to self-employment in the absence of wage employment and enhance the industrialization process. TVET is the portion of the education system imparts training programmes targeting to employment and supply of the workforce to the labor market with competent skills. It includes the study and practices of technologies and related sciences, and the acquisition of Knowledge, Practical Skills, and Attitudes relating to occupations in various sectors. Policies of TVET should have their foundations in approaches and practices so that it can move towards a sustainable development. Unfortunately TVET has been still in the outside edge and its importance has not really been recognized properly.

Bangladesh has an advantageous position of having a large number of unemployed youth which may be trained to become skilled or semi-skilled workforce. In the current governmental plans, development of TVET has been emphasized in the policy and strategy. This is very much essential to analyze the current condition of TVET, the importance of TVET, the challenges facing the TVET Systems, concepts of improving the quality of TVET delivery, improving the training related affairs, delivering a TVET on demand-driven approach, assuring TVET institutional development, provision of capacity building instruments and transfer of training technology.

### **Training Departments**

Public TVET in Bangladesh is delivered by institutions belonging to 22 ministries. A large number of private institutions deliver training courses commercially. Hundreds of large and small NGOs offer skills training through short courses. Industry bodies provide training as per the needs of relevant enterprises through on-the-job training. Employers prefer recruiting apprentices and helpers who develop skills through work practice rather than formal training. A few recruiting agencies for the overseas employment market are operating training institutes to cater to the needs of the Foreign Employers. Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) under the Ministry of Education, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) under the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Department of Women Affairs under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Department of Youth Development (DYD) under the Ministry of Youth and Sports deliver the major portion of skills training through Training Centers all over the country. Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) regulates admission, curricula and testing ensuring the quality assurance of the skill training system through accreditation of courses, TVET certification and registration of training providers.

## **Social involvement of TVET**

Usually two thirds of the workforce is engaged in a developing country that require a skill level associated with vocational education and training. But the people typed their understanding about TVET in a negative way. It has been always a difficult task to change the mindset of guardians of students, the community and stakeholders about vocational training being second choice to academic stream of education. Mostly this is caused for better job opportunity for the highly educated graduates like engineers, doctors, lawyers etc. It is apparently one of the major obstacles to improve the social status of TVET. But the situation is changing towards TVET with positive trend.

The wages of the TVET graduates is another important factor. Unlike other developed countries they earn lesser amount than that of the professional but more than the same level workforce with the general education. It would have been easy to overcome the social barrier of participation in TVET with more interest if the wage structure for the TVET graduates could be made attractive ones. An electrician can earn much money as an engineer but he is still being considered with a lower social status. Actually a university degree is measured as a stair to social mobility even if it does not lead to employment or more money. This perception needs to be changed so that parents use a different yardstick to measure their success. Better quality of TVET will lead to higher performance and productivity of TVET trained graduates and hence higher wages and more career opportunities.

## **Financing TVET**

Inadequate budget is one of the foremost constraints of TVET which becomes the primary issue in procuring modern equipment, regular upgrading of these equipment, employing sufficiently proficient trainers, qualified assessors, support them in updating their skills, purchase most appropriate training facilities, aids and technology for practical training, etc. Application of the modern training methodologies involves sufficient budget also. This is common both in public and private sector TVET institutions. High-quality TVET sometimes may be unaffordable by governments, enterprises and training providers. Quality assurance of TVET systems, best practices and innovations in TVET may be shared with Developed Countries to upgrade the level of training standard.

## **Quality Assurance of the TVET System**

Quality Assurance is an important issue in TVET. Quality Assurance and Management System (CAMS) and the Competency Assurance Management System (CAMS) are the established evidence based quality control and assurance system identifying the methods and procedures followed up to ensure that the trainees and TVET Institutions have the awareness, skills, knowledge and attitudes to perform all the tasks including Health, Safety and Environmental Protection (HSEP). This concept is very new to TVET in Bangladesh.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in TVET**

Proper Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Systems are very much important to confirm the quality and effectiveness of training delivery. This is necessary to provide a rational basis for planning and implementing quality management for TVET within different enterprises and Institutions. Evaluation System is used to assess and determine the effectiveness and relevance of the training activities in the light of the stated objectives. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems is the key to an effective measurement of the TVET Program and essential tools of ensuring quality improvement. A Management Information System (MIS) is generally established within TVET Systems in order to provide a process that

facilitates an effective, efficient and timely internal information and data collection from different TVET Institutions.

### **Training of Trainers**

Professional development of trainers as per the demand of the employers and the application of latest technology is a major concern for the development of quality of TVET. Technology is changing and upgrading day by day. To keep pace with the technological advancement the trainer and training methodology should be improved. This needs a systematic and integrated approach and continuous efforts.

### **Procurement of latest and modern equipment**

TVET mostly proves its success with the training on advanced technical and industrial application which needs the appropriate machinery and equipment. This is another challenge to procure this needed equipment on a regular basis both for the public and private training institutions. Establishment of appropriate training infrastructures, upgrading training resources and proper instruments are necessary for imparting the quality TVET.

### **Regular updating curricula and training program**

Applicable curricula and its systematic updating is an essential element for ensuring sustainable TVET delivery. This action needs sufficient effort and finance for implementation. Bangladesh Technical Education Board is nationally responsible to perform these activities which also need enhancement both in manpower, logistics and expertise. Private sector may come forward to prepare curriculum as per the demand of the employer, industry or of the sector.

### **Linkage with employer**

Links between training and the employment sectors is of prime importance in establishing agreeable environment and win-win situation for the demand and supply position for the training graduates and the employers. The market requirements are changing specially the case with training curricula, trainers' skills, market linkages, etc. In order to promote employment with appropriate and needed skills, engagement of employers and enterprises (industry) to be significant players in TVET should be emphasized.

### **TVET and Gender**

Traditionally TVET was considered to be a suitable profession for the male and socially women are discouraged from enrolling for vocational career training opportunities. This trend has resulted low percentage of the women's total enrolment in vocational areas and substantive exclusions of women in the economic development programs. Bangladesh National Skill Development Policy 2011 and National strategy for promotion of gender equality in TVET 2012 has been formally adopted to strengthen female participation in TVET and prohibit discrimination in this regard. They experience a wide range of problems such as lack of access to marketable skills training programs, social discrimination, early marriage, family restrictions on their education and job choice, transportation constraints, lack of physical and sanitary facilities etc. These limit their participation in the growing labor economy in Bangladesh.

### ***Gender Issues, barriers and gaps***

- Lack of a social acceptance for women to work alongside men. Socio-cultural barriers and constraints, attitudes and sex stereotyping by parents promote the view that technical jobs and training programmes are the exclusive preserve of males.
- Lack of social safety and security at the institution and safe transportation.
- The lack of female-friendly structures (Toilets, Common room etc.) in training institution and lack of systematic positive action to counteract the present imbalance.
- Lack of exposure to technically oriented subjects in the primary level limits their participation and influences their performance in these subjects at secondary school and subsequent levels.
- Early marriage/Child marriage of girls' student also restricts their participation in TVET.
- There is a lack of effective career guidance and counselling in both single sex and mixed schools and a lack of exposure to employment opportunities for females in technical fields.
- Some parents are reluctant to send their daughters to polytechnics if accommodation is not assured.

Currently there is a very low participation of women in TVET institutions. The enrolment size ranges from 9% to 13% in the public institutions and 33% in private institutions affiliated with the BTEB. The participation of females in TVET accounts for 24% of the total enrollment. DTE, BMET and DYD have exclusive training institutions for skill development training of women and also provision of admission in co-education with male students in different trades. Department of Woman Affairs (DWA) conducts training programs for uplifting women by expanding their employment opportunity. Awareness and social marketing of technical education is needed to overcome the barriers of social stigma on female participation in TVET.

### **TVET and disability**

Skills Development Policy stipulates a strategy to increase the participation of people with disabilities in skills development programs. The Household and Income and Expenditure Survey (2010) put the figure of disable people at 9.1% in Bangladesh. A reformed skills development system empowers persons with disabilities is necessary to access decent employment in Bangladesh, thereby contributing to increased economic productivity.

### **Project support towards development of TVET**

Currently a few investment projects are aligned with Bangladesh's country strategies to support skill development. Among these ILO-TVET Reform Project funded by EC, Skill Development Project (SDP) by GoB, ADB and SDC, Skill and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) funded by World Bank and Canada, Bangladesh Skill for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) funded by Canada, Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) funded by ADB and Skill for Employment of Bangladesh (SEP-B) by DFID are remarkable. The objective of these projects are to put in place a demand-led, flexible and responsive TVET system that would deliver skills training to meet the needs of the labor market and to strengthen selected public and private training institutions to improve training quality, and the employability of trainees, including those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds emphasizing and encouraging female participation in TVET. These are supporting the pro-poor growth agenda of Bangladesh's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper by creating more employment opportunities for the poor and strengthening the capacity to tackle the competitive challenges of the country. More project assistance is needed for technological development of TVET to cope with the international standard.

## **Skill training and overseas employment**

As the local employment is limited in Bangladesh and there is potential opportunity for the skilled workers in different countries, TVET can play a vital role in producing high quality workforce for the overseas labour market. About 51% of the total Bangladeshi workforce in various countries particularly in the Middle Eastern countries and Malaysia are unskilled or less-skilled workers. They have very little or no educational background and have not received any kind of training. There has been noticeable mismatch in supply and demand of manpower resources across the countries and regions in different categories of occupations and skills. Demand for skilled manpower in different trades is increasing in the world employment market. The benefits can be derived only if a skilled labour force is available to face competitiveness in the world market. Bangladesh can enhance the skills of the labour force providing them with appropriate education and training to achieve further success in global employment market through achieving the international accreditation of TVET.

## **Collaboration of TVET with Higher Education**

In overcoming the challenges of TVET for establishment of sustainable TVET, cooperation with Higher Education and TVET may be bonded in some areas. These may be in i) Development of TVET Packages (Curriculum & Training Program), ii) Training of TVET Trainers, iii) Research and Study for sustainable Development of TVET and iv) Development of resources and pedagogy to promote and encourage sustainability in TVET.

## **Challenges**

TVET is facing multifarious problems and challenges which need to set priorities to alleviate these problems for proceeding towards a sustainable way forward. There exist massive unemployment and under-employment and scarcity of Job in some trades and sectors. Inadequate utilization of huge work force is prevailing in Bangladesh due to skill shortage. On the other hand low productivity in some industrial sectors hampers the production. Low internal and external efficiency of TVET in providing market driven, relevant and flexible program hinders the production of skilled manpower.

## ***Core problems in TVET***

1. There is no comprehensive need assessment survey to assess the detailed training requirement;
2. TVET system is not adequately responding to market demand;
3. Small Industrial base and slow growth to accommodate the skilled workforce comfortably;
4. Access to the formal TVET is limited to 'Grade VIII Barrier'. It debars a vast population to enter the formal TVET. The NTVQF at Pre-vocational basic level and RPL may be a solution to this entrance which also need long time for implementation in full swing;
5. Female students have limited access to TVET enrolment and to employment due to social stigma and lack of gender friendly environment in TVET institutions and employment;
6. TVET providers are far behind the international standards, certification and quality assurance;
7. Low connection to international labour employment market;
8. Weak governance of TVET;
9. Participation of private sector and employers with TVET providers is inadequate. Effective ISC may be a solution to this issue but the development of ISCs in different sectors will take considerable time;
10. Poor monitoring and no performance evaluation of TVET;

11. Lack of PPP framework in TVET system. Recently BSEP project has introduced a few PPP programs on pilot basis which needs to be encouraged;
12. Insufficient creation of job opportunities for the TVET graduates;
13. Inadequate orientation to labour market regarding TVET;
14. TVET institutions, particularly private ones, lack workshop, lab equipment and physical facilities;
15. Majority of the teachers of private TVET institutions are not properly qualified and trained;
16. Large number of teaching positions vacant in the most of the TVET institutions particularly in public TVET;
17. Lack of sufficient teacher training facility to face the challenges of the TVET system and identify the basic concepts of improving the quality of TVET delivery.

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) TVET strategies should be formulated on the basis of National Skill Development Policy;
- 2) TVET should be made more market driven in nature;
- 3) Quality Assurance of the TVET should be maintained in a planned way;
- 4) Enterprise and Training Provider Partnerships should be encouraged;
- 5) Increased funding for TVET will be a good investment towards human resources development;
- 6) Appropriate research and study should be conducted to design proper TVET system;
- 7) Acquisition of up-to-date equipment and tools should be ascertained both for the public and private TVET institutions;
- 8) More engagement of industrial organizations to participate in the formulation of the curricula, provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) programmes and certify the competencies;
- 9) Governments should encourage industrial organizations to participate in TVET through providing incentives, subsidizing apprenticeship wages and assisting the stipend program;
- 10) It is important to ensure harmonized national TVET policies, provision of adequate funds and developing positive social attitudes;
- 11) TVET should be recognized as an investment not a cost, with significant returns including the well-being of workers, enhanced productivity, international competitiveness and economic growth in the long run;
- 12) More arrangement of counselling and guidance to vocational training;
- 13) Systematic professional development of TVET Trainers and Assessors;
- 14) A TVET System should keep pace with technological advancements and use appropriate technology;
- 15) Continuing TVET and Lifelong Learning should be encouraged;
- 16) Assurance Management System (CAMS) is to be established;
- 17) Change the Mindset of parents, the community and stakeholders about vocational education should be made;
- 18) Closer links between TVET and the employment sector are necessary, as well as concerted actions to promote TVET for women. Introduction of stipends and other financial benefits may be made to encourage girls' participation. Gender friendly environment is also a requirement.

The national labour force increases annually by roughly 2.5m people most of whom are youth. More trained and skilled workforce need to be produced to contribute to the national economic development through improved productivity, more employment generation in the local employment market and abroad.