



# Skills for the international labour market: Bangladesh country report

Part of a multi-country labour market trend analysis for migrant workers from South Asia  
to the member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf



ILO Country Office for Bangladesh  
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment  
Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training





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# Preface

Bangladesh has been formulating and adopting national laws and policies to govern the labour migration process. The Government has also adopted national policies that address the skills development of workers. Recognizing the need for increasing the competitiveness of its labour force, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) has undertaken various initiatives in technical cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) through a programme called "Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh", which is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). In addition, both the MEWOE and its executing arm, the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), have mobilised resources from and cooperated with a range of stakeholders to enhance workers' skills.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Frameworks (NTVQF) in order to align the qualifications available in the country to better reflect the growing and changing occupational and skill profiles in both domestic and international labour markets. The NTVQF is supporting stronger integration of skills training in community organisations, schools, training institutions and the workplace, by providing a common national benchmark for the naming the achievement of qualifications. The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) of Bangladesh desires that all training institutions deliver training in a manner that is aligned with the NTVQF. BMET, while moving towards this alignment, is ensuring that the current needs for short-term courses for the workers migrating abroad is met well. It has also undertaken a number of efforts to understand the in-demand skills in major destination countries. This is to ensure that Bangladeshi workers have the opportunity to receive nationally recognized qualifications that is based on industry demands.

Labour market trends and production technologies, however, are fast evolving and the skills workers need for productive labour market participation, are also fast evolving. Efforts are required to help establish Bangladeshi workers' credentials abroad by continuously improving their labour productivity. Specific efforts are required to develop skills that match the demand for skills and competencies that are relevant to current production practices in destination countries. The task before the government is more than daunting because a large number of actors are involved in training Bangladeshi workers, particularly in technical and vocational training of less than six-month duration. Not all of these actors follow standardized curricula or adhere to the national certification system. But the efforts being made by the government demonstrates their commitment to boost labour productivity. The MEWOE and BMET are also working on the job-seeker registration and plan to use the international occupational classification, which would enhance possibility for wage negotiations in the international recruitment process.

This study presents current challenges in terms of matching skill demand and supply. It recommends measures to be adopted to improve relevance and quality of training services for Bangladeshi workers who would like to migrate for employment.

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# Contents

Preface	v
Contents	vii
Abbreviations and acronyms	x
Executive summary	xiii
<b>Part 1: Country profile of migration</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Background of the report</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Study objective and research questions	4
1.3 Methodology	5
<b>2. Demand-supply matching in the migration process</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Establishing demand for migrant workers	8
2.2 Demand trend	9
2.3 Connecting workers with demand	11
2.4 Recruitment and selection process	12
2.5 Malpractice in the recruitment system	14
2.6 Female migrant workers	15
<b>3. Preparation of migrant workers</b>	<b>19</b>
3.1 Historical connections of workers	19
3.2 TVET system for migrant workers	20
<b>4. Role of the Government in promoting migration</b>	<b>29</b>
4.1 Government policies and planning	29
4.2 Delivering Skills Training	31
4.3 Establishing bilateral agreements with destination countries	33
<b>5. Services for migrant workers</b>	<b>35</b>
5.1 Pre-departure services	35
5.2 In-country support	37
5.3 Other services	38
5.4 Support for sending remittances	39

<b>6. Maximizing economic value from returning migrants</b>	<b>43</b>
6.1 Benefits to the labour market	43
6.2 Benefits to the economy	44
<b>7. Information services related to migration</b>	<b>49</b>
 <b>Part 2: Profile analysis and implications for action</b>	 <b>53</b>
 <b>Bibliography</b>	 <b>63</b>
 <b>Annex</b>	 <b>67</b>
Annex I: List of key informants interviewed	67
Annex II: Total employment of migrant workers and remittance inflow by destination country	69
Annex III: TTC pass rates, 2013	71



## Tables

1. Flow of migrant workers to Saudi Arabia by skill, 2005-12	7
2. Cost structure of migration in Bangladesh	10
3. Number of female migrant workers to select destination countries	15
4. Distribution of migrants by gender a division (in per cent)	16
5. Percentage of population according by education and education level	17
6. Number of trainers and enrolment of women workers in training institutions in 2012	21
7. Skills levels under NTVQF	27
8. Pilot Programmes at RTOs under NTVQF	28
9. Forms of sending money by migrants	34
10. Distribution of remittance savings by category	36
11. Distribution of remittance savings by category and division, 2012-13	37
12. Remittance flows from Middle East countries (US\$ millions)	37
13. Organizations' sources of online information and areas covered	40
14. Mechanisms for supporting the Government in developing the migration process and capacity building of migrant workers	50

## Figures

1. Official process of migration from Bangladesh to various destination countries	6
2. Selection and recruitment of migrant workers by recruiting agents	11
3. Total Employment of female workers	13
4. Number of trainees who passed training courses in institutions under BMET	18
5. Total overseas employment and remittance inflow	39
6. Measures for integrating returning migrant workers	49

## Boxes

1. Female worker subject to malpractices of the recruitment system	14
2. Pre-departure trainings at BKTTC	31
3. Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Technical Centre for Women	31

# Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladesh takaBKTTC Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BSEP	Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity Project
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CAD	computer-aided design
CBT	Competency Based Training
CIP	Commercially Important Person
CoD	Country of Destination
COEL	Centre of Excellence for Leather
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Offices
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education
EC	European Commission
EPS-TOPIK	Employment Permit System Test of Proficiency in Korean
EPZ	export processing zone
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HSC	Higher secondary certificate
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISC	Industry Skills Council
MEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MOU	memorandum of understanding
NCB	national commercial bank
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPVC	National Pre-vocation Certificate
NSC	National Skill Certificate

NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NSQAS	National Skills Quality Assurance System
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework
OKUP	Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit
RPL	recognition of prior learning
RTO	registered training organization
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDP	Skills Development Project
SEP-B	Skills and Employment Programme Bangladesh
SME	small and medium enterprise
SSC	Senior secondary certificate
STEP	Skills and Training Enhancement Project
SUR	Survey on the Use of Remittance
TMSS	Thangamara Mohila Shobuj Shongho
TTC	Technical Training Centre
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Education Programs
US\$	United States dollar



# Executive summary

## Country profile on labour migration: key issues

**L**abour migration and remittances generated by migrant workers have contributed significantly to the Bangladesh economy for several years. A total of 6.4 million male and female workers with various skills are currently working overseas. The primary destination countries are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Singapore, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, among others. This report focuses on labour migration trends from Bangladesh to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Malaysia.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted various regulations for governing the migration process, including the Emigration Ordinance, 1982, the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, the Recruiting Agents License and Conduct Rules, 2002, among others. These regulations contain details on the responsibilities of various actors in the labour migration process. Various government ministries and their affiliated organizations are involved in the governance of migration in Bangladesh. Private recruitment agencies, licenced and regulated by the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) and the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), have a vital role in the recruitment process. Matching demand for workers in destination countries with aspirant migrant workers is done by private recruitment agencies registered with the BMET, as well as the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), the only government organization fulfilling the role of recruiter. Despite the prevalence of various well-articulated provisions in existing regulations, malpractice in the recruitment process is common, which erodes gains from migration. Common malpractices include the imposition of high migration costs and fees on workers, providing wrong information to foreign employers on workers' skills, among other things. Due to high costs associated with migration imposed by some recruiting agents, many workers resort to illegal channels to migrate overseas, making workers subject to abuse and violence. Female migrant workers are most vulnerable and often subject to abuse during their stints as domestic workers in various GCC countries.

Low-skilled migrant workers from across Bangladesh who are willing to work for low wages meet short-term labour demand in destination countries such as the GCC countries and Malaysia. The prevailing migration trend features a mismatch between demand in the destination countries and the supply of Bangladeshi migrant workers in terms of competencies and experience. In order to ensure the employability of migrant workers in the destination countries, increasing competitiveness of Bangladeshi workers is required. Increasing employability requires worker skill development with relevance to the international market. Developing and implementing skills development policies with an emphasis on quality and relevance are required in this context. Efficient distribution of resources needs to be mobilized by identifying priority areas in skills development.

Recognizing the need for increasing the competitiveness of its labour force, the Government of Bangladesh, with support from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and various development partners, has undertaken programmes for skills development of workers. Programmes on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) have been adopted by various training centres established under the BMET. A number of non-government organizations (NGOs) and private institutions have also provided training to workers nationwide. Efforts are being made to improve the quality and relevance of technical training being provided to the trainees. However, the efforts still result in less output compared to the needs and requirements of the local economy. In the context of matching migrant workers' skills with foreign demand, it must be mentioned that technology used in industries in different destination countries vary. Training currently available in Bangladesh lacks market relevance due to dated curricula and technology used in training courses. Trainees who receive training in Bangladesh do not acquire skills to utilize new technology and industrial practices in destination countries. More efforts are needed in terms of adopting curricula that are equivalent to that used in destination countries. Overall improvement is necessary to increase the capacity of relevant trainings and develop training infrastructure.

BMET's affiliated training centres, private training institutions, and private recruiting agencies provide migrant workers pre-departure orientation training based on modules developed per the demands of the destination countries. These trainings are mostly provided to female migrant workers who migrate as domestic workers to the GCC countries, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and others. To some extent these trainings prepare workers—especially female migrant workers—to cope with the socio-cultural environment in the destination countries.

In the case of trade-based trainings, there is lack of proper mechanisms to incorporate foreign demand into the training curricula. The reason for this is due to the demand for unskilled labourers in key destination countries, including GCC countries, Malaysia, and others, where they emphasize practical experience gained by workers rather than certificates obtained from training courses. Job placement cells exist in government technical training centres (TTCs) and some of the private training centres. These cells are supposed to keep information on the trainees who pass out of these centres in order to observe what kinds of job opportunities their trainees avail in the domestic or international labour markets. However, as observed at the TTCs visited during this study, the job placement cells are unable to perform efficiently. It is difficult to know how many trainees who participated in trade-based trainings in these institutions migrated for jobs overseas. Participation of female migrant workers in trade-based training is low. This is in part due to high demand for female migrant workers to work as domestic workers in the destination countries. Another reason for low women's participation in training for trades is the negative social attitude concerning women's participation in trade-based occupations.

Training provided by private recruiting agencies to some extent meets the demand of foreign companies through providing short-term trade-based training tailored to foreign companies' requirements. However, these trainings only meet the skills required for short-term jobs overseas offered by specific foreign employers. Recruiting agents do not take any initiative to enhance long-term capacity and productivity of migrant workers. However, some recruiting agents hire returning migrants, which is a noteworthy measure towards reintegrating returnees into the economy. Tech-

nical training at other private institutions is provided by diploma engineers who do not have any practical work experience in industry.

A number of NGOs and workers' organizations provide support to migrant workers in terms of providing them accommodation facilities during training, counselling them on safe migration and workers' rights, among other services. However, these organizations are unable to function properly due to a lack of financial and human resource capacities. Accommodating and creating job opportunities for returnees is difficult in Bangladesh even if they possess updated skills through their overseas job experience. The recognition of prior learning (RPL) system is a commendable measure adopted under the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011. Proper implementation of RPL is necessary for migrant workers to ensure recognition of their acquired skills through their previous foreign job experience. Acquiring RPL certification will facilitate returnees in finding jobs in the domestic market and also securing jobs in the international market through repeat migration. However, the RPL system is unable to operate efficiently due to a lack of assessors at the RPL centres to assess workers' existing skills. Furthermore, undertaking measures to assess skills of returnees and ensure them further job opportunities is not possible without tracking the returnees and proper planning for their reintegration. In this case, systematic recordkeeping of the returning migrants in Bangladesh is necessary.

The macroeconomic literature identifies various factors that have significant impacts on the effectiveness of migration in fostering growth and development of the economy. Factors in the domestic market include the country's income level, inflation level, interest rate, and political stability. Research work conducted by the Bangladesh Bank found that factors affecting remittance earnings include inflation, exchange rate, wage rate, and regulatory and institutional arrangements of the Government. Having been affected by various factors, migrants from Bangladesh have contributed to the economy through income generation for their families, savings and investment of their earned remittances, and their acquired knowledge and skills from overseas employment.

The BMET is the best source of information relating to labour migration in Bangladesh. However, there are other organizations, including the Bangladesh bank, the Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), among others, that collect information on migration. Besides these, there are many research organizations and NGOs working on various aspects of labour migration. Coordination is required among the various institutions and the Government to address the prevailing weaknesses within the labour migration process and in enhancing the competitiveness of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

### **Areas of concern and implications for action**

Sustainable gains from migration cannot be ensured unless discrepancies within the recruitment process are removed. Actions are required at the policy and implementation levels for developing the recruitment process of labour migration. Long-term employability of Bangladeshi migrant workers requires coordination among regulations related to migration and skills development policies and actions. Skills development programmes should be developed through resource mobiliza-

tion and efficient implementation. In this regard, a coordinated effort is required from the various ministries and their affiliated departments related to labour migration and skills enhancement of workers. Coordination is also required from international agencies, bilateral agencies, and international and local NGOs to ensure effective resource utilization and efficient implementation of various programmes related to migration and skills development of workers. Coordination and planning is required to address the following issues:

- adopt measures to ensure the recruitment process follows existing rules and policies;
- establish mechanisms to develop relevant training structures for effective demand-supply matching in the migration process;
- facilitate female migrant workers; and
- build awareness on safe migration processes and upgrading skills.

In order to remove discrepancies from the migration process, monitoring and supervision is important. This is required to ensure efficient performance by various stakeholders in the migration process, including private recruitment agents. Strengthening the monitoring wing of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) is necessary. For special monitoring of female workers, a separate unit under the Ministry could be established. Stringent monitoring of private recruiting agents' activities may enable the BMET to bring the whole recruitment process under control. In addition to this, classifying and grading the agencies based on their performance and disseminating the grades to various stakeholders will increase awareness among the agents. This will also facilitate migrant workers in choosing the right agents through which they can establish linkages with overseas employers. The BMET has developed a database for migrant workers with the objective of creating a ready pool of workers for overseas employment. Discrepancies prevail within this database that need to be addressed through engaging persons in preparing the database who are well acquainted with migration related issues and have compatible computer skills. Engaging recruiting agents and TTCs in this case may be effective in maintaining a proper registration process.

For ensuring demand-supply matching of migrant workers in terms of skills and competencies, it is necessary to develop relevant training structures that will be responsive to the needs of the destination countries. To ensure matching, the first requirement is to explore and identify new opportunities for workers in the destination countries. The next step is to develop a training structure through research-based initiatives to align training to existing demand. For efficient implementation of TVET programmes, human resource capacity of the department of training under the BMET needs to be developed. Capacity building in the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) is required for curriculum development of competency-based training and certification as per the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) needs to be well-equipped in providing infrastructure and technical support to BTEB in this regard. Resource mobilization and efficient utilization of resources are vital in capacity building of the various institutions and developing a competent training structure for migrant workers. Increasing the number of assessors certified by the BTEB as well as increasing the number of accredited training institutions is essential to reach out to the large number of workers who migrate for employment and those returning. This calls for coordination among BTEB, BMET, other training providers and development partners. Regular practical trainings for



the trainers, as well as assessments of the assessors and trainers, are very important. International recognition of the national-level trainings acquired by Bangladeshi migrants would require mutual negotiation at the government level. Skills accreditation and standardization of migrant worker training should be brought under bilateral negotiations and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) signed with the destination countries.

Bangladeshi female workers who largely work as housekeepers in the key destination countries need to be made more aware of lawful migration procedures and safe migration through mass awareness campaigns and also during orientation courses provide at the TTCs. To promote the employability of women in diversified jobs, women should be encouraged to adopt trade-based training at the TTCs to build their skills in non-traditional occupations. Accommodation facilities for female workers at the TTCs should be developed focusing on their security and providing quality food and lodging. Female labour attachés need to be appointed in the Bangladesh embassies located in key destination countries.

Intervention by the Government is needed to maintain records on various aspects of migration through coordinated efforts of various departments in the MEWOE. In this regard, cooperation is required from the private recruitment agencies. Embassies in key destination countries need to have human resource capacity to support migrant workers in dealing with various problems encountered during their stints overseas. Addressing the prevailing gaps within various aspects of the migration process in Bangladesh is not possible for the Government alone without support from development agencies. Various international development agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), bilateral and multilateral agencies, and local NGOs have adopted programmes for safe migration, promotion of decent employment opportunities for migrant workers, and their skills development. Ensuring a lawful migration process with demand-supply matching in terms of workers' skills requires financial and technical support from the various development agencies. This support should be aimed at capacity building of public organizations in policy formulation, as well as supporting infrastructure and human resource development of both public and private organizations and training institutions. In this regard, effective coordination through regular consultations and dialogues, as well as effective monitoring, are prerequisites for the proficient implementation and functioning of various programmes.



PART 1:

# Country profile of migration

A photograph showing two women working on sewing machines in a garment factory. The woman in the foreground is wearing a colorful floral sari and a blue face mask, focused on her work. The woman behind her is wearing a pink shirt and is also working on a machine. They are using white GMC industrial sewing machines. In the background, there is a large window with a metal grid and a sign with text in Hindi.

# Background of the report

## Chapter 1 | Background of the report

### 1.1 Introduction

Bangladesh, like other South Asian countries, has a labour surplus that the domestic market is incapable of absorbing. An additional 2 million young people are added to the country's labour force every year. Given this situation, international labour migration contributes to the economy through overseas employment and income generation and adds 11 per cent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through remittance inflows.<sup>1</sup> Statistics from the Bureau of Manpower and Employment (BMET) indicate that almost 9.2 million Bangladeshi workers, a combination of professional, skilled, semi-skilled, and less-skilled migrated. A large number of them are currently working in various countries abroad.<sup>2</sup> The BMET statistics show that a total of 30,073 Bangladeshi workers were employed in overseas jobs in 1980.<sup>3</sup> This figure has increased to 425,684 in 2014. During this period, remittance inflows to Bangladesh have increased from US\$301.33 million in 1980<sup>4</sup> to \$15,309.47 million<sup>5</sup> in the financial year 2014-15. Female migration from Bangladesh has also increased as reflected in the BMET data. The year over year increase in female migration was 51.2 per cent in 2013, which is significantly higher than a negative 12.9 per cent recorded in 1992. Based on the trend of the last 40 years, it can be predicted that the migration of workers from Bangladesh will continue in the foreseeable future.

The main destinations for Bangladeshi migrants are Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Malaysia, and Singapore. Saudi Arabia has absorbed the largest number of migrant workers for the last three decades. In 2001, 83 per cent of Bangladeshi overseas workers were employed in Saudi Arabia. After this period, the proportion of Bangladeshi workers working in the country declined for reasons discussed in chapter 2. Over the last few years, Malaysia has become a substantive market to absorb labourers from Bangladesh (ILO, 2014). The Government of Bangladesh has adopted bilateral agreements and signed MOUs with governments of various destination countries for sending migrant workers for specific occupations.

The labour migration trend in Bangladesh shows that there is an increase in the outflow of low-skilled and semi-skilled workers, which is also the case in other South Asian countries (ILO, 2014a). Whereas 40 per cent of migrant workers from Bangladesh were skilled in 2010, this figure has declined to 34 per cent in 2012 (The Financial Express, 2014). Low-skilled and semi-skilled workers face more problems than skilled workers in terms of protection of their rights in the destination countries. Low-skilled workers also often resort to illegal channels to migrate to work in for-

<sup>1</sup> This figure is for the fiscal year 2012-13 as per Bangladesh Bank statistics. Available from: Monthly Fiscal Report (April, 2014), Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup> "Skilled" workers refer to those who possess a broad range of knowledge and practical skill and can accomplish tasks by applying all acquainted methods, tools, materials, and information. These type of workers are able to find solutions to problems through applying knowledge from past experiences by undertaking overall responsibility. "Semi-skilled" workers have moderately broad knowledge and the practical and solve regular problems by using simple techniques under supervision but autonomy to certain degree. "Less-skilled" workers possess very limited general knowledge and skills to carry out simple tasks under direct supervision (ILO, 2014c).

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/index> [accessed 16 Jul 2015].

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_117970.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_117970.pdf) [accessed 16 Jul 2015].

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://www.bb.org.bd/openpdf.php> [accessed 16 Jul 2015].



eign countries, making them subject to even greater abuse and violence. The Government should undertake proper measures to ensure that the recruitment of migrant workers is done in line with government regulations, ensuring workers' safety in the destination countries. On the other hand, despite the current demand trend for unskilled workers in the GCC countries, Malaysia, and other countries, initiatives should be adopted to develop a skilled workforce. Skilling the workforce and simultaneously engaging in bilateral negotiations with destination countries to send skilled workers are necessary for ensuring long-term employability of Bangladesh's migrant workers.

Recognizing the necessity for enhancing the competitiveness of migrant workers from Bangladesh in the international labour market, various ministries and their affiliated organizations have adopted skills development programmes. The TVET Reform Project was adopted with funding and support from the Government of Bangladesh, the European Commission (EC), and the ILO. Trainings are also being provided by TTCs under the BMET, many NGOs, private recruiting agencies, among others. However, gaps within the training programmes remain in terms of developing quality skills among migrant workers with relevance to meet demand in the destination countries.

This report provides an analytical overview of the labour migration process from Bangladesh to the destination countries. The report also includes the existing practices of worker demand-supply matching by the various actors in the overall recruitment process. The report aims to explore the effectiveness of the skills development programmes adopted in Bangladesh for enhancing employment opportunities for workers abroad. The study is based on the objectives detailed in the next section.

## **1.2 Study objective and research questions**

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The report provides an overview of how Bangladesh manages labour migration. It aims to explore ways in which the country can adapt to changing demand in the labour markets of the selected destination countries. This study is based on the following objectives:

- to assess the practices and adequacy of existing labour market (planning) approaches; and
- to identify how Bangladesh can improve its response to the needs of destination countries.

With the above objectives in view, the study evolved with the following research questions:

- What is the present migration profile in Bangladesh and to what extent is migration being 'managed'? Specifically, to what extent in practice are the country's institutions (government, NGO, and other) engaged with the migrant labour migration processes such as skills training systems, certification, recruitment, employment, migrant preparation, migrant reintegration, financial transfers of remittances, among other processes?
- What opportunities exist for process management which can increase the competitiveness of and demand for Bangladeshi migrant workers and maximize the economic benefits from migrant labour and returnees?

The study aims to identify areas and gaps which can be addressed with development assistance to increase the competitiveness of migrant workers in the international labour market and make them more beneficial to the Bangladesh economy upon their return from the destination coun-

tries. The study will also identify and discuss the extent of support required for migrant workers. This report will finally make recommendations on areas which can be improved and supported by different stakeholders to more effectively and efficiently support short-term migration of workers from Bangladesh.

### 1.3 Methodology

This report on Bangladesh as a country of origin includes a variety of issues addressing various aspects of labour migration. The report provides information on various elements of the labour migration process including issues related to skills development, employment and skills development policies and regulations, and remittance generation by migrant workers. Sources used to collect the information include available secondary data on the labour market, especially on migrant workers and government policies and plans. Several reports and studies were also consulted during the preparation of this report, including existing studies on Bangladesh's labour migration and skills development, published reports on government ministries and institutions, reports prepared by international organizations and development agencies, and civil society organizations' policy briefs.

Data on various aspects of skills development, including the number of trainees at government training centres and information on course curricula, were collected from relevant stakeholders through visiting the institutions. Qualitative information collected from interviews with different stakeholder groups is a major source of information for this study. The selection of stakeholders for interviews was aimed to include people from various sectors in order to achieve an accurate picture of the multidimensional nature of the labour migration process. In this regard, actors from the public and private sectors, civil society organizations, academics, workers, returnees, and trainers were included in the interview process. The key informant interviews were conducted from 7 July to 7 September 2014. The interviewed stakeholders were from the following groups:

- ministry officials;
- private recruiting agents;
- officials from the Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA);
- international experts on skill development projects for migrant workers in Bangladesh;
- apex body and other relevant stakeholders for worker skill development;
- public and private training centres;
- research organizations;
- NGOs working on migration; and
- female and returning migrant workers.

A list of the key informants interviewed for this study can be found in annex I. The study also gathered information from web pages of relevant institutions and organizations.





# Demand-supply matching in the migration process

## Chapter 2 | Demand-supply matching in the migration process

**T**his chapter focuses on the overall migration process, including the procedures for establishing linkages between foreign demand and aspirant workers, demand trends for Bangladeshi workers in the destination countries, and the status of female migrant workers. In this context, functions of various actors involved in the migration process are also discussed.

Generating benefits from short-term migration depends on the efficiency in the overall migration process. If labour migration does not correspond to the international labour demand, positive outcomes cannot be extracted from workers' migration. According to the Emigration Ordinance 1982, the BMET was tasked with regulating the overall labour migration process. In October 2013, the Emigration Ordinance 1982 was replaced by the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 in an effort to improve the governance of labour migration. This is the first ever law on labour migration which was drafted with technical support from the ILO.

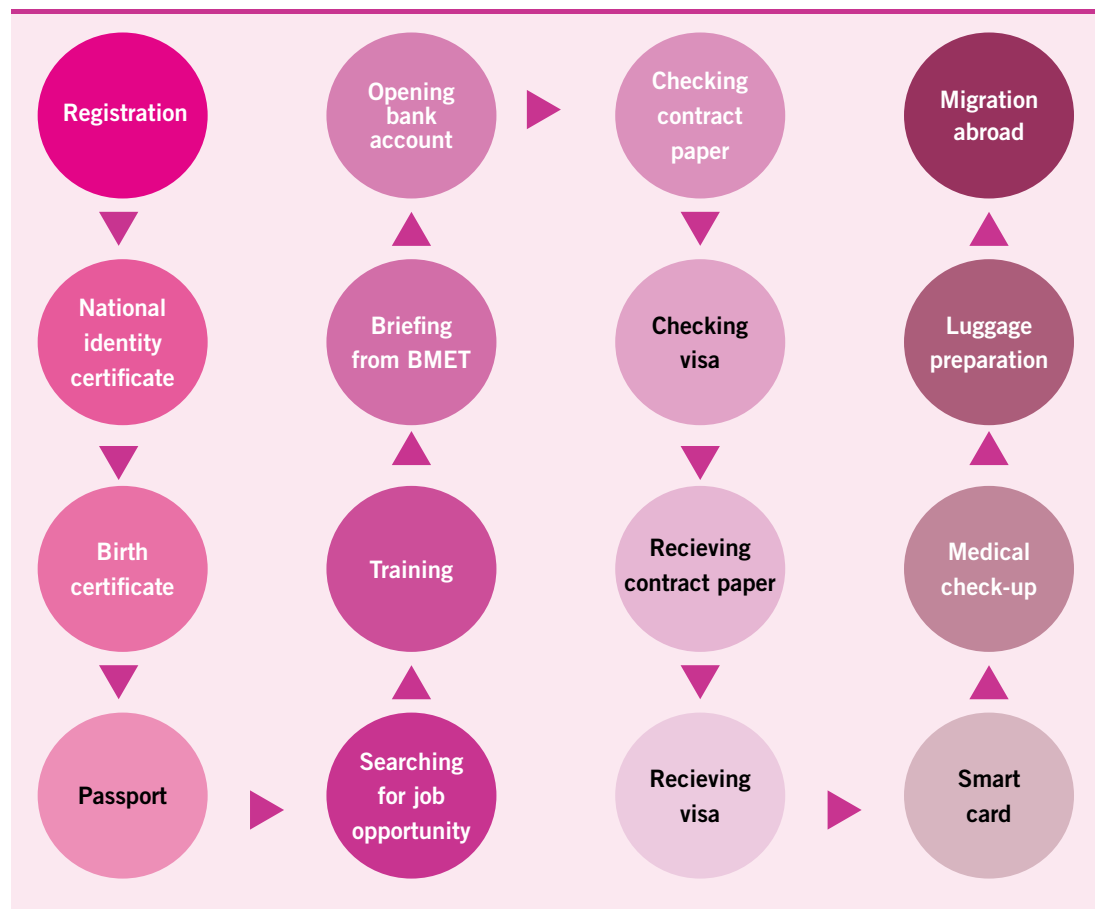
Following a substantial increase in the number of migrants since 1981, the Government started to provide licenses to private recruiting agencies in 1984 under the governance of the BMET. Currently there are 876 recruiting agents that are authorized by the Government to conduct migration-related activities. These recruiting agents act as intermediaries between overseas employers and aspirant workers willing to migrate for overseas jobs. According to the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, recruiting agents have to select workers for foreign employment from a BMET database that includes information on the aspirant migrant workers. Workers willing to go for overseas jobs have to register their names at union offices and declare their occupational expertise. However, there are many workers who do not register their names with the BMET and apply for overseas jobs through their own contacts.

Over the last few years, there are several challenges that the Government of Bangladesh has faced regarding the labour migration process. The issues are related to the costs of migration, prevalence of middlemen or '*dalals*', lack of awareness among the workers regarding the lawful process of migration, and the matching of skill demand and supply. The first step in the migration process is the establishment of foreign demand for migrant workers, in the course of which several actors are involved, including the BMET, private recruiting agents and their subagents, and foreign employers in the destination countries. A lawful and efficient migration procedure depends on the effective performance of these actors.

## 2.1 Establishing demand for migrant workers

There are several institutions involved in the labour migration process, include Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and two government bodies operating under it, namely the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training and the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited. Recruitment agents in Bangladesh establish linkages between employers in the destination countries and the aspirant migrant workers in Bangladesh. However, a considerable number of migrant workers get information on overseas employment opportunities from their social networks, including their family members, relatives, and friends. Subagents are also one of the major mediums through which overseas demand for workers is established (ILO, 2014b). However, without completing the formalities with BMET, recruitment agents are not authorized to conduct activities related to labour migration. The recruiting agencies have their national-level association called the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), which is responsible for protecting the rights of the migrant workers. Figure 1 shows the official migration process.

**Figure 1: Official process of migration from Bangladesh to various destination countries**



Source: ILO, 2014b.

According to the official migration process as depicted in figure 1, aspirant workers willing to migrate for overseas jobs need to register in the BMET database through District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOs) or at BAIRA offices. The workers then need to go through various formalities including preparation of documents such as passport, birth certificate, among others. The workers need to attend training, apply for visas, and go through medical check-ups. Workers are issued smart cards and are cleared for migrating after they fulfil all of the official requirements (ILO, 2014b).

In the process of migration through recruiting agents, overseas companies send copies of demand letters to the recruiting agents in Bangladesh with their requirements on the category of workers and skills. There are a number of recruitment agencies in Bangladesh who have their own representatives in the destination countries and get information on demand for workers through them. Bangladeshi recruiting agents also contact recruiting agents in the destination countries authorized by their respective governments. The representatives of the recruiting agencies from Bangladesh sometimes travel to potential destination countries to collect information on demand for workers in these countries. Local recruiting agents mostly operate through foreign agents and their sub-agents in the destination countries. Within this process, local agents must prove the authenticity of the demand letters to the BMET. Meeting all the requirements as per BMET and MEWOE, recruiting agents select and recruit workers according to the requirements specified by foreign employers. However, during the overall process mentioned above, several anomalies prevail, which are discussed in section 2.5.

## 2.2 Demand trend

Migrant workers from Bangladesh often migrate for overseas employment in Middle Eastern countries, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and Sudan. In addition to these, Malaysia, India, Singapore, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, among others, are destination countries. Annex II provides data on overseas employment in the GCC countries and Malaysia.<sup>6</sup> Saudi Arabia has historically been a major destination for migrant workers. However, a decline has been observed in the number of migrants to Saudi Arabia after 2001, with a drastic decline from 2009 according to BMET statistics. This reduction is the result of the imposition of restrictions by the Saudi Government on Bangladeshi workers due to the large number of migrants already in the country, a number that exceeded the quota set by the Saudi Government. In addition to this, a large number of migrants going to the country through illegal channels has influenced the decision of the Saudi Government. However, with the existing Bangladeshi migrants there, Saudi Arabia is still the largest source of remittances for Bangladesh, making up 22 per cent of the total remittance inflow between January and July 2014. Migration to Qatar has recently increased due to large infrastructure projects related to the upcoming World Cup to be hosted in that country. World Cup-related construction requires large numbers of workers in the construction sector. In addition to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, India is reputed to be a major labour receiving country.

<sup>6</sup> No official statistics are available on labour migration from Bangladesh to India in BMET database.

**Table 1: Flow of migrant workers to Saudi Arabia by skill, 2005-12**

Year	Less-skilled	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Professional
2005	44 026	5 797	29 954	288
2006	69 327	5 226	33 854	123
2007	164 425	4 042	35 065	151
2008	111 156	2 082	18 519	234
2009	12 467	418	1 651	103
2010	6 037	814	169	36
2011	13 135	1 677	168	8
2012	17 949	2 587	617	20

Source: ILO, 2014c

According to World Bank statistics, 3,190,769 workers from Bangladesh went to India as migrants in 2010 (IOM, 2013).

During the 1990s, Malaysia was an important destination for migrant workers from Bangladesh. However, irregularities in the recruitment process caused the Malaysian Government to impose a ban on Bangladeshi workers in 2009 (ILO, 2014a). From March 2013, the Government of Bangladesh has barred private recruiting agencies from sending workers to Malaysia. Complaints against the recruiting agencies included sending workers with false documents and charging high fees from the workers (Jureidini, 2014). This was followed by a bilateral arrangement between the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia for sending Bangladeshi migrant workers only for the jobs in plantations. However, only 1,000 workers have gone to Malaysia under government to government arrangement in the last one and a half years (Siddiqui, 2014).

Bangladeshi workers possessing various skills and occupations migrate to several countries of destination (CoDs). Table 1 shows that most of the migrant workers going to Saudi Arabia are less-skilled (ILO, 2014c). Official statistics show that labourers and cleaners are the most common occupations for migrant labour in Saudi Arabia. These workers do not possess any skills when they travel to the destination country.

Compared to other occupations, a large number of migrant workers from Bangladesh worked in the agriculture sector in Saudi Arabia during 2005 to 2008. However, according to available statistics, no workers have worked in this sector since 2009, which shows the negative impact of the ban by the Saudi Government on employment generation for aspirant Bangladeshi migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. The number of female workers who worked as labourers in Saudi Arabia was 7.81 per cent of total Bangladeshi workers employed in 2005. This number decreased to 0.12 per cent in 2014.<sup>7</sup> It is perceived that housekeeping job opportunities in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, and other destinations will create new alternative employment opportunities for female workers from Bangladesh. Ensuring long-term employability of female workers and availing these new opportunities requires workers to be adequately prepared through pre-departure job training and sent to these jobs according to government regulations.

<sup>7</sup> Estimated from the BMET database available at <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/statisticalDataAction> [last accessed 16 July 2015].

Labourers working as carpenters, cleaners, cooks, drivers, and agricultural workers migrated at higher rates than other occupations to the UAE. In 2010, 18 per cent of total workers going to the UAE were carpenters. Employment demand in Qatar has been primarily for labourers, masons, technicians, drivers, carpenters, steel fixers, among others. It is perceived that the upcoming World Cup in Qatar will create more job opportunities for South Asian workers in the tourism, hospitality, and service sectors. However, these occupations will require semi-skilled and skilled workers. Thus, Bangladesh needs to take the initiative to prepare migrant workers through skills development. Kuwait has taken labourers from Bangladesh to work as labourers, drivers, house boys, and cooks at higher rates than any other occupations. Workers were largely employed as factory workers in Malaysia during the period of 2005 to 2009. The recent agreement to recruit workers to work in plantations in Malaysia is described above. The recent signing of an MOU between the governments of Bangladesh and Malaysia to send workers from Bangladesh to work in manufacturing, construction, and the service sector is likely to enhance demand for semi-skilled and skilled workers

### 2.3 Connecting workers with demand

According to existing regulations, recruiting agents in Bangladesh are required to establish regional offices. However, due to additional costs incurred in the process, they avoid establishing such offices, which creates dependency of aspirant migrant workers on *dalals* for getting information on overseas employment opportunities. Recruiting agents do not maintain any official procedures or documentation on their recruitment processes through these middlemen who are generally rural religious or political elites who reside in small cities, towns, and villages. To some extent they are educated and thereby are able to assist the workers with their paperwork, obtaining passports, going for medical check-ups, among other tasks (Jureidini, 2014). The costs associated with this process are very high. Generally, workers have to pay 300,000 Bangladesh takas (BDT) to BDT400,000 to migrate irrespective of the country of destination. In addition to this, workers have to pay for their passports, their medical check-ups, and any pre-departure training. Another risk associated with this practice is that in case of some unexpected circumstances that prevent workers from going to the destination countries, they are unable to recover the amount paid to the *dalals*. Workers become subject to this practice due to their lack of awareness regarding the lawful process of migration and required documentation. It must be mentioned that information on the lawful migration process and necessary documents for migrants are provided at orientation programmes held at TTCs. This type of information needs to be extensively disseminated through community-based campaigns by local NGOs in collaboration with the Government.

In the process of migration through *dalals*, the names of the agencies and their heads remain in many cases unknown to the workers. Hence, the workers are unable to contact these agencies and the *dalals* also remain out of reach after the workers depart. This practice is against the stipulated provisions under sub-clause C of article 15 in the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013. However, only a few of the recruiting agents practice keeping detailed information on workers in case there is a need for such information.

There are instances in which workers willing to go for overseas jobs visit the offices of BMET and Ministry officials to inquire about existing overseas job opportunities because they do not know where they can obtain such information. Workers also get information on the job opportunities through media advertisements by the agencies and by the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd. (BOESL).

Migration costs for Bangladeshi workers are very high compared to other countries (ILO, 2014b). Table 2 shows the cost structure of migration from Bangladesh to a few countries that workers have to bear. The Bangladesh Household Remittance Survey 2011 conducted by the IOM also showed that average cost of migration comes to around BDT 219,395. Migrant workers who are connected to overseas demand through their migrant relatives and friends find it easier to go through all the formalities since they are briefed by these existing workers throughout the whole process. A large number of female workers from Bangladesh go for overseas domestic work through this channel.

## 2.4 Recruitment and selection process

With the objective of enhancing control over the recruitment process of migrant workers, the Government has adopted the practice of enlisting workers through the BMET database for Malaysia and other destination countries. Private recruiting agents and BOESL are currently required to select workers from the BMET database. Figure 2 shows the official process of selecting workers by recruiting agents. In case they cannot find workers as per their demand, advertisements can be placed in newspapers. However, this has to be done with prior approval from the BMET after outlining the reasons for being unable to select workers from the database. According to the stakeholders from the recruitment agencies, there are certain constraints with the BMET database.<sup>8</sup> Details of migrant workers willing to go to Malaysia and other destination countries are registered through 64 DEMOs, including their occupations. Practical experience of selecting workers from the database, however, reveals that the workers do not always possess the expertise they mention during registration due to a lack of understanding about the process. Prospective workers can enter up to seven occupations in which they are experts when they register themselves in the database. This excessive number has made the whole process ineffective since a worker's actual expertise is sometimes not revealed. Another reason for the ineffectiveness of this system is that workers usually rely on other community members to register them in the database. These helpers often possess few computer skills and also are not aware of the applicants' skills, sometimes even writing occupations according to their own will. Stakeholders from the private sector also opined that workers selected from the database do not always respond to the demand of the recruiting agents when they are contacted. From the point of view of government officials, recruiting agents actually avoid selecting workers from the database as these workers do not agree to pay their required fees.

<sup>8</sup> As per sub-clause C of article 19 in chapter 4 of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013.

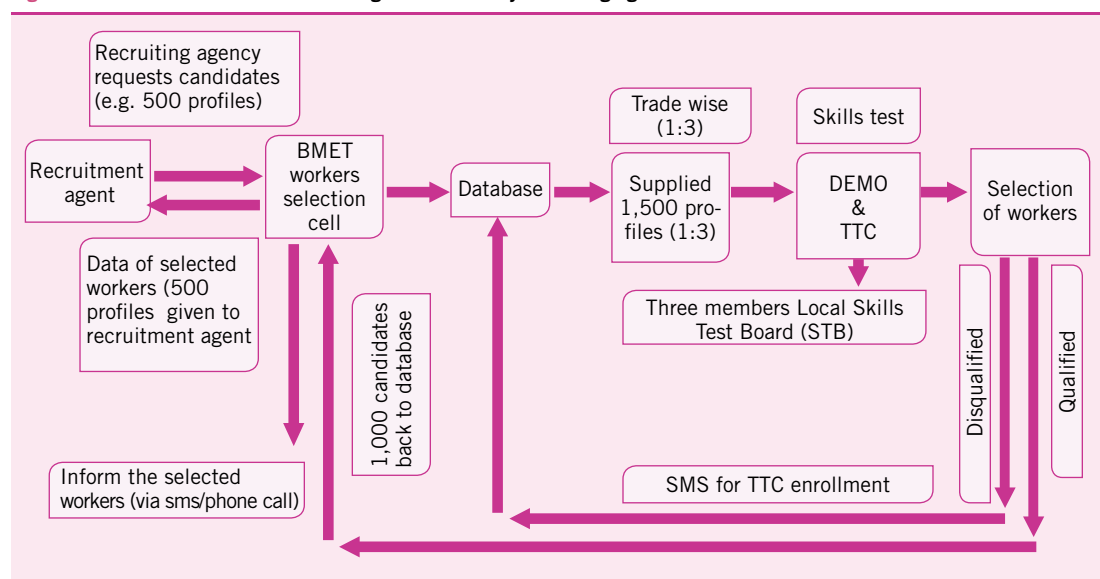
**Table 2: Cost structure of migration in Bangladesh**

Approximate cost (in BDT) of recruitment and migration through illegal intermediary channels by destination country		
Destination country	Cost range* of migration (as of June 2013)	Excess cost**
Qatar	350 000	266 000
Saudi Arabia	650 000 – 750 000	566 000 – 666 000
Lebanon	550 000 – 600 000	466 000 – 516 000
Oman	220 000 – 250 000	136 000 – 166 000
Libya	250 000 – 320 000	166 000 – 236 000
Malaysia	250 000 – 300 000	166 000 – 216 000

\* Cost is subject to skill requirement, nature of job, salary, and other benefits  
 \*\*Considering the maximum cost ceiling (BDT84,000) fixed by the Government  
 Source: Key informant interview with an illegal sub-agent conducted for research on the cost of migration

Source: ILO, 2014b

Worker interviews and assessments take place at the agencies in the presence of representatives from the overseas companies with whom the local recruiting agents made contacts for sending workers. In these cases, representatives from foreign companies sometimes hold oral interviews and in certain cases they resort to skills testing of the workers. In case a worker does not meet the requirements of the overseas company, they are rejected, as shown in figure 2. This process is troublesome for the rejected workers as they have to bear the cost of traveling from their home to the city areas where the agencies are located. Workers who possess some skills and are selected are then required to upgrade their skills at the recruitment agency training centres.

**Figure 2: Selection and recruitment of migrant workers by recruiting agents**

Source: BMET.



It must be mentioned here that the training provided by the trainers hired at the agencies are mostly diploma engineers who do not have practical work experience. Some agencies also hire returning migrant workers as trainers who are acquainted to the work environments in the foreign countries and are familiar with their technology. There are also cases where private agencies select workers according to their own selection process without the presence of foreign companies' representatives. These workers are sent abroad without receiving any training in the occupation in which they are intended to work. In these cases the workers are paid less than what they were promised by their agents.

## 2.5 Malpractice in the recruitment system

Recruiting agents do not maintain any documentation concerning the involvement of *dalals* in the recruitment process, as mentioned in section 2.3. Thus, in cases of malpractice committed by agents during the selection and recruitment process, the *dalals* often act as a “protective shield” and save agents from facing law enforcing agencies. In the process of matching occupations and workers' skills with foreign demand, information regarding workers' skills is sometimes misrepresented to the employers in the destination countries by some private agencies and their subagents. On the other hand, migrant workers are often promised overseas employment in certain occupations at certain wages which are not met due to the fraudulent practices of the *dalals* and private agencies. Because they do not get their expected job and salary (as promised by *dalals* or agencies) during their employment abroad, workers resort to strikes or escape from their existing employers in search of other opportunities. This leads to harassment by law enforcement agencies in the destination countries. Female workers who escape become subject to fraudulent practices in the destination countries and become victims of physical abuse or are forced into prostitution. Some workers leave their jobs and return back home early. The employers refuse to pay for their airfares and the agencies through which the workers migrate also refuse to repay the placement fees. This adds to the already high cost of migration. Migrant workers resort to irregular migration for getting overseas jobs in order to avoid the high costs involved in the migration process. Many incidences of irregular migration attempts have taken place, including to Malaysia, Europe, among other destinations. Cheating, extortion, and death are outcomes of these illegal practices that have been reported in the media.

According to the Emigration Ordinance 1982 and the recently enacted Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, migration fees are to be charged by the recruiting agents according to the limits prescribed by the Government. However, in the process of establishing linkages between the foreign employers and the job-seeking workers, some recruiting agents conduct serious malpractices in the form of charging high fees from the workers, not providing the promised jobs and wages to the workers, giving wrong information to the employers regarding the workers' skills, among other things (ILO, 2014b). Another practice among recruiting agents is to collect demand from foreign companies through visa trading and also to collect demand letters through their own agents in the destination countries in exchange for commission.<sup>9</sup> The agents pay large premiums for securing job orders from foreign companies in the destination markets that range from BDT120,000 to BDT200,000 (The Financial Express, 2013). According to a BOESL official, this is the reason why foreign companies prefer to recruit through the private recruiting agents in Bangladesh and prevents them from contacting BOESL. This occurs despite low costs associated

<sup>9</sup> This process involves paying foreign companies for visas of workers which they are supposed to provide workers free of charge.



with the migration process through BOESL. The malpractices among recruiting agents expose the migrant workers to a high degree of vulnerability. This situation calls for effective monitoring and stringent action against non-compliant agents.

## 2.6 Female migrant workers

There is demand for female workers from Bangladesh in the GCC countries and Malaysia mainly for domestic work. The number of female migrant workers has been increasing over the years showing a rise from 2,189 in 1991 to 56,400 in 2013 (see figure 3). The increase has occurred due to positive changes in the social attitudes towards women's migration for overseas jobs and the withdrawal of time-bound work permits by Bangladesh (ILO, 2014d). Demand for female migrant workers to the GCC countries for housekeeping jobs has been increasing as workers from the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia are being replaced by Bangladeshi workers. The reduction of workers from these source countries is due to improvements in labour market conditions in the source countries and government policies discouraging overseas employment (ILO, 2014a). As mentioned before, female workers from Bangladesh have recently started migrating to Hong Kong, Malaysia, and other countries.

Female workers go for overseas jobs to earn higher salaries than they can get in Bangladesh. Some women who are divorced or are subject to mental and physical abuse from their husbands tend to leave home even if they have to leave their children behind. There are also cases where women with previous work experience in the garment industry went for overseas jobs influenced by *dalals*. Women workers in Bangladesh, like their male counterparts, often go for overseas jobs through recruiting agents and their middle men. There are instances where they are cheated by middle men and become subject to harassment, abuse, and violence. Such a case of a female migrant is provided in box 1. Female domestic workers in the GCC countries are subject to abuse but are unable to take actions against their abusers since they lack of knowledge on the institutional procedure through which they can file complaints.

**Figure 3: Total Employment of female workers**



Source: BMET Database. Available at: <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/viewStatReport.action?reportnumber=17>. [21 July 2014].

**Box 1: Female worker subject to malpractices of the recruitment system**

*Ms Hena Akhter, age 35, worked in a garment factory for about 25 years. She went for a housekeeping job to Dubai through a 'dalal' from her village to whom she paid BDT60,000. In addition to this fee she had to pay for her passport, visa, and training. Although promised overseas work in tailoring, Ms Hena later found that she was sent for a housekeeping job. She was not provided with any contact in Dubai and was unable to contact her dalal, she had to wait at the airport for a whole day without any money or food. She was picked up at dawn and taken to an office which she called 'maktab' where she was kept locked in a room with little food which, according to her, was rotten. She had problems in communicating with the employers. After becoming severely homesick, she was sent to the agency by her employer. Ms Hena was later sent to Oman through a contact between two overseas agencies. She was accompanied by five other female workers from other countries during the night-long journey by road to Oman where she was ultimately recruited for domestic work. She came home for vacation, but her husband refused to let her return. Faced with hardships and constant abuse by her husband, Ms Hena prefers to re-migrate if she can financially manage to do so.*

Source: Interview of a female worker.

**Table 3: Number of female migrant workers to select destination countries**

Year	Country					Total Employment all destinations	Yearly increase (%)
	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Qatar	Malaysia		
1991	29	417	416	0	926	2 189	
1992	21	435	311	0	841	1 907	-12.88
1993	39	462	307	0	753	1 793	-5.98
1994	47	298	409	0	1 032	1 995	11.27
1995	89	189	547	0	584	1 612	-19.20
1996	112	177	757	0	753	1 994	23.70
1997	132	463	942	5	0	1 762	-11.63
1998	143	410	257	0	0	939	-46.71
1999	0	351	0	0	0	366	-61.02
2000	0	381	4	0	0	454	24.04
2001	335	162	15	0	1	659	45.15
2002	827	217	18	0	2	1 216	84.52
2003	808	108	333	0	0	2 353	93.50
2004	3 133	3 241	1 773	0	0	11 259	378.50
2005	6 319	3 786	930	6	0	13 570	20.53
2006	7 358	7 355	589	3	1	18 045	32.98
2007	7 341	5 181	49	4	354	19 094	5.81
2008	4 144	5 902	0	3	1 091	20 842	9.15
2009	386	6 095	0	4	87	22 224	6.63
2010	44	7 111	1	3	16	27 706	24.67

Year	Country					Total Employment all destinations	Yearly increase (%)
	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Qatar	Malaysia		
2011	166	7 394	0	4	23	30 579	10.37
2012	484	6 212	0	6	19	37 304	21.99
2013	167	13 710	0	2 100	23	56 400	51.19
2014 (until July)	2	13 230	0	3 588	14	42 985	
Total	32 126	81 271	7 658	5 175	6 520	319 247	

Source: BMET database. Available at: <http://www.bmet.gov.bd/BMET/viewStatReport.action?reportnumber=17>. [31 Aug, 2014].





# Preparation of migrant workers

## 3 Preparation of migrant workers

Chapter

This chapter discusses migrants' areas of origin and the available TVET system for migrant workers. Gendered aspects of migration are also incorporated into this part of the report.

### 3.1 Historical connections of workers

There are several factors that have been observed to have implications for the migration process. According to the opinions of recruitment agency officials, significant numbers of migrants come from the districts of Comilla and Brahmanbaria. This is confirmed to some extent by survey data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) (see table 4). The data show that the highest number of male migrants is from the Chittagong division under which the above mentioned districts fall. However, the number of female migrant workers is lowest from this region. The percentage of female migrants from Sylhet division is highest.

Empirical evidence shows that a large number of migrants from the Sylhet division have long been expatriating to developed countries, especially to the United Kingdom.

Regarding the education levels of the migrant workforce, it has been observed that the highest number of migrants have an educational qualification of nine years (class I-IX). Chittagong division has the highest number of migrants from this level. The literacy level is lowest in the Khulna region. The findings thus depict a large number of male workers migrating from the Chittagong division with educational attainment of about nine years. Table 5 shows the educational attainment of migrant workers according to their areas of origin

**Table 4: Distribution of migrants by gender a division (in per cent)**

Division	Total	Male	Female
National	100	97.37	2.63
Barisal	100	97.19	2.81
Chittagong	100	98.49	1.51
Dhaka	100	96.89	3.11
Khulna	100	97.91	2.09
Rajshahi	100	97.63	2.37
Rangpur	100	97.17	2.83
Sylhet	100	94.31	5.69

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistics and Information Division, Ministry of Planning, 2013.



**Table 5: Percentage of population according by education and education level**

Division	Total	Illiterate	I-IX	SSC/ Equivalent	HSC/ Equivalent	Degree/Hons	Masters	MBBS/Eng.
National	100	9.56	61.50	16.25	7.19	2.47	0.62	2.41
Barisal	100	6.10	60.27	19.35	9.66	4.08	0.14	0.40
Chittagong	100	7.17	64.00	15.60	6.40	3.12	0.58	3.13
Dhaka	100	10.58	60.82	16.51	6.45	1.97	0.53	3.14
Khulna	100	12.91	56.79	17.35	9.46	1.66	0.31	1.52
Rajshahi	100	12.32	59.27	16.91	7.61	1.58	0.56	1.75
Rangpur	100	10.72	60.11	19.24	7.20	1.98	0.62	0.14
Sylhet	100	8.83	64.70	11.89	8.60	3.29	2.02	0.67

Source: BBS &amp; Statistics and Information Division, Ministry of Planning, 2013.

### 3.2 TVET system for migrant workers

Technical and vocational education programmes have been initiated in Bangladesh in both the public and private sectors. These programmes have been adopted to produce a skilled workforce that is competitive in both the national and international labour markets. Government initiatives in skills development are reflected in the adoption of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP), 2011, and the establishment of the National Skills Development Council (NSDC), which is the highest body in dealing with skills development programmes. The National Training and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF) was initiated to provide a national benchmark for the achievement of qualifications (NSDP, 2011). Winning international recognition of national certificates is another objective of introducing the NTVQF. The National Skills Quality Assurance System (NSQAS) was introduced in the NSDP to ensure standardized training and develop competencies and qualifications that are nationally recognized. Accreditation of the training and assessment programmes is another objective of introducing NSQAS. Effective implementation of both NTVQF and NSQAS are required for developing high quality training that is nationally recognized and internationally credible. Stakeholders' consultations during this study reveal that the NSDC needs to ensure successful completion of its functions in coordinating skills development programmes. Competency based trainings (CBT) in various occupations need to be started under the various public and private institutions that would provide workers certifications under NTVQF.<sup>10</sup> However, current constraints mean that training centres are unable to provide CBT to workers for various occupations, which results in mismatch between the output from the TVET system and demand for industrial skills. Vast restructuring of existing skills development programmes is required so that relevant and standardized trainings can be provided to the workers.

Due to the demand of GCC countries for unskilled workers from South Asia in recent years, skilling the migrant work force has not been given much emphasis in Bangladesh. However, as mentioned in section 2.2, recent demand for semi-skilled and skilled workers has increased, which is reflected in the interest of the Malaysian Government to attract workers from

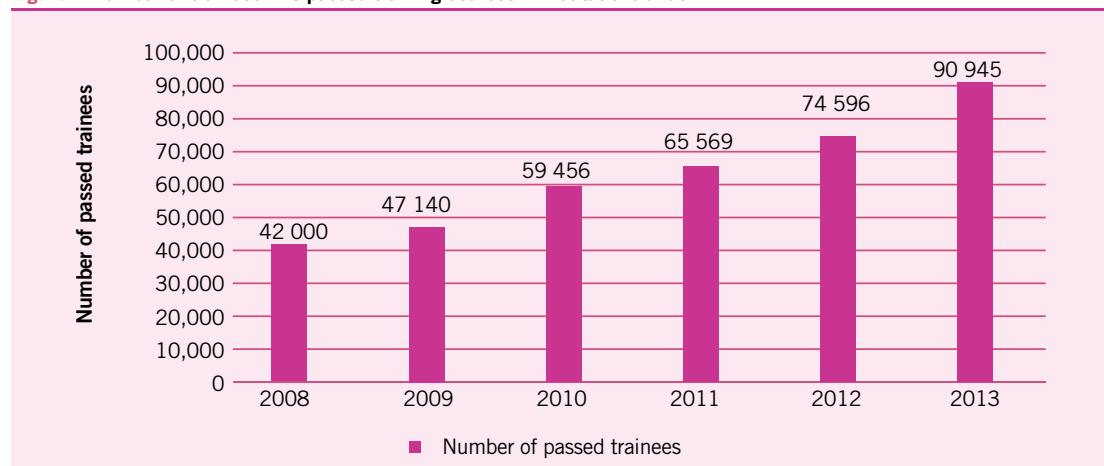
<sup>10</sup> In order to introduce demand-driven training and development of partnerships between the industrial sector and training organizations, the NSDP 2011 has introduced a competency based training and assessment system.

Bangladesh for construction, manufacturing, and the service sector (The Daily Star, 2014). However, responsiveness to changing demand is not reflected in the training programmes, though pre-departure orientation training courses for some selected destination countries have been able to incorporate the demand of foreign companies into their training modules. The orientation trainings result from specific instructions from certain destination countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, to provide these trainings to migrant workers. The middlemen or *dalals* are using this issue to their advantage by pressuring aspirant migrant workers to attend these trainings and then taking additional money from the migrant workers. Migrant workers are generally unwilling to obtain any kind of trade-based training, as they prefer to go for overseas jobs in the shortest amount of time possible. Private recruiting agencies that do not have their own training centres send workers for pre-departure trainings at TTCs under BMET or to private training centres. In the case of occupation-based trainings, the private agents do not emphasize this type of training since practical experience is required by the foreign employers rather than certifications.

### 3.2.1 Technical Training Centres under BMET

The BMET provides skills development training in 45 trades in 38 Technical Training Centres (TTCs). The annual capacity of these centres is about 65,000 individuals. Trainings provided at the TTCs include four-year diploma courses in engineering, two-year certificate courses in marine trades, two-year senior secondary certificate (SSC) vocational courses and one-year skill certificate courses. Certificates for these courses are provided by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). The BMET certifies some modular courses with durations of seven days to six months. Orientation trainings are provided at these TTCs, including programmes for Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Republic of Korea, and others. The number of trainees passing out of training programmes at the centres has increased over the last few years (see figure 4). This is due to the increase in the number of trainees for orientation courses. Annex III provides the number of trainees who passed TTC programmes under each training courses. BMET data shows that 47 per cent of the total trainees in all TTCs under BMET have obtained training in housekeeping courses during the year 2013. This is also observed in the available data from the TTCs under BMET in the Dhaka district.

**Figure 4: Number of trainees who passed training courses in institutions under BMET**



Source: BMET, 2013.

Among the total trainees at the Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKTTTC) in 2012 and 2013, 60 per cent and 66 per cent of the total trainees, respectively, passed the 21-day housekeeping course. In case of one-year trade-based courses, the pass rates were 0.54 per cent and 0.26 per cent in 2012 and 2013, respectively. Participation in three-day orientation training for Saudi Arabia during these years were 23 per cent and 22 per cent of the total number of trainees in 2012 and 2013, respectively, which was higher compared to the three-month and six-month trade-based courses. The same scenario prevails in the Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Technical Centre for women where 93 per cent of total female trainees were admitted to and passed the housekeeping course. Other short-term orientation trainings were also provided for Republic of Korea and Hong Kong. Emphasis is given by the MEWOE and BMET on module development for the orientation courses. Foreign delegates from the demand side provide consultations for the short-term orientation trainings. The inclusion of the CoDs required components into the training modules contributes to capacity building among the workers, giving them information to cope with the new environment in the destination countries. However, regarding the trade-based courses, little attention is currently being paid to developing quality relevant trainings for migrant workers, which requires greater financial and human resource investment in this area.

### 3.2.1.1 Curriculum development for training

It is a common practice for government officials from Bangladesh to periodically visit foreign countries to explore expansion into new markets for migrant workers. Despite this practice, gaps prevail in identifying occupation-based skills and competencies required by the destination countries. The lack of relevance of the training curricula to the international market also leads to mismatch of the skills of migrant workers. This is the reason why migrants' skills are not recognized in the international market and they are paid lower wages compared to migrants from other South Asian countries. This scenario calls for investing in developing a relevant trade-based training curriculum for Bangladeshi migrant workers. It was observed during the study that efforts towards curriculum design and training delivery address domestic industry requirements with little attention paid to the needs of migrant workers. Though it was mentioned by the BMET and TTC officials that they are incorporating the needs of destination countries, there currently is no specific mechanism for collecting information on skill demand in CoDs or disseminating this information to TTCs and private training institutions.

Registering institutions providing TVET, renewing the registrations of these organizations, accrediting courses, monitoring the quality of trainings conducted by these institutions, and conducting examinations are the responsibilities of BTEB and the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE). BTEB is responsible for curriculum development for some of the trade-based training courses and periodic reviews of the curriculum are done through consultations with representatives from the BMET, academics, and domestic industry representatives. During stakeholders' interviews for this study, a number of prevailing discrepancies were identified regarding the syllabus and course structure of the higher secondary certificate (HSC) vocational course prepared by BTEB. According to some stakeholders, too few syllabi have been developed by the BTEB for technical courses, which negatively affects the building up of a technical knowledge-based workforce. Questions have also been raised on the insufficient emphasis on vocational courses at the HSC level, which is an important step towards the nationwide skills development process. Also, BTEB has been unable to



incorporate skills demand of destination countries where Bangladeshi workers migrate. To date, no survey on foreign demand has been conducted by BTEB.

There is a dedicated wing and assigned officers at DTE for monitoring the academic, financial, and technical aspects of TVET. However, inconsistencies in the TVET curricula and management in the private training institutions reveal that monitoring has not been effective. There currently are deficiencies in available human resources and equipment for conducting TVET programmes, especially in the private institutions.

### 3.2.1.2 Institutional performance of TTCs

BMET monitors the TTCs regarding the quality of training and utilization of funding provided by the Government for the training programmes. In regards to governance, there prevails a lack of coordination in terms of resource utilization and management. Funding for the institutions is not distributed in a timely manner, which leads to underutilization of the funds and inefficiencies in the functional processes of the TTCs. Funding for the TTCs from BMET is also not adequate to upgrade technology at the institutions and salaries for the officials. Honorariums paid to trainers are very low, which creates obstacles in recruiting qualified and competent trainers at the TTCs. Another issue of concern is that the average number of teachers in these institutions is very low in all public and private training institutions. According to a survey conducted by NSDC and BTEB on 539 training institutions, it was observed that there are only 3.6 teachers per trade.<sup>11</sup>

Principals of the TTCs are not given any autonomy in making changes to the designs of the training curricula or recruiting trainers for the institutions, even though they constantly deal with the workers and are more aware of the requirements needed for workers' skills development. Regarding regular periodic assessments of the trainers, it is not done sufficiently to promote their competency levels, which is one of the major obstacles in implementing CBT at the training institutions. One of the reasons for the prevailing demand-supply mismatch is the lack of practical skills and industrial work experience among the trainers (NSDC and BTEB, 2014). Measures are required for regular training of the trainers, preferably through providing them orientation trainings at the industry level for practical experience in handling equipment. Trainers should be sent to the export-oriented industries that use updated technology in production, allowing them to acquire updated technological knowledge. Passing this knowledge to the trainees will also facilitate the migrant workers. In this regard, it may be mentioned that the lack of national-level assessors and trainers is an impediment to the functioning of the Industry Skills Councils (ISCs).<sup>12</sup> Developing assessors and obtaining international accreditation of their trainings are required for restructuring the training programmes to be relevant for developing productivity and ensuring employability of migrant workers in the destination countries.

<sup>11</sup> The study was commissioned jointly by NSDC and BTEB for identifying some selected features of the public and private training institutions to explore the current situation of the TVET system. These institutions were selected by taking into account of their distribution by division, authority through which these institutions are managed, their level of certification, and trades offered by these institutions. Detailed data on 235,243 skills of 1,899 trades were collected from the selected institutions (NSDC and BTEB, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> ISCs have been established in ten sectors under the Corporation Act. These sectors include transport equipment, agro food, information technology, leather and leather goods, construction, readymade garments (RMG), informal economy, light engineering, tourism and hospitality and furniture (Ministry of Education, BTEB, and DTE, 2014). Questions remain regarding the efficiency of the ISCs as there is a lack of assessors and trainers for these ISCs.

### 3.2.1.3 Employment of TTC graduates

The TTCs under BMET do not keep records of the number of workers who go for overseas jobs after the completion of training despite having job placement cells for keeping such records. There is also a lack of knowledge and awareness among workers who go overseas that they should inform their training providers about their whereabouts. An initiative is required for such recordkeeping measures. TTC graduates should be motivated to provide information on their foreign job placements to these institutions, which will provide input to the TTCs in developing their future skills development programmes for migrant workers.

### 3.2.1.4 Training for female workers

Despite reforms in the TVET system to ensure access and equity to the entire unskilled labour force, the system has been unable to motivate and encourage the participation of female workers in training programmes. Overall participation of women in general TVET programmes is very low. Approximately 24 per cent of total trainees comprise of women workers. A National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2012 was developed by NSDC in collaboration with the ILO TVET Reform Project. The major objectives under this strategy include achieving 40 per cent female enrolment by 2020 in TVET programmes, eliminating negative perceptions of obtaining training and employment by women, and establishing a gender-responsive environment. Female enrolment at TTCs of BMET reveals greater involvement of female workers in training programmes for skills development (see table 6).

**Table 6: Number of trainers and enrolment of women workers in training institutions in 2012**

Type of Institute	Management	No. of Institutes	Teachers			Students		
			Total	Female	% female	Total	Female	% female
Polytechnic institute	Public	46	1 481	172	11.61	88 302	10 723	12.14
	Private	172	2 971	488	16.43	48 660	4 051	8.33
	Total	218	4 452	660	14.82	136 962	14 774	10.79
Technical school & college	Public	64	1 132	119	10.51	36 112	4 860	13.46
	Private	103	1 681	340	20.23	28 124	9 350	33.25
	Total	167	2 813	459	16.32	64 236	14 210	22.12
Glass & ceramic institute	Public	1	21	4	19.05	1 018	62	6.09
	Total	1	21	4	19.05	1 018	62	6.09
Graphic arts institute	Public	1	14	4	28.57	682	48	7.04
	Total	1	14	4	28.57	682	48	7.04
Survey institute	Public	2	35	5	14.29	822	30	3.65
	Private	2	19		0	419	34	8.11
	Total	4	54	5	9.26	1 241	64	5.16
Technical training centre	Public	38	1 120	180	16.07	20 294	6 781	33.41
	Private	43	172	32	18.6	5 666	1 899	33.52
	Total	81	1 292	212	16.41	25 960	8 680	33.44
Textile institute	Public	10	186	26	13.98	3 572	283	7.92
	Private	23	327	57	17.43	6 437	496	7.71
	Total	33	513	83	16.18	10 009	779	7.78
Textile vocational	Public	40	262	45	17.18	4 245	1 075	25.32
	Private	10	78	16	20.51	1 265	235	18.58
	Total	50	340	61	17.94	5 510	1 310	23.77
Agriculture training institute	Public	13	142	32	22.54	10 638	3 206	30.14
	Private	96	811	150	18.5	18 252	3 716	20.36
	Total	109	953	182	19.1	28 890	6 922	23.96
Marine technology	Public	1	50	4	8	915	105	11.48
	Total	1	50	4	8	915	105	11.48
SSC Voc. (independent)	Public	11	267	37	13.86	2 962	497	16.78
	Private	158	1 709	362	21.18	21 464	6 285	29.28
	Total	169	1 976	399	20.19	24 426	6 782	27.77
HSC Voc./B. Management (independent)	Public	10	144	27	18.75	3116	166	5.33
	Private	566	5 151	1 117	21.69	102 187	36 116	35.34
	Total	576	5 295	1 144	21.61	105 303	36 282	34.45
Total (independent technical education)	Public	237	4 854	655	13.49	172 678	27 836	16.12
	Private	1 173	12 919	2 562	19.83	232 474	62 182	26.75
	Total	1 410	17 773	3 217	18.1	405 152	90 018	22.22
SSC (Voc)	Private	1 254	6 216	1 446	23.26	114 227	40 372	35.34
	Total	1 254	6 216	1 446	23.26	114 227	40 372	35.34

Type of Institute	Management	No. of Institutes	Teachers			Students		
			Total	Female	% female	Total	Female	% female
HSC Voc/B. Management (attached)	Public	8	8	1	12.5	746	443	59.38
	Private	655	2 325	478	20.56	88 051	34 641	39.34
	Total	663	2 333	479	20.53	88 797	35 084	39.51
Total technical education	Public	245	4 862	656	13.49	173 424	28 279	16.31
	Private	3 082	21 460	4 486	20.9	434 752	137 195	31.56
	Total	3 327	26 322	5 142	19.53	608 176	165 474	27.21

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS). Available at: [http://banbeis.gov.bd/data/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=808:table-75-number-of-institution-teacher-and-enrolment-by-type-management-and-sex-2012&catid=126:technical-and-vocational-education-2011&Itemid=218](http://banbeis.gov.bd/data/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=808:table-75-number-of-institution-teacher-and-enrolment-by-type-management-and-sex-2012&catid=126:technical-and-vocational-education-2011&Itemid=218) [19 July 2014].

Stakeholder consultations on the training of female migrant workers reveal that these workers mostly adopt training for housekeeping jobs. Recently, female workers have started going overseas for jobs in the garment sector. Workers' opined that despite having prior experience in housekeeping jobs, *dalals* take them to the TTCs and charge them money to train in housekeeping again. Recently, some female workers have obtained garment-related training, although some workers still resort to their prior work experience in the garment industry in Bangladesh.

One of the major problems that female workers face in getting training at TTCs is finding appropriate accommodation during the training programme. It is extremely difficult for female workers to find adequate accommodation when they go for trainings to TTCs without accommodation facilities. Even if some TTCs have accommodation facilities, these are not secure and provide low quality food and accommodation to the workers.

### 3.2.2 NGOs and private training institutions

There are several private institutions and NGOs that provide training to workers. Among these institutions are Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (OKUP), Thangamara Mohila Shobuj Shongho (TMSS), Ahsania Mission Syed Sadat Ali Vocational Training Institute, Montage Training, among others. Several private recruitment agencies also provide trainings to the migrant workers. OKUP provides orientation trainings to female workers for migrating to the Middle East countries. These are short training courses that provide life skill and language skill training according to their own curriculum. TMSS provides trade-based trainings, but very few workers go for overseas jobs after being trained by this institution. Among the migrant workers who receive training here, the majority are trained in gas welding. These workers are offered non-formal and low standard training courses of short duration (NSDC and BTEB, 2014). As revealed from stakeholders in the private sector, migrant workers who train in these private institutions are hired for low-grade jobs and are paid less in foreign countries than migrants from other countries like India and Nepal. Findings from the NSDC and BTEB survey reveal that the performance of private training institutions is low compared to that of public institutions and NGOs. This is a concern considering that these institutions provide 96 per cent of the training to workers.

The private training institutions are incapable of adopting CBT as introduced by the National Skills Development Policy, 2011, due to a lack of proper trainers and infrastructure. Delivering quality TVET depends on competent teachers who are proficient in terms of theoretical, technical, and practical knowledge. However, the trainers in these private institutions are mainly diploma degree holders in engineering who lack relevant practical work experience. The recruiting agents might be better service providers since they provide trainings based on the demand of foreign employers. Some agencies have established training centres with relatively higher investment than others. However, there are also gaps in these short-term training programmes which is reflected in the low wages paid to Bangladeshi workers despite being promised higher pay by the agencies. A negative aspect of these training providers is despite the fact that some of the agencies possess financial capacity, they do not conduct any research or analysis on existing international demand. As such, they are unaware of skill demand among migrant workers in the face of constant industrial technological restructuring taking place in the international markets. This results in inefficiencies in addressing long-term skills development of workers. Such initiatives on the part of these institutions would have a significant impact on the training structure for migrant workers. However, this will only be possible if inputs from research initiatives are disseminated to the public and private training centres and incorporated into their training modules.





# Role of the Government in promoting migration

## Chapter 4

This chapter provides a brief review of the various rules and policies adopted by the Government of Bangladesh for governing migration. The chapter also includes discussions on various aspects of skills development policy adopted by the Government, as well as government initiatives for enhancing migration to foreign countries through adopting bilateral negotiations. Implementation status of the various rules and policies are revealed through discussions on various aspects of migration covered in chapters 2 and 3.

### 4.1 Government policies and planning

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment has initiated a policy reform process to replace the Overseas Employment Policy 2006. The objective of the new policy is to elaborate the policy context and directives taking into account current challenges and opportunities for Bangladesh and its workers in the international labour market. The draft policy was developed to provide a comprehensive labour migration framework with a particular focus on the protection of migrant workers. The proposed new policy also brings out the need for better synergies between in-demand skills in the international labour market, national skills training services, promotion of women workers' employment, issues of access to skills training in diverse trades, and employment opportunities. In order to ensure inclusive and relevant policy formulation, the policy-making process included research, a number of consultations with stakeholders (workers, recruitment agents, academic experts, non-government organizations, and employers' and workers' organizations), inter-ministerial meetings, and feedback from the ministries. The new policy has been pending submission to the Cabinet of the Government of Bangladesh since the latter part of 2013. The proposed policy defines a policy framework based on key principles that emphasize the Government's commitment to (1) providing decent work for all; (2) recognize individual worker's right to freely choose employment at home or abroad; (3) promote overseas employment with dignity and security; and (4) ensure fundamental equality of women and men in the sphere of labour migration. It includes:

- employment promotion and safe migration;
- protection of Bangladeshi migrant workers and their families;
- benefits and welfare services for migrant workers;
- migration of women workers;
- linking migration and development; and
- governance of labour migration.

The proposed policy emphasizes the need to look at overseas employment as a necessary basis for policy-making, gives a timeframe for planning implementation, postulates formation of a high policy-level national steering committee, and creates an inclusive Labour Migration Forum to involve stakeholders in labour migration governance. Finally, it provides roles and responsibilities to 14 ministries and divisions based on their mandates.

Notwithstanding the rights-based nature and modern outlook of the proposed policy, delays in its adoption are also a delay in positive impacts on the lives of migrant workers and their families.

Labour migration from Bangladesh is governed by the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013. The Act replaces the Emigration Ordinance, 1982. The major objective of this regulation is to provide a structural framework for the migration process taking place from Bangladesh. It includes provisions on the organizational structure relating to the labour migration process, an equity approach principle in the procedure that is to be followed, details on the licensing of recruitment agencies to be authorized for conducting labour migration operations, among other provisions. The Act aims to provide an overall legal regime for the governance of labour migration from Bangladesh. The Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, requires the Government to maintain an electronic database of job-seekers. In order to curtail malpractices by the recruitment agents, the Act demands that the recruitment agents should first attempt to find suitable applicants from those who are already registered in the job-seekers' database.

The Emigration Ordinance, 1982, was implemented through the following Rules:

- Emigration Rules, 2002;
- Recruiting Agents' License and Conduct Rules, 2002; and
- Wage Earners' Welfare Fund Rules, 2002.

A technical review of the Rules mentioned above was conducted. The Rules are currently under revision with the aim to help better implement the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, including promoting better matching between jobs and skills.

There are also certain other Rules and Regulations that have direct or indirect impacts on the education and skills of Bangladeshi workers migrating for employment. These include:

- Technical Education Act, 1967;
- Apprenticeship Rules, 1967;
- Technical Education Regulation, 1976;
- Bangladesh Technical Education Institute Recognition & Renewal Regulation, 1996;
- Bangladesh Technical Education Institute Management Committee Regulation, 1996;
- Bangladesh Private Technical Education (Teacher & Employees) Service Regulation, 1996; and
- Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 (Act No. 42 of 2006).

The most recent policy formulated with an aim to incorporate all aspects of skills development is the National Skills Development Policy, 2011. Currently, the BTEB Act is being reframed to promote skills upgrading to match the local industrial and global labour market demands.



## 4.2 Delivering skills training

The Government of Bangladesh, through its various ministries and affiliated organizations, has tried to establish a mechanism to address the demand-supply gap in the Bangladesh workforce. One of the major initiatives in this respect is the development of the National Skills Development Policy, 2011. Various aspects in the policy, including the introduction of NTVQF, CBT, a Bangladesh skills quality assurance system, and the development of the ISC, are noteworthy measures for skills development. If implemented efficiently, the country's labour market is likely to become competitive in domestic and international domains.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the overall policy-level decision-making for all types of education, including technical and vocational education. In addition to this, 18 ministries are involved as supporting institutions for human resource development. These Ministries include the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth and Sports, and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

### 4.2.1 National Technical & Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF)

Migrant workers from Bangladesh do not receive recognition in the international market as they do not possess competitive levels of skills. In order to ensure the recognition of local skills qualifications of Bangladeshi workers in both the domestic and international labour markets, NTVQF was introduced in NSDP 2011, as mentioned above. If implemented effectively, the NTVQF is expected to provide a benchmark for international recognition of Bangladeshi workers' locally acquired skills and knowledge (see table 7).

**Table 7: Skills levels under NTVQF**

NTVQF Level	Pre-Vocation Education	Vocational Education	Technical Education	Job Classification
NTVQF 6			Diploma in engineering or equivalent	Middle level manager/ sub assistant engr./among others
NTVQF 5		National Skill Certificate 5 (NSC 5)		Highly skilled worker / supervisor
NTVQF 4		National Skill Certificate 4 (NSC 4)		Skilled worker
NTVQF 3		National Skill Certificate 3 (NSC 3)		Semi-skilled worker
NTVQF 2		National Skill Certificate 2 (NSC 2)		Basic-skilled worker
NTVQF 1		National Skill Certificate 1 (NSC 1)		Basic worker
Pre-Voc 2	National Pre-vocation Certificate 2 NPVC 2			Pre-vocational trainee
Pre-Voc 1	National Pre-vocation Certificate 1 NPVC 1			Pre-vocational trainee

Source: National Skills Development Policy, 2011.

As has been mentioned in section 3.2, certification of workers under NTVQF can be done if CBT is implemented to provide training to workers. However, efficient levels of training for each competency standard require the development of standard curricula and competent trainers with updated technological knowledge. In this regard, BTEB plays a major role in developing curricula which is fully updated according to industry-based and trade-based skill requirements. Also, competency based training cannot be successfully executed unless certified trainers or assessors are deployed at the assessment centres established in the 24 districts of Bangladesh.<sup>13</sup> Compared to the approximate demand for 240 assessors to work in the assessment centres, only 98 trainers have been certified and are deployed by the BTEB at various assessment centres as per requirement. Despite having developed competency standards for 34 occupations, due to prevailing barriers in certifying and recruiting trainers and assessors, only ten standards have been implemented to date. This scenario reveals that it will take time to implement training and certification standards under the NTVQF at the national level. This means that recognition at the international level is still a long way off. Table 8 shows the eight pilot registered training organizations (RTOs) now providing training on the standardized occupations by BTEB.

**Table 8: Pilot Programmes at RTOs under NTVQF**

Institutes as RTOs	Programmes
National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute, Dhaka	Baking, level 2
Dhaka Polytechnic Institute	1. Food processing and quality control, level 1 and 2 2. Food packaging, level 2
Graphic Arts Institute, Dhaka	Graphics design, level 1 and 2
Feni Computer Institute, Feni	1. IT support, level 1 and 2 2. Web design, level 2
Centre of Excellence for Leather (COEL), Gazipur	1. Machine operator-leather goods, level 1 and 2 2. Machine maintenance, level 1 and 2 3. Supervision, level 5
Technical Training Centre (TTC), Chittagong	1. Electrical installation and maintenance, level 1 and 2 2. Fitter, level 1 and 2 3. Welding, level 1 and 2
Technical School and College, Barisal	Welding, level 1 and 2
Western Marine Institute, Chittagong	Welding, level 1 and 2

Source: BTEB, Annual Report 2012-13.

Competency based curricula are developed by BTEB at the initial stage. In the process of developing the curricula, job market surveys in the industries (local companies) are executed through questionnaires. However, to date no initiative has been taken to conduct research and incorporate requirements of the international market into the development of training curricula, which would accelerate the international accreditation of skills trainings provided to workers in Bangladesh.

#### 4.2.2 Recognition of prior learning (RPL) system

NSDP 2011 introduces an RPL system that recognizes prior learning of workers. In order to ensure the recognition of Bangladeshi workers' certifications in the international market, it is necessary that they obtain certificates from recognized bodies at the national level that also has international accreditation. Implementation of RPL is important so that workers' skills are assessed given relevance to the NTVQF and CBT. If workers are not provided training according to the NTVQF and CBT, recognition of their skills in the

international market cannot be obtained. Implementation of RPL is a major challenge for Bangladesh. The majority of workers in Bangladesh get certificates from small uncertified training institutions. A significant number of migrant workers are not certified at all. RPL is important for acknowledging workers' prior certifications by recognized bodies or receiving international accreditation, thus validating workers' skills in the international market. It is necessary that workers' experience and skills are certified through recognized RPL assessment centres.

According to a BTEB official interviewed during this study, returnees who have experience working in certain jobs and workers with work experience in domestic industries can attend assessment exams at the RPL centres and obtain BTEB certificates. However, due to a lack of assessors, the established RPL assessment centres are unable to function properly. This prevents the recognition of prior skills of the returning migrant workers, which is discussed in chapter 5. BTEB is currently training about 200 assessors in CBT. However, the impact of this on training and RPL will depend on their effective employment in the training centres and RPL centres. The World Bank's Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) has undertaken an initiative for scaling up the RPL system through which 50 persons in five occupations were tested. This type of approach needs to be adopted on a large scale in order to develop assessors and ensuring the efficient implementation of the RPL system. Collaborative efforts between BTEB and ISCs are required in this context.

### 4.3 Establishing bilateral agreements with destination countries

The Government of Bangladesh continuously engages in bilateral negotiations to promote the migration of workers to developed countries. Eleven bilateral agreements and nine MOUs have been signed by the Government of Bangladesh with various countries, including UAE, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Kuwait, Oman, Malaysia, Maldives, Republic of Korea, and others. Regional consultative processes are also being undertaken. Delegates from various ministries and BMET are participating in high-level dialogues. Recent negotiations include a contract developed through negotiations with the Government of Qatar in early 2013 for sending 30,000 female workers from Bangladesh for domestic work and other services. The contract was subsequently agreed upon in April 2013. An MOU was signed with Malaysia for sending workers for manufacturing, construction, and the service sector. However, the bilateral agreements between governments have mostly focused on the expansion of markets for migrant workers without significant focus on skills development issues. Establishing linkages between skill demand and supply of migrant workers would require addressing skills accreditation and standardization issues in the bilateral agreements. In order to address the prevailing mismatch between skills demand and supply, the Government of Bangladesh needs to put emphasis on negotiating with destination countries on providing joint training to migrant workers with technical support from the destination countries. Employment contracts need to be standardized through research and analysis under technical cooperation from international organizations working on migration related issues. Enforcement mechanisms for effective implementation of the agreements should be strengthened.





# Services for migrant workers

## Chapter 5 | Services for migrant workers

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In the process of migration, workers are provided training for specific occupations. They are also provided with various services by the recruiting agents and embassies abroad. This chapter discusses the various pre-departure and post-departure services and efficiencies among various institutions in extending these support services.

### 5.1 Pre-departure services

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Migrant workers in Bangladesh are provided with pre-departure training through public and private institutions. According to the official migration process for overseas jobs (depicted in figure 1), workers have to adopt these trainings at their own expense. Consultations with returning workers from Saudi Arabia reveal that during the early 2000s workers were not aware of the necessity of obtaining training for overseas jobs and migrated to GCC countries without even knowing the language of the destination countries. However, in recent years the trend of workers obtaining orientation training has increased. However, the increasing participation in orientation training is to some extent due to pressure from *dalals* to attend training since they can charge additional fees to take aspirant migrant workers to training centres. In some cases, returnees willing to re-migrate are sent by their *dalals* to TTCs to obtain additional training despite the fact that they already possess five to six years of overseas work experience. The only purpose of this additional training is to generate additional fees for the *dalals*. In this case, prior experience and skills are not recognized even by the TTCs.

The trainings are multi-dimensional in nature depending on the occupation and duration of the training courses. According to available statistics from the TTCs affiliated with the BMET, worker participation in trade-based trainings is very low at the TTCs. There is a tendency among workers to adopt short-term pre-departure orientation courses than longer trade-based training courses, which is reflected in the BMET data. Low levels of migrant worker participation in trade-based trainings can be attributed to various factors. First, emphasis is given by the overseas companies on practical work experience in various trades rather than the training certificates obtained by migrant workers. Second, workers willing to go for overseas jobs are not interested in obtaining training. These low- or semi-skilled workers with low productivity are in most cases willing to migrate for overseas jobs ignoring the wage levels or risks associated with the available jobs. For these reasons, private recruiting agents encourage short-term orientation courses before sending workers to overseas jobs.

However, a general observation of the BMET data reveals that the pass rates of trainees in four-year diploma courses in engineering, and two-year certificate courses in various occupations are very low. This situation calls for increasing awareness among workers to adopt trainings in various occupations that would ensure their employability at the national and international levels in future.

Three-day training is provided at the Bangla-German Technical Training Centre, Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKTCC), and Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Technical Centre for Women. During these training courses, booklets are provided with detailed information on the culture of the destination country, ways of remitting money, means of communication in cases of emergency during the stay abroad, among other useful information. Information on accidental death is also provided. Trainees are also informed about the process to obtain entry and exit passes, as well as briefed on the law and order of the CoD.

Stakeholders claim that CoD demand is incorporated into the modules for worker orientation training. For example, a ten-day orientation training is provided to workers for Malaysian jobs as per the demand of the Malaysian Government, including briefs on culture, language, food, labour law, among other things. Saudi Arabia also asked for workers to attend a three-day orientation training that includes information on their airport formalities, immigration process, language, culture, among other things. These issues were incorporated into the training curriculum accordingly. Boxes 2 and 3 provide brief examples of pre-departure trainings at TTCs under BMET.

### Box 2: Pre-departure trainings at BKTTC

*BKTTC provides several pre-departure training courses for migrant workers, including a 21-day training on housekeeping, ten-day pre-departure training for migrant workers going to Malaysia, six-day EPS pre-departure training for migrants going to the Republic of Korea, and a three-day pre-departure orientation for workers going to Saudi Arabia. This last three-day course will be extended to migrants departing for all developed countries in the future. In 2013, 6,927 migrants participated in the three-day course for Saudi Arabia, 20,042 migrants attended the 21-day housekeeping course, and 1,677 completed the EPS course. During the first six months of 2014, 4,304 workers attended the three-day orientation course for Saudi Arabia, whereas 11,305 workers attended the housekeeping training. The courses provide the workers with information on required work hours, accommodation facilities, things to carry during the journey, immigration procedures, customs, among other things. The workers are briefed on the minimum expected salary for labourers in Saudi Arabia, doable for workers in case of getting information on the contract forms, and means of remitting money home. For female workers going for housekeeping jobs, they are given briefs on safe migration processes, visa information, detailed information on the types of overseas housekeeping work, and information on and specific instructions for HIV and women workers. Migrant workers willing to go to Malaysia are given pre-departure training modules on the country profile of Malaysia, prevailing laws and regulations, language, work placement and job descriptions, and health-related instructions for workers.*

Source: BKTTC.

### Box 3: Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Technical Centre for Women

*The institute was established in 2001. Regular and short courses are provided to women workers to facilitate employment in both domestic and overseas jobs. The institute provides pre-departure training to women migrant workers in housekeeping. According to available statistics at the institution, 67,817 women workers attended 21-days housekeeping courses from 2001 to 2013. According to an official interviewed at the Centre, most of the women who come to the Centre for training are illiterate. This creates a problem in preparing them for overseas jobs. During the course, a booklet is provided to them detailing doable and language of the destination country. However, during the period between completing the training and their departure, they are unable to remember everything covered in the course. Due to a lack of education, they are also unable to become acquainted with the booklet they are provided.*

Source: Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Technical Centre for Women.

As mentioned before, workers often attend orientation and pre-departure training through private training institutions. A positive outcome of these orientation trainings is that female workers who come from villages learn the names and uses of various household appliances, which helps them to conduct housekeeping activities in the destination countries. However, dissatisfaction prevails among some of the various stakeholders concerning the duration of the courses. According to them, the life skills and language training courses given over three to 21 days are not sufficient for the migrant workers. In reality, workers must learn and become accustomed with the foreign language and culture based on their actual experience abroad. During their stay overseas, migrant workers require support from the agencies through which they migrate and their subagents.

## 5.2 In-country support

Migrant workers from Bangladesh occasionally may receive some support services from different actors in the destination countries. However, institutionalised support is minimal and its inadequacy affects workers during their employment period.

### 5.2.1 Recruitment agent-provided support

Support provided to the migrant workers in the destination countries varies depending upon the recruiting agencies used. As opined by stakeholders in the recruiting agencies, workers get support by the agencies' subagents who reside in the destination countries. The support provided includes assistance upon arrival at the foreign country, accommodation, job placement, among other things. In case an emergency arises for a worker, the recruitment agency in Bangladesh generally contacts the foreign company and solves the problems through mutual understanding.

### 5.2.2 Support by Bangladesh embassies abroad

In case of any severe incidences, workers can approach the Bangladeshi embassies to take appropriate measures. However, many incidences occur where workers, especially female workers, do not receive any support from their agencies or embassies when facing abuse and harassment from their employers. One of the reasons behind the lack of support when major incidences occur is the lack of human resource capacity at the embassies in the destination countries. Stakeholder consultations reveal that there are not enough labour attachés at the embassies, especially in key destination countries with relatively high levels of Bangladeshi migrant workers, such as Saudi Arabia. This deficiency results in inefficiencies in mitigating problems faced by the workers during overseas employment in terms of providing legal and financial assistance to the workers in need or the repatriation of the stranded workers. There are instances where migrant workers have not received support from the embassies to renew their passports and issue machine readable passport. Workers also complain that repeated visits to the embassies are required and there is a lack of drinking water and toilet facilities in the embassies during the visits. In the above mentioned cases, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not adopted proper measures to facilitate the migrant workers (Siddiqui, 2014).

### 5.2.3 Government initiative

The Government of Bangladesh has introduced a system that provides migrant workers with a 'Smart Card'. This card has 32 kilobytes of memory and contains details on the worker and needs to be shown during the immigration process. The system was initiated to keep some records on

the migrant workers during their immigration. The worker can also keep the card, which includes their contact details, at their disposal throughout their stay abroad. The card is also useful to the workers' families. Families keep copies of the card's information with them, which includes information on the migrant worker's employer, agency, country of employment, and details of employment. Services for migrant workers are also provided by several local NGOs in areas of protecting the workers' rights, ensuring safe migration for workers, among other services.

### 5.3 Other services

A number of migrant workers' associations have been developed for working on the protection of rights of these workers in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Ovibashi Mohila Sramik Association (BOMSA) is an association founded and operated by returnee women migrant workers, which has been working with internal and external women migrants for ensuring the protection of their rights. According to BOMSA personnel, female migrants mostly face risks during employment in the GCC countries and are unable to get help from any authority or from the Government. Private institutions like OKUP have pre-departure training and accommodation facilities for female migrant workers. Montage Training and Certification Centre provides orientation trainings and accommodation facilities for migrant workers. These institutions however are not able to function properly due to lack of infrastructure and financial resources. Various private institutions and NGOs are also providing various services to the migrant workers. Among these, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has taken various measures and adopted nationwide programmes for migrant workers. These programmes include awareness building for migrants on safe migration processes, skill building, advocacy at the local and national levels for ensuring gender equality at all levels of the migration process, among others initiatives. The Government of Bangladesh has adopted various measures for facilitating migrant workers in sending their earnings to their families which are described in the next section.

### 5.4 Support for sending remittances

The two regulatory instruments that govern the remittance system in Bangladesh are the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947, and the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2002. The system is operated and controlled by various organizations, namely the Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh Bank, national commercial banks (NCBs), private commercial banks, and international banks. Remittance transfer through formal channels has increased in Bangladesh through the introduction of Western Union, Money Gram, and other remittance houses. The banks have introduced and popularized cash-to-cash and spot cash systems. A survey conducted by Bangladesh Bank in 2010 shows that 72 per cent of the migrant workers send their money through banks. The rest of the workers used informal channels such as *hundi*<sup>14</sup> or brokers in sending money to their families. The informal channels are often chosen by migrants due to the relatively longer time required for transmitting their earnings through proper channels. An initiative by the Ministry of Finance instructing the NCBs to ease and expedite the remittance process has played an effective role in facilitating the migrants' remittance transfer. Moreover, expansion of exchange houses and the introduction of various investment instrument packages for migrant workers have facilitated the expatriates. Various measures adopted for easing the process of sending remittances have to



some extent facilitated savings and investment of migrants and their families, which is discussed in chapter 6.

Another major government initiative in this aspect is the establishment of Probashi Kalyan Bank (Expatriates' Welfare Bank) for providing loans with simple interest to migrants going abroad and to the returnees for investment. Despite the various measures undertaken, migrants from Bangladesh still face various constraints at the local level and also in the destination countries. Regarding the prevailing constraints in Bangladesh, one of the major problems is a lack of education among the migrants, which renders workers incapable of conducting formal banking procedures related to sending remittances, necessitating that they seek cooperation from bank officials in this regard.

Regarding the problems faced in destination countries, the language barrier is a major problem for fulfilling the formalities in sending their earnings home. Female workers especially face this problem and also make mistakes in providing account details to their employers. In most cases, female workers do not have their own bank accounts, which means that they must send remittances to their husbands' or fathers' accounts. There prevails a lack of knowledge about the procedures to send remittances, particularly among women workers. This problem has been addressed to some extent through the orientation trainings provided to the female workers at TTCs and private institutions. In some cases migrant workers also depend on other fellow workers to send their remittance, which sometimes become subject to fraudulent practices. Table 9 reveals that bank channels are the most frequently used in sending remittances by migrant workers.

**Table 9: Forms of sending money by migrants**

Living Country	Mode of sending Money								
	Western Union	Money Gram	Post office	Bank	Friends	Hundi	Known persons	Other	
Saudi Arabia KSA)	5.84	0.86	0.22	68.49	8.30	11.56	3.95	0.78	
UAE	6.52	2.82	0.21	70.62	8.68	8.37	2.28	0.50	
Malaysia	6.22	1.52	0.29	68.80	8.23	6.25	4.16	4.51	
Kuwait	5.46	1.97	0.00	75.83	6.87	7.22	2.03	0.62	
Qatar	12.38	1.44	0.50	72.73	3.99	7.72	1.16	0.07	

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistics and Information Division, Ministry of Planning, 2013.

The Government provides support to migrant workers through giving them a Commercially Important Person (CIP) card. These cards help the migrants to obtain various kinds of support (e.g. special treatment at the airport). The workers with earnings of \$150,000 at minimum can apply for these cards. The CIP is given under three categories to 25 persons each year. The three categories include the following:

- highest remitter with earnings of a minimum of \$150,000;
- migrants using local products for their business abroad; and
- migrants investing their earnings in Bangladesh.

<sup>14</sup> Hundi is an illegal financial system involving an 'unconditional money order' for which a client pays a sum to a broker who orders by phone or any other means another broker to disburse the same amount to the intended beneficiary. Hundi may involve a small fee, usually less than the remittance fee charged by the money exchange houses and banks.



# Maximizing economic value from returning migrants

## Chapter 6 | Maximizing economic value from returning migrants

This chapter discusses the reintegration of returning migrant workers into the economy and the potential benefits associated with reintegration. The chapter also includes discussions on the benefits that labour migration brings to the Bangladesh economy in terms of remittances and the impact of various macroeconomic factors on remittance flows..

### 6.1 Benefits to the labour market

Employers in local industries perceive that the current vocational education and training system targets old and marginal trades, which have limited demand in the existing labour market. There is substantial need for skilled workers in the economy according to existing market demand (Siddika, 2010). In order to cater to changing industry requirements, various measures have been adopted at the public and private levels, as mentioned in the previous chapters. Challenging issues facing the Government are to implement the various measures efficiently to upgrade the basic employability skills and facilitate workers to gain recognition in the domestic and international markets. Developing migrant workers' skills will also benefit the domestic labour market when these workers return home and reintegrate into the economy. Efficient implementation of CBT and assessment programmes for migrant workers' skills and experience, thereby recognizing them through the RPL system, and reintegrating the workers into the domestic market is important. Skilled returning migrants and professionals tend to gain employment in public or private institutions. Some of these returnees who have some savings and capital start businesses of their own. There are some organizations that provide advisory services for returning migrant workers in entrepreneurship development, such as the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Foundation.

Accommodating and creating job opportunities for returning migrants under the current economic realities in Bangladesh is difficult even for workers who possess updated skills through their overseas job experience. Proficient implementation of the RPL system is required to ensure recognition of their skills and in order to integrate them into the economy. Consultations with unskilled returning workers during this study reveal that they prefer to return for overseas jobs through completing formalities, including appearing for a new visa, making new passports, obtaining trainings as per requirements, among other tasks. These workers face various problems, including lack of information on prevailing business trends and lack of advisory services for new job opportunities in Bangladesh. The scenario is the same for both male and female migrant workers.

A large number of returning migrants from various Middle Eastern countries and Malaysia have raised concerns regarding their integration into the economy. There is no systematic recordkeeping on returning migrants in Bangladesh. MEWOE has taken the initiative to develop a returnee database. It has been observed during this study that very few private agencies maintain records on migrants who go overseas through agencies and they are unaware of whether the workers remained

in the overseas jobs. The migrant workers do not inform the agencies of their return. The Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU) has undertaken various initiatives regarding returning migrants, including research and community level work with households of workers currently working abroad. The institution has organized national level programmes to increase awareness on the various aspects of repatriation too. Their programmes include training for remittance utilization of the returnees and entrepreneurship. BRAC has also initiated programmes on the socio-economic development of returning migrants. One of these initiatives includes supporting the returned workers in starting SMEs.

## 6.2 Benefits to the economy

The major contribution of the migrant workers is their generated earnings or remittances. The contribution of personal remittances to GDP has increased from 11.8 per cent in 2009 to 12.2 per cent in 2012.<sup>15</sup> The benefits to the economy accrued from remittances, however, depend on the savings and investment of migrant workers' families. A BBS survey reveals that the largest proportion of remittances sent during 2012-13 was saved in savings accounts. This study and various other related literature have found that remittances sent by migrants are mostly spent on food and housing expenses. However, some families of migrant workers save money in various forms. The various forms through which they save their earnings are shown in table 10.

**Table 10: Distribution of remittance savings by category**

Category of Savings	Remittance distribution (2012-13)
Purchase of Savings Bond	5.79
Insurance	4.89
Savings Account	66.07
DPS/SDPS	7.13
Permanent Deposit (One year & above)	5.02
Cooperative Society	0.24
Friends & Others	1.07
Savings at Home	9.14
Others (clubs, local associations, among others)	0.65
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistics and Information Division, Ministry of Planning, 2013.

There are regional variations in the types of savings by migrant workers and their families (see table 11). In the Sylhet division, savings through bank accounts is the main mode of saving remittances. Saving at home and through purchasing savings bonds are other major modes of saving.

<sup>15</sup> The World Bank. Personal remittance here refers to the sum of personal transfers and compensation of employees. Personal transfer refers to all types of current transfer between resident and non-resident individuals. Compensation of employees refer to income of non-resident short-term workers. Available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS>.

**Table 11: Distribution of remittance savings by category and division, 2012-13**

Savings by Category	Division							
	National	Barisal	Chittagong	Dhaka	Khulna	Rajshahi	Rangpur	Sylhet
Purchase of Savings Bond	5.79	5.02	5.00	8.05	2.48	7.49	1.25	3.37
Insurance	4.89	6.69	7.80	4.08	2.56	1.59	6.60	2.81
Savings Account	66.07	55.78	63.00	69.96	67.92	55.88	55.46	79.10
DPS/SDPS	7.13	17.02	7.50	4.70	10.91	7.76	13.56	3.35
Permanent Deposit (One year & above)	5.02	11.13	7.50	3.48	2.46	3.52	3.25	6.41
Cooperative Society	0.24	0.08	0.70	0.06	0.10	0.04	0.01	0.01
Friends & Others	1.07	0.29	1.40	0.25	0.42	3.96	2.32	1.12
Savings at Home	9.14	3.11	7.00	8.95	12.19	16.97	16.80	3.74
Others	0.65	0.89	0.20	0.48	0.96	2.80	0.75	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Others include clubs, local associations, among others.

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Statistics and Information Division, Ministry of Planning, 2013.

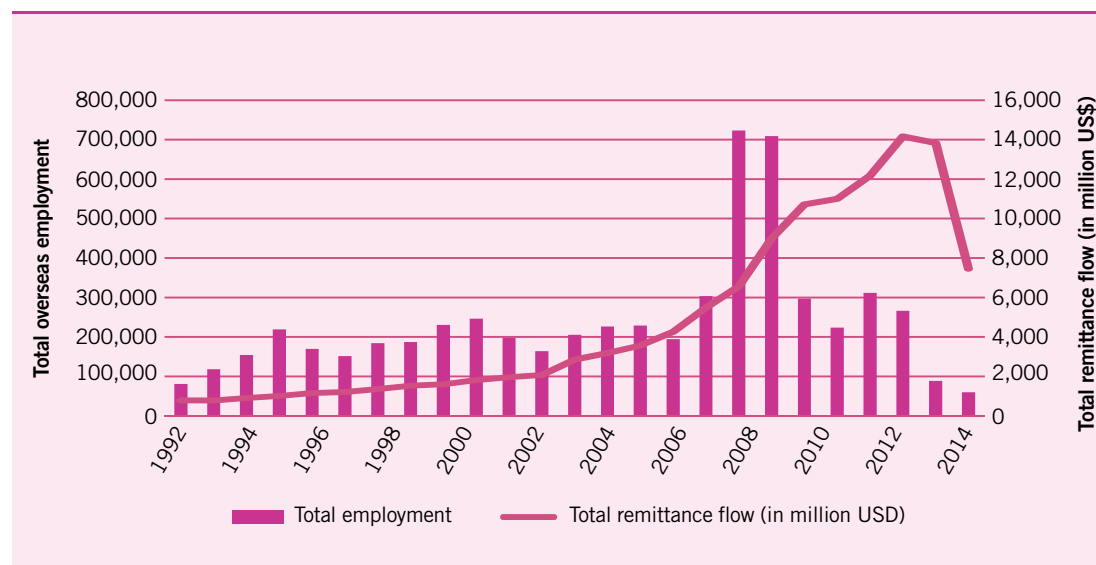
Migrant workers also bring back new knowledge and skills from experience they obtain through overseas employment. Migrant workers and their families contribute more to the economy compared to non-migrant families in terms of modernizing agriculture through their acquired knowledge of mechanized equipment, high quality seeds and insecticides, and modern irrigation systems. Migrant workers' families also contribute to the rejuvenation of the rural economies by introducing cash crop production, fisheries, poultry, and other agricultural ventures. Improved purchasing power of migrants' families influences the rural marketplace (Siddiqui, 2014).

Table 12 shows the inflow of remittances from countries in the Middle East.

**Table 12: Remittance flows from Middle East countries (US\$ millions)**

Country	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Bahrain	157.43	170.14	185.93	298.46	361.7	459.39
Kuwait	970.75	1 019.18	1 075.75	1 190.14	1 186.93	1 106.88
Oman	290.06	349.08	334.31	400.93	610.11	701.08
Qatar	343.36	360.91	319.36	335.26	286.89	257.53
Saudi Arabia	2 859.09	3 427.05	3 290.03	3 684.36	3 829.45	3 118.88
UAE	1 754.92	1 890.31	2 002.63	2 404.78	2 829.40	2 684.86
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1.25	1.46	5.20	12.91	57.65	71.96
Islamic Republic of Iran	3.28	4.49	2.32	1.16	2.59	0.40

Source: Bangladesh Bank. Available at: <http://www.bangladesh-bank.org/econdata/wagermidtl.php> [accessed 15 Aug 2014].

**Figure 5: Total overseas employment and remittance inflow**

Source: BMET database.

There is various macroeconomic literature that focuses on factors that determine the economic impact of migration and remittance. Some underlying factors affect the decision-making of the migrant workers in remitting their earnings home. Straubhaar (1986) finds that wage levels and political stability are two factors that determine whether workers remit their money home. Migrant workers' skills are one of the key determinants of wage levels in this regard. In an IOM survey it was found that annual remittances per migrant worker was only \$1,672 for migrants from Bangladesh, while workers from India, China, and the Philippines remitted \$4,843, \$6,112, and \$4,982, respectively (CPD, 2014).

Elbadawi and Rocha (1992) found through empirical evidence that an increase in the stock of migrant workers increases remittance flows into the economy and contributes to economic growth. This situation is revealed in the case of Bangladesh during the period of 1990 to 2008. A rise in the total overseas employment was followed by increasing levels of remittances during that time (see figure 5). After this period, migration, and consequently remittances, fell drastically in the following years. The reduction in remittances sent to Bangladesh during this period was the result of the global economic crisis which led to many foreign employers to dismiss foreign workers. This situation is also reflected in the study by Huang and Vargas-Silva (2005) in which they found that the macroeconomic conditions of the host rather than the home country are the most important driving forces that determines remittances.

Research work by the Bangladesh Bank found that high inflation has a positive impact on the remittance inflow to Bangladesh. This happens because high inflation reduces the purchasing power of the migrants' families and thereby induces the migrant workers to send more remittances home. Other factors that affect remittances according to the study are exchange rate, wage rate, and regulatory



and institutional arrangements of the Government (The Financial Express, 2012). The research also indicates that due to prevailing low wages, a decrease in the demand for migrant workers in major destination countries has a significant impact on the remittance flows into the economy.

A decrease in the remittances resulting from a global economic shock is likely to have a negative impact on the economy. Raihan and Sugiarto (2012) applied CGE modelling to estimate the impact of a decline in remittances on the Bangladesh economy after the global crisis.<sup>16</sup> They found that since poor households in Bangladesh are more dependent on remittances, a decline in remittances likely affects household incomes and spending, which ultimately leads to declines in various sectoral prices and output.

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<sup>16</sup> The CGE model determines the detailed accounts of the circular flows of receipts and expenditures in an economy and analyses on any kind of association between various economic agents. The model provides an instrument for policy simulations and experiments (Raihan and Sugiarto, 2012).





# Information services related to migration

## Chapter 7 Information services related to migration

In Bangladesh there are various organizations and their affiliated institutions that provide information on labour migration-related issues and the areas in which they work. However, updated data and statistics are not available in all cases. Moreover, labour migration indicators, such as district-wise data on workers and data on returnees, are not systematically available. Table 13 shows an online of the availability of information on labour migration issues from various organizations and their affiliated institution.

**Table 13: Organizations' sources of online information and areas covered**

Organization	Types of available information	Brief on the available information
Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE)	Acts, rules, and policies related to labour migration	All regulations related to migration process, remittances, and licensing of recruiting agencies
	Data and statistics	Category-wise and year-wise data on overseas employment and remittances
	Development projects	All types of projects undertaken to support and develop skills for the economy's migrating labour force
Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET)	Data and statistics	Updated data on overseas employment, remittances, female migrant workers, among others
	Acts, policies, and other	All types of acts, policies, and migration related publications
	Forms	All types of forms required for migrant workers and recruiting agents
	List of recruiting agents	Recruiting agents that are currently affiliated with BMET and list of suspended agents
	Welfare programmes	Various welfare programmes adopted by the Government for the development of labour migration in Bangladesh and supporting migrant workers
Bangladesh Bank	Remittance flow	Monthly and yearly remittance inflows
Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd. (BOESL)	Overseas job opportunities	Job opportunities in various sectors of the economy
	Data and statistics	Country-wise migration data
Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU)	Projects and programmes undertaken in collaboration with other organizations on migration-related issues	Up-to-date programmes that benefit migrant workers is one of the primary goals of RMMRU
	Research publications on various aspects of migration	
International Organization for Migration-Dhaka	Facts and figures on labour migration in Bangladesh	Numbers of estimated migrants, share of female migrants, volume of remittance, among other statistics
	Migration-related programmes	Programmes on migration management, facilitation of migration, dialogues and cooperation relating to migration

Source: Compiled from websites of the relevant organizations.

Among the various national organizations in Bangladesh, BMET is the best source of information related to labour migration. Statistical data are regularly updated on BMET's website. However, there is still a lack of data on many labour migration indicators that would provide a more complete profile of the migration trends in Bangladesh. Data on the age composition of migrant workers, district-wise numbers of migrating workers, number of returnees from various destination countries, among other figures could be included in the database to provide a more complete picture of labour migration in Bangladesh. The main objective of the MEWOE is to enhance overseas employment and the flow of remittances into the economy while simultaneously ensuring the welfare of the migrant workers. The departments under the MEWOE conduct activities related to the various aspects of the labour migration in Bangladesh. Systematic recordkeeping on several aspects of migration is needed and requires coordination among the various departments within the Ministry. Each department should maintain complete records on the issues for which it is responsible and cooperate with the MEWOE to develop a consolidated database.

The Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd. (BOESL) aims to provide job opportunities in various sectors of the economy though at a limited scale. Data provided on the organization website is not updated and very limited regarding indicators on labour migration. There are many other organizations that aim to provide information on various aspects of labour migration including research organizations and NGOs. Coordinated efforts are required from various government bodies, national and international organizations, research organizations, and NGOs, in order to develop a comprehensive database that captures all relevant indicators to provide a full profile of labour migration in Bangladesh.



PART 2:

# Profile analysis and implications for action



## Part 2 | Profile analysis and implications for action

Migrant workers from Bangladesh, who are predominantly unskilled, currently meet labour shortages in the GCC countries. These destination countries have opened up their labour markets on a short-term basis to unskilled and semi-skilled foreign workers from South Asian countries. Bangladeshi migrant workers are paid low wages in the destination countries due to a lack of competitiveness compared to workers from other countries. In order to enhance the competitiveness of these workers, skills of migrant workers must be enhanced to match demand in the destination countries. In this context, skills development programmes in Bangladesh need to be restructured such that they are relevant to the demand in the destination countries. A mechanism needs to be established for incorporating skill requirements into the recruitment process.

It is also necessary to ensure coordination among the rules and policies for labour migration with skill development policies in order to keep balance between short-term needs and long-term sustainability of jobs for migrant workers (ILO, 2008). TVET system effectiveness for employability of migrant workers is only possible if standardized training is internationally benchmarked. Trainees from the training institutions in Bangladesh will be suitable for and competitive in the international market if their training is provided and certified by recognized institutions. To improve the overall training apparatus, training institutions need to well-equip its facilities with trainers, develop assessors, and maintain regular dialogues with industries. Necessary approaches to facilitate the labour migration process are detailed below.

### **A. Required measures to ensure the recruitment process follows existing rules and policies**

#### **i. Monitoring and supervision**

For promoting transparency and openness in recruitment processes, monitoring and supervision of recruitment practices need to be strengthened. In this context, the Monitoring and Enforcement Wing of the MEWOE needs to be strengthened in reporting non-compliant recruiting agencies, discovering anomalies in the recruiting process, and checking migration process irregularities. In order to avoid corruption within the monitoring process, a committee can be established under this wing consisting of representatives from the MEWOE, BMET, labour organizations, and civil society organizations working on migration issues. The committee will be given the responsibility to conduct regular monitoring of the recruitment process and performance of the recruiting agents. Regular inspections at the airports and monitoring of DEMO offices need to be conducted. A separate unit under the BMET may be established for monitoring various aspects of female labour migration.

According to the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, the Government needs to classify private recruiting agencies such that workers can clearly understand the performance of these agencies and select a proper agency for their overseas recruitment process. Criteria for classification should be their professional capacity in terms of ensuring and promoting decent work for

migrant workers, protection of workers' rights, cooperating with the BMET through disseminating information on foreign demand for workers, and enhancing the knowledge base of public and private training providers on in-demand skills in the destination countries. The agencies should be monitored and the assigned categories re-evaluated every year depending on their performance and standards. These categories should be published on the BMET website so that the overseas companies hiring workers from Bangladesh also become aware of the agencies' performance and select their contacts accordingly. Each agency should maintain transparency and openness in the recruitment process, preventing slippage of migrant workers into any form of irregularities.

## **ii. Consultative process in fixing cost structure**

A consultative process is required between the Government and private recruiting agencies to arrive at a mutually recognizable cost structure for migration. The existing cost structure fixed by the Government does not incentivize private agencies to select and hiring workers from the government database. Meanwhile, many agencies victimize the workers by imposing high costs of migration. In providing licenses to the recruitment agencies, the Government needs to conduct proper assessments on the financial aspects of the agencies. Regular dialogues and consultation between government organizations and private agencies is necessary regarding various aspects of the migration process.

## **iii. Developing the registration process for migrant workers**

Selecting workers through the BMET database has not been adopted by the private agents due to certain anomalies persisting within the system. The database is unable to provide correct information on workers' occupations. This is due to flaws in the registration process. Workers in remote areas register their occupations through union offices, but this is done without judging their actual expertise. Preparing the database requires experts who have knowledge of migration-related issues and are well-equipped with the criteria required for each occupation. Training on relevant computer skills may be provided to officials engaged in the data entry process. Public-private collaboration may also be a solution for developing an effective database that ensures a flawless mechanism for worker selection. Engaging recruiting agents and TTCs in the registration process may be more effective and convenient for migrant workers as well.

# **B. Mechanism for developing a relevant training structure for effective demand-supply matching in the migration process**

## **i. Research for expansion in new markets and diversification of occupation demand**

It was mentioned before that demand for Bangladeshi workers in many GCC countries and Malaysia has been decreased or prohibited due to various factors. Under the circumstances, research-based initiatives are required to explore actual skill requirements in these destination countries. Demand for semi-skilled and skilled labourers should also be explored so that relevant skills development programmes can be improved to meet those requirements. Research on this issue can be undertaken by officials in the Bangladesh embassies in major destination countries, which would simultaneously develop the embassies' human resources capacity.



Initiating research initiatives requires funding from the Government to develop a research cell in the MEWOE. Project-based initiatives may also be undertaken by the Government in developing the research cell. Human resources in the Bangladesh embassies in the major destination countries need to be developed to conduct research in this area.

## **ii. Resource allocation and effective utilization**

Need-based training for migrant workers first requires an overhaul of the existing training structure to meet competency levels that will certify domestic industry workers according to the NTVQF. Domestically recognized certifications will then need to achieve international recognition and accreditation. Conversion of existing trainings programmes into CBT requires resource allocation to the training institutes from skills development projects, development agencies, and government budget. A resource distribution plan needs to be developed in an efficient manner in order for funding to reach institutions at the right time for procurement and upgrading equipment, purchasing raw materials for trainings, and training teachers. Effective utilization of the allocated resources should be ensured through maintaining transparency at the institutional level and proper monitoring by the Government.

Resource allocation is also required under the Ministry of Education to motivate and incentivize students to participate in TVET programmes, as well as fund students to undertake TVET training.

## **iii. Institutional capacity building**

For efficient implementation of TVET programmes and the development of skills development programmes, human resource capacity in BMET's training department needs to be upgraded. As was mentioned before, skills development training for migrant workers will not be effective unless CBT is efficiently implemented. BTEB is not sufficiently equipped to conduct its various functions, including curriculum development, preparation of assessors for CBT implementation, and efficient functioning of the RPL system. Investment in BTEB needs to be undertaken to develop its institutional structure with efficient human resource deployment, upgrade equipment for instruction, and develop other infrastructure. Proficient implementation of various government projects, including the development of a CBT cell, needs to be ensured through deploying human and financial resources effectively. NSDC needs to be more organized to efficiently coordinate TVET programmes provided under public and private institutions through varying strategies according to specific requirements. Developing curricula and introducing more technical courses at the HSC vocational level could be a step towards building a better workforce with technical and vocational education. The establishment of accommodation facilities at public and private training institutions is important for meeting the needs of trainees, especially for female workers.

## **iv. Institutional coordination**

Institutional coordination is required among BMET, BTEB, and DTE to establish demand-supply linkages for migrant workers through developing course curricula for trainings and conducting regular monitoring and assessment of the trainings provided at TTCs. There is a severe lack of oversight of training programmes at private training centres, as revealed by the survey by NSDC and BTEB (2014). The prevailing deficiencies within the training structure at the private agencies and institutions need to be addressed through a coordinated effort by BMET, BTEB, and



the training institutions. A coordination unit may be established under MEWOE to ensure coordinated training development and delivery for the migrant workers. This unit will also establish linkages between the committee for curriculum development at BTEB and the BMET delegates who visit foreign countries to collect information on foreign demand for migrant workers. During these visits, information should be collected on skill and competency demand in the foreign countries. A proper mechanism should be established to disseminate information collected through these visits to the curriculum development committee and the training centres. This coordination unit may work in collaboration with the research cell as mentioned before. The overall process of coordination can be facilitated through technical assistance from the ILO.

#### **v. Inclusion of relevant stakeholders in developing the training structure**

Developing a training structure relevant to current international market-based demand requires participation by relevant stakeholders in the restructuring process. As it has been observed during the study, principals and some officials at the TTCs are aware of the required training programmes for workers. Measures need to be adopted for capacity building of these officials through providing training to them. It may also be beneficial to involve them in curriculum development and recruitment of trainers at the training centres. In these cases, consultations with the private recruitment agencies should also be conducted as they are more aware of foreign demand due to their close proximity to overseas employers and migrant workers. Public-private collaboration may be an important mechanism for developing a training structure to meet skill and competency level demand in destination countries.

#### **vi. Developing assessors for training institutes**

One of the major challenges in implementing CBT, NTVQF, and the systematic functioning of the RPL system is a lack of assessors at the training institutes. Project-based initiatives need to be adopted to develop assessors so that the existing CBT standards developed for 34 occupations can be implemented. Assessors with practical work experience in industry are required. The Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP) for Bangladesh has undertaken an initiative in collaboration with UCEP to develop assessors. Coordination with industry is required to identify industrial workers and supervisors who have the potential to become assessors at training institutes, RPL centres, and ISCs.

#### **vii. Recruitment process of trainers and their capacity building**

Trainers at the TTCs need to be provided regular trainings to upgrade their training capacities. The trainers should be acquainted with practical work experience at the industrial level. Thus, the trainers need to be sent to update their knowledge about equipment used in the industries. Since the export-oriented industries in the export processing zones (EPZs) in Bangladesh use modern and updated technologies for production, trainers and trainees from the TTCs may be sent to these industries during their training process. This will facilitate migrant workers by making them familiar with up-to-date technology that will be encountered during their overseas employment.

Some recruiting agencies hire returnees as trainers in their training institutions. This is a positive approach towards developing the training structure for migrant workers. Since the returnees are more aware of the requirements in the foreign companies, their practical experience would help develop appropriate local training and make the trainee migrant workers capable of the work

encountered in the destination countries. TTCs under BMET can further think of integrating returnees into their training programmes. In the case of female migrant workers, the training centres can recruit returning female migrants to provide short-term counselling services on safe migration processes for female workers through their practical experiences. This service, if provided during the orientation courses, will help future female migrants to cope and deal with the new socio-cultural situations in the destination countries.

### **C. Facilitating female migrant workers**

Female migrant workers face several challenges during the recruitment process for overseas jobs and also during their stints overseas, which have been in chapters 2, 3, and 5. Safe migration of female workers and protecting their rights in the destination countries should be ensured by holding regular dialogues among BMET officials, BAIRA members, and workers' organizations. The following measures need to be adopted for female worker skills development and rights protection during their employment in the destination countries:

- Diversification of skills of female workers is required for promoting employability in diversified jobs through encouraging them to adopt trainings and build their skills in non-traditional occupations at the TTCs .
- Skills development for female workers in diversified occupations can be followed by efforts by the Government to develop negotiations with destination countries for recruiting female migrant workers into occupations beyond housekeeping.
- For protecting the rights of female workers in the destination countries, female labour attachés may be appointed in key destination countries where relatively large numbers of female workers migrate.
- Accommodation facilities for female workers at the training centres need to be improved in order to ensure their security and quality food and lodging.
- Orientation trainings need to be extended for female workers with more focus on foreign language acquisition and the socio-economic aspects of the destination countries.
- Female workers need to be provided with advice and support for sending remittances from their destination countries.

### **D. Awareness building on safe migration and skills upgrading**

An awareness building campaign on the lawful migration process needs to be adopted nationwide. Aspirant migrant workers also need to be provided with information on the necessary documents required for safe migration of workers. The above mentioned information also needs to be disseminated through the TTCs at the district level. An Assistant Commissioner of expatriate welfare at 64 District Employment and Manpower Offices has been created with logistic support to disseminate migration-related information. This initiative needs to be efficiently implemented to ensure workers' access to this information. Awareness also needs to be built among workers to adopt trainings in various occupations that will ensure their employability in the domestic and international labour markets in the future.

## **E. Required initiatives from the Government**

### **i. Maintain a consolidated database**

There is no consolidated database on migration in Bangladesh. Various institutions keep data on different aspects of labour migration, but to date there is a lack of effort to maintain a complete database that would provide a complete picture of migration trends in the country. These databases developed through public and private sector initiatives need to be updated on a regular basis.

### **ii. Bilateral negotiations and employment model**

The Government of Bangladesh has initiated bilateral negotiations to increase migration of workers to developed countries. These negotiations should cover support provided by Bangladesh and destination countries to enhance migrants' work experience during the recruitment process in Bangladesh and while the workers are employed abroad. Negotiations should also include aspects of skills accreditation and standardization achieved through mutual recognition of certification. Joint initiatives may be adopted between the country of origin and the destination country in providing standardized training to the migrant workers. The Government can adopt an employment contract model such as in Sri Lanka and the Philippines which includes details on a worker's skill level, working hours, wages, health-care issues, holidays, among other details (Wickramasekara, 2011). An employment model encompassing the above mentioned issues should be used by all the recruitment agencies affiliated with the BMET. The Government should periodically monitor agencies' contracts to prevent any kind of malpractice.

### **iii. Institutional restructuring of embassies in key destination countries**

Stakeholder views reveal that there is a lack of human resource capacity in Bangladeshi Embassies in the destination countries, especially in the GCC countries where there is a large volume of Bangladeshi workers. This impedes processes to deal with problems that arise for workers in those countries. Embassies should be provided with adequate support staff. The support staff working in these countries must possess language skills and knowledge of other issues related to the overseas employed workers.

MEWOE needs to undertake an initiative to deploy a sufficient number of labour attachés in key destination countries and expand their roles in terms of providing support related to the protection of workers' rights and supporting them in cases of passport-related problems.

### **iv. Regular dialogues with destination countries**

The Government needs make an effort to hold regular dialogues with the destination countries on the issues of safe migration and protection of workers' rights. Representatives from BAIRA, workers' organizations, and returnees should be included in these dialogues.

### **v. Keeping records on returnees and their re-integration**

An issue of concern related to migration in Bangladesh is the lack of systematic records maintained on departing and returning migrant workers. Recordkeeping on the returning workers is required for proper planning in integrating them back into the domestic economy. Initiatives have recently been undertaken to keep records on the returnees, which needs to be implemented as quickly as possible. It has been mentioned before that the Government has set up a system where the workers

are given a smart card before going for overseas jobs. The smart card includes information on the employer, the agency, the employment country, and the details of employment. All of the information is stored on a chip in the smart card. Since it is a machine readable digital card, initiatives may be undertaken to make this card accepted internationally. A system may be developed in which workers can enter their information through punching the card at immigration while leaving the country and during their return.

Initiatives should be taken by the Government in cooperation with private sector organizations for the reintegration of returning migrant workers into the economy and ensure their socio-economic well-being. Figure 6 shows a list of actions under various sub-headings that may be undertaken for the reintegration of returnees.

**Figure 6: Measures for integrating returning migrant workers**



## **F. Role of development agencies**

Addressing the prevailing gaps within various aspects of the migration process is not possible for the Government of Bangladesh alone without support from international development agencies and NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and local NGOs. To date, development agencies have supported the Government at the project level and extended technical support on various aspects of migration. The supportive measures extended through projects in collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh include technical support from the ILO in policy formulation, the Decent Work Programme, and various TVET development programmes. Projects addressing vari-

**Table 14: Mechanisms for supporting the Government in developing the migration process and capacity building of migrant workers**

Development agencies	Mechanism for support
International NGOs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical support to the Government for developing linkages between the regulations related to migration and the National Skills Development Policy, 2011.</li> <li>2. Enhance technical support to BMET in developing a research cell and coordination unit to ensure matching between in-demand skills in the destination countries and the supply of migrant workers.</li> <li>3. Encourage regular dialogues between the officials of MEWOE, BMET, members of BAI-RA, and workers' organizations aimed at establishing cooperation among the stakeholders and improve the recruitment process for migrant workers.</li> <li>4. Provide financial support for infrastructure and capacity building of public and private training institutions and local NGOs in developing a training structure for migrant workers.</li> <li>5. Provide technical and financial support to standardize the CBT and NTVQF certification process.</li> <li>6. Provide effective supervision of the implementation and resource utilization in the skills development programmes, especially for migrant workers, funded by international development agencies.</li> </ol>
Bilateral and multilateral development agencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide technical support to BTEB in developing curricula and infrastructure for trade-based training to migrant workers.</li> <li>2. Encourage regular dialogues with BTEB and domestic industries to ensure collaboration in developing assessors for skills development programmes and the RPL system.</li> <li>3. Arrange regular dialogues between the Government and training providers to upgrade trainings by incorporating skills requirements for the international job market.</li> <li>4. Provide technical and financial support to training institutions to develop physical infrastructure for training. Also, provide technical leadership and financial support to these institutions and local NGOs to provide training under NTVQF.</li> <li>5. Provide technical support to the MEWOE in collaboration with local NGOs to develop a recordkeeping system on returnees.</li> <li>6. Provide technical support to local NGOs, SME Foundation, among others, to provide counseling courses to returnees on entrepreneurship development.</li> </ol>
Local NGOs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate an awareness campaign at the national level in collaboration with the BMET for safe migration and the importance for workers to obtain skills development training.</li> <li>2. NGOs that have district- or union-level offices and are working on gender related issues should adopt programmes in collaboration with bilateral development agencies for female migrants addressing the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support female workers with the formalities of migration (e.g. medical check-up, passport and visa related procedures, among others) through local NGO offices.</li> <li>• Initiate basic orientation courses for female workers at the community level on the overall migration process.</li> <li>• Provide the returning female migrants with financial support and advisory services in entrepreneurship development.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

ous areas of skills development include the World Bank's Skills and Training Enhancement Project (STEP), Skills and Employment Programme Bangladesh (SEP-B) implemented by GRM International in partnership with Swisscontact and the British Council, Skills Training Project funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and SDC, and Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity Project (BSEP) initiated by the Government of Bangladesh with technical support from ILO and financed by the Canadian Government. These supportive projects aim to address areas of policy formation concerning migrant workers' recruitment process, capacity building of policy-makers and training providers, protecting rights of migrant workers, ensuring decent employment

opportunities for migrant workers, among others. However, there are gaps within the implementation of these projects in terms of establishing linkages between skills development programmes and the migrant workers of Bangladesh. Development agencies need to focus on specific mechanisms for establishing the linkages and addressing the demand-supply gap of migrant workers in terms of required skills and competitiveness in the destination countries. Moreover, certain skills development programmes such as TVET programmes have not achieved expected results at the national level due to a lack of infrastructure and human resources. Coordination efforts among the Government, local organizations, and development agencies are required for the effective implementation of the various programmes. Table 14 below lists mechanisms through which development agencies can support the Government of Bangladesh to establish a competent training structure for skills development that will make migrant workers competitive in the international labour market and ensure demand-supply matching in the migration process.





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# List of key informants interviewed

## Annex I

### Stakeholders from public and private sector

1. Azharul Haq (Joint Secretary – Welfare & Mission, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment)
2. Begum Shamsunnahar (Director General, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training – BMET)
3. Dr Md Nurul Islam (Director, Training, Standard & Planning, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training – BMET)
4. Dr Engr Md Sakawat Ali (Principal, Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre – BK-TTC, BMET)
5. Dr Selim Raihan (Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling – SANEM)
6. Gabriel H. Bordado (Technical Adviser, TVET Quality and Relevance, B-SEP Project, ILO Country Office for Bangladesh)
7. Haripada Das (Programme Officer, TVET Reform Project, ILO Country Office for Bangladesh)
8. Hassan Imam (Programme Coordinator, Migration Programme, BRAC)
9. Kazi Abul Kalam (Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment)
10. Marina Sultana (Programme Manager, AMR Project, RMMRU)
11. Md Faisal Mufti (Assistant Director, Directorate of Technical Education)
12. Md Golam Mostafa Khan (Director, Emigration, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training – BMET)
13. Md Khalilur Rahman (Director, Training, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training – BMET)
14. Md Rasedul Islam (Vice-Principal, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women's Technical Training Centre, BMET)
15. Md Sazzad Hossain (Principal, Bangladesh-German Technical Training Center – BGTTC, BMET)
16. Md Zahirul Islam (General Manager, Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited – BOESL)
17. Mohammad Faisal Mufti (Assistant Director, Directorate of Technical Education – DTE)
18. Mohammad Rezaul Karim (Deputy Secretary, NSDC – Secretariat, Ministry of Labour and Employment)
19. Mr Habib (Principal, Thangamara Mohila Shobuj Shongho – TMSS, Bogra)
20. Ms Fouzia Shahnaz (Principal, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women's Technical Training Centre, BMET)



21. Ms Nadia (Trainer, Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme – OKUP)
22. Ms Nasrin (Course Coordinator, Montage Training & Certification Center)
23. Nazia Haider (Senior Programme Officer, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation – SDC, Embassy of Switzerland)
24. Professor Md Abul Kashem (Chairman, Bangladesh Technical Education Board – BTEB)
25. Saidur Rahman (Deputy Director, Directorate of Technical Education – DTE)
26. Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman (EC Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
27. S.M. Shahjahan (Deputy Inspector, CBT Cell, Bangladesh Technical Education Board – BTEB)
28. Sk Al-Ferubi (Assistant Director, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training – BMET)

### **Recruiting agency representatives**

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1. Ali Haider Chowdhury (Managing Partner, NAC International; Secretary General, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
2. Ataharul Islam (General Manager, A.M. Air Travels Limited; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
3. Md Abul Bashar (President, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
4. Mohammad Abdul Hye (Chairman, Greenland Group; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
5. Mohammad Obaidul Areef (Managing Director, Orchid View Ltd.; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
6. Mohammed Ruhul Amin (Chairman, Catharsis International; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
7. Mozibur Rahman Mozib (Proprietor, Monzil Overseas; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
8. Nasir Uddin Mojumder (Proprietor, Madina Overseas; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
9. Raquib Mohammad Fakhrul (Proprietor, Munshi Enterprise Limited; Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)
10. Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman (Proprietor, Sadia International; EC Member, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies – BAIRA)

### **Migrant workers**

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A group of migrant workers and returnees were interviewed for this study.

# Total employment of migrant workers and remittance inflow by destination country

## Annex II

Year	Country					Total Employment (Including other all other destination countries)	Remittances* (US\$ millions)
	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Qatar	Malaysia		
1976	217	1 989	643	1 221	0	6 087	23.71
1977	1 379	5 819	1 315	2 262	0	15 725	82.79
1978	3 212	7 512	2 243	1 303	23	22 809	106.90
1979	6 476	5 069	2 298	1 383	0	24 495	172.06
1980	8 695	4 847	3 687	1 455	3	30 073	301.33
1981	13 384	6 418	5 464	2 268	0	55 787	304.88
1982	16 294	6 863	7 244	6 252	0	62 762	490.77
1983	12 928	6 615	10 283	7 556	23	59 220	627.51
1984	20 399	5 185	5 627	2 726	0	56 714	500.00
1985	37 133	8 336	7 384	4 751	0	77 694	500.00
1986	27 235	8 790	10 286	4 847	530	68 658	576.20
1987	39 292	9 953	9 559	5 889	0	74 017	747.60
1988	27 622	13 437	6 524	7 390	2	68 121	763.90
1989	39 949	15 184	12 404	8 462	401	101 724	757.84
1990	57 486	8 307	5 957	7 672	1 385	103 814	781.54
1991	75 656	8 583	28 574	3 772	1 628	147 156	769.30
1992	93 132	12 975	34 377	3 251	10 537	188 124	901.97
1993	106 387	15 810	26 407	2 441	67 938	244 508	1 009.09
1994	91 385	15 051	14 912	624	47 826	186 326	1 153.54
1995	84 009	14 686	17 492	71	35 174	187 543	1 201.52
1996	72 734	23 812	21 042	112	66 631	211 714	1 355.34
1997	106 534	54 719	21 126	1 873	2 844	231 077	1 525.03
1998	158 715	38 796	25 444	6 806	551	267 667	1 599.24
1999	185 739	32 344	22 400	5 611	0	268 182	1 806.63
2000	144 618	34 034	594	1 433	17 237	222 686	1 954.95
2001	137 248	16 252	5 341	223	4 921	188 965	2 071.03
2002	163 269	25 462	15 769	552	85	225 256	2 847.79
2003	162 131	37 346	26 722	94	28	254 190	3 177.63
2004	139 031	47 012	41 108	1 268	224	272 958	3 565.31

Year	Country					Total Employment (Including other all other destination countries)	Remittances* (US\$ millions)
	Saudi Arabia	UAE	Kuwait	Qatar	Malaysia		
2005	80 425	61 978	47 029	2 114	2 911	252 702	4 249.87
2006	109 513	130 204	35 775	7691	20 469	381 516	5 484.08
2007	204 112	226 392	4 212	15 130	273 201	832 609	6 562.71
2008	132 124	419 355	319	25 548	131 762	875 055	8 979.00
2009	14 666	258 348	10	11 672	12 402	475 278	10 717.73
2010	7 069	203 308	48	12 085	919	390 702	11 004.73
2011	15 039	282 739	29	13 111	742	568 062	12 168.09
2012	21 232	215 452	2	28 801	804	607 798	14 163.99
2013	12 654	14 241	6	57 584	3 853	409 253	13 832.00
2014	7 652	15 235	1 706	53 152	3 388	270 181	8 947.00
Total	2 636 775	2 318 458	481 362	320 456	708 442	8 987 183	127 785.00

\*Remittances up to July 2014

Sources: BMET; remittance figures from Bangladesh Bank.

# TTC pass rates, 2013

Annex III

Trade name	Duration	No. of trainees passed	% of total
Diploma in marine engineering	4 years	437	0.48
Diploma in shipbuilding engineering	4 years	433	0.48
Certificate in marine diesel engine artificer	2 years	165	0.18
Certificate in ship fabrication	2 years	137	0.15
Certificate in shipbuilding welding	2 years	144	0.16
Certificate in shipbuilding & mechanical drafting	2 years	151	0.17
Refrigeration & air-conditioning	2 years	1 518	1.67
Machine tools operation	2 years	276	0.30
Automotive	2 years	1 199	1.32
General electrical works	2 years	1 778	1.96
Drafting civil with computer-aided design (CAD)	2 years	260	0.29
Civil construction	2 years	450	0.49
Drafting mechanical with CAD	2 years	143	0.16
General electronics	2 years	1 739	1.91
General mechanics	2 years	285	0.31
Plumbing & pipe fitting	2 years	200	0.22
Welding & fabrication	2 years	785	0.86
Woodworking	2 years	353	0.39
Electrical maintenance works	2 years	492	0.54
Farm machinery	2 years	45	0.05
Dressmaking	2 years	49	0.05
Food processing & preservation	2 years	185	0.20
Architectural drafting with AutoCAD	2 years	529	0.58
Dyeing printing & block batik	2 years	49	0.05
Computer operation	2 years	40	0.04
Ship fabrication and welding	6 months	90	0.10
Ship safety and fire fighting	6 months	120	0.13
Marine pipe fitting	6 months	90	0.10
Marine engine and mechanical fitter	6 months	120	0.13
Auto CAD 2D & 3D	6 months	294	0.32
Welding & fabrication	6 months	925	1.02
General mechanics	6 months	80	0.09
Electrical machine maintenance	6 months	344	0.38
Electrical house wiring	6 months	1 863	2.05
Computer operation	6 months	6 850	7.53
Graphics design	6 months	714	0.79
Consumer electronics	6 months	875	0.96

Trade name	Duration	No. of trainees passed	% of total
Refrigeration & air-conditioning	6 months	1 734	1.91
Dressmaking/garments	6 months	1 399	1.54
Auto mechanics	6 months	890	0.98
Auto mechanics with driving.	6 months	1 409	1.55
Plumbing & pipe fitting	6 months	140	0.15
Civil construction	6 months	86	0.09
Boutique/block batik	6 months	421	0.46
Machine tools operation	6 months	199	0.22
Mid-level garments supervisor	6 months	143	0.16
Quality control management	6 months	296	0.33
Fruit & food processing	6 months	406	0.45
Plastic technology	6 months	101	0.11
Carpentry/woodworking	6 months	97	0.11
Catering	6 months	70	0.08
Architectural drafting with AutoCAD	6 months	574	0.63
Welding (6G)	3 months	35	0.04
Sewing machine operator	2.5 months	92	0.10
Solar Home System	2 months	265	0.29
Korean language	2 months	779	0.86
Pattern making, marker making & cutting	1.5 months	414	0.46
Rod binding	1.5 months	20	0.02
Sewing machinery maintenance	1.5 months	46	0.05
Sweater and linking machine operator	1.5 months	30	0.03
Housekeeping	21 days	42 767	47.03
Employment Permit System-Test of Proficiency in Korean (EPS-TOPIK)	7 days	1677	1.84
Orientation training	3 days	12 648	13.91
<b>Total</b>		<b>90 945</b>	

Source: BMET.





# Skills for the international labour market: Bangladesh country report

Part of a multi-country labour market trend analysis for migrant workers from South Asia to the member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf

International labour migration contributes to the Bangladesh economy both in terms of addressing the unemployment and underemployment and helping to keep foreign currency reserves stable through remittances. The labour migration trend in Bangladesh is characterized by an outflow of low- and semi-skilled workers. These workers are concentrated in short-term and low wage employment. The jobseekers' registration based on the international occupational classification is urgent to enable comparability of skill levels with the countries of destination. There is also a need to align training and assessment with the Bangladesh National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Frameworks. Investment in awareness about living and working abroad is required. Outreach services are required to expand the use and benefit of the 'Recognition of Prior Learning' to both outgoing and returning migrant workers and to build career trajectories of those workers who can afford only a few weeks to a few months-long technical training. Undeniably, there is a need for greater coordination of efforts in terms of developing workers' skills and improving governance of overseas employment recruitment, in particular, job-matching.

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