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FINAL REPORT

YOUTH LABOR MARKET ASSESSMENT USAID BIJOYEE ACTIVITY

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Prepared by:

Inspira
Advisory & Consulting

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The study team would like to conclude with a wish that the outcome of the study helps to inform key policy decisions for the interventions aimed at the youth workforce in Bangladesh. We hope the program activities, as a whole, will be a steppingstone in soft skill-focused youth development in the target regions.

Study Team:

The following individuals contributed to the research design, data collection, analysis, and report writing for this labor market assessment:

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Soft Skills	A broad set of skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. Different disciplines use different terms to refer to these skills. (Youth Power)
PYD Framework	Positive Youth Development (PYD) is both a philosophy and a programmatic approach for supporting healthy, productive, and engaged youth as they grow into adulthood. The PYD approach rests on the idea that youth with more developmental assets are more likely to enjoy academic success, have greater economic prospects, be more civically engaged, and be healthier in the long term.
NEET	Youth that are neither in employment nor in education or training
EET	Youth that are either in employment or in education or training
Urban	Divisional cities as well as top tier industrialized municipalities
Peri-urban	Districts other than divisional and top tier industrialized municipalities
Hub and spoke	A strategic framework in which a central hub entity serves as the focal point for the distribution of project's resources, services, or information to various spokes or subsidiary units
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)	RPL is a process of awarding credits for competencies achieved outside of formal accredited learning. It gives credit for competencies gained through previous learning, other training, work or life experience as part of skill assessment. The certification under RPL carry same status of the certificate gained by formal training in Bangladesh. This is helpful for assessing the skill status and level of skill qualification for the existing workforce.
Industry Skill Council (ISC)	Industry Skills Council is a key initiative of the TVET Reform Project, to strengthen linkages between industry and the national training system by bringing together the major enterprises and industry bodies within an industry sector to discuss skill development issues affecting their sector. At present, there are 15 ISCs in the country.
High Demand	Demand for any occupation is either increasing or has potential to increase in future.
Low Demand	Demand for any occupation is stagnant, diminishing or might diminish in future.
Vulnerable Youth	Youth who are associated with poverty, inequality, social exclusion, physical and/or mental disabilities, along with a lack of social support and education that might have long-term socio-economic consequences.
Soft Skills Item statements	Soft skills item statements are a group of proxy indicators/questions to understand youth's perception, attitude towards PYD soft skills as well as status of that specific soft skill.
Youth	Persons aged between 18-35
Item statements	Item statements are simple interrogative statements that were used in survey to understand the perception of soft skills among the youth

List of Acronyms

ADLs	Activities of Daily Living
BASIS	Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BFIOA	Bangladesh Furniture Industries Owners Association
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
BRTA	Bangladesh Road Transport Authority
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small & Collage Industries Corporation
BTB	Bangladesh Tourism Board
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
BYLC	Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
CKD	Completely Knocked Down cars
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
CPG	Consumer Packaged Goods
DAE	Department of Agricultural Extensions
DoF	Department of Fisheries
DSS	Department of Social Services
DWA	Department of Women Affairs
DYD	Department of Youth Development
DYDF	Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation
EET	Education, Employment, or Training
EU	European Union
IADLs	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
IT	Information Technology
ITES	IT-Enabled Services
LFS	Labor Force Survey
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NCDs	Noncommunicable Diseases
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSDA	National Skill Development Authority
NYC	National Youth Council
OTT	Over-The-Top
PIP	Project Implementation Plan
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RMA	Rapid Market Appraisal
RMG	Ready made Garments
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SUV	Sports Utility Vehicle
TOAB	Tour Operators of Bangladesh
TOAC	Tour Operators of Cox's Bazar
TOAS	Tour Operators of Sundarbans
TSP	Training Service Provider
TVET	Technical and Vocation Education and Training
UCEP	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YSO	Youth-Serving Organization

Executive Summary

The USAID Bijoyee Project aims to enhance soft skills among disadvantaged youth aged 18-35 in Bangladesh to improve their economic and social involvement, focusing on those who are NEET (not in education, employment, or training) and EET (engaged in education, employment, or training). This initiative will promote skills development through various channels, including the Department for Youth Development (DYD), other training providers, employer-based training, and direct courses, all using a locally led, inclusive approach. Inspira Advisory & Consulting Limited has been tasked with conducting an inclusive youth labor market assessment in 18 districts across four regions. The assessment examines youth perceptions and attitudes towards soft skills and the demand for these skills in sectors with high employment potential. It highlights five critical soft skills from the Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework: higher-order thinking, communication, social skills, self-control, and positive self-concept. Additionally, the study identifies other essential skills valued by Bangladeshi employers, such as mutual respect, gender sensitivity, and empathy. Although consumer data was not collected, their perceptions on soft skills were inferred from employer interviews. This comprehensive approach aims to align youth skills with employer needs, fostering greater youth participation in the workforce.

The youth labor market assessment employed a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to enhance the study's validity through data triangulation. The research included 96 in-depth interviews with employers and self-employed youth, a survey of 628 NEET and EET youth emphasizing inclusivity, 20 focus group discussions (FGDs) with NEET and EET youth, and 57 key informant interviews with partner organizations, government stakeholders, training service providers, and other relevant actors. This comprehensive methodology ensured a robust and inclusive assessment of youth perceptions and the demand for soft skills in the labor market.

The youth labor market assessment identified key sectors in three broad categories: Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Service, across 18 target districts in Bangladesh aligning with the National Industrial Policy 2022. Key agricultural sectors included livestock, aquaculture, crops, and horticulture. Manufacturing sectors covered a wide range, including agro-food processing, recycling, construction, and light engineering. Service sectors focused on freelancing, BPO-call centers, healthcare, and retail. These sectors were chosen based on their potential for high employment and economic impact. The assessment also reviewed government documents such as the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan 2022-2041 and the 8th Five-Year Plan, identifying priority sectors like transport, ICT, healthcare, tourism, and agro-processing for skill development and employment growth. However, nine sectors were excluded due to various limitations: the paper industry is declining due to digitization, rubber production is low, renewable energy requires specialized skills, and sectors like tea, medical equipment, entertainment, telecommunications, professional services, and chemical plants offer limited employment opportunities or require highly specialized skills.

Demand Side Analysis: Employers' Perspective on Soft Skills

In-depth interviews with major employers across target districts explored their perceptions and demand for soft skills. The interviews aimed to identify sector-specific growth, key occupations, required soft skills, perceived skills gaps, and the importance of soft skills for career advancement.

High Priority Sectors

Light Engineering

The light engineering sector in Bangladesh has significant potential for poverty alleviation and GDP growth, supporting various industries by manufacturing diverse machinery and spare parts. The sector, considered the "mother of all sectors," employs 1.6 million people across 34 clusters in 18 districts,

with major hubs in Bogura, Jashore, and Dhaka. It contributes USD 12 billion domestically and 3 percent to GDP, with export earnings projected to reach USD 12.56 billion by 2030. Growth factors include government plans for dedicated industrial parks and technological advancements, particularly in agri-machinery. Bogura and Jashore are major light engineering hubs in Bangladesh, employing over 23,000 people in foundries and workshops. Dhaka district hosts around 7,500 workshops employing 60,000 people. Saidpur is another hub with more than 100 enterprises. The government plans to establish dedicated light engineering industrial parks in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Jashore, Bogura, and Narshingdi to boost employment and economic progress, aiming for development by 2041. Demand for workers varies, with a high need for entry-level positions like welders and lathe machine operators due to limited automation. Recruitment is often informal, and soft skills such as attention to detail, communication, and self-control are crucial for career advancement. However, gaps exist in safety awareness, conflict management, and leadership, particularly for mid-level positions like CNC machine operators. Inclusion in the sector is limited, with a predominantly male workforce and minimal representation of women and disabled individuals.

Handicraft

Bangladesh's handicraft sector exports to over 50 countries, primarily to Europe (60 percent), North America, and the Middle East. The sector, which empowers and employs around 56 percent women, includes housewives, widows, and women with disabilities. It directly and indirectly supports 5 million people and generates a domestic market worth \$900 million annually. In 2022-23, handicraft exports reached USD 29.75 million, slightly down from USD 42.83 million in 2021-22. The sector includes various sub-sectors: bamboo and cane products dominate (43.8 percent), followed by pottery (19.2 percent), Nakshi Kantha, brass jewelry, and Shatranji. Major hubs include Bogura, Rangamati, Sherpur, Chattogram, and Jashore. Rangpur is the largest hub, with Sataranji Palli in Nishbetganj hosting significant export-oriented enterprises. Growth factors include rising global demand for environmentally friendly, biodegradable products and an 8 percent government cash incentive for exports. Handicrafts are mostly produced in household settings, but some export-oriented enterprises exist in districts like Bogura and Rangpur. Entry-level job opportunities are high for tailors and craftsmen, while handloom operators and mid-level supervisors face stagnant or declining demand. Recruitment practices focus on technical skills and references, especially for entry-level positions. Soft skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and client handling, are crucial for mid-level roles. Women and indigenous communities, especially in CHT areas, are heavily involved in the sector. However, challenges include inadequate raw material supplies and limited inclusion of persons with disabilities (2-3 percent) and SOGI individuals (less than 1 percent).

Tourism

Bangladesh's tourism sector, contributing over 3 percent to GDP with USD 13.8 billion in revenue, is a growing industry, supporting 8.07 percent of national employment with around 5 million jobs. The Bangladesh Tourism Board's new Tourism Master Plan aims to attract 5.57 million foreign tourists annually by 2041, creating 21.94 million jobs. Key attractions include the Sundarbans, the hilly districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban, and beaches like Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin Island. Activities range from river cruises and adventure trekking to eco and cultural tourism.

Cox's Bazar is the most visited, with 450 hotels employing up to 13,000 people. The Sundarbans and hill districts also see significant tourist activity and employment. Tourism investments are increasing, with USD 600 million allocated in the 2023-24 budget and USD 1.18 billion proposed for development projects over the next 15 years. The sector faces a shortage of skilled workers, particularly in soft skills like problem-solving, communication, and customer service. Entry-level positions such as front office management, housekeeping, and tour guides are in high demand, while roles like chefs and baristas see less demand. Hiring practices favor technical skills and soft skills, with significant gaps

identified in client handling and decision-making. Inclusion remains an issue, with only 14% female workforce and less than 1% youth with disabilities, although indigenous communities from Bandarban and Khagrachari are heavily involved in tourism-related jobs. Increasing female participation and supporting youth with disabilities could enhance workforce diversity and sector growth.

Healthcare and Care Economy

Bangladesh's economic growth and rising income levels have spurred a transformation in its healthcare sector, now valued at USD 10 billion and projected to reach USD 14 billion by 2023. The country's healthcare infrastructure includes 654 government hospitals, over 5,000 private hospitals and clinics, and 10,675 diagnostic centers. Despite this, there is an acute shortage of healthcare workers, particularly nurses, with a current deficit of over 0.3 million nurses. The care economy is also expanding due to a growing elderly population, projected to constitute 21.5 percent of the population by 2050, increasing demand for geriatric care and home care services. This demand is fueled by a rising middle class and more working women. Additionally, the beauty salon industry employs over a million women, and daycare centers are spreading beyond the capital, Dhaka. The security sector employs 700,000 personnel across 800 companies. Soft skills are crucial in this sector, with employers seeking good communication, situation-handling, and problem-solving abilities during recruitment and promotion. However, there are notable gaps, particularly in dealing with clients and maintaining composure under stress. Training and internships for caregiving roles are essential to address these gaps. The sector also presents inclusion opportunities, with 60 percent of the workforce being women, and potential for youth with disabilities and indigenous communities to thrive in caregiving roles. Financial and training support is needed for marginalized groups, including the SOGI community, to establish businesses in beauty salons.

Plastic

With a CAGR of 15 percent, it employs 1.5 million people across 6,000 enterprises, with a domestic market worth USD 4 billion and exports exceeding USD 1 billion. Key sub-sectors like toy manufacturing, plastic pipe, recycling, household items, and PVC bags contribute significantly to this growth. Toy manufacturing, with over 100 registered factories, is a prominent segment, employing 400,000 people and witnessing substantial export growth. Plastic pipe and recycling industries also thrive, meeting a significant portion of domestic demand and contributing to exports. Moreover, the Plastic Industry Development Policy aims to further boost the sector, targeting a market worth USD 10 billion by 2028 and creating 500,000 new jobs.

Soft skill gaps, especially in communication and emotional maturity, persist in the sector, affecting productivity. Recruitment practices often prioritize technical skills, but there's a growing recognition of the importance of soft skills, particularly for mid-level positions. Gender inclusion is notable in toy manufacturing, where women constitute over half of the workforce, mainly in fitting and packaging roles. However, the sector lacks representation from persons with disabilities, SOGI individuals, and the Dalit community, although efforts are being made to accommodate persons with disabilities in less labor-intensive roles.

Agro-food Processing

The agro-food processing industry in Bangladesh holds significant promise, driven by increasing global demand and a burgeoning domestic market. Contributing 1.7 percent to the GDP, it's valued at USD 4.8 billion, projected to reach USD 5.8 billion by 2030, with exports growing at 16.6 percent annually. Key export items include frozen fish, shrimp, spices, and fruits, with major markets in the EU, US, and the Middle East. With over 1000 processing industries, employing 250,000 workers, the sector offers substantial employment opportunities. Sub-sector profiles highlight diverse segments such as meat processing, seafood processing, consumer packaged goods (CPG), and dairy processing. The meat

processing sector, though currently serving a small market share, is expected to grow at a 5 percent CAGR by 2027. Seafood processing, focused on shrimp and dried fish, faces challenges like factory closures but employs 10,000 workers, mostly female. CPG, worth USD 3.6 billion, sees participation from local and multinational corporations. The dairy industry, with 1.4 million traditional farms, is ranked 25th globally for milk production. Factors driving growth include abundant raw materials, rising middle-class population (expected to double by 2025), economic growth, urbanization, and changing dietary habits. The government aims to create 0.1 million jobs by 2025 in the sector. Demand for workers spans small, medium, and large enterprises, with entry-level jobs offering opportunities for 7500 to 5000 new positions annually. High-demand occupations include bakers, food grain machine operators, and maintenance workers, while quality controllers are sought for mid-level positions. Conversely, fish processing and meat processing workers face stagnant demand due to market challenges. Recruitment practices involve third-party channels, prioritizing previous industry experience and soft skills like punctuality. Soft skills are critical for promotion, but gaps persist, including absenteeism, and impulse control, impacting productivity and workplace harmony. Inclusion efforts show a 22 percent female workforce, with a significant presence in seafood processing. Youth comprise over 50 percent of the workforce. However, persons with disabilities and Dalit communities have minimal representation due to labor-intensive nature and social stigma, highlighting areas for improvement in inclusivity.

Construction

The construction sector in Bangladesh is a vital contributor to the economy, employing over 3.3 million workers and accounting for 7.6 percent of the GDP. With a projected market size of USD 44.13 billion by 2029, driven by infrastructure development, rapid urbanization, and government investments in mega projects and public-private partnerships. Demand for workers is high, particularly for entry-level positions like masons, painters, electricians, and plumbers, driven by continuous urbanization. However, occupations such as rod binders and steel fabricators are expected to see stagnant demand. Soft skills are crucial in recruitment and promotion, with employers assessing factors like willingness to work, ethical sense, and physical fitness. Communication, self-control, and customer dealing are key considerations for promotion. Current workers face gaps in soft skills, including unnotified absenteeism indicating a need for improved communication and appropriate behavior. In terms of inclusion, the sector remains male-dominated with limited opportunities for women and persons with disabilities. Indigenous youth in CHT areas are employed but face mobility constraints, while Dalit communities are not represented due to the labor-intensive nature of the work.

Agriculture

The agricultural sector in Bangladesh plays a crucial role in the nation's economy, contributing nearly 11.4 percent of the GDP and employing over 45 percent of the total workforce. Despite the shrinking farmland, the sector is experiencing a steady growth rate of 2.61 percent CAGR, with a total market size of USD 47.55 billion. The sector's performance impacts various macro-economic indicators such as employment generation, poverty alleviation, food security, and nutritional attainment. The subsectors within agriculture include Livestock and Poultry, Aquaculture, and Crops and Horticulture. Livestock and poultry exhibit the highest growth rate at 3.23 percent CAGR, contributing significantly to both GDP and the agriculture sector. Aquaculture has been steadily growing due to rising demand and technological innovations, making Bangladesh self-sufficient in fish production. Crops and horticulture have seen diversification efforts, leading to significant contributions to GDP and global recognition. The sector's presence spans across various districts, with certain districts specializing in specific subsectors. For example, Dhaka, Narayanganj, and Chattogram are prominent for meat production, while Bogura and Rangpur excel in dairy production. Aquaculture is well-distributed, with certain districts specializing in freshwater or saltwater fish production. Rapid urbanization, rising middle-class demands, government support, and technological advancements are driving growth in the

agriculture sector. However, there are existing gaps in soft skills and technical skills among workers. Soft skills such as communication, attention to detail, and decision-making are lacking, especially in smaller enterprises. Technical skills gaps include breeding and hatching skills in poultry farming, chemical mixing in spraying, and packaging machine operation in sorting and packaging. In terms of inclusion, the sector predominantly employs females, although most of them are engaged in voluntary or unpaid household work. There are limited opportunities for people with diverse gender identities, and barriers exist for youth with disabilities due to physical fitness requirements. However, large-scale employers show more acceptance, and indigenous youth are increasingly engaged in agriculture and aquaculture activities, especially in Satkhira. Additionally, Dalit youth and men are participating in agriculture as a secondary income source.

Repair and Maintenance

The repair and maintenance industry in Bangladesh is experiencing steady growth, driven by increasing demand for services across various sub-sectors. Major areas include phone repairing, automobile and bike repairing, agro-machinery repairing, refrigeration and air condition repairing, and home appliance repairing. While the sector is distributed nationwide, certain hubs like Dhaka, Chattogram, and Gazipur specialize in specific services. Factors such as the National Industrial Policy 2022, rising vehicle and cellphone manufacturing, and mechanized agricultural practices are driving growth. The demand for workers, particularly entry-level positions, is high, with small enterprises offering around 10% of the total workforce new job opportunities. In-demand occupations include automotive mechanics, mobile phone servicing technicians, and refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) technicians. Moreover, technicians in the agro-mechanization industry are relatively more demanded such as mechanics of tractor, thresher, harvester, etc. However, soft skills like ethical behavior, communication, and customer orientation are crucial for success in this sector. Recruitment practices vary, with small and medium-scale enterprises being more lenient, while large firms prefer medium-level experienced workers. There are existing gaps in both soft and technical skills, with attention to detail, communication, and proper training being essential. The sector is generally open to diverse participation, but physical attributes pose barriers to entry for some groups, especially females and individuals with disabilities.

ICT

The ICT sector in Bangladesh is experiencing rapid growth, driven by government prioritization, comprehensive policies, and substantial investments. It encompasses IT/ITES, digital commerce, BPO, and freelance work, contributing significantly to the national GDP and job creation. The sector is expanding across the country, with major hubs in Dhaka, Jashore, Chattogram, and Khulna, supported by the development of IT parks. Key growth factors include the establishment of IT and high-tech parks, skilled workforce development initiatives, and efforts to attract foreign investment. District-level data indicates significant opportunities for new job creation, particularly in IT, BPO, and digital commerce sectors. However, the sector is also creating entrepreneurship opportunities alongside jobs. Occupations in high demand include medical scribes, IT support executives, social media executives, and customer care executives, driven by the increasing number of IT firms, e-commerce sites, and BPOs. Conversely, positions like data entry operators and computer operators may see reduced demand due to advancements in AI technology. Soft skills play a crucial role in the ICT sector, with communication, problem-solving, and behavior management being essential for success. Recruitment practices often prioritize candidates with strong soft skills, with extensive training provided, especially in industries like BPO. However, there are gaps in soft skills among current workers, including decision-making and client dealing abilities. Career progression in the sector is heavily dependent on soft skills, alongside technical expertise. Inclusion efforts focus on gender diversity, with a significant portion of women already engaged in freelancing and BPO roles. However,

challenges remain for marginalized communities like Dalits and SOGI individuals due to lower tech readiness and access barriers.

Retail

Bangladesh's retail sector, estimated at USD 200 billion, is experiencing rapid growth, with modern trade gaining momentum alongside traditional mom-and-pop shops. The sector employs a significant portion of the national workforce, contributing 12 percent to employment, and is expected to reach USD 280 billion by 2025, reflecting a growth rate exceeding 30 percent. Job opportunities abound in various retail segments, with super shops, electronics stores, pharmacies, groceries, and fashion outlets being common avenues for employment. Small enterprises are expected to offer around 400,000 entry-level jobs annually, particularly in supermarkets, which are projected to create 200,000 new positions by 2025. Soft skills are crucial for these roles, with communication, problem-solving, and attention to detail being essential. Soft skills considerations are integral to recruitment in the retail sector, with employers prioritizing interpersonal skills, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities. However, existing gaps in communication, teamwork, and adaptability pose challenges in the workplace, impacting productivity and customer service. For promotion, leadership qualities, communication skills, and a proactive approach to problem-solving are highly valued. Candidates demonstrating initiative, decision-making ability, and adaptability stand out for senior positions. In terms of inclusion, the retail sector is making strides in gender diversity, with women increasingly represented in sales and management roles. Indigenous groups and Dalit communities bring valuable cultural insights, while persons with disabilities can excel with appropriate support systems, such as physically disabled individuals working as cashiers.

Transport

Bangladesh's transportation sector is undergoing significant growth and development, fueled by major infrastructure projects like the Padma Bridge and Metro Rail. The sector contributes around 7.32 percent to the GDP and employs over 3.17 million people. It encompasses road, rail, air, and water transport, as well as postal and courier services. Key sub-sectors include road transport, railways, air transport, and water transport, each playing a vital role in facilitating domestic and regional connectivity. Growth factors include infrastructure development, urbanization, economic growth, and public-private partnerships. Ride-sharing apps have also contributed to the sector's expansion. Demand for workers is high, particularly for skilled drivers, conductors, and gig workers in the ride-sharing industry. However, occupations like sailors and ticketing agents face stagnant or declining demand. Soft skills are increasingly important in the transportation sector, particularly for customer-facing roles. Employers prioritize attributes like appropriate behavior, conflict resolution, and emotional management during recruitment and promotion decisions. However, there are gaps in current workers' soft skills, particularly in managing emotions and resolving conflicts, which can impact customer satisfaction and safety. In terms of inclusion, the sector remains male-dominated, with minimal female participation and limited opportunities for persons with disabilities. However, there are emerging opportunities for females in ridesharing and food delivery, while battery-driven rickshaws provide employment possibilities for persons with disabilities.

Furniture

The furniture sector in Bangladesh has experienced significant growth, contributing around 1.2 percent to the GDP and employing over 2.5 million people across 40,000 enterprises. While the industry is segmented into organized and unorganized divisions, the latter dominates the domestic market, comprising 65 percent. Export prospects are promising, with the sector's contribution to the export basket steadily increasing over the past decade. Dhaka serves as the primary furniture hub, with notable clusters in other districts like Chattogram, Khulna, and Sherpur. Factors driving growth include the rise of e-commerce, expanding export markets, and increasing demand from the corporate sector.

Demand for workers is notable, especially for CNC operators and lacquer polishers, driven by technological advancements. Soft skills, particularly communication and sense of responsibility, are prioritized during recruitment and promotion decisions. However, there are gaps in punctuality and attention to detail among current workers. In terms of inclusion, female participation remains low, with indigenous communities comprising a significant portion of the workforce in certain regions. However, persons with disabilities, SOGI individuals, and Dalit youth are underrepresented in the sector.

Additional Priority Sectors

Apart from the 14 highest priority sectors, there are additional sectors prevalent in the Bijoyee Activity districts. These sectors comprise of a reasonable number of workforces in the districts or are niche markets that have a great potential for entrepreneurship and wage employment.

Cricket Bat Manufacturing: This industry in Jashore offers job creation and entrepreneurship opportunities, mainly at the entry level. Soft skills like attention and critical thinking are crucial, but there's a gap in technical skills, particularly in wood curving and sawing. Women play a significant role, and there's potential for inclusion, including opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Nursery Business: With high demand for plants, the nursery business employs around 0.5 million people across 18,000 registered nurseries. Soft skills like client handling and attention are essential, but gaps exist, particularly in customer interaction and technical skills like soil management. Despite being male-dominated, there's potential for inclusion, especially through training initiatives.

RMG Accessories: The RMG accessories sector aims for significant growth, offering new job opportunities mainly at the entry level. There's high demand for technicians, but soft skills gaps include attention and communication. While women constitute over 20 percent of the workforce, there's limited inclusion of persons with disabilities and indigenous communities.

Beekeeping and Honey Production: With around 7,000-8,000 workers in Satkhira, this sector offers entrepreneurship opportunities for NEET youth. Soft skills like critical thinking are crucial, but technical skill gaps exist in colony management. Females show less interest, but there's potential for marginalized and indigenous communities.

Floriculture: Engaging over 100,000 individuals, floriculture generates significant revenue. Soft skills like critical thinking are vital, but gaps exist in disease management knowledge. Women play a significant role, and there's potential for inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Wig Industry: Employing over 31,000 individuals, this industry offers opportunities for both women and men, especially in entry-level positions. Soft skills like attention to detail are crucial, while technical skills like hair types knowledge are needed but often lacking. There's potential for inclusion of persons with disabilities and SOGI individuals with proper training.

Jute Industry: Experiencing a resurgence, the jute industry employs 10,000 workers in Khulna. Soft skills gaps include communication and critical thinking, with limited female participation and barriers for youth with disabilities and marginalized communities.

Recycling Industry: Significant employers in Bogura and Saidpur, offering entry-level opportunities like waste segregation and machine operation. Soft skills like attention and time management are crucial, with minimal representation of women, persons with disabilities, and SOGI individuals due to workplace limitations.

Steel Industry: Valued at USD 6.2 billion, this industry employs 1 million individuals directly and indirectly. Key occupations like furnace operators are in high demand, but soft skills like

communication are lacking. Opportunities for women and youth with disabilities are limited due to the physically demanding nature of the industry.

Ceramic Industry: Employing 48,000 individuals directly, with entry-level jobs in high demand. Soft skills like anger management are lacking, and female representation is minimal. Opportunities for youth with disabilities exist, particularly in tile factories.

Automobile Industry: Experiencing rapid growth, with occupations like welders and assemblers in demand. Soft skills like focused attention are crucial, but there's a lack of diversity, particularly in terms of female, disabled, Dalit, or SOGI representation.

Cement Industry: Employing 60,000 people, with demand for technicians and plant helpers. Soft skills like adaptability are essential, but there's limited female participation and barriers for youth with disabilities and marginalized communities.

Packaging Industry: Facing challenges like raw material shortages, but offering opportunities like assistant operators. Soft skills like communication are lacking, with minimal representation of women, persons with disabilities, and SOGI individuals.

Salt Industry: Dominated by Cox's Bazar, employing 39,000 farmers and 3,000 mill workers. Workers lack in adopting hygiene practices and social skills, with limited female participation and barriers for persons with disabilities.

RMG: Employing over 4 million workers across 4000 factories, with demand highest in Gazipur. Soft skills like communication are lacking, but the sector is increasingly embracing diversity, employing persons with disabilities and indigenous youth.

Electronics Goods Manufacturing: Rapidly expanding, with over 1 million workers employed. Soft skills like communication are crucial, but gaps exist. Opportunities for women and persons with disabilities exist, contingent upon supportive infrastructure.

Cross Sectoral Soft Skills Gap

- Lack of consciousness about physical fitness: Workers often lack knowledge about nutrition and budget-friendly food choices that can enhance productivity.
- Lack of aspiration and absence of hard work: Some blue-collar workers prioritize minimal earnings over career growth, frequently switching jobs for slight wage increments.
- Lack in process thinking orientation: Workers may disregard established processes, preferring to follow the actions of others, hindering safety protocols like PPE usage.
- Lack of awareness and practice of standard occupational safety and wellbeing: Many workers lack awareness of safety protocols, increasing the risk of accidents.
- Interpersonal behavior ignorance: Workers may display behaviors that lead to conflicts due to a lack of understanding of appropriate workplace interactions.
- Lack of gender sensitivity: Gender-related issues are often overlooked, resulting in potential discrimination or unequal treatment.
- Missing orientation of social media usage and cybersecurity: Workers may lack awareness of appropriate social media usage in a professional context, posing risks to organizational confidentiality and reputation.

Demand Side Analysis: Employers' Perspective on Soft Skills

The supply side analysis focuses on youth aged 18-35 in Bijoyee Activity project areas, considering factors like status (NEET, EET), hub location, gender, age class, region, and vulnerability. It aims to

understand youth status, willingness for skill development, training challenges, and current soft skills baseline.

Youth Status

- Most of the EET youths received higher secondary level education (37%) where most of NEET reached up to secondary level education (21%). Since NEET includes job seeking educated youth as well, the proportion distribution from low to high education level were found more or less evenly distributed. In a comparison between NEET male and female, female education dropped after secondary while it was the opposite in case of male youths.
- The majority of the working youths were found involved with private job or self-employment. Male working youths were found comparatively more engaged in these two categories than their female counterparts.
- One out of three NEET youth still do not have both smartphone and internet, while it is only one out of five in case of EET youth. Youth from Khulna hub (60%) lagged behind the most followed by youth from Rangpur hub (66%).
- About 30% of the EET youth received any form of skills development training while it is only 18% for NEET youth. Among the hubs, youth from Khulna (16%) were the least recipient of skills development training while on the opposite end Chattogram youth (32%) received the most in comparison.

Youth Aspiration

- Self-employment/Entrepreneurship is the most desired career path, however, neither EET nor NEET youths have any definite plan towards this path. Female youths, particularly from NEET category mentioned about it the most. EET youth's primary concern is to enter public service jobs.
- About one in ten NEET female and one in twelve NEET male do not know what sector they want to work. The handicraft and retail sectors are the major desirable sectors for former and latter respectively. Tourism for Chattogram indigenous youth and beauty parlor for transgender youth.
- About a third of the youths do not wish to relocate beyond their home for their desired career. It is two times high for female than male. EET youths are less rigid to relocation than NEET youths. The former group is also more agnostic regarding the distance from hometown.

Current Status of Youth Soft Skill

- Around a third of the youths had heard the term "soft skills" somewhere. Comparatively, a higher proportion of youth understand how soft skills are recognized in a work environment, although it is not more than half of the youth population. Vulnerable youth are the least aware.
- Within the five PYD soft skills, youth in general were found to score more on Positive Self-Concept, Higher Order Thinking, and Social Skills. Contrarily the scores on Self-Control and Communication Skills paled in comparison.
- Vulnerable youths (i.e. indigenous, Dalit, YwD, SOGI) were found significantly lacking in comparison with mainstream youth in all five soft skills facets. In the areas of Communication Skills and Positive Self-Concept, female and/or NEET youths were more lacking. Urban youths were found with more with Self Control. Higher order thinking is only found significantly higher for older youths in comparison to younger youth.

Willingness to Training and Pay

- Although very few expressed not to participate in training, Willingness to receive only soft skills-based training is next to nothing. Training with both technical and soft skills components is the most desired in person mode.
- Travelling beyond a set area distance is the least favorable in the Khulna hub and the most allowable in the Rangpur hub. Female youths were most restrictive in case of travel distance to training center.
- One to two months of training length is more preferable to the youths regardless of their status.
- Youth with higher training potential is found to be around 30% based on the proportion of willingness to pay.

Challenges of Participation in Training

- Lack of family or peer support for training is a primary concern for female, vulnerable and NEET groups. The higher cost (from their perspective) of training is also considered a challenge for the mentioned groups. Social backlash for female youth and a lack of motivation for vulnerable youth are worth mentioning.
- In the case of online training, special interest groups claimed to have less access to the internet, lack of platform knowledge, and lack of digital skills. Lack of access to a reliable and connected digital device is an issue for vulnerable youth.
- In the case of in person training, the distance to training institute, a lack of accommodation, social anxiety, and a fixed schedule is found to be among the core issues. Physical constraints were a key issue for vulnerable youth.

Recommendations

USAID Bijoyee Project can consider the following skills training and support for the job seeker as a part of their career development:

- Identifying suitable jobs using professional platforms (e.g. bd jobs, linked in)
- Navigating the job application (includes job description understanding, company/occupational responsibility reviewing, CV writing, online-offline application to dos, networking, and follow-up)
- Navigating interviews (includes self-introduction, personal hygiene and attire, facing interviews, presentations etc.)
- Building application of workplace behavior, safety, and hygiene
- Supporting career counselling (includes clarifying career pathways, improvement requirement and opportunity discussion, and follow-ups)

Bijoyee can prioritize employer engagement through a two-step approach: pre-training orientation and post-training support.

- Employer Orientation Program: Target Audience: Informal sector employers (MSMEs) who will potentially hire Bijoyee-trained youths.
- Trained Youth Placement and On-the-Job Training: Strategic Placement: Work with employers who have participated in the orientation program and understand the value of soft skills.

To address the female onboarding challenges, a set of 5 strategies is recommended as following:

- Reframing Soft Skills Value: Conduct workshops and outreach programs specifically designed for Female NEET and their families.

- Family Consent and Support: Partner with local community leaders and social workers to engage with families of female NEET.
- Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment: Offer training sessions possibly led by female instructors who can serve as role models and mentors.
- Integration of Technical Skills: In addition to soft skills training, incorporate technical skills relevant to female-friendly, home-based, or low-mobility work opportunities.
- Addressing Stigma: Partner with local NGOs and women's empowerment groups to address societal stigmas associated with female employment and skill development.

It is recommended to provide entrepreneurship training to these returnee migrants, leveraging their international-level technical skills to facilitate self-employment. Additionally, integrating soft skill training can enhance their adaptation and success in this endeavor. Moreover, skill recognition in Bangladesh can ease the process of reintegration in the economy.

- Skill Recognition and Validation: BTEB official has recommended that program should be launched to support migrants in obtaining recognition of prior learning (RPL) certificates from the government. RPL recognizes their skills and experience gained abroad, making them more competitive in the job market.
- Streamlined Process: Bijoyee can collaborate with government agencies (e.g. NSDA, BTEB) to streamline the RPL process, ensuring efficient skill evaluation and certification of the returnee migrants.

USAID Bijoyee Project can contribute to the national level soft skills training, curriculum, competency standards, assessment, and certification system initiatives by following activities such as –

- Developing Competency Standards (CS): Bijoyee can collaborate with NSDA to define clear and measurable learning outcomes for various soft skills relevant to different job sectors.
- Piloting a Uniform Assessment and Certification System: Bijoyee can partner with NSDA to pilot a standardized assessment and certification system for soft skills training.

To address this challenge, USAID Bijoyee Project can implement a multi-pronged approach:

- Partnership and Sensitization: Develop partnerships and targeted campaigns/sensitization workshops for employers, industry associations, and ISC members. Lobby for the inclusion of soft skills competency standards in national training frameworks and curricula.
- Standardizing Terminology: Work with industry experts and training providers to establish a unified terminologies for soft skills across different sectors and develop a comprehensive glossary of soft skills with clear definitions and descriptions to ensure consistency in communication.

A comprehensive soft skills awareness campaign is proposed before launching the soft skills training program which may serve as a foundation for the training programs. The following components shall be included in the campaign but not limited to:

- Terminology Demystification: Clarify the meaning of "soft skills" and differentiate them from technical skills. Highlight their importance in the workplace and career success.
- Expanded Skill Recognition: Move beyond basic skills like communication and etiquette. Showcase a broader range of soft skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.

- Value Proposition for Youths: Demonstrate the impact of soft skills on employability, retention and job promotion. Showcase how these skills enhance communication, collaboration, and leadership, leading to career advancement.
- Value Proposition for Employers: Emphasize the economic benefits of a workforce equipped with strong soft skills. Highlight how these skills foster a positive work environment, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction.

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Chapter I

Introduction

I. Introduction

I.1 Background

The USAID Bijoyee Activity seeks to boost the development of soft skills among disadvantaged youth ages 18-35 to increase their economic and social participation including for those not in education, employment, or training (NEET) and those currently engaged (EET). The Bijoyee Activity will support skills development through the Department for Youth Development (DYD), other training providers, employer-based training, and direct provision of courses, using a locally led, inclusive approach. Working closely alongside the DYD and aiding the development of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS)'s newly established National Youth Council (NYC), Bijoyee aims to fortify youth systems in Bangladesh. Its primary goal is to deliver soft skills training to 250,000 young individuals, out of a total target of 281,200 youths placing particular emphasis on women, with 60% of the training recipients. (Figure 1). The project also targets the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized communities such as persons with disability, indigenous people, SOGI, Dalit, religious minorities etc.

The USAID Bijoyee project is being implemented through a partnership between DYD, CARE; Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP); and various youth-focused organizations, such as the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) and JAAGO Foundational and a diverse array of Bangladeshi youth-serving organizations (YSOs) with expertise in disability and accessibility (Access Bangladesh Foundation), inclusion regarding sexual orientation and gender identity (Bandhu Social Welfare Society), climate action (The Earth), dignified work (Safety and Rights Society), issues concerning indigenous youth (Tahzingdong), and youth civic engagement (Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation).

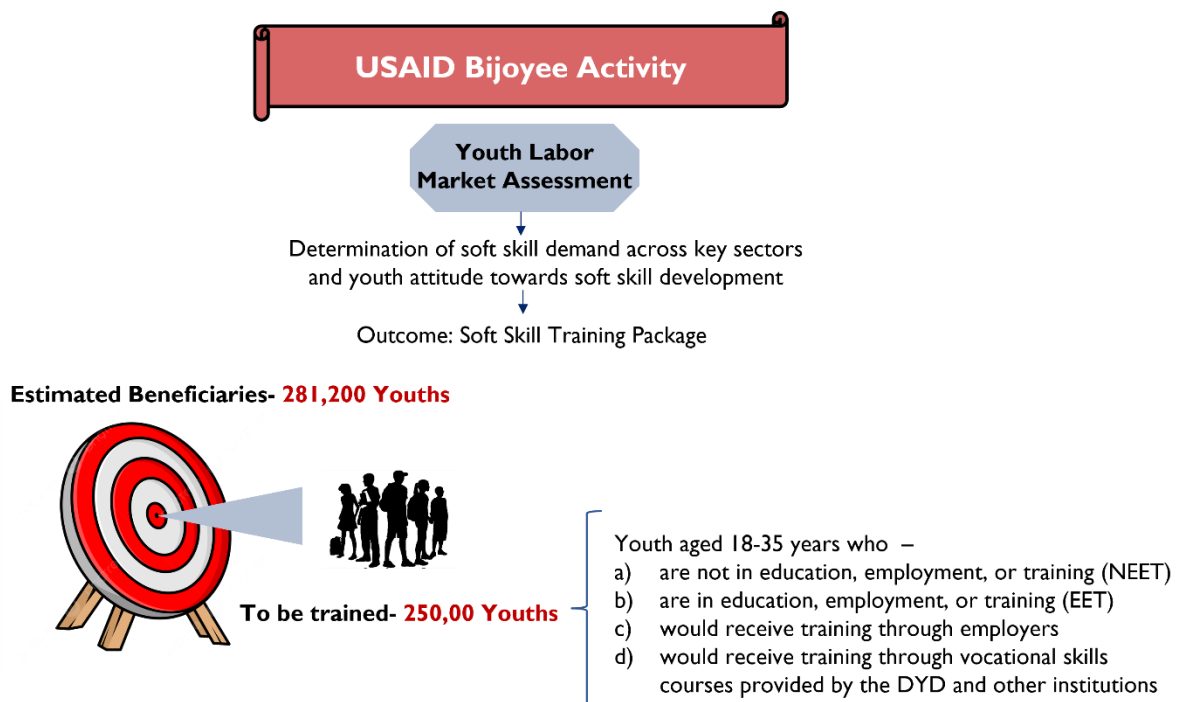


Figure 1 Overview of Bijoyee Activity soft skill training and its beneficiary

Against this backdrop, Inspira Advisory & Consulting Limited has been commissioned to carry out an inclusive youth labor market assessment in 18 districts across four target regions/hubs with an extended coverage district of Sherpur under the Mymensingh division in Bangladesh. This assessment specifically explores the perception and attitude of youth towards soft skills, and the demand for soft

skills within emerging sectors that exhibit high employment potential. It draws upon the five soft skills identified as critical for workforce success in the Positive Youth Development framework¹ (higher order thinking skills, communication, social skills, self-control, positive self-concept) while also considering other relevant skills demanded by the employers in the Bangladesh context. **Error! Reference source not found.** (Figure 2). The study not just only considered soft skills summarized in PYD toolkit but also tried to capture soft skills which are considered important in job settings such as mutual respect, gender sensitivity, empathy by the employers. Though the study did not collect data from consumers or customers, their perceptions on soft skills were explored and extrapolated from the interviews with employers.

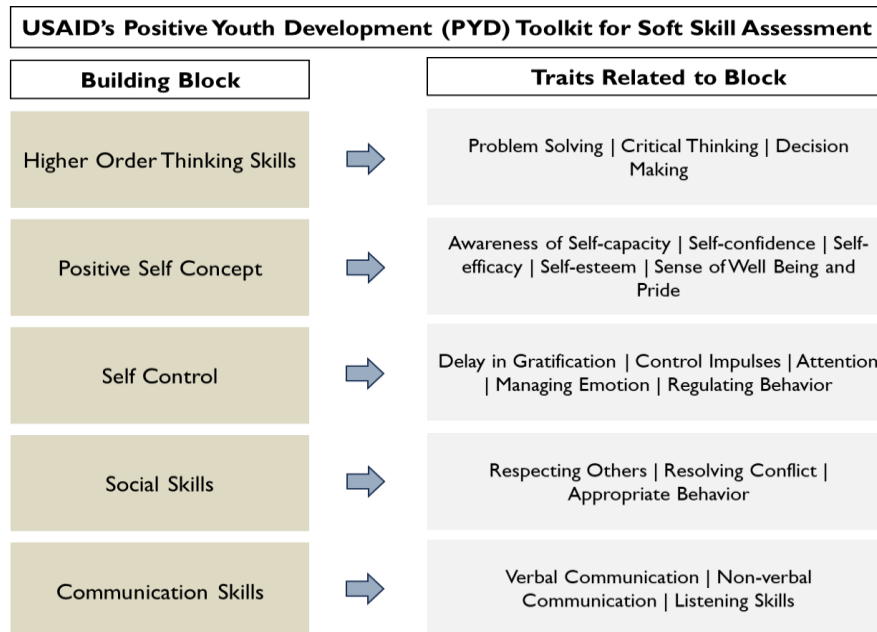


Figure 2 PYD toolkit for soft skill assessment.

Analysis findings will be shared with USAID, government stakeholders, YLOs, private sector partners, and communities of practice to enhance youth access to equitable economic opportunities, strengthen YLOs, and reinforce local youth systems.

I.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study include:

- To identify the key growth sectors along with respective occupations and skills level of the economy that are likely to see significant increases in employment in the near future in and around the above-mentioned project locations and at the national level;
- To identify the current demand for soft skills for youth in the growth sectors and perceived skill gaps from the perspectives of employers and self-employed individuals;
- To identify the factors impacting the recruitment decision of the employers such as only soft skills, only technical skills, and a combination of soft and technical skills;
- To identify potential employers along with their short-, medium- and long-term demand for skilled workers on the identified occupations;
- To identify employment opportunities along with the soft skills, need for the women, person with disabilities and indigenous youth;
- To assess youths' aspirations and attitudes towards soft skills training and their challenges;

¹ [Measuring Soft Skills Among Youth and Young Adults: Validation of a New Instrument, February 2020.](#)

- To provide recommendations on the types of soft skills required by the market segregated per sector, occupation and sex, including how they are ranked in terms of relevance/ need and by whom (employers, sectors, self-employed youth);
- To explore and recommend feasible assessment and certification options for the recommended soft skills; and
- To explore areas for policy recommendations related to soft skills development in youth success in workforce in Bangladesh

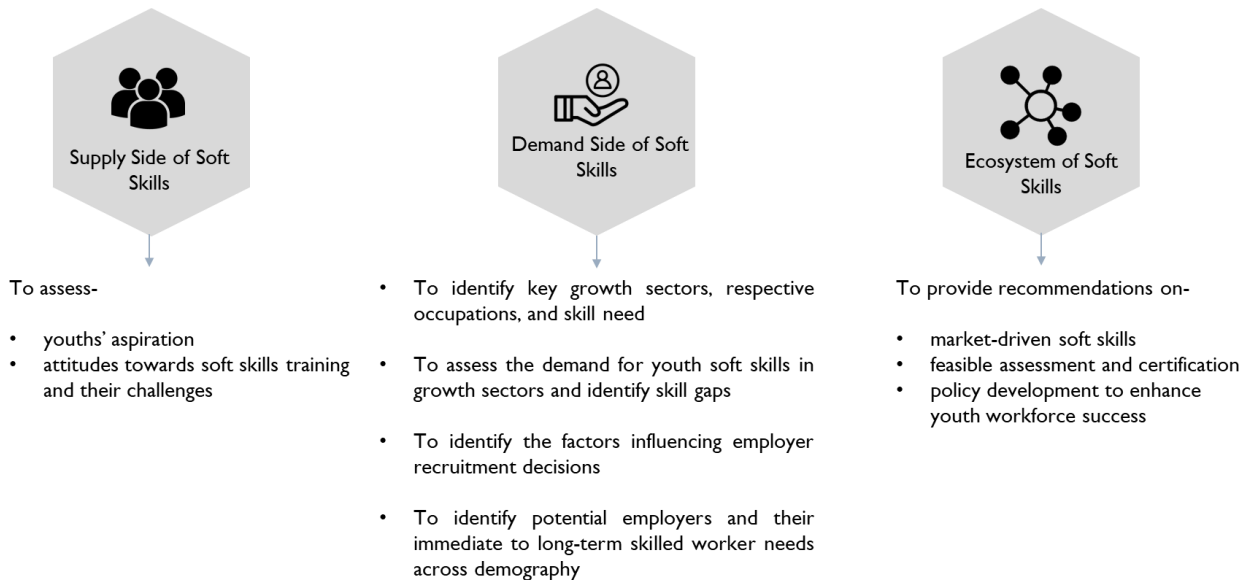


Figure 3 Objectives of the Study

1.3 Geographic Coverage of the Study

The divisional cities as well as districts that are industrialized have been considered as urban. The remaining districts have been considered peri-urban as they typically exhibit the characteristics of both urban and rural environments.

1.4 Methodology

The youth labor market assessment study adopted a mixed-method approach which has the strength of using both quantitative and qualitative data and allowed the triangulation of different types of data thereby maximizing the validity of the study.

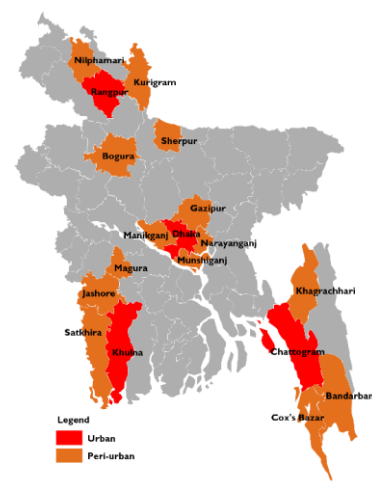


Figure 4 Geographical location of the Bijoyee Activity

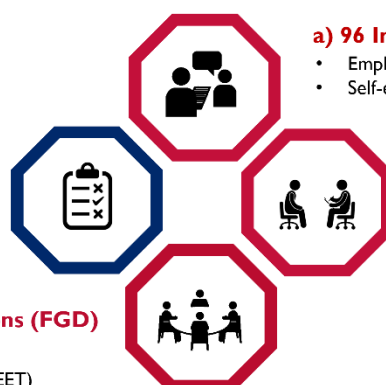
Quantitative Approach

a) 628 Youth Surveys

- Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Youth in Education and Training
- Youth in Employment

c) 20 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

- Youth Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Youth in Education and Training
- Youth in Employment



Qualitative Approach

a) 96 In-Depth Interviews (IDI)

- Employers
- Self-employed Youth

b) 57 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

- Industry Associations
- Govt. Stakeholders
- Training Service Providers
- Peer Organizations
- Partner Organizations

Figure 5: Snapshot of the methodology.

1.4.1 Desk Review

The consulting team undertook a review of existing research findings, documents, datasets, and secondary literature on the project objectives. This step facilitated a robust understanding of the project scope and assisted in designing the data collection tools. Two clusters of documents were reviewed as discussed in the following table:

Table 1 List of documents reviewed

Cluster	Documents	Information Extraction
Project Documents	Bijoyee Project document	Overview of project objectives, goals, and intended outcomes.
	Project Implementation Plan (PIP)	Understanding project strategies, interventions, and operational frameworks.
	Feed the Future Fact Sheets	Understanding the scope of different sectors such as Mechanization, Nutrition, Aquaculture etc.
Documents/ reports published by relevant government bodies and	Workforce Connections: Key soft skills that foster youth workforce success: Towards a consensus across fields by USAID	Understanding PYD framework and Identification of essential soft skills for youth's success in the workforce and using for DCT preparation.
	Positive Youth Development Framework of Youth Power	Understanding PYD framework, its connection with workforce success and youth development.
	Youth Power Action Soft Skills Assessment	Insights on developing questionnaires on understanding youth's knowledge, perception and attitude regarding PYD soft skills.

Cluster	Documents	Information Extraction
development partners	PYD Measurement Toolkit	Development of questionnaires for youth's soft skill assessment and analysis framework.
	Youth Matters Survey 2023 by BYLC	understanding youth's perception regarding soft skills.
	National industrial policy 2022	Identification of prioritized growth sectors in government plan and policies.
	Bangladesh Labor Force Survey 2022, BBS	Understand the existing dynamics of youth's employment
	Skill Gap and Youth employment in Bangladesh: an exploratory analysis by CPD	Understanding existing demand for soft skills among employers and Skill preferences of employers, skill performance of university students and graduates, and skills gap

1.4.2 Quantitative Approach

A quantitative approach was applied for collecting **youth data** and was undertaken using surveys with youth across the target regions. The threshold for youth was predefined from 18 to 35 years old. Primarily, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's sampling formula with random selection assumption. The derived value was then adjusted for non-random sample selection with a design effect of 1.5 and then finally adjusted for 5% non-response rate from youth respondents. At the inception phase of the study, the aggregated target number was 608, however, a total 628 surveys were conducted at the end. **Random** sampling technique is however applied for EET group selection. The selection of EET youth respondents was unstructured due to the high prevalence/ availability of the group. On the other hand, NEET youth respondents were selected using a **purposive** sampling method with **trial and error** due to the low availability of the group. i.e. when a potential NEET respondent is identified, the person is verified whether he/she falls under the criteria of NEET and only surveyed when found one. **Please see annex 1 for detailed sampling technique.**

Table 2 A snapshot of respondents from each hub

Hub	EET	NEET	Hub Total
Dhaka	70	116	186
Chattogram	54	94	148
Khulna	49	97	146
Rangpur	61	87	148
Overall	234	394	628

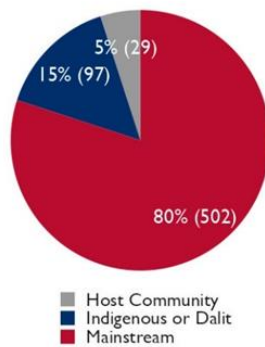
From the hub perspective, a relatively even number of respondent distributions can be observed from Table 2 **Error! Reference source not found.** except for Dhaka hub. It is due to Sherpur district being included under Dhaka division. Overall, a NEET to EET respondent ratio of 60:40 is maintained. As similar ratio is also maintained for Female to Male as described in Table 3 **Error! Reference**

source not found.. The survey also included six individuals from different sexual orientations and gender identities. They are covered under Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity (SOGI) umbrella.

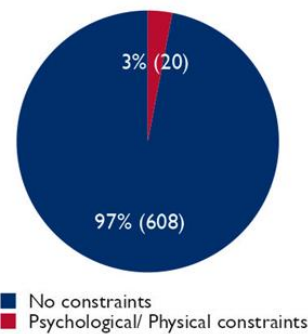
Table 3: A snapshot of youth respondents from a gender perspective

	EET	NEET	Gender Total
Female	127	254	381
Male	107	134	241
SOGI		6	6
Overall	234	394	628

Proportion of Youth Respondents from Intersectionality Perspective (%), n=628



Proportion of Youth Respondents with Disabilities (%), n=628



Type of Community	Name of the Community	Hub
Indigenous Community	Marma	Chattogram
	Chakma	
	Tanchangya	
	Mro	
	Santal	Rangpur
	Garos	Dhaka
Religious Minority	Dalit	Khulna
	Bihari	Dhaka
		Rangpur
		Khulna

Figure 7 Respondents from Communities with region

There were at least 20 youth with disability respondents surveyed, which accounts for 3% of the total number. The proportion resonates with the target of Bijoyee Activity. Youth from host communities were surveyed at 5% against the beneficiary target of 6%. Around 15% of the respondents come from indigenous and religious minority communities and this proportion overshoots the target of 1.7% of the project. At the right end of Figure 7 **Error! Reference source not found.** the top 8 respondents' communities are listed in order of survey prevalence i.e. Dalit were the most surveyed and are

found in Dhaka, Khulna, and Rangpur hubs.

1.4.3 Data Cleaning, Preparation, & Analysis

Collected survey data were stored on KoBoToolbox server. The first phase of data cleaning was performed on a day-to-day basis by locally engaged teams, i.e., when major inconsistencies were observed, the response was expunged and when minor inconsistencies were detected, the portions were redacted. The second phase of cleaning was performed before the beginning of analyses using R version 4.3.2 inside RStudio version 2023.12.1+402. Some major activities here were:

1. Looking for duplications in major variables
2. Cleaning and simplifying variable names using regular expressions (Regex)
3. Preparation of factor variables e.g., status, age class, region etc.
4. Removing redundant surveys from a few districts.

Charts, figures, and tables were developed based on Data Analysis Framework prepared earlier for this study. A number of descriptive and inferential statistics were performed over the dataset and visualized in grouped bar charts, stacked bar charts, dot plots with error bar, pie charts, and heatmaps.

Measurement of PYD Soft Skills:

A number of items (35) were prepared during the tool development phase and were deployed with the survey questionnaire to the youth respondents. The following steps were undertaken for analysis:

1. Five PYD Soft Skills were selected to be measured and Item statements were collected from USAID PYD document.²
2. The items statements were then adapted to the Bangladeshi context and language.
3. Number of items varied among different soft skills.
4. Each item was measured on a Likert scale of 4 as from **Strongly Agree** to **Strongly Disagree** as per recommendation of PYD document.
5. The items under each soft skill were quantified from 1 to 4. Negatively worded items were quantified from 4 to 1. With a view to higher score is better.
6. Pairwise scores were calculated from five different perspectives.
7. Aggregate values of the items were scaled to 100 (i.e. normalization).
8. Tests of significant difference were calculated through Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test for cohort-wise difference.

PYD Soft Skill	No. of Items
Positive Self Concept	8
Self-Control	8
Communication Skills	5
Social Skills	5
Higher Order Thinking Skills	9

Table 4 number of items for PYD skills

1.4.4 Qualitative Approach

The assessment team also conducted 20 focus group discussions (FGD) with youth, 96 In-depth interviews with employers and self-employed youth, and 57 KIs with industry associations, government stakeholders, training service providers (TSP), and development partners. **Please see Annex I for a detailed breakdown.**

Table 5 A Summary of Qualitative Approach

Qualitative Approach			
Cohort	Method	Number	Remarks
Youth (18-35)	FGD	20	- Covers the supply side of soft skills - Included NEET and EET youth - Included gender groups, SOGI, youth with disabilities, Dalit youth, and indigenous youth
Employers and Self-employed youth	IDI	96	- Covers the demand side of soft skills - Included to identify the key growth sectors and demand for soft skills in selected sectors and their future trends
Industry Associations		22	
Govt. Stakeholders		20	- Covers the demand side of soft skills - Included to identify existing soft skills curricula, mode of delivery, assessment
Training Service Providers		5	

² Omoeva, C., Gates, S., Cunha, N., Martinez, A., and Burke, H. (2020). Measuring Soft Skills Among Youth and Young Adults: Validation of a New Instrument. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower: Implementation, YouthPower Action.

	KII		method, and their importance during placement
Development Partners and Peer Organizations		10	- Covers the demand side of soft skills - Included to identify the soft skill demand in different industries and different demography's inclusion opportunities

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The study encountered the following limitations-

a) Difficulties in Covering Every Prevalent Sector across the Target Area:

While efforts were made to capture prevalence-based clusters in target areas, it was not always feasible. To address this limitation, extrapolation was employed based on available data, such as desk research to infer trends in the remaining districts.

b) Interviewing Line Managers in Replacement of General Managers:

The participation of General Managers in the interviews was limited due to their constrained schedules. To address this limitation, the study opted to conduct interviews with available line/floor managers to gather insights into the sector.

c) Difficulties in Tracing the NEET Youth:

It was difficult to find NEET youth, particularly in urban areas. It is because of the fact that the cost of living in urban areas is generally higher than in rural areas, which creates a barrier for NEET youth who may not have the financial means to support themselves in cities. To mitigate this challenge, the study extended its coverage to adjacently located unions of urban areas, which are known for their high population density and low-income status, including slum areas.

d) Difficulties in Tracing the Vulnerable Youth:

To overcome these obstacles, indigenous communities were mapped using desk research, and enumerators were dispatched to these locations to facilitate engagement. Furthermore, a snowballing approach was adopted to identify and reach out to the youth with disabilities within the target area. SOGI youths were traced with the help of partner organizations like Bandhu Social Welfare Society and Access Bangladesh Foundation.

e) Limited Opportunity of Quantifying Different Aspects through Qualitative Tools

During the methodology phase, the study team planned to conduct in-depth interviews with a representative number of the employers from different sectors to understand market size, sector's competitiveness, current workforce, demand for workers and existing gap in soft skills. It was mutually agreed with CARE Bangladesh team. Hence, it was not possible to provide demographics of the workforce such as percentage of youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups as well as disaggregated data on formal vs informal workforce in every sector as this requires survey with the employers which does not fall under the mutually agreed methodology. However, the study team tried to resort to desk research to mitigate this from available desk research as much as possible. But, due to inadequate available data from the literature review it was not possible to mention key demographics in every sector.

Chapter 2
Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA)
for Sector Shortlisting

2. Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) for Sector Shortlisting

Considering the 110 industrial and service sectors mentioned in National Industrial Policy 2022 (including the 6 priority sectors of Feed the Future: Livestock, Nutrition, Mechanization, Climate Smart Agriculture, Aquaculture, Horticulture) across the project locations, the assessment team has conducted a Rapid Market Appraisal (RMA) of the existing sectors to shortlist 10 priority sectors and 30 district wise key growth sectors and linkage value chains. The assessment team has conducted a multistage assessment to finally reach the priority sector.

2.1 Process of Rapid Market Appraisal

The RMA process consisted of a comprehensive desk review of sector assessment reports, sector roadmaps, and other regulatory documents on each sector produced by the Government authorities, followed by key informant interviews with industry associations who provided insights on future growth/employment and soft skill demand potential. The assessment team also incorporated initial triangulation visits in selected economic/industry clusters to further ascertain the data found from desk and association interviews.

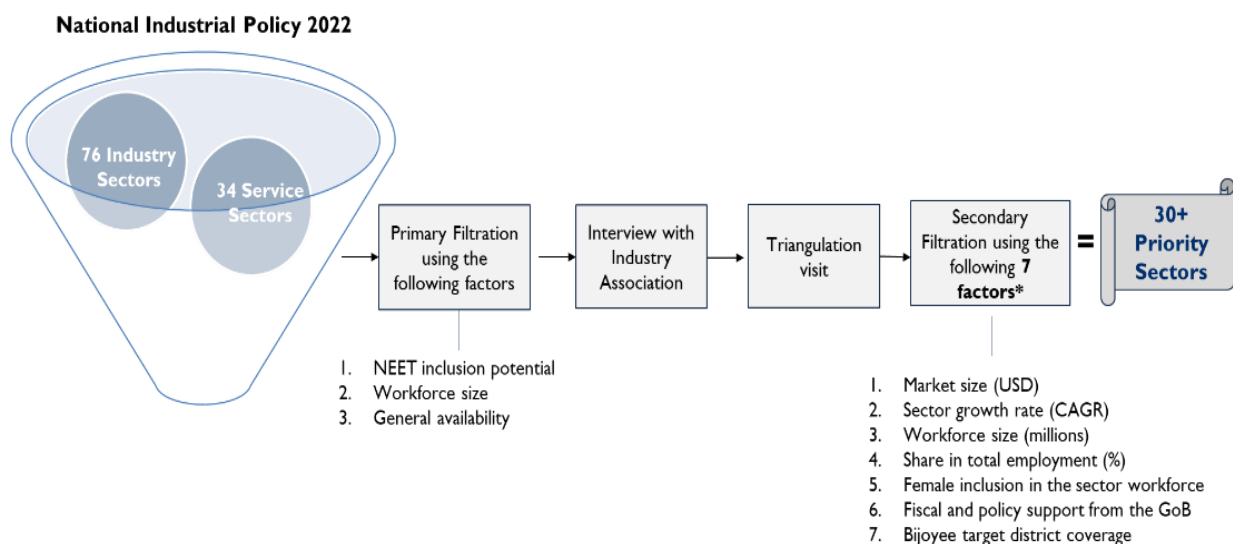


Figure 8: Process of Rapid Market Appraisal

The factors for RMA included sector size and growth that indicated the general economic opportunity that the sector offered whereas the employment growth rate indicated whether the sector had the capacity to absorb youth from NEET cohorts, and semi-skilled/un-skilled cohorts. Government policy priority and fiscal/non-fiscal incentives under the sector-specific masterplans, Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041, Eighth five-year plan, Bangladesh Industrial Policy, etc. were also in consideration. The inclusion potential of the excluded and marginalized youth including women, youth with disabilities, sexual orientation and gender inclusion (SOGI), indigenous youth, and Dalit youth in the sectors/value chains was assessed. Apart from those, sector prevalence in Bijoyee target districts was also considered in conducting RMA.

2.2 Findings of Sector Identification

The sector found by RMA was categorized into three broad economic sectors i.e. Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Service. For each sector district prevalence in the Bijoyee target district was identified. The table below shows the sectors considered and their presence in the target district.

Table 6 Shortlisted Sectors for the Assessment

SL	Cohort	Sector	District Coverage	District Name
1	Agriculture	Livestock and Poultry	10	Dhaka, Gazipur, Manikganj, Khagrachari, Chattogram, Jashore, Bogura, Rangpur, Magura, Satkhira
2		Aquaculture	10	Bogura, Jashore, Satkhira, Khulna, Magura, Cox's Bazar, Gazipur, Manikganj, Kurigram, Sherpur
3		Crops and horticulture	11	Rangpur, Bogura, Jashore, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Magura, Satkhira, Bandarban, Khagrachari, Gazipur, Manikganj
4		Salt	1	Cox's Bazar
5		Floriculture	2	Jashore, Dhaka
6		Bee	1	Satkhira
7		Mariculture	1	Cox's Bazar
8		Fruit Garden	3	Rangpur, Chattogram, Magura
9	Manufacturing	Agro-food Processing	18	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Sherpur, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachari, Bandarban, Magura, Jessore, Satkhira, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Bogura
10		Recycling	7	Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Bogura, Nilphamari
11		Construction	9	Dhaka, Chattogram, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Rangpur, Khulna, Cox's Bazar, Magura, Narayanganj
12		Transportation and Storage	9	Dhaka, Khulna, Chattogram, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Jashore, Magura
13		Furniture	7	Dhaka, Gazipur, Sherpur, Khulna, Rangpur, Khagrachari, Bandarban
14		Packaging	5	Dhaka, Khulna, Chattogram, Gazipur, Narayanganj
15		Light Engineering	6	Dhaka, Bogura, Jashore, Nilphamari, Khulna, Chattogram
16		Electronics Manufacturing	4	Narayanganj, Dhaka, Gazipur, Chattogram
17		Automobile Manufacturing	4	Jashore, Gazipur, Dhaka, Chattogram
18		Leather and Footwear	3	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj
19		Handicraft	8	Jashore, Magura, Khagrachari, Bandarban, Bogura, Rangpur, Kurigram, Sherpur

SL	Cohort	Sector	District Coverage	District Name
20		Plastic	4	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram
21		RMG	6	Dhaka, Manikganj, Chattogram, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Magura
22		RMG Accessories	4	Dhaka, Chattogram, Narayanganj, Gazipur
23		Jute	2	Bogura, Khulna
24		Ceramics	2	Gazipur, Bogura
25		Cement	2	Munshiganj, Narayanganj
26		Wig	1	Nilphamari
27		Steel	1	Chattogram
28		Cricket Bat	1	Jashore
29		Nursery	5	Bogura, Dhaka, Rangpur, Jashore and Chattogram
30	Service	Freelancing	18	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Sherpur, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, Bandarban, Magura, Jessore, Satkhira, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Bogura
31		BPO-Call center	4	Dhaka, Gazipur, Jashore, & Chattogram
32		Healthcare	6	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Rangpur, Khulna, & Chattogram
33		Retail	18	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Sherpur, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, Bandarban, Magura, Jessore, Satkhira, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Bogura
34		Repair and Maintenance Services	18	Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj, Sherpur, Cox's Bazar, Khagrachhari, Bandarban, Magura, Jessore, Satkhira, Kurigram, Nilphamari, Bogura
35		Tourism	8	Dhaka, Bandarban, Khagrachhari, Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Khulna, Sherpur, Gazipur

However, the assessment team has also studied relevant government documents to identify priority sectors. In the below table, priority sectors from Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan 2022-2041 and 8th five-year plan are mentioned.

Table 6 Priority sectors in govt documents

Name of the Document	Theme	Sector
Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan 2022-2041	Just transition program through Access to skill development	Transport, ICT, health care, tourism, agriculture, Aquaculture, construction, tanning, telecommunications, and clothing industry and storage
	Continuing sectoral growth through Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification	Jute, leather, textiles, information technology (IT) services or components, high-value agriculture
	Promotion to increase farm income and employment	Fisheries, fruit, vegetables, and dairy products, agro-processing and seaweed
8th Five-Year Plan (July 2020-June 2025)	Accelerating growth	ICT, RMG, processed food, leather and footwear, light engineering,
	Employment creation	ICT, Agriculture, tourism,
	Support and investment for export potential sectors	Leather, footwear, light engineering (bicycle and electronic products), Information Technology (IT), home textiles, agricultural and food processing,
	Modernization of Service Sector Activities	ICT, hospitality industry (hotel and restaurants) and transport support services. Retail and wholesale, construction, and Health
	Non-Factor Services Exports	Tourism, ICT services, Transportation

However, nine sectors were not in consideration in the RMA: these sectors include paper industry due to declining consumption related to digitization; tea and rubber industries due to not having enough potential for incorporating youth in the sectors and limited Bijoyee district coverage; renewable energy as it requires specialized skills set; medical equipment due to heavy dependency on imports; and telecommunication, entertainment, professional services, and chemical plants for other reasons. The following table summarizes these points.

Table 7 Sectors not in consideration

Name of the Sectors	Rationale for not Selection
Paper	According to the Bangladesh Paper Mills Association, around 50 mills that used to produce paper products only have been shuttered due to declining demand amid the pandemic. However, entrepreneurs say that the use of paper in public and private offices is declining due to the proliferation of digital media and people's growing online dependence. Academic activities being conducted online also has been contributing to a gradual decline in the demand for paper. This means that employment will be stagnant or lower trend in the paper industry in the coming years.

Name of the Sectors	Rationale for not Selection
Rubber	According to TBS, there are 18 state-owned rubber plantations available in Bangladesh. Among them, nine plantations are in Chattogram zone, five in Tangail-Mymensingh zone and four in the Sylhet zone. Besides, there are more than a hundred private and privately owned rubber plantations in Sylhet region. However, the country's total rubber production is constantly declining due to the decline in price in the domestic market and dominance of imported products. Around 300 workers' livelihoods are dependent on this rubber garden which is not significant enough to be considered for the study in terms of employment generation.
Renewable Energy	Requires specialized skills: By 2030, this sector will create 9,000 skilled jobs . Job opportunities in the renewable energy transition are concentrated in specific categories, including roles like energy technicians, storage specialists, grid engineers, energy analysts, green building designers and architects ³ . These positions require specific skills, making them more suitable for targeted and specialized youth rather than a mass workforce. Though the high-quality white-collar jobs will increase, report says a decade ago, the main pivot of solar power growth in Bangladesh was small-scale solar home systems that could be installed and repaired by low-skilled workers. But most of these are being phased out as larger solar projects are added to the expanding national grid ⁴ . As a result, blue collar jobs may not increase at a satisfactory rate.
Tea	The tea industry is primarily located in the Sylhet region. out of 167 tea establishments, one project district- Chattogram- has only 21 tea establishments. According to the Department of Social Welfare, there are only 16,593 permanent and casual tea garden laborers involved in Chattogram. This represents a lower employment offer in comparison with other industrial sectors prevalent in Chattogram.
Medical Equipment	The country's medical device market is heavily dependent on imports as per the recent report. There are more than four thousand categories of medical devices including 400 types of high-end devices and surgical items used by caregivers such as syringes, infusion sets, catheters, surgical masks, pulse oxymeters, and glucometers. More than 2,600 medical devices are registered with the country's regulatory body. Almost 90 percent of these required items need to be imported every year.
Entertainment	Requires specialized niche skills: Television media and OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms, including local entities such as I-flix and bioscope, possess distinct niches that demand specific and unique skills sets. These spaces cannot be easily replicated for a mass youth workforce, as they require specialized expertise to navigate and contribute effectively.
Telecommunications	Controlled and limited scale of operation: The telecommunication service industry, encompassing mobile/cellular and land phone services, is categorized as a 'controlled industry' in the National Industrial Policy. This designation signifies its constrained presence and operations, making it unsuitable for mass workforce replication. However, the mobile phone assembly and manufacturing industry employs only 12,000 to 15,000 workers, which shows a lower employment opportunity. ⁵
Professional Services	Demands Specialized expertise:

³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/energy/renewable-energy-create-over-9000-skilled-jobs-2030-cpd-study-722590>

⁴ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/national/bangladesh-solar-power-surge-set-to-unlock-thousands-of-green-jobs>

Name of the Sectors	Rationale for not Selection
	Professional services offered by management consulting firms, accounting firms, law firms, and engineering firms necessitate individuals with specific educational backgrounds and a diverse set of skills. The nature of these roles makes mass-scale employment replication challenging.
Chemical Plants	Limited presence and demand for technical skills: There are 94 chemical plants in the country, often producing austic soda (flake), liquid caustic bleaching power, bleaching fine, hydrochloric acid, sodium hypochlorite and liquefied chlorine etc. These plants require substantial support from foreign technicians and local specialized skilled workforce to operate.

Chapter 3

**Demand Side Analysis:
Employer's Perspective
on Soft Skills**

3. Demand Side Analysis: Employers' Perspective on Soft Skills

A series of in-depth interviews across target districts were conducted with major employers of selected sectors to identify their perception towards soft skills and demand for soft skills in the workplace. Also, interviews with local and national level associations were conducted to validate the information collected from employers and fill in any missing information regarding specific sectors. Following figure Table shows number of in-depth interviews conducted with different sub-sectors from three broad sectors.

Sector Cohort*	Urban	Peri-urban	Total
Agriculture	2	16	18
Manufacturing	23	34	57
Services	13	8	21
Grand Total			96

Figure 9 Snapshot of number of IDIs in three broad sectors

The major goals of the interviews were to identify sector-specific growth data, key occupations, soft skills requirement for the occupations, perceived skills gap, the importance of soft skills for career growth and so on.

3.1 Key Occupations, Demand for Soft Skills, and Perceived Skill Gaps in Each Sector

3.1.1 Light Engineering Sector

The light engineering sector has enormous potential to alleviate poverty through employment generation and increasing contribution to GDP. It provides support to industrial, agricultural, and other sectors of the economy by manufacturing a wide range of spare parts, casting, molds, and dice, oil & gas pipeline fittings, light machinery, etc. due to its backend support to the cement, paper, jute, textile, sugar, agriculture, food processing, railway, shipping, garments capital machinery, the light engineering sector of Bangladesh is considered to be the 'mother of all sectors.' Light engineering enterprises are scattered throughout the country and therefore can generate employment in a wider span of areas. This sector has consistently grown over the years, and one of the major contributing factors to this is the growing large domestic market demand. The following section will shed light on the current market situation, demand for workers, demand for soft skills, and inclusion scenario within the sector.

Market Scenario: The light engineering sector, considered one of the major export potential sectors, continues to grow at a rate of 13.7% according to BIDA. It was declared as the product of the year 2020 by the government. The sector has a domestic market size of \$12 billion and contributes 3 percent of the total GDP. On the other hand, it has an increasing amount of export earnings, and the projected export volume for the sector in 2030 is USD 12.56 billion.⁵ Light engineering employs 1.6 million people directly.⁶ The sector has 34 clusters in 18 districts across the country.

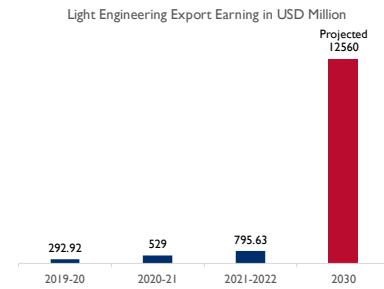


Figure 10 Export earning of light engineering sector

Sub-Sector Profile



Sub-sectors



Agricultural Machinery
(CAGR of 20%)



Textile Machinery
(25% through local sourcing)



Bicycle and motorcycle parts production
(projected to grow at a CAGR of 30%)



Electronics and Electrical parts
(CAGR of 15%)



Battery Manufacturing
(CAGR of 20%)

Figure 11 Sub-sector of light engineering

Using ship scrap from shipbreaking yards as their primary material, light engineering manufacturers are remarkably capable of producing a vast array of nearly 3,900 types of machinery, spare parts, and accessories. This impressive range includes spare parts belonging to rail engine, rail lines, automobile, jute, and textile industries, tea processing, chemical industries, fertilizer, cement, agro-food processing industry, water transport, pharmaceutical industry, construction materials, electronic and electrical accessories, telecommunication, and agri-mechanization. The large subsectors include agricultural machinery, which has larger hubs in Bogura, Jashore, and Saidpur, textile machinery has larger hubs in Dhaka and Gazipur, bicycle and motorcycle spare parts production has hubs in Dhaka, Gazipur, Rangpur, electronic and

electrical parts in Dhaka and Chattogram, and battery manufacturing in Dhaka and Gazipur.

Sector's Presence across Hubs

Bogura and Jashore districts are two of the biggest light engineering hubs in Bangladesh. There are close to 100 foundries and 1500 light engineering workshops in Bogura alone which gives employment for more than 15,000 people. In Jashore, there are around 20 foundries and 1,500 workshops creating employment for over 8,000 people. In Dhaka district, only in Dholaikhal and Jinjira area, there are around 7,500 light engineering workshops which employ 60,000 people.⁷ Similarly, Saidpur of Nilphamari under Rangpur division is regarded as another hub for the sector as it consists of 500+ personnel in 100+ enterprises.

Table 8 Light engineering presence across hubs

District	No of Enterprises	Workforce	Major Cluster
Bogura	1,600+	15,000+	Railway market, BSCIC, Fulbari, Tin Rasta mor, Char Rasta Mor
Nilphamari	100+	500+	Bangabandhu Road, (Saidpur)
Jashore	1,500+	8,000+	Jhumhumpur, Chachra, Rajarhat, R N Road, Kanaitola, Bokchor,

⁵ [https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views-reviews/burgeoning-prospect-for-the-light-engineering-in-bangladesh-1699713392#:~:text=Light%20Engineering%20Road%20Map%20prepared,BSS%2C%2016%20January%202023\).](https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views-reviews/burgeoning-prospect-for-the-light-engineering-in-bangladesh-1699713392#:~:text=Light%20Engineering%20Road%20Map%20prepared,BSS%2C%2016%20January%202023).)

⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/light-engineering-keeps-growing-yet-below-potential-458010>

⁷ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/corporates/businesses-call-recognising-dholaikhal-jinjira-light-engineering-hubs-688122>

Khulna	1,000	5,000	Boyra, Goalkhali, Sheikh Para, Sher-e-Bangla (Amtola), Bishhoroad
Dhaka	7,500+	60,000	Dholaikhal, Tipu Sultan Road, Narinda, Taher Bagh, Banagram, Jinjira, Keraniganj

*Source: KII Extrapolation and Field Observation

Growth Factors

The government has planned for dedicated light engineering industrial parks that will be set up in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Jashore, Bogura, and Narshingdi districts to implement the immense potential of the industry for national economic progress. This will create additional jobs for the youth of the country. However, no timeline has been scheduled for light engineering industrial park, but the government is committed to ensure development of all Economic Zones (EZ) and industrial parks by 2041.

Table 9 Proposed light engineering parks

Proposed Industrial Park	Number of jobs to be created	Project Completion Date
Munshiganj	1,650 ⁸	Near completion
Jashore	0.2 million people ⁹	2026
Bogura	0.1 million people ¹⁰	N/A
Narayanganj	N/A	
Narshingdi		
Dhaka		

Additionally, technological advancement in the agricultural sector also fosters growth for the agri-machinery sub-sector and will continue to do so in coming years. On the other hand, import substitution also fosters growth for the sector. CNC machine's introduction in the light engineering sector also creates opportunities to produce import substitute machines and spare parts for different industrial sectors.

Demand for Workers:

Demand for new workers

Table 10: Demand for new workers in Light Engineering Sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprises	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Bogura	Small	1,600	90	1440	9000	5	450
	Medium		9	144	3750	7	263
	Large		1	16	2250	10	225
	Small	100	90	90	300	5	15

⁸<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/entrepreneurs-look-80-subsidy-land-munshiganj-light-engineering-park-383278>

⁹ <https://www.prothomalo.com/business/industry/0ybeupsoz6>

¹⁰<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangla/%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%82%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A6%E0%A7%87%E0%A6%B6/news-details-160794>

Nilphamari	Medium		9	9	125	5	6
	Large		1	1	75	10.0	8
Jashore	Small	1,500	90	7200	4800	7	336
	Medium		9	720	2000	8	640
	Large		1	80	1200	10	800
Khulna	Small	1,000	90	900	3000	5	150
	Medium		9	90	1250	7	88
	Large		1	10	750	10	75
Dhaka	Small	7,500	90	6750	36000	5	1800
	Medium		9	675	15000	7	1050
	Large		1	75	9000	10	900

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Where Dhaka district will offer the most opportunity and Nilphamari will offer the least.

Occupations that are in High Demand¹¹

The entry and mid-level occupations mentioned in the table below are identified from interviews with the industry enterprises, and associations. Some of the occupations for entry level positions such as welder lathe machine operator, and grinder will be in high demand for the sector. It is because there is a large number of enterprises that are still dependent on manual work rather than incorporating automation and technologies. Moreover, due to the advancement of agri-machinery sub-sector and increasing demand for domestically produced complete machinery or spare parts, demand for occupations like welder and lathe machine operators will remain high in demand. On the other hand, for mid-level position, demand for CNC machine operator will increase in the future due to increasing demand for quality product ensuring precision for the medium and large enterprises.

Occupations that are in Low Demand¹²

On the other hand, in small and medium enterprises, demand for foundry workers will remain stagnant in this sector. It is because many foundries have reduced their production since COVID-19 due to the higher cost of raw material price added with surge of using submersible pumps in the household level.¹³ Similarly, for metal furniture related work, demand for steel fabricator and rob binders also will also remain stagnant in demand. Because due to popularity of furniture made of wood, laminated board and plastic led to a gradual decline in the demand for steel furniture over the last few years.¹⁴

Table 11 Major occupation in light engineering

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Dhalai Master	Mid	- Work attention - Leadership	Self-control
CNC machine operator	Mid		
CAD-CAM Designer	Mid		

¹¹ High demand refers to the occupations that are in high demand or have potential to increase in future

¹² Low demand refers to occupations that are stagnant and/or diminishing

¹³ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/tube-well-makers-passing-hard-times-2973716>

¹⁴ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/tk10000-crore-steel-furniture-industry-verge-collapse-205084>

Welder	Entry	• Lack of awareness of safety protocols • Unnotified absenteeism • Concentration on details	• Positive self-concept • Communication • Higher-order thinking • Self-control
Steel Binding and Fabricator	Entry		
Lathe Machine Operator	Entry		
Rod Binder	Entry		
Grinder	Entry		
Electrical Installation and Maintenance	Entry		
Foundry work Worker	Entry		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations and black ones are found in the industry, but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Recruitment Practices in the Sector

Recruitment in the light engineering industry happens mostly through references from friends and family, colleagues, and people from nearby communities. Almost no presence is observed in placement with TVET institutions and light engineering industries for hiring entry-level positions. However, for mid-level occupations like CNC machine operators and CAM-CAD designers, employers either connect with TVET providers or recruit from any existing enterprises. There is no educational qualification required for the entry-level positions in micro, cottage and small enterprises. However, for medium and large enterprises, candidates must complete 8 grades and/or diploma in relevant skills.

On the other hand, for mid-level positions of CNC machine operator and CAD-CAM designers, candidates must have to complete minimum 10th grade or secondary school certificate (SSC).¹⁵

Demand for Soft Skills in the Sector

Soft Skills during Recruitment

Physical fitness is preferred for all entry-level workers (except for Grinder). Additionally, some occupations (Metal Fabricators, Welders, and Lathe Machine Operators) require previous technical work experience. For entry level workers, experience of 0-3 years is usually sought after by the employers during the recruitment. On the other hand, for mid-level workers 4-10 years of experience are generally considered during recruitment. Soft skills are also considered in rare cases for the above-mentioned positions only in large and medium enterprises where 1-2 questions are asked regarding soft skills out of total 10 questions during recruitment. On the other hand, micro to cottage enterprises only examine the technical skills of the candidates. For example, adaptation to the workplace and industry, a hardworking mentality, and an accepting mindset are the skills that are taken into consideration while recruiting new employees for entry-level positions. However, a substantial number of entry-level employees are children under 18.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Workplace

Apart from the soft skills during recruitment, some skills are more important during their stay at the workshop. Having better concentration on details (attention) and creating parts flawlessly is the first requirement in the industry. Due to excessive work pressure, and temperature in the workshop and foundries, they often lose attention which incurs wastage resulting in financial loss for the business.

¹⁵<https://seip-fd.gov.bd/labor/study-report-on-labor-market-and-skills-gap-analyses-of-light-engineering-sector-in-bangladesh/>

Employees also need to communicate with colleagues and customers, show appropriate behavior, and not indulge in quarreling and conflicts with any of them. Possessing these skills, an employee can get promoted quickly or get a raise in the factory.

Existing Gaps in Soft Skills

Entry-level employees have gaps in positive self-concept, higher-order thinking, and self-control. They often exhibit deficiencies in safety protocol awareness showing a lack of sense of well-being and safety from hazards. Employees often also lack skills regarding anger management in the workplace which leads to conflict and use of bad language and slang towards other colleagues. Similarly, attention to detail while listening to work orders, and also while continuing work is one of the primary gap areas. This also happens due to work pressure and excessively high temperatures; it is because of the fact that light engineering industries usually do not have enough airflow in the workplace. This leads to material wastage and loss of money if the work does not match the needs or demands of the client.

On the other hand, for mid-level workers such as CNC machine operators and Dhalai masters, employers mentioned that they lack work attention and leadership skills in the workplace. Task and pressure management is primarily responsible for lack of attention. They also suffer while in charge of leading a team. This hampers the productivity of the work of subordinates and requires the presence of business owners/managers to oversee the activities and mitigate any problems arising in the workshop/factories.

Inclusion Scenario

Due to the labor-intensive nature of the industry, this sector is predominantly dominated by males. And especially, youth as over three fourths of the workforce is youth.¹⁶ On the other hand, less than 10% of women work in the industry mostly in low intensity jobs in foundry level like bedding, polishing, cleaning, sorting and packaging and generally their roles are limited to the mentioned tasks only with minimal opportunity of room for growth.¹⁷

On the other hand, more than 60% of Bihari communities work in the light engineering industry in Saidpur.¹⁸ However, light engineering sector does not have existing workforce from Dalit community as they do not have interest in joining this sector and do not possess skills as well to enter the sector. This is also due to their social exclusion that they do not consider this sector as an employment source. However, there is a growing trend of installation of CNC machines in the large and medium enterprises. If youth from Dalit can be trained in this added with sensitization of employers for inclusive recruitment, there might be a room for their entry point in this sector.

However, there are limited opportunities for persons with disabilities in the sector due to it being a labor-intensive industry. Youth with disabilities can be employed only in large and medium enterprises in less labor-intensive positions such as manager, accountant etc.

3.1.2 Handicraft

Handicraft items from Bangladesh are exported to over 50 countries and the products with the highest export volumes include jute goods, baskets made of hogla leaves, bamboo and cane, floor mats and carpets, nakshi kantha and nakshi bedsheets, and items made through recycling.¹⁹ At present, 60% of Bangladeshi handicrafts are exported to Europe. Other key markets include North America and the Middle East. Employers mentioned that the pandemic has boosted the demand for Bangladeshi handicrafts as European countries are avoiding importing products from China and are taking an increased interest in using natural products.

¹⁶ KII extrapolation from industry employers and associations.

¹⁷ KII Extrapolation from SMEs in target locations and associations during field visit.

¹⁸ KII extrapolation from interview with industry insiders and association from Saidpur

¹⁹ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/handicraft-exports-untouched-pandemic-202444>

The country's handicrafts sector has empowered women and created jobs for deprived and underprivileged women. Around 56 percent of the total workforce are women.²⁰ Many of them have become self-sufficient in cottage industries while a bulk of women have become entrepreneurs. Housewives, widows, and women with physical disability are involved in this industry. Only 2-3 percent of the persons with disabilities are employed in the sector.²¹ The following section will provide the market scenario, sub-sector profile, handicrafts presence across Bijoyee project hubs, and demand for workers as well as soft skills.

Market Scenario

The Handicraft sector is one of the most potential sectors for entrepreneurship development and women empowerment. The sector maintains a growth rate of 9 percent and was declared as the product of the year 2024. The domestic market for handicrafts is worth around \$900 million annually and handicrafts exports fetched \$29.75 million in fiscal year 2022-23 after earning \$42.83 million in 2021-22, according to the Export Promotion Bureau. At least 40,000 entrepreneurs are involved in the sector, which directly and indirectly employs 5 million people.²² Women constitute more than half (56%) of the total workforce size.

Sub-Sector Profile

Handicrafts in Bangladesh are dominated by Bamboo and cane-based products (43.8 percent). It has larger hubs in Bogura, Rangamati, Sherpur, and Chattogram, followed by pottery (19.2 percent) which has a prevalence in Sherpur, Rangpur, and Bogura. Similarly, Nakshi Kantha is prevalent in Jashore, Khulna and Bandarban, Cox's Bazar, Bogura, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar. On the other hand, Jewellery made from brass and metal items is prevalent in Bogura and Shatranji has a stronghold in Rangpur.

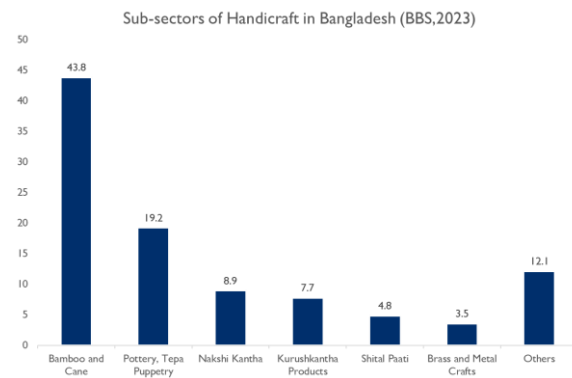


Figure 12 Sub sector of Handicraft

Sector's presence across hubs

The sector is dispersed across many districts of Bangladesh. Enterprises are mostly home-based but in Rangpur and Bogura, many export-oriented large enterprises have been established. In CHT areas handicraft producers are dispersed across the hilly areas. Most of the trading takes place in Sadar upazilas. Rangpur is the largest hub for handicrafts. Sataranji Palli in Nishbetganj stands as one of the largest clusters for handicrafts catering to some large export-oriented handicraft manufacturing enterprises. Similarly, in Magura, Sadar, and Nalia villages in Shalikha upazila, Narapati village of Shalikha, and Langalband of Sreepur are some big clusters. Sherpur, Binodpur, Mirzapur, Khanpur, and Khanpur Dahopara are clusters in Bogura.

Table 12 handicraft presence across hubs

District	Enterprises	Workforce	Sub-Sector	Major Cluster
Khagrachari	300-350 Families	900-1,000	Bamboo-based	Scattered all over the district

²⁰ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/handicraft-makers-struggling-capital-shortfall-survey-3459126>

²¹ KII extrapolation from interviews with handicraft employers and association

²² <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/handicrafts-declared-product-the-year-2024-3550446>

Bandarban	900-1,000 Families	3,000+	Bamboo-based	Scattered all over the district
Magura	500-700 Families	2,000-2,500	Hand-stitched products	Sadar and Nalia villages in Shalikha upazila, Narapati village of Shalikha, and Langalband of Sreepur
Jashore	500+	22,000+ ²³	Nakshi Kantha	Lebutola in Sharsha, Khejura village in Monirampur and other villages of Sadar, Chuga,cha and Jhikargacha
Rangpur	500-550 enterprises including 70 large ones	50,000+	Nakshi Kantha	Sataranji Palli in Nishbetganj
Bogura	-	10000+	Nakshi Kantha and cane-based products	Sherpur, Binodpur, Mirzapur, Khanpur, and Khanpur Dahopara, Hapunia
	238 jewellery shops	40,000 people	Jewellery	Dharampur area, locally known as Gohona Gram (jewellery village), Nishindara, Jhorgari, and Atapara ²⁴

Source: KII extrapolation and field visit

Growth Factors

Growing demand for environmentally friendly products, as people across the globe are becoming more and more conscious about the environment, and their falling for biodegradable, handmade items is one of the main drivers of growth for the sector. Moreover, to promote this sector's growth, the government provides an 8 percent cash incentive for exports of handicraft products²⁵.

Demand for Workers

Handicrafts are growing silently across the country. But the trend is household-based production rather than through formal establishments. Many indigenous families in CHT areas are involved in handicraft manufacturing but most of them consider it as a side business for extra earnings. Nevertheless, there are some small and medium-sized enterprises in many districts such as Bogura and Rangpur which are primarily export-oriented.

²³<https://www.tbsnews.net/bangla/%E0%A6%85%E0%A6%B0%E0%A7%8D%E0%A6%A5%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%80%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF/news-details-99894>

²⁴<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/trade/handcrafted-jewellery-trade-making-women-bogura-self-reliant-217114>

²⁵ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/handicrafts-declared-product-the-year-2024-3550446>

Demand for new Workers

Table 13: Demand for new workers in Handicraft sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Khagrachari	Small	350	70	245	600	5	30
	Medium		25	88	250	7	18
	Large		5	18	150	10	15
Bandarban	Small	1000	70	700	1800	5	90
	Medium		25	250	750	7	53
	Large		5	50	450	10	45
Magura	Small	700	70	490	1500	5	75
	Medium		25	175	625	7	44
	Large		5	35	375	10	38
Jashore	Small	500	70	350	13200	5	660
	Medium		25	125	5500	7	385
	Large		5	25	3300	10	330
Rangpur	Small	550	70	385	30000	5	1500
	Medium		25	138	12500	7	875
	Large		5	28	7500	10	750
Bogura	Small	234	70	164	6000	5	300
	Medium		25	59	2500	7	175
	Large		5	12	1500	10	150

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Where Rangpur district will offer the most opportunity and Khagrachari will offer the least.

Occupations that are in High Demand

For entry level positions, demand for tailors and craftsmen will remain high as handicraft production mostly requires manual labor.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Due to the continuing decline of the handloom machinery across the country, the entry-level occupation of handloom operators may see a decrease in demand. Similarly, for mid-level position of supervisor, the demand will be stagnant as only the large and medium enterprises require to hire supervisors. Because, for cottage and micro level enterprises, owners themselves perform the role of the supervisors.

Table 14 Major occupation in the handicraft

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Tailor	Entry	• Willingness to learn • Attention • Ability to replicate design	• Higher-order thinking • Self-control
Craftsman	Entry		
Handloom operator	Entry		
Supervisor	Mid	• Critical Thinking • Client Handling • Verbal Communication	• Social skills • Communication
Note: All occupations are found in the industry level, but not enlisted in BTEB/NSDA list			

Recruitment Practices in the Sector

As this sector is mostly family-based, workers are not recruited by following standard procedures. However, in small and medium enterprises employers hire employees now and then. In the case of recruitment for entry-level workers, employers normally emphasize technical skills like weaving, designing, and handloom operation. But in export-oriented organizations for mid-level positions like supervisors, employers consider both technical and soft skills. Usually, this recruitment happens in two ways, firstly, through hiring from references or from peer companies and secondly, recruitment also happens through references to recruit a skilled worker who completed the minimum tertiary level of education and/or completed courses from government institutions for the sector. They check their background from the references and try to understand their skills through demonstration or taking an interview. Soft skills such as team management, communication, and client handling are considered during recruitment for supervisor positions. Soft skills such as team management, communication, and client handling are considered during recruitment for supervisor positions.

Demand for Soft Skills within the Sector

Soft Skill Requirement during Recruitment

Successful recruitment in this sector mostly depends on the candidate's willingness to learn, attention and the ability to replicate designs. Therefore, during recruitment, employers try to find out if the employees have self-confidence in their abilities and about their attention to details. It is because of their self-confidence that they will not hesitate to recreate any complex tasks. Often, they find people with a lack of confidence procrastinating for hours to decipher a new or complex design.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Workplace

Employees with greater critical thinking abilities such as color combination, design ideas and creativity will get quick promotion in the workplace. For promotion, employees also need to manage the team of workers efficiently, resolve conflicts if they arise within the workplace through better problem-solving and social skills.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

For entrepreneurs, critical thinking abilities such as business expansion and new market capturing are to be developed. In absence of that, they remain operating at a small scale. Client handling and verbal and written communication skills are two other crucial skills that the employees and entrepreneurs lack in the sector. Due to not having good verbal communication skills, they do not clearly present their business the public forums and also suffer while dealing with customers.

Inclusion Scenario

According to latest Survey on Handicraft Establishment Bangladesh 2022, women comprise of 56 percent of total workforce²⁶. Of these, one fourth of the girls and women (24%) are aged 15-34 where only 11.3 percent of male youth of the same age group work in the industry.²⁷ This sector also offers opportunities for persons with disabilities as 2-3 percent of persons with disabilities are currently employed in the sector.

For the indigenous communities, especially in Khagrachhari and Bandarban, handicraft traditionally offers a greater employment opportunity as more than fourth thousand people are now currently involved in this sector. Although they were progressing steadily due to higher demand for their products across the country, the number became lesser due to the inadequate input supplies such as Banana fiber etc.

On the other hand, in an interview with TransEnd, a dedicated youth-led platform for SOGI people for employment, It was revealed that less than 1 percent of SOGI people are currently involved in handicraft sector.²⁸

On the other hand, the indigenous communities in CHT areas and Sherpur are traditionally involved in the handicraft sector as nearly 4 thousand people from different indigenous communities of Bandarban and Khagrachhari are engaged in bamboo based and banana fiber-based products. Most of the persons involved in CHT area are youth and above 90% of them are women.²⁹ Although they are currently facing problems due to insufficient raw material.



Figure 13 Indigenous women working in handicraft factory

3.1.3 Tourism Industry

Bangladesh stuns with its exquisite natural beauty. The landmass of the country constitutes a number of beautiful places and tourist destinations including rivers, seacoasts, religious places, waterfalls, hills, etc. Bangladesh is also home to three of the world's most treasured cultural landmarks: the Sundarbans, the Sixty-Dome Mosque, and the Buddhist Vihara ruins at Paharpur – all designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Domestic and international tourists flock to Bangladesh to experience its beauty and tranquility and hence, this sector is regarded as a promising catalyst for the economic development of the country and employment opportunities for the youth. The recently formulated Tourism Master Plan also government's intentions to boost the tourism sector. However, there is a scarcity of skilled workers in the sector and a visible gap in some soft skills. The following section provides a glimpse of the overall industry, its geographical presence across Bijoyee hubs, the demand for workers within the industry, and information regarding the soft skills of prospective and existing employees.

Market Scenario

²⁶<http://nsds.bbs.gov.bd/storage/files/1/Publications/Survey%20on%20Handicraft%20Establishment%20Bangladesh%202022.pdf>

²⁷<http://nsds.bbs.gov.bd/storage/files/1/Publications/Survey%20on%20Handicraft%20Establishment%20Bangladesh%202022.pdf>

²⁸ KII with TransEnd

²⁹ KII extrapolation with the handicraft associations from Bandarban and Khagrachhari

The tourism sector contributes slightly more than 3 percent to the national GDP³⁰ with \$13.8 billion in revenue. Also, the industry has achieved an average growth of 15 percent annually, excluding the pandemic period.³¹ The sector accounts for 8.07 percent of the total employment of the country. According to the data from BBS,³² around 5 million are directly or indirectly employed in the tourism and hospitality sector across the country.³³ On the other hand, the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) has recently finalized the much-anticipated **Tourism Master Plan**³⁴ with the goal of **attracting 5.57 million foreign tourists annually by 2041** and fostering the creation of 21.94 million jobs within the sector.³⁵

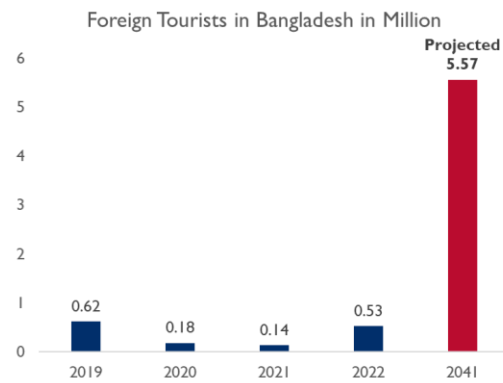


Figure 14 Foreign tourist in Bangladesh

Sub-Sector Profile

Bangladesh is endowed with various natural attractions, including beaches, forests, waterfalls, sanctuaries, rivers, lakes etc. One of the most popular sites for ecotourism in Bangladesh is the Sundarbans. Sundarbans is the world's largest mangrove forest and is also famous for its wildlife, especially the Royal Bengal Tiger. The three Hilly Districts of Rangamati, Khagrachari, and Bandarban are home to several indigenous communities with discrete cultures and rituals. Sajek Valley, which is another hilly area, is currently one of the most popular tourist spots for eco-tourism. Garo Pahar of Sherpur is also a great place for community-based eco-tourism. Riverine tourism is another form of tourism prevalent in the country as the country is home to a total of 907 rivers and 57 international rivers.³⁶ The government is also focusing on the development of riverine tourism as after the inauguration of Padma bridge, Riverine Tourism is again in consideration. River-cruising is one of the best tourism activities in Bangladesh during the winter. Tour operators organize river cruises frequently as per the demands of both domestic and foreign tourists. During the cruise, tourists get mesmerized at the idyllic beauty of rural Bangladesh.

Trekking, a form of adventure tourism in CHT hilly areas, has become popular over the last decades. Especially trekking to mountains and waterfalls is the primary activity in CHT areas. Besides, island hopping, scuba diving, kayaking, and parasailing in Cox's Bazar are also becoming popular. On the other hand, for beach tourism, different sea beaches and islands exist in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar such as Cox's Bazar Beach, Saint Martin Island, Maheshkhali Island, Shahparir Dwip, Chera Dwip, Patenga and Sitakunda beaches, and Sonadia Island are some of the exemplary names for beach tourism.

Moreover, the country is home to a huge number of indigenous communities and has deep-rooted historical places belonging to different eras of the emperors, as well as diverse religious and cultural places and activities, it offers tourists an excellent chance to visit archaeological and historical places such as Mahasthangarh in Bagura, Zamindar bari in Rangpur, Bogura and other areas, as well as spiritual places like different mosques, Buddha Vihar, temples, etc. and also ethno tourism in different indigenous communities residing in Khagrachari, Bandarban, and Sherpur. Similarly, rural areas of the country during different seasons offer tourists to enjoy rural tourism as well. Lastly, MICE tourism refers to the segment of the tourism industry that focuses on hosting meetings, incentives,

³⁰<https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/blog/mapping-tourists-mind-introduce-and-nurture-data-driven-decision-making-culture-tourism-sector-creating-informal-employment>

³¹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/tourism-fared-well-2023-despite-jitters-3505416>

³² <https://businesspostbd.com/back/bangladesh-tourism-to-enter-new-era-2022-12-27>

³³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/tourism-master-plan-aims-attract-557m-tourists-annually-2041-707870>

³⁴ <https://file.portal.gov.bd/uploads/8ef2a505-c131-4a8f-b6d0-2ac4760cc936//6316c406a6316c406a9807875210649.pdf>

³⁵ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/tourism-master-plan-aims-attract-557m-tourists-annually-2041-707870>

³⁶ <https://en.prothomalo.com/environment/xyyqmcgwmo>

conferences, and exhibitions or events. This form of tourism not only attracts visitors but also has the potential to greatly benefit a country's economy.

Sector Presence across Hubs

Cox's Bazar, the country's most visited destination, is already well-connected by road and air with the rest of the country. Cox's Bazar is now connected by train after the inauguration of the station and train. The rail link has added new vigor to the beach town's booming hospitality industry. 17 percent of local tourists, numbering in the millions, visit Cox's Bazar each year.³⁷ To draw more international tourists as mentioned in the Tourism Master Plan, works are underway to internationalize the Cox's Bazar airport. According to primary data collection, there are 450+ hotels in Cox's Bazar which employ around 13,000 people.

Following the route of Cox's Bazar, tourism in Sundarbans continues to soar after COVID-19. Moreover, the construction of the Padma Bridge makes it easier for tourists to visit Sundarbans through the Khulna belt. According to the tour operator of Sundarbans (TOAS), there are 120+ hotels in the region catering to tourists on the move for Sundarbans. It also created employment opportunities for 2,500+ people. Eco and adventure tourism and cruise ships are the primary sub-sectors for the Sundarbans.

Similarly, tourists tend to visit hilly areas of Khagrachari, Bandarban, and different tourist spots in Chattogram. There are more than 100+ hotels in Bandarban and 60 hotels in Khagrachari that ease the accommodation of the tourists. Over 1,000 people are involved in Bandarban and 500+ people are involved in Khagrachari directly. Moreover, community-based tourism is also getting popularized in Sherpur.

Table 15 Employment within tourism sector

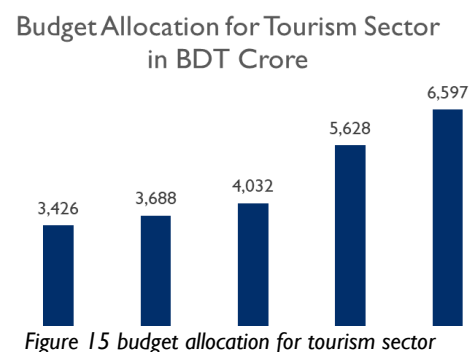
District	No of Enterprises	Workforce
Khagrachari	50-60 hotels	500+
Bandarban	100+ hotels	1000+
Cox's Bazar	450 hotels	9,000-13,000
Khulna	120 hotels	2,000-2,500

*Source: Primary Data collection

Growth

The tourism sector continues to receive increased funding allocations as a total of around \$600 million has been allocated for the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry in the proposed budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year aiming at upgrading the air transport system as well as expanding the tourism industry to meet the global standards. The allocation in the proposed budget is 969 crore BDT more than the revised budget for the 2022-23 fiscal that was 5,628.³⁸ Since 2019, the sector has received a 14 percent increase in year-on-year

Factor



³⁷ <https://www.thedailystar.net/recovering-covid-reinventing-our-future/times-change-so-must-we/news/coxs-bazar-ready-and-waiting-more-tourists-2966331>

³⁸ <https://www.bssnews.net/national-budget-2023-2024/128572>

budget allocation. BTB has also formulated 10 development project proposals which will require around \$1.18 billion investment, mostly private, in the next 15 years. Of the total sought amount, private investors-local and foreign- will have the opportunity to invest \$1.07 billion for the development of tourist zones in Kuakata, Padma Bridge, Shahpori Dwip, Sundarbans, Shalbon Bihhar, Sompura Mahabhihara, Lawachara, Tanguar Haor, Padma Char and Nazirtek areas which are categorized as an integrated tourism zone, multi-zone development, site development, and special tourism zone. They will mainly invest in constructing star hotels, resorts, amusement parks, and other luxury facilities. Besides, the government will also invest \$105.5 million to develop infrastructural facilities like roads, electricity, and security.³⁹ These investments will create further jobs for the sector and minimize the unemployment rate.

Moreover, 3 tourism parks in Cox's Bazar are in progress as shown in the table below. This will create an additional 200,000 jobs for the people in the near years.

Table 16 Proposed tourism parks

Tourism Park	Employment Generation	Capacity
Sabrang Tourism Park	200,000 people in the next 8 years ⁴⁰	39,000 domestic and foreign tourists
Naf Tourism Park		-
Sonadia Eco-tourism Park		10,000 tourists would be allowed every day there

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 17: Demand for new workers in Tourism sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Khagrachari	Small	60	70	42	300	10	30
	Medium		25	15	125	10	13
	Large		5	3	75	15	11
Bandarban	Small	100	70	70	600	10	60
	Medium		25	25	250	12	30
	Large		5	5	150	15	23
Cox's Bazar	Small	450	70	315	7800	10	780
	Medium		25	113	3250	12	390
	Large		5	23	1950	15	293
Khulna	Small	120	70	84	1500	10	150

³⁹ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/govt-seeks-over-1bn-private-investment-tourism-599138>

⁴⁰ <https://beza.gov.bd/special-tourism-park/>

	Medium		25	30	625	12	75
	Large		5	6	375	15	56

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 10% to 15% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Cox's Bazar district will offer the most opportunity and Khagrachari will offer the least.

Occupations that are in High Demand

Shortage of skilled manpower is one of the key challenges for the sector right now as mentioned by the insiders.⁴¹ There is continuous demand for skilled workers in the sector. For entry-level positions, there is a higher demand for front office management executives, housekeeping, and food and beverage service executives in all of the respective tourist spots. Similar demand also goes for tour guides, especially in hilly areas where tourists have to struggle to find locations, eco-tour guides, especially for Sundarbans areas, and cook. As the above-mentioned areas are getting investment and prioritized in government planning, these occupations will continue to have demand in the sector.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

On the other hand, for entry-level positions such as gardener, spa worker, barista will remain stagnant throughout the year and might see a bit increasing only during the peak season. Similarly, for the mid-level occupation of chefs, demand will be stagnant due to limited opportunities in the sector.

Table 18 Major occupations in tourism

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Chef	Mid	•Problem-solving •Verbal and non-verbal communication • Self confidence - Client dealing	•Higher-order thinking •Positive-self concept •Communication skills
Cook	Entry		
Barista	Entry		
Front Office Management Executive	Entry		
Housekeeping	Entry		
Food and Beverage Service Executive	Entry		
Tour guide	Entry		
Eco Tour guide	Entry		
Spa worker	Entry		
Ride operator	Entry		

⁴¹<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/industries/tourism/news/lack-skilled-manpower-key-challenge-tourism-sector-3426156>

Gardener	Entry		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations			

Hiring Practices in the Sector

Recruitment in the sector happens mostly through referencing, followed by placement through TVET institutions. For a few positions like cook/chef, technical skills are the main criteria for recruitment with industry experience. But for positions like front desk executive, tour guide, food and beverage service executive, and housekeeping soft skills are the main considerations during recruiting a new employee. The apprenticeship in the tourism sector focuses primarily on the occupations such as food and beverage service executive, housekeeping and food and beverage production. However, to avail it, the minimum criteria is to have a SSC degree completion. TVET institutions in partnership with the hotels and resort provide the apprenticeship. While the internship happens mostly for front office management executive and other managerial roles. However, candidates need to possess a minimum bachelor's degree to obtain it.

Demand for Soft Skills in the Sector

Soft skills have a huge role in the tourism sector as employees need to manage different situations, make quick decisions, show respect and appropriate behavior toward clients, and communicate well with them. Hence, soft skills play an indispensable role during recruitment and promotions. However, the industry suffers from gaps in the soft skills as well.

Soft Skills during Recruitment

During the recruitment process, employers want to see some desired soft skills, such as how they present themselves, how well-conversed they are, and how much confidence they possess. In conversation with the employers, the assessment team found that to get a job in the tourism sector, one must have good verbal communication skills as they are required to communicate with different sorts of people in their workplace. They also look for problem-solving skills and good presentation and dress-up sense. For example, for the front office management executive, the employers look for communication skills as they are involved with the client at the first glance at the hotel. They also look out for problem-solving skills as many times executives receive diverse problems from clients and must solve them at ease without the involvement of higher management and their good presentation and dress-up sense make them more approachable to clients as well. In tourism sector skills certificates are normally valued during recruitment and as most of the jobs in tourism sector are highly dependent on soft skills, employers opined that they would value soft skills certificates if the skills were related to tourism industry.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Workplace

Apart from the above-mentioned skills, employers look for some specific soft skills when evaluating an employee for a promotion or advancement in the company. Leadership remains at the top of the list for employers as they look for a leader in the team who can manage things well, blend well with the team, treat seniors and juniors with respect, and have quick decision-making and conflict-solving attitudes. Apart from leadership skills, they also mentioned critical thinking ability to solve problems, and punctuality as the requirements. For example, the tour guide in Sundarbans stays on the ships for a few days even without a network. There, sometimes the ships are stuck at the river due to ebbs and they remain there for a few days, tour guides have to remain in close contact and mitigate any issues that arise from visitors. They also have to think critically about limited food management in the ship. Those who possess these soft skills get speedy promotion in the sector. The same goes for occupations like front office management executive, food and beverage service executive, etc.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

Appropriate behavior and client handling skills are another core soft skill gap. The employers opined that this sector relies heavily on soft skills like client handling and appropriate behavior towards clients. However, due to extensive pressure during weekends, holidays, and peak seasons, they lose many customers due to having a bad experience with the employees. Problem-solving and decision-making skills are the other most important skills for tourism industry workers. However, there is a visible gap in solving any issues with clients peacefully and the employers end up getting help from the senior officials.

Inclusion Scenario

The tourism sector is heavily dominated by male workers as revealed through primary research that only 14 percent of the workforce are women in the tourism sector.⁴² Though there is a need for women employees in this sector according to some employers, female employees especially in Cox's Bazar and CHT areas are reluctant or/ and discouraged socio-cultural norms and social stigma. Their family members and community discourage women to work in hotel and resort as they think it is not a suitable profession for female. Also, they think that women will be teased or harassed if they work in this sector. The sector can absorb more female employees if communities are sensitized properly and ensure a healthy working atmosphere for women in occupations like front office management executives in hotels and resorts,

On the other hand, there is less than 1 percent of presence of youth with disabilities in the sector. However, employers mentioned that some desk-based jobs like front office management executive could be dedicated to youth with disabilities.

However, almost 70 percent of indigenous people from Bandarban and Khagrachari work at hotels, restaurants, transportation and resorts. They also work as tour guides, tour operators especially for adventure tourism in hilly areas. On the other hand, the popularity of eco-tourism or indigenous tourism can also be a good source of employment for the local indigenous youth as tourist will reside in their places in their locations, eat their prepared meals, and observe their rich cultural and indigenous history and tradition.⁴³

3.1.4 Healthcare and Care Economy

Over the last decade, Bangladesh has experienced rapid economic growth and a consistent population increase, driven by rising income levels and a shift in disease patterns. While communicable diseases were predominant before, there is now a noticeable shift towards non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases, cancer, heart disease, etc., which require long-term treatment and medications. This change has led to an increased demand for healthcare services nationwide. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has further intensified this demand. Consequently, the healthcare scenario in Bangladesh is undergoing a substantial transformation in response to the evolving healthcare requirements of the population.

Market Scenario

Currently estimated at USD 10 billion, Bangladesh's healthcare market is expected to grow to USD 14 billion by 2023 growing at a CAGR of 10.3 percent.⁴⁴ A total of 3.8 million people is currently involved in clinics, hospitals, security guard agencies, beauty salons, and daycare centers. Currently, the country boasts 654 government hospitals, over 5,000 private hospitals and clinics, and 10,675 privately registered diagnostic centers.⁴⁵ Additionally, there are 3,500 registered salons, 130+ daycare centers, and 800 security agencies. The following section is dedicated to understanding the sub-sector of the healthcare and care economy, the demand for workers, and existing soft skill gaps.

⁴² KII Extrapolation from tourism sector employers and associations

⁴³ KII with Bandarban Chamber of commerce

⁴⁴ <https://bida.gov.bd/storage/app/uploads/public/625/65a/bd9/62565abd9867f595095196.pdf>

⁴⁵ <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/revitalising-bangladeshs-healthcare-supply-chain-786406>

Sub-Sector Profile

Healthcare

According to a recent report, more than 63 percent of the patients are provided medical care by private hospitals.⁴⁶ Along with that, the number of private hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centers is also increasing. There is an acute shortage of healthcare workers as the country needs more than 0.3 million nurses. However, the number of registered nurses here was 73,043 as of April this year. Moreover, according to WHO, the country has about 148,000 community health workers.⁴⁷

Care Economy

The elderly population in Bangladesh is growing rapidly. Currently, people aged 60 and above constitute approximately 8 percent (12.5 million) of the total population. This number is projected to rise to 21.5 percent (43 million) by 2050. Life expectancy at birth has significantly increased, from 47 years in 1960 to 71 years in 2015. This trend highlights the urgent need for geriatric healthcare services.

The demand for Home Care (HC) is also increasing. This can be attributed to two factors: a growing middle class with the financial means to afford HC services, and a rise in the number of working women in the country. Traditionally, women have borne the burden of unpaid care work. HC service providers assist clients in their homes with essential activities. These include Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) such as walking, getting around, feeding, dressing, grooming, toileting, bathing, and transferring.⁴⁸ Additionally, they help with Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) such as managing transportation, shopping, meal preparation, housekeeping, home maintenance, communication, and medication management.

Beauty Salon

There are over 350,000 registered salons in 64 districts of Bangladesh. The number is higher when it comes to men's salons which stands at about 500,000. The industry employs over a million women with a turnover of 5 billion BDT.⁴⁹

Day Care Center

There are around 139 government-run daycare centers, and more than 100 private and government daycare centers are now providing the service in the capital Dhaka.⁵⁰ Daycare service is now also available at the district level. Government data showed it is providing the service in several districts like Cox's Bazar, Rangpur, Jashore, Bogura, and Mymensingh free of charge.

Security Guards

As reported by Financial Express, more than 800 security companies are working throughout the country. These companies have created job opportunities for more than 700,000 personnel.⁵¹ Clients of these companies include embassies, high commissions, international organizations, NGOs, different industries including garment factories and pharmaceuticals, educational institutions, offices, and residential apartment buildings. These agencies also provide security guards for cash-carrying vehicles and ATM booths.

Non-Clinical Healthcare

Non-clinical healthcare workers include ayas, ward boys, ward masters, stretcher bearers, and other occupations including cleaners and gatekeepers, who make up the bulk of the human resources in the

⁴⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/legal-remedies-ensure-proper-medical-care-bangladesh-639426>

⁴⁷ <https://extranet.who.int/uhcpartnership/story/bangladesh-community-health-workers-heart-stronger-health-system-and-fight-against-covid-19#:~:text=According%20to%20a%20study%20in,assets%20of%20the%20health%20system.>

⁴⁸ KII with Care service provider

⁴⁹ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/economy/249129/how-the-beauty-industry-is-adapting-to-the-new>

⁵⁰ <https://businesspostbd.com/news/daycare-services-gain-momentum-23184>

⁵¹ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/home/the-state-of-private-security-services-industry-in-bangladesh-1658593136>

health sector of the country across the public and private spectrum. However, there is no available data on the number of personnel involved in non-clinical healthcare or its growth projection.

Sector's Presence across Hubs

Healthcare centers such as hospitals and clinics are mostly prevalent in divisional cities like Dhaka, Chattogram, Rangpur, and Khulna, etc. For Dhaka, major clusters include Jigatola-Dhanmondi, Shyamoli-Kollyanpur, Panthopath, Mirpur, etc. For Rangpur, Dhap mor is the largest hub for healthcare. For Khulna, KDA avenue is the primary for the region and for Chattogram, Panchlaish is the major hub. On the other hand, security guard agencies, beauty parlors, and daycare centers are scattered across the county.

Growth Factor for the Sector

Bangladesh has been experiencing a rapid shift in disease patterns where non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become the leading causes of mortality, with 67 percent of all deaths in the country due to noncommunicable diseases.⁵² This has generated an additional need for healthcare services. Moreover, increasing life expectancy and ageing people will also aggravate the need for care workers. As reported by the World Bank, one in every ten citizens will be 60 years or older by 2025. Moreover, by 2050, this figure is projected to double, meaning one in every five citizens. This will make Bangladesh home to one of the largest older adult populations on the planet and further escalate the severe need for care services. Moreover, increasing national purchasing power will lead to a higher need for geriatric care workers, increment of dual-earning households will lead to more daycare/after-school programs.

On the other hand, global hospital chains have already begun the process of setting up world-class healthcare facilities in Dhaka, and Chattogram which will create 15,000 new jobs.

Demand for Workers in the Sector

Demand for new Workers

Table 19: Demand for new workers in Healthcare sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	38000	70	26600	1900000	3	57000
Medium		20	7600	1140000	5	57000
Large		10	3800	760000	1	76000

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 1% to 5% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. New entry level job opportunities in this sector are a bit as workers for most of the positions need to have certification.

Occupations that are in High Demand

⁵² <https://www.thedailystar.net/health/disease/news/rising-health-risk-2948321>

As the care economy sector continues to grow, there is a huge demand for skilled workers. For entry-level occupations, caregivers, and nursing assistants, the demand is higher in the industry due to the growing middle-income population in the country and the ageing of Bangladesh's population which is faster than even Japan and subsequently this will naturally create a huge demand for caregivers⁵³ Moreover, due to dual income household, there is a growing demand for day care centers which ultimately increases demand for caregiver such as teacher in the center as well. As also mentioned above, there is an acute shortage of nurses in the sector which has high in demand and will continue to be so in the coming years.

Similarly, demand for mid-level positions such as geriatric caregiver is also increasing because of the aforementioned reasons.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

On the other hand, for security services subsector, demand for security guards and cleaners tend to have stagnant demand in the future. Similarly, the demand for beauty care workers remains stagnant throughout the year and rises during festivals. For the beauty salon industry, demand for barbers will also remain stagnant in the future as per the industry insiders due to higher job retention.⁵⁴

"We need highly skilled and trained caregivers who are passionate about the job and possess the necessary soft skills to deal with different sorts of clients. You can see that even in western economies like the UK, we are now sending nurses and caregivers. This demand will be increasing in the coming years." - Founder of a caregiving center.

Table 20 Major occupation in care economy

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Geriatric caregiver</i>	Mid	• Verbal communication • Appropriate behavior • Problem-solving • Pressure Handling	• Communication skills • Social skills • Higher-order thinking
<i>Daycare service worker</i>	Entry		
<i>Beauty care worker</i>	Entry		
<i>Caregiver</i>	Entry		
<i>Nursing Assistant</i>	Entry		
<i>Cleaner</i>	Entry		
<i>Security Guard</i>	Entry		

Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations

Hiring Practices in the Sector

Employers of the sector recruit workers primarily through references followed by formal placement through TVET institutions for occupations in sub-sectors like healthcare, the care economy, and daycare centers. For clinics and care centers, there are no internship opportunities right now.

A skill curriculum for the care giver must incorporate internship opportunities which is missing right now. - **Founder of a care center**

⁵³<https://businesspostbd.com/opinion-todays-paper/caregiving-sector-promising-new-jobs-and-business-opportunities-2022-02-26>

⁵⁴ IDI with Dhaka based salons.

On the other hand, beauty salons and non-clinical healthcare operate primarily through the traditional apprenticeship model of mentor-mentee. This recruitment is mostly done through references. However, only the security guards are hired through formal security agencies.

Demand for Soft Skills in the Sector

The healthcare and care economy sector relies mostly on soft skills of the employees. There are some specific skills gaps that the employers look for in the employees. The following section will be dedicated to the soft skills that employers look for during recruitment, for promotion, and the soft skills gap in the sector.

Soft Skills during Recruitment

For healthcare sector workers, during recruitment, employers try to understand if the prospective employee possesses good communication skills as the sector heavily depends on interactions with clients. Secondly, they want to see if the person possesses a delay in gratification. Often, they find that they switch jobs in other companies seeing lucrative opportunities, although that might be false. Moreover, they also look for situation-handling and anger management (controlling impulses) skills as these are required most in the workplace while dealing with different sorts of clients and patients.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Workplace

To get a promotion or stay a longer time in the workplace, employers look for some specific soft skills. Appropriate behavior with the clients is deemed as most important in the workplace for healthcare professionals, followed by problem-solving and attention skills. For example, a geriatric caregiver needs to be calm and sensitive while dealing with a dementia client. The patient may tend to show excessive anger towards anyone close to them. The geriatric caregiver needs to be attentive to what their needs are, behave well, manage them while they are angry, and solve any problems while dealing with them. If any employee shows continuous progress, they might get a quick promotion and stay for a longer period at the workplace.

Existing Gap in Soft Skill

Employers mentioned that dealing with different sorts of clients is one of the critical tasks. Be it the caregiver, nursing assistant, daycare service worker, or a security guard, situation handling and solving any problems that arise are of utmost importance. And on the other hand, verbal communication skills are also not very good within the workplace. Employers also mentioned that employees need to take care of their well-being, eat healthy food, and maintain hygiene as dealing with clients in this sector requires both mental and physical well-being. However, employees tend to lose patience while dealing with clients, do not communicate well, listen to their miseries, and consequently get mentally stressed and do not behave appropriately. In the end, the business bears the consequences.

Inclusion Scenario

Care work jobs are 90 percent occupied by female employees. Overall, 60 percent of the workforce in this sector is women.⁵⁵ According to employers there are no youth employees with disabilities in the sector, the employers were positive about future employment. For example, youth with hearing disabilities can be engaged in beauty care. On the other hand, youth with visual impairment can work in day care centers to teach the children etc.

On the other hand, some of the SOGI people are interested in beauty salons for entrepreneurship. However, they lack finance and infrastructural support to establish the business. On the other hand, 5% of the Bihari communities are involved in men's salon.

"Most of our fellows want to establish beauty salons and we also have some great examples from Dhaka and Chattogram as well. However, we need finance and training to establish these salons." - Participant from FGD with SOGI community.

⁵⁵ KII extrapolation from industry employers

However, employers also mentioned that indigenous people can thrive in the care economy for occupations like geriatric caregiver, daycare service worker as they tend to show greater composure and patience comparatively. Therefore, more training on the care economy should be focused on indigenous communities such as those living in different hubs and districts and introduced to formal care service providers.

3.1.5 Plastic

Plastic is a substitute for wood and metal because of its portability and durability. In Bangladesh, the 9kg per capita consumption is related to only domestic uses of plastic, apart from the industrial and building material. Domestic supplies reportedly grew at 15 percent a year over the last several years and created employment for 1.5 million people in the sector. Moreover, plastic exports constitute more than \$1 billion. Considering the domestic performance and export potential, the plastic sector has a high growth potential in the coming years, especially in toy manufacturing and plastic recycling. The following section is dedicated to understanding the market scenario, presence in Bijoyee project areas, demand for workers and soft skill gaps among the employees.

Market Scenario

For the last two decades, the use of plastic in the country has continuously risen and it has been a substitute for wood and metal because of its light weight and durability. The sector continues to grow with a CAGR of 15 percent and created employment for 1.5 million people in around 6,000 plastic enterprises. According to BPGMEA, the country's overall plastic product market is worth around \$4 billion. of which 83.4 percent is manufactured domestically while the remaining 16.6 percent is imported. Moreover, Bangladesh directly and indirectly exports around \$1.5 billion worth of plastic products. The sector is projected to be \$10 billion by 2028. ⁵⁶

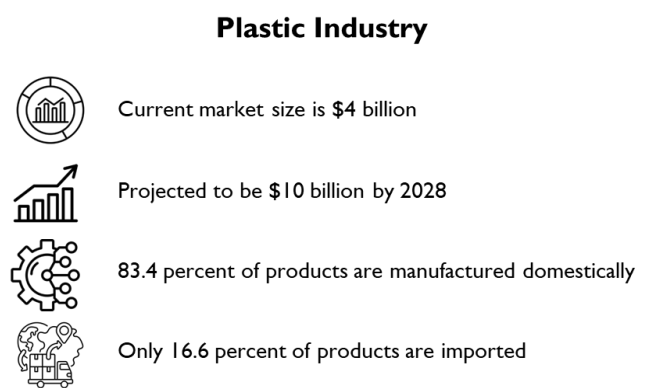


Figure 16 plastic industry overview

Sub-sector Profile

Toy Manufacturing

There are more than 100 registered toy factories in Bangladesh and most of them are in old Dhaka centering Chawk Bazar, the country's biggest toy business hub. There are more than 500 wholesale toy shops at Chawk Bazar from where products are supplied all over the country. 400,000 people are currently working in toy manufacturing, of whom 60 percent are women. The estimated toy market size in Bangladesh is around Tk7000 crore, and 80 percent of this is produced locally and covers 85 percent of the domestic market. The sector also enjoys continuous growth in exports at \$54.39 million in 2020-21 and \$69.24 million in 2022⁵⁷ and is expected to hit an estimated \$466.31 million by 2030⁵⁸. If the current annual growth trend holds steady at 24 percent, the present growth rate, Bangladesh could become the 28th largest toy exporter in the world in 2030.

Plastic pipe

⁵⁶ <https://bida.gov.bd/storage/app/uploads/public/650/bc4/532/650bc45323e39184095874.pdf>

⁵⁷ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/toy-makers-look-for-dedicated-zone-govt-support-575934>

⁵⁸ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/plastic-toys-poised-be-the-next-big-export-earner-3041896>

The domestic plastic pipe industry is growing at around 20 percent a year. Around Tk 6,000 crore worth of plastic pipes were sold in 2020 and around 80 percent of the pipes used in the country at present are manufactured locally.⁵⁹ More than 40 enterprises are present across the country where more than 16,000 people are directly involved⁶⁰.

Plastic Recycling

There are more than 300 plastic recycling factories in Bangladesh, which make the much-in-demand plastic flakes. Around 40,000 tonnes of ⁶¹recycled flakes are exported every year by 80 of these facilities. Plastic recycling factories are concentrated in divisional and large municipal cities such as in Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Gazipur, Bogura, Narayanganj, etc.

Plastic Household Items

The domestic market for plastic household items accounts for nearly Tk3,000 crore.⁶² It is dominated by large factories as well as some non-brand factories. Most of the factories are located at Kamrangirchar, Islambag and Keraniganj of Dhaka.

PVC Bags

The industry manufacturers produce different types of bags including PP woven bags, jumbo bags, bulk container bags, shopping bags, and tarpaulin bags which are used for packaging cement, poultry and aqua feed, food grain, and seed. They export these bags to European and Asian countries. Around 100 firms are involved in this sector. Currently, the sector is growing at 20 percent yearly.⁶³

Sector's Presence across Hubs

According to BIDA on plastic sector 2023, about more than 60 percent of the plastic factories are located in Dhaka & Narayanganj. Apart from these two cities, there are factories in Gazipur, Bogura, and Chattogram. Plastic clusters include Chawkbazar, Lalbagh, Kamrangirchar, Islambag, Keraniganj, of Dhaka, Nasirabad of Chattogram, Fatulla of Narayanganj, Uttar Panishail, and Enayetpur of Gazipur.

Table 21 Sector presence across hubs

District	Number of Enterprises	Workforce	Major Clusters
Dhaka	39000+	1 million	Chawkbazar, Keraniganj, Kamrangirchar, Islambagh, Lalbagh, Hazaribagh etc,
Narayanganj			Fatulla
Chattogram	12000+	.3 million	Nasirabad, Baizid industrial area,

Source: Primary research and desk research

Growth Factor

The Plastic Industry Development Policy 2023 has set a target to increase the plastics and packaging industry market from around \$4 billion now to \$10 billion by 2028. The policy also set a target to provide demand-based training to 10,000 individuals by 2028 to create skilled staff while also aiming to create 5,00,000 new employment opportunities in this sector by 2028. The policy aims to ensure consistent annual growth of 15 percent in the sector and eliminate problems and obstacles facing new

⁵⁹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/plastic-pipe-industry-growing-fast-2085605>

⁶⁰ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/plastic-pipe-industry-growing-fast-2085605>

⁶¹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/how-plastic-waste-can-drive-the-economy-forward-3433741>

⁶² BIDA sector profile for plastic industry, 2023

⁶³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/pvc-bag-exports-grow-771-oct-increased-demand-324958>

business ventures in this industry before 2026. It also set a target to increase the contribution of the plastics sector to total GDP by at least two percent by 2028. Currently, it is below one percent⁶⁴.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 22: Demand for new workers in Plastic sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Dhaka and Narayanganj	Small	39000	90	35100	600000	5	30000
	Medium		9	3510	300000	7	21000
	Large		1	390	100000	10	10000
Chattogram	Small	12000	90	10800	180000	5	9000
	Medium		9	1080	90000	7	6300
	Large		1	120	30000	10	3000

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. Many entry level positions are needed to be fulfilled in this sector throughout the year. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Dhaka and Narayanganj district will offer the most opportunity and Chattogram will also offer handsome amount of new jobs.

Occupations that are in High Demand

The sector continues to grow tremendously and enriches its export market; for example, injection molding machine operator and blow molding machine operator are two highly demanded occupations in the sector.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

On the other hand, for entry-level positions like cutting, blending and polishing workers and packaging workers will remain in low demand. Employers mentioned that finding these types of workers is too easy as they do not require that much of skills. On the other hand, for mid-level position, supervisor will remain stagnant in demand as most owners of the enterprises in plastic sector operate the role him/herself which narrows the opportunities for supervisors.

Table 23 Major occupations in Plastic sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Injection molding machine operation	Entry	Controlling impulses Sense of well-being Time management	Self-control Positive self-concept
Blow molding machine operation	Entry		

⁶⁴https://moind.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moind.portal.gov.bd/policies/8303a1f7_1229_4f61_bb2f_5d7bc5296241/Plastic%20Industry%20Development%20Policy%202023.pdf

Cutting, Blending & Polishing Workers	Entry		Communication skills
Accessories fitting & packaging workers	Entry		
Supervisor	Mid	Communication Problem-solving Leadership	Communication skills Higher order thinking

Recruitment Practices in the Sector

Enterprises in the sector recruit employees through informal processes such as referencing. However, large enterprises tend to hire workers through third party payroll service providers for blue-collar workers where an HR outsourcing firm supplies required number of workers as per the need and demand of the employers. The employers do not directly pay those workers, rather the HR outsourcing firm gets payment from the employers and pays the workers generally on a daily basis and keeps a margin as commission. Having technical skills boosts a candidate's chances of getting the job rather than any positive skills. They also prefer experience in similar plastic enterprises. However, for mid-level occupations, soft skills such as verbal communications at the workplace, time management, controlling emotions and impulses are also highly demanded.

Soft Skills Requirement during Recruitment

Both hard and soft skills are necessary based on the occupation level. For mechanic work, technical skills get priority instead of soft skills. During recruitment, they check whether they are really interested in this sector as those who are not interested in the sector might leave within a few days. They also check their quick-learning ability and adaptability to machine environments as some of the employees cannot adapt to the sector due to noise, dust, heat. Especially in the plastic recycling industry where these issues are more intense so not everyone is willing to work with plastic waste.

Soft skills for promotion in the workplace

Communication skills are important while dealing with managers, senior and junior colleagues in the workplace. They need excellent interpersonal skills such as showing appropriate behavior towards colleagues and seniors. They are also required to have better time management skills while entering the workplace and completing given work within a timeframe.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

Unnotified absenteeism in the plastic sector is high according to the employer. Due to this, some employers mentioned that they resort to daily basis payment instead of monthly payment so that, whenever they remain absent in the workplace, they are not getting paid. Controlling emotions is also another gap in the industry as employees tend to remain less productive at work and remain in high note verbal conflict with colleagues. *"Employees in this sector need proper training on emotional maturity"* as mentioned by one of the plastic enterprise owners. Also, employees need communication skills so that if anything happens, they can express it clearly.

"Employees in this sector need proper training on emotional maturity". - A Plastic enterprise owner.

Inclusion Scenario in the Plastic Sector

The gender ratio in the plastic sector is 60 males to 40 females, but women constitute more than half of the workforce in the toy manufacturing sector. Most of the women are engaged in fitting and packaging.

However, there are no persons with disabilities employed in the sector right now, However, employers mentioned that they can be employed in accessories fitting section as this does not require heavy labor. One notable exception is the Mairti Shilpa which is operated under the ministry of Social Welfare's Physically Handicapped Protection Trust provided in case story below. ⁶⁵ . Employers also mentioned that there are no SOGI people in the sector.⁶⁶This sector also does not employ Dalit community.⁶⁷

The Case of Mairti Shilpa: Where Person with disabilities produce plastic products

In Mairti Shilpa, over 100 persons with disabilities are employed. This organization is run under the Ministry of Social Welfare's Physically Handicapped Protection Trust. They produce mineral drinking water "Mukta" and different types of plastic products. This organization can be of a good example that persons with disabilities can be employed in manufacturing sectors as well.

Figure 17 Case story on persons with disabilities

"There are no persons with disability in the plastic sector. However, if they are willing to work, they can do low intensity light weight work within the industry." - **Manager of a plastic factory.**

3.1.6 Agro-Food Processing

Agro-processed foods with the essential marker of value addition are considered to have brighter prospects than many other processed products because of their growing demand globally. This sector, with its strong and integral link to the livelihood of millions of farmers, has more prospects than any other to thrive, for both the domestic and export markets. The domestic market for agro-processed products is growing as people are getting increasingly inclined to ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat food items. Basically, it is the domestic demand that the industry caters to. However, currently, Bangladeshi processed foods are being exported to many countries ranging from the advanced to less advanced regions, the key markets are the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Malaysia, and countries in the Middle Eastern region. The products include among other spices, frozen fish, shrimp, and other frozen food products, fruit juice, fruit drinks, biscuits, processed nuts, potato chips, potato flakes, and pickles.

Market Scenario

According to the Bangladesh Agro-Processors Association, the agro-food processing industry contributes 1.7 percent to the overall GDP. The industry's current market size is \$4.8 billion and projected to reach \$5.8 billion in 2030.⁶⁸ The sector employs around 250,000 people, which is 2 percent of the total workforce of the country and its share of total exports now stands at around 3.5 percent with an annual rate of 16.6 percent.⁶⁹ The main export items are frozen fish, shrimp, and other frozen food products, tea, spices, fruits including dry fruits, and some other processed agricultural products. The major export destinations include the European Union (EU), the US, the Middle East and the Gulf.

There are 1000+ agro-food processing industries in the country.⁷⁰ Of which 10 percent are large enterprises and the rest are SMEs. Moreover, 250+ factories are involved in exporting agro-food items.⁷¹

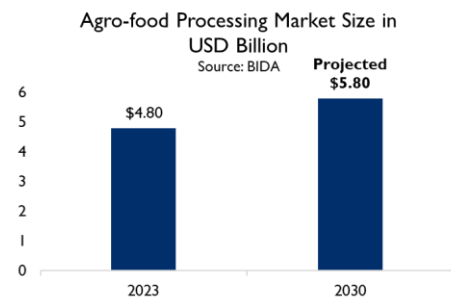


Figure 18 agro-food processing market size

⁶⁵ KII extrapolation from plastic sector employers and field visit

⁶⁶ KII with employers

⁶⁷ KII with enterprise Dhaka-based enterprise owner.

⁶⁸ <https://bida.gov.bd/agro-processing#:~:text=Bangladesh%20exports%20more%20than%20700,to%20more%20than%20140%20countries.>

⁶⁹ BIDA Report on Agro processing, 2023

⁷⁰ KII extrapolation from interviews with employers and national level association.

⁷¹ Challenges of the agro-processing industry of Bangladesh

Sub-sectors Profile

Meat processing sector

The meat processing sector is also an emerging sector in Bangladesh serving both ruminant meat and poultry meat products. At present, only a small portion of the total meat processing market is being served by formal channels. While local butcher shops and kitchen markets are currently the major suppliers of meat to consumers, with the adoption of modern eating habits and consumers' awareness of product hygiene, the meat processing sector in Bangladesh is projected to grow at a projected CAGR rate of 5 percent by 2027.

Seafood Processing

The seafood processing industry in Bangladesh is highly concentrated around shrimp and dried fish with a minimal amount of freshwater fish processing. The fish processing sector is majorly focused on the export market while the emergence of processed fish products (such as fish finger, shrimp rolls, fish kabab, etc.) is being observed. In the most vibrant informal cluster of fish processing in Khulna, the Char Rupsha area, only 10-15 of the fish processing companies are currently operational among the 40 located there. Out of a total of 60 processing companies in Khulna, only half of them are still operating.⁷² Similarly, 15 of the 43 factories in the Chattogram division have continued production. Only 10,000 persons are currently employed in this sub-sector.⁷³ Approximately 75 percent of the total workforce is female in this industry.

Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)

According to the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce, the consumer-packaged goods market in Bangladesh is worth \$3.6 billion (BDT 383.58 billion) and is growing at an annual rate of 9 percent. The sector itself is one of the most sophisticated industries in Bangladesh with a vast number of players operating on an industrial scale, both local and multinational corporations.

Dairy Processing Industry

In Bangladesh dairy processing industry is enjoying a growth phase with the popularity of value-added products such as cheese, yogurt, flavored drinks, butter, etc. Alongside 14 registered dairy companies that operate on an industrial scale⁷⁴, there are 1.4 million traditional dairy farms with an average herd size of 1-3 cows⁷⁵. According to IFCN, Bangladesh is now ranked 25th in the world in terms of milk production with a self-sufficiency rate that hovers around 91 percent,⁷⁶ corroborated by the latest figures released by the Department of Livestock that stated that Bangladesh was able to meet 83.45 percent of its national demand using locally produced milk in FY 21-22.⁷⁷

Growth Factors

The country has abundant raw materials for the agri-food process industry due to its tropical climate, year-round growing season, and plentiful freshwaters, and fertile land. As the Bangladesh economy continues to grow, the size of the middle-income population continues to rise. And it is predicted that by 2025 nearly 3.5 crore Bangladeshis will become middle-class and affluent consumers (MACs), to more than double in a decade. With a significant surge in income, the MACs, especially those in urban areas, have already come through a massive shift in their lifestyle. Also, sustained economic growth is causing rapid urbanization. Both sustained economic growth and urbanization have already caused changes in dietary intake where processed food has become an important element in their consumption basket. Furthermore, with the rise of two-income families, the demand for processed packaged food is also on the rise. All these factors are now contributing to a rapidly growing domestic market for a whole range of processed food including ready-to-eat and ready-to-cook meals.

⁷² KII extrapolation from interviews with Khulna and Chattogram based employers.

⁷³ Shrimp processors closing down, The Daily Star (2021), Shrimp industry reels from changing demand patterns, Prothom Alo (2023), KII extrapolation

⁷⁴ Annual Report 2021-2022, Department of Livestock

⁷⁵ Expansion of Dairy Hubs in Bangladesh promotes sustainable development

⁷⁶ Expansion of Dairy Hubs in Bangladesh promotes sustainable development

⁷⁷ Annual Report 2021-2022, Department of Livestock

Additionally, according to BIDA, the government is planning to create a new 0.1 million jobs for the sector by 2025.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 24: Demand for new workers in Agro-food Processing sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	3500	70	2450	150000	5	7500
Medium		20	700	50000	7	3500
Large		10	350	50000	10	5000
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. New entry level job opportunities in this sector can reach to 7500 in small enterprises and 5000 in large enterprises.

Occupations that are in High Demand

As the food processing industry continues to grow, there is a high demand for entry-level occupations such as baker, food grain machine operators, and maintenance workers and especially due to continuous demand for consumer packaged goods products. On the other hand, for mid-level position of quality controllers demand will also be higher as more and more people are becoming aware of the product's quality.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

For the entry level positions for fish processing occupations such as filtering, grading and scaling machine operators, demands will be in lower trend. Because this subsector is passing through a tougher time across the country due to the lower production and shutting of numerous factories due to decreased foreign demand, a major decline in price on the international market following the global financial crisis worldwide. Similarly, for occupations in the meat processing industry such as chopper and slaughterhouse workers, demand will be stagnant as the workforce is much smaller in size in the formal sector.

Table 25 Major occupations in agro-food processing

Sub Sectors	Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Consumer packaged Goods	Baking	Entry	•Unnotified absenteeism •Regulating Behavior	•Positive self-concept •Self-control •Communication skills
	Food Packaging worker	Entry		
	Food Grain Machine Operation	Entry		

Seafood Processing	Filleting machine Operator	Entry	•Attention •Controlling impulses •Conflict resolution	•Self-control •Higher order thinking •Social skills
	Grading machine operator	Entry		
	Scaling machine Operator	Entry		
Meat Processing	Slaughterhouse Workers	Entry		
	Chopper	Entry		
All subsectors including dairy	Packaging and storage	Entry	•Conflict resolution •Verbal Communication •Time Management	-Social Skills -Communication skills
	Maintenance worker	Entry		
	Quality Controller	Mid		
	Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations			

Recruitment Practices within the Sector

The large enterprises of the sector recruit employees through third parties. For example, in Khulna and Chattogram, workers are usually recruited through third-party recruiters who have the capacity to supply skilled workers based on urgent demands as well. During recruitment, previous experience in the food processing industry gets the priority along with necessary technical skills. However, there is the prevalence of soft skills that employers look forward to during recruitment.

Demand for Soft Skills

Soft Skill Requirement during Recruitment

During recruitment, no prior skill is required. However, employers try to understand candidate's willingness to work in the industry as many workers could not adapt to the fish, meat and other food processing subsectors. Punctuality is another thing they want to look for. Often, candidates come later than the assigned time for the recruitment interview. Additionally, employers also look for hygiene practices as this is a common gap in the sector. During recruitment they try to understand the candidate's attitude towards hygiene practice by asking some proxy questions.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Sector

For getting promotion in the sector, employers try to understand their absenteeism at first. How regular in the workplace s/he is counts during the promotion. Similarly, employers try to understand how s/he controls the team of the workers, how much his/her words are valued to the colleagues and how s/he manages any conflict arising situation in the workplace. Coordination within the workplace is another top consideration for promotion. Often, some workers remain absent, or someone could get sick during working hours. In these types of situations, employers try to find someone who is willing to cooperate with other colleagues and complete the task left by someone else. Usually, the foreman reports on the skills set of the candidate and based on that, s/he gets promoted.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

Despite several training and awareness-raising sessions, employees remain inflexible in their attitude towards hygiene and it remains a crucial soft skill gap in the industry. Often, workers do not clean machines after their shift and start working the next day with the same unclean machine. Unnotified absenteeism is another gap that employers mentioned. During peak production hours, they have to look for employees who can make up the work and employers face hurdles due to this. Cooperation in the workplace and controlling impulses is another crucial gap in the sector among employees. For example, one employer mentioned that in his workplace, a worker tried to restrict a person's promotion by harming his reputation. The worker sped up the machine at an unexpected rate to cause trouble. However, after analyzing through CCTV footage, the line manager found the guilty person and terminated his contract.

"Controlling impulses is a critical skill to work in this sector. I have recently encountered an incident where a worker tried to restrict a person's promotion by harming his reputation. The worker sped up the machine at an unexpected rate to cause trouble. However, after analyzing through CCTV footage, the line manager found the guilty person and terminated his contract." - **HR Manager from a Seafood Processing Enterprise.**

Inclusion Scenario

In total, females employed in this sector is about 22 percent of the total employment.⁷⁸ However, in the fish processing sector, approximately 75 percent of the total workers are female and most workers are engaged in trades such as fish checking, cleaning, quality checking, packaging, labeling, etc.⁷⁹ Youth remain a bulk source of the workforce as over 50 percent of them are youth aged 18-35.

On the other hand, there is minimal presence of the persons with disabilities in the sector due to it being the labor-intensive sector. According to the association, it is below 1 percent at the moment. Similarly, Dalit communities are also not employed in this sector due to their social exclusion, they do not get employment in this sector. People's stigma towards Dalit as untouchables make them non-fit for the food processing industry.

3.1.7 Construction

In Bangladesh, a fast-growing construction industry is proving to be a key player in the country's development. This industry not only creates jobs, but also connects to many other industries, acting as a vital link in the country's economic engine. As Bangladesh undergoes rapid urbanization and industrialization, with major infrastructure projects underway, the construction sector becomes even more crucial for further investigation.

Sector Scenario: Bangladesh's construction sector is a significant contributor to the economy, employing over 3.3 million people and accounting for 7.6% of the GDP⁸⁰. With a current market size estimated at \$32.33 billion in 2024, the industry is projected to reach \$44.13 billion by 2029, reflecting a steady annual growth rate of 6.42%⁸¹.

The sector is expected to reach USD 44.13 billion by 2029. The government is building mega



Figure 19 Construction market scenario

⁷⁸<https://seip-fd.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/4.-Labor-Market-Study-for-Skills-for-Employment-Investment-Project-SEIP-Agro-Food-Processing-Sector.pdf>

⁷⁹ KII with Chittagong based seafood processing employers

⁸⁰ <https://seip-fd.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5.-Labour-Market-and-Skill-Gap-Analysis-for-the-Construction-Sector-in-Bangladesh-I.pdf>

⁸¹[https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/bangladesh-construction-market/market-size#:~:text=The%20Bangladesh%20Construction%20Market%20size,period%20\(2024%2D2029\).](https://www.mordorintelligence.com/industry-reports/bangladesh-construction-market/market-size#:~:text=The%20Bangladesh%20Construction%20Market%20size,period%20(2024%2D2029).)

infrastructure, numerous economic zones and industrial areas. These are creating vast employment opportunities. The sector is prevalent mainly in city areas of the country as urbanization has gained boost in Bangladesh.

Sector's Presence across Hubs: Due to heavy urbanization throughout Bangladesh construction sector is conspicuous all over Bangladesh. This sector is prevalent in most of the targeted district of Bijoyee Activity. Urban areas like Dhaka, Gazipur, Chattogram, Narayanganj, Khulna, Rangpur are bustling with construction sector projects.

Growth factors: The constant growth of the construction sector is thrust by many factors. The growth factors are explained below_

- **Infrastructure development and rapid urbanization:** Infrastructure development (including large-scale megaprojects) and rapid urbanization of major cities has been driving growth of both construction and real-estate sectors in Bangladesh.

- **Mega projects:** Bangladesh is undertaking several mega projects that have a significant impact on the construction sector. These include the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant, the Matarbari ultra-supercritical coal-fired power plant, and the expansion of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. These projects not only require extensive construction services but also boost related industries.

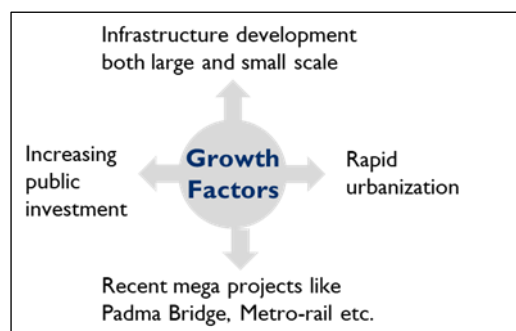


Figure 20 Growth factor for construction

- **PPP Investment:** The Bangladeshi government is investing heavily in the construction sector, particularly through public-private partnerships (PPPs). These investments are aimed at improving the country's transportation infrastructure and other public services, which is a boon for the construction industry.

Demand for Workers:

Demand for new Workers

Table 26: Demand for new workers in Construction sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	33000	80	26400	2310000	3	69300
Medium		15	4950	660000	5	33000
Large		5	1650	330000	7	23100

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 3% to 7% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. New entry level job opportunities in this sector can reach around 69000 in small enterprises and 23000 in large enterprises.

Occupations that are in High Demand

Due to the continuous urbanization in every district of the country, the demand for entry-level positions such as mason, painter, electrician, and Plumber will remain high. As per the report with SEIP these occupations will see a rise in demand till 2027.⁸²

Occupations that are in Low Demand

For entry-level occupations such as rod binder and steel fabricators will remain stagnant in the coming years.

Table 27 Major occupation in construction sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Welder	Entry	• Time management • Self confidence • Decision making, Reading client's pulses	• Positive self-concept • Higher order thinking
<i>Electrical installation and maintenance worker</i>	Entry		
Plumber	Entry		
Mason	Entry		
Painter	Entry		
<i>Tile and marble fitter</i>	Entry		
<i>Steel Binding and Fabrication</i>	Entry		
Rod Binder	Entry		
Interior Designer	Mid	Ability to visualize	Higher order thinking
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/ NSDA aligned occupations			

Soft Skills Dynamics in Construction Sector

Soft skills consideration during recruitment

During recruitment, most of the time employers seek technical skills in candidates. However, they also look if they have willingness to work in the industry. They also try to understand the ethical sense of the workers. As often, employees steal and sell construction items from the sites. And lastly employers also try to understand the physical fitness of the employees.

Soft skills Considerations for Promotion

Business owners at first try to rate the candidate's communication skills such as how s/he interacts with the customers/clients and other colleagues. They also want consider self-control such as maintaining focused attention during tasks like glass measurement and ensuring optimal resource utilization, such as proper gas management. Moreover, employers also rate employee's customer

⁸² https://www.hdrc-bd.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/05.-PKSF-Skill-Survey_-Construction-Sector.pdf

dealing while they work in the sites. If s/he brings good recommendations from the clients, the promotion or salary increment becomes faster.

Gap in Soft Skills of Current Workers

Unnotified absenteeism of employees remains a problem for employees, which indicates a gap in communication skills. Moreover, proficiency in marketing strategies and customer interaction, negotiation skills to facilitate successful business transactions are also missing among the employees. On the other hand, self-confidence about one's own work and capacities needs to be developed for the workers involved in the construction sector.

Gap in Soft Skills

Though the sector is heavily technical skills dependent, there is a gap of a few soft skills that can be beneficial for workers in the workplace. Unnotified absenteeism of employees remains a problem for employees which indicates a gap in communication skills, and appropriate behavior.

Inclusion Scenario

Due to the labor-intensive nature of the industry, it is predominantly dominated by males. Only 7.8% employees in this sector are women.⁸³ Moreover, there are limited opportunities for persons with disabilities in the sector due to it being a labor-intensive industry. In CHT areas, youth from indigenous communities are employed in the sector especially in the onsite jobs such as construction of households, restaurants. Due to their reluctance in mobility, they are confined within CHT areas. Moreover, Dalit communities are not employed in this sector either.

"Every occupation in this sector requires some sort of heavy labor tasks and hence, you will not find any persons with disabilities in this sector." - **Construction firm owner from Magura**

3.1.8 Agriculture

The agricultural sector has played a crucial role in fostering growth and development in Bangladesh, contributing to nearly 11.4% of the nation's GDP and offering job prospects to over 45% of the total workforce.⁸⁴

Market Scenario

Despite the shrinkage of farmland, the agriculture sector is pulling off at a rate of 2.61% CAGR overall⁸⁵. The total market size of the sector is USD \$47.55 billion⁸⁶. The performance of this sector has a great impact on macro-economic situations like employment generation, poverty alleviation, food security, and nutritional attainment. Although rice has been the main staple of the country, with rising upper middle class is driving agricultural product or crop diversification. It also comes with the demand for processed and canned foods which in turn is giving rise to large value addition food industries namely ACI, PRAN, Golden Harvest, Kazi Farms. The import and export growth rate in the agriculture market is projected to be 24.28 percent and 33.54 percent (CAGR 2024–2028) respectively.

Sub sector Profile

⁸³<https://seip-fd.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5.-Labour-Market-and-Skill-Gap-Analysis-for-the-Construction-Sector-in-Bangladesh-1.pdf>

⁸⁴ Labor Force Survey 2022. BBS

⁸⁵ Bangladesh Economic Review, 2023

⁸⁶ International Trade Administration, 2022

Among the myriad of sub sectors under agriculture there lies three overarching subsectors: 1) Livestock and poultry; 2) Aquaculture; and 3) Crops and Horticulture. The boom in food grain production, especially due to rice varietal developments is apparent with the onset of urbanization (industry and service sector growth), and on the other hand fisheries, poultry, livestock and dairy turned into huge economic sources.

- 1) **Livestock & poultry:** A growth rate of 3.23% CAGR puts livestock and poultry sub sector as the most promising one under agriculture sector. It contributed about 1.90 percent to the country's GDP and more than 16.52 percent to the agriculture sector in FY 2021-22. About 14.5 percent of the population depended primarily or secondarily on livestock and dairy⁸⁷. Although 90 percent of rural households rear chicken and ducks, industrial level poultry is also on the rise. There are 16 grandparent farms and 206 breeder farms, with up to 70,000 commercial farms. These are mainly small-scale, typically having 500-2,500 birds⁸⁸. CP, Kazi Farms, Paragon, Bengal Meat, Sadeeq Agro etc.
- 2) **Aquaculture:** Fish is the most consumed source of animal protein in Bangladesh, accounting for 58 percent of the total.⁸⁹ Over the years, the aquaculture sector has been growing steadily due to rising demand and depleting fish stocks in rivers and marine areas. In 2018, Bangladesh was the fifth largest global aquaculture producer.⁹⁰ According to government agencies, aquaculture production has increased threefold since 2000, largely thanks to technological innovations and regulations that are producer friendly. Over the course of 20 years Bangladesh became self-sufficient in fish production (utilizing both fishery and aquaculture resources) and gained global recognition as a leading fish producer. Although fish farming in ponds is currently the dominant production and shrimp farming is mainly practiced in extensive polyculture ponds, there remains massive scope for technological innovation.
- 3) **Crops and horticulture:** Traditionally the country has been producing a variety of agricultural products such as rice, wheat, corn, legumes. Bangladesh made strive in diversifying its produces especially in horticulture section. It includes the cultivation of fruits, vegetables, aromatic plants, herbs, and flowers. In 2021-22, crops and horticulture contributed 5.64 percent of the total GDP, which amounted to USD \$20.48 billion.⁹¹ Currently, 7 percent of total crop production in Bangladesh comes from horticulture, while it utilizes only 4 percent of the total farming area. Bangladesh was the third largest vegetable producer in the world in 2021 according to UNFAO, marking sevenfold production increment over 12 years.⁹²

Sector's Presence across Hubs

As a ubiquitous sector it is more or less distributed over 18 target districts. However, while preparing the list the study team looked into commercial scale dominance/ prevalence in each district. In case of livestock and poultry sub sector, household level cattle, hen, and duck rearing may be found in many peri-urban or rural settings, but at meat production level Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chattogram contains numerous meat production focused cattle farms. Bogura and Rangpur are well established for dairy production. Gazipur, Manikganj and Satkhira are picked for the prevalence of poultry (broiler and layer) industry.

Table 28 agriculture subsectors

⁸⁷ Measuring Ex Ante Jobs Outcome of the Bangladesh Livestock and Dairy Development Project.

⁸⁸ Poultry in Bangladesh. One Health Poultry.

⁸⁹ Aquaculture Sector Study Bangladesh

⁹⁰ Bangladesh's Aquaculture Success Story, 2020.

⁹¹ [Horticulture Value Chain – Overcoming Long Standing Challenges](#)

⁹² [Vegetable production increased sevenfold in last 12 years: Minister. The Business Standard, 2022.](#)

Sub-sector	Workforce Size (million)	Prevalent Districts
Livestock and Poultry	8.7	Dhaka, Gazipur, Manikganj, Khagracchari, Ctg, Jashore, Bogura, Rangpur, Magura, Satkhira
Aquaculture	17.8	Bogura, Jashore, Satkhira, Khulna, Magura, Cox, Gazipur, Manikganj, Kurigram, Sherpur
Crops and Horticulture	17	Rangpur, Bogura, Jashore, Nilphamari, Kurigram, Magura, Satkhira, Bandarban, Khagracchari, Gazipur, Manikganj

Being a low-lying country, aquaculture practices are well distributed all over except for hill tracts. However, based on the presence of both hatcheries and pond-based cultures Bogura, Jashore, Magura, and Manikganj come first in line for freshwater varieties. Khulna, Satkhira, and Cox's Bazar are the only ones with saltwater fish production.

Southeastern region of Padma River (Jashore, Magura) is considered a suitable zone for vegetable or horticulture production. A number of floriculture businesses were found there. Honey production and beekeeping found in Magura and Satkhira. Salt production is a major and unique business in Cox's bazar district. Along with that Chattogram hill tracts are abundant with fruit crops/ orchards.

Growth Factors

Rapid urbanization will result in increased demand for processed and convenience food.⁹³ Due to government support, improved medical care, artificial insemination to increase production, the use of automation and technology in farms, and increased investment, the growth of livestock sub sector is accelerating. On the other hand, animal-based protein consumption is expected to steadily increase over the next 10 years.⁹⁴ The Asian Development Bank's country partnership strategy for Bangladesh calls for developing agriculture and off-farm economic activities to accelerate growth in rural areas.⁹⁵ Commercial livestock production has increased while production for consumption has decreased over the years.

Demand for Workers

Bangladesh being a late adopter in modern agri-tech boasts potential in immediate manual labor job market. On the flipside in the near future, technological advancements will bring in more diversified and specialized employment in this sector gradually supplanting few of the older ones. The total number of people employed by the agriculture sector increased from 24.7 million in 2016-17 to 32.2 million in 2022.⁹⁶ The fisheries and aquaculture sectors (directly and indirectly) alone support more than 18 million people.⁹⁷ Since the agriculture sector is likely to be affected by 4IR, there will be some emerging jobs imminent in the near future, namely agriculture technician, sustainable farm workers, harvester operator, etc. Currently the entry level jobs have few to no barriers in securing work.

⁹³ [Financing the future of farming and agribusiness ambitions. FAO, 2023.](#)

⁹⁴ [Poultry sector study Bangladesh, 2020.](#)

⁹⁵ [Sector Overview: Agriculture and Food Sector in Bangladesh. PRAN Agribusiness Project.](#)

⁹⁶ [Labour Force Survey 2022: Agriculture still main job generator. The Daily Star, 2023.](#)

⁹⁷ [Bangladesh's Aquaculture Success Story. The Fish Site.](#)

Demand for new Workers

Sub sector	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Livestock and Poultry	Small	125000	90	112500	6960000	5	348000
	Medium		9	11250	870000	7	60900
	Large		1	1250	870000	10	87000
Aquaculture	Small	250000	90	225000	16020000	5	801000
	Medium		9	22500	890000	7	62300
	Large		1	2500	890000	10	89000
Crops and Horticulture	Small	250000	90	225000	15300000	5	765000
	Medium		9	22500	850000	7	59500
	Large		1	2500	850000	10	85000

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII

The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information of sub sectors. The aquaculture sub sector will offer the maximum new job opportunity. The sub sector will offer new job opportunities from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise.

Table 29 Major occupation in agriculture

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Poultry Rearing and Farming worker</i>	Entry	Listening Verbal communication Attention Controlling impulse Appropriate behavior Problem-solving Decision making Teamwork	Social skills Communication skills Self-control Higher order thinking
Sprayer	Entry		
Sorting and packaging worker	Entry		
Dairy collector	Entry		
Farmer	Entry		
Cowboy	Entry		
Seed seller	Entry		

Note: Italicized names are BTEB/ NSDA aligned occupations

Although farm sizes may vary based on the sub sector and region, it could be generalized that small farms consist of up to 6 employees, medium farms 6-15 employees, and large farms nearly 50 employees.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

Soft skills as a term is less understood by the employers except for the large ones. However, the employers in this sector expressed several pain points regarding their existing employees:

1. **Limited Marketing and Product Promotion Awareness:** Flower producers often express dissatisfaction when approached for interviews by various media outlets during festive seasons. This indicates a lack of understanding regarding how media coverage can significantly contribute to the expansion and success of their businesses.
2. **Deficiency in communication etiquette:** Flower producers often convey dissatisfaction when approached for media interviews, especially during the festive seasons when they encounter a surge of journalists seeking insights into their business. They also face difficulties in effectively articulating their responses, whether they agree to answer their questions or not.
3. **Deficiency in Attention to Detail:** Workers involved in the litchi-plucking process often lack carefulness, leading to accidental exposure of the litchis. Additionally, some overlook the importance of meticulous sorting, resulting in inconsistencies in the number of litchis per crate.
4. **Lack of attention during peak time (Slacking):** During harvesting season the workload is very high. New workers sometimes tend to waste time using phones, playing ludo.
5. **Lack of language skills:** In CHT areas people from indigenous communities are largely employed in fruits garden as daily labor. The gardens are in many cases owned by indigenous people and leased to mostly Bangali people. So, there are some employees employed by the owner to take care of the garden and some employees employed by the lessee. The number of people employed by the owner are normally much less than the people employed by the lessee. The owner mostly employs indigenous people and the lessee mostly employ Bengali speaking people and mainly those people manage and supervise the garden. Many indigenous community people do not get a job in these gardens just because they do not speak or understand Bangla.
6. **Lack of timely decision-making:** Within the hatchery, workers are tasked with monitoring specific water parameters and fish health. In cases where issues beyond regular parameters arise, quick decision-making becomes crucial for timely administration of medications. Failure to do so can lead to catastrophic consequences, as evidenced by a past incident where the entire fish population in the hatchery was at risk.
7. **Deficiency in timely monitoring:** In a fish hatchery, eggs typically hatch within 16-24 hours. After hatching, the eggshells begin to rot, necessitating the quick transfer of these hatchlings to another sanitized container. Some hatchery workers lack this necessary sense of timely monitoring and subsequent transferring, resulting in the decay of eggshells and resultant loss of hatchlings' lives.
8. **Challenges in Adaptability:** Hatchery workers often drop out due to their reluctance and lack of mental preparedness to work within the aquatic environment of the hatchery.

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

The agriculture sector requires a diverse set of technical skills to manage the various aspects of farming and agricultural production. These skills are inseparable part for the workers working in the agricultural sector. Technical skills help agricultural workers to efficiently manage farm operations, ensure the health and growth of crops and livestock.

Table 30 Technical skills gaps in agriculture

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
<i>Poultry Rearing and Farming worker</i>	• Lack in breeding and hatching skills • Lack of knowledge in husbandry • Inefficiency handling animal waste

Sprayer	• Inept in chemical mixing • Lack of knowledge on appropriate timing for spray • Inefficiency in spray machine operation
Sorting and packaging worker	• Inapt in packaging machine operation • Deficiency in sorting skills
Dairy collector	• Gaps in knowledge of appropriate milking method • Skills deficiency in appropriate feed mixing • Lack of knowledge on proper breeding method • Skills gap in scanning and maintaining shed in proper manner
Farmer	• Inefficiency in soiling • Knowledge gap in using of fertilizer • Knowledge gap in proper sowing method • Having inefficiency in irrigation skills • Gaps in utilizing proper pest control method • Seeding skills gap
Cowboy	• Skills gap in rearing • Skills gap in grazing • Knowledge gap in nutrient feed mixing

Inclusion Scenario

The sector is rife with female employment. At national level, around 57.7 percent of the sector is served by female population. On the face it may seem the second most employer of female population after RMG, however, their works in this sector are considered voluntary/ unpaid/ household work, with only 6 percent of them working as paid employees⁹⁸. Although there is no major barrier for people of diverse gender identity to be involved here, the study team could not find anyone at work. Most of the employers do not prefer youth with disabilities due to the requirement of physical fitness and some refrained from answering about the potentiality of inclusion. Large scale employers were found to be less biased and more accepting in terms of indigenous youth inclusion. Dalit youth and men are now engaging in agriculture and aquaculture in Satkhira. Moreover, they also raise goats, cattle and cows at their home as a second income source.⁹⁹

3.1.9 Repair and Maintenance

The repair and maintenance industry in Bangladesh is a growing sector. It is a sector that holds immense potential for future growth. Businesses in this sector begin from self-employment/ boutique level to large scale. The sector broadly covers but is not limited to electrical and mechanical devices and equipment.

Market Scenario

National-level statistics lack overarching coverage of repair and maintenance given the diversity and magnitude of its operations. The sector in general holds a steady annual growth rate of 5.5 percent (not inclusive of all sub-sectors). Currently the sector provides 500,000 jobs in the cellphone repairing market and a similar number in the auto repair market. As proxy indicators, the phone accessories market and automobile registration are growing at an annual rate of 5.5 percent and 5.43 percent¹⁰⁰. The cellphone repair industry is currently a quarter of the handset industry and is roughly holds a

⁹⁸ [Progressing female labour force participation in Bangladesh. The IGC, 2019.](#)

⁹⁹ Interview with Khulna-based Dalit NGO

¹⁰⁰ <https://businessinspection.com.bd/automobile-industry-of-bangladesh/> Automobile Industry of Bangladesh

market value of USD \$107 billion¹⁰¹. Private vehicle owners spend around USD \$109 million in a year overall. On the other hand, the refrigeration and air conditioning market is growing at a rate of 4.1 percent and 6.68 percent respectively. The above statistics underpin the affiliated growth of the repair industry across different subsectors.

Sub-sector Profile

Major Sub-sectors include:

1. Phone repairing
2. Automobile and bike repairing
3. Agro-machinery repairing
4. Refrigeration and air condition repairing
5. Home appliance repairing

Sector's Presence across Hubs

Although evenly distributed all over the country, there are some major clusters for specialized cases within this sector. For example, Nilphamari (Saidpur) and Bogura are particularly well known for their agro-machinery repair industry along with Dhaka. Services like home appliance repair and cellphone repair services are mainly clustered in Dhaka, Chattogram, and Gazipur although sporadic presence can be found in major urban areas. Automobile repair shops are also ubiquitously located over the target districts. Some large businesses include Navana limited, Uttara motors, Rangs workshop, Rancon automobiles, and Biswas automobiles.

Growth Factors

The National Industrial Policy 2022 recognizes the repair and maintenance industry under the service sector. A number of new vehicle manufacturing and cellphone manufacturing facilities have been established over the past 5 years with increasing domestic demands. Growing labor costs and shortages of supply, particularly during the rice harvest period as Bangladesh graduating LDC status, are now driving a demand for mechanized rice transplanting and harvesting services.¹⁰² Since only 2 percent of harvests and less than 10 percent of weeding and fertilizer operations are mechanized, there remains the maximum headroom for adoption. Mobile phone accessories and repair market is expanding at a rate of 30 percent to 40 percent each year; with the establishment of foreign manufacturing units (Samsung, Oppo, Vivo) in the country, the industry will continue to grow.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 31: Demand for new workers in Repair and Maintenance sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	17000	80	13600	450000	10	45000
Medium		15	2550	40000	10	4000
Large		5	850	10000	10	1000
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

¹⁰¹ [Smartphone repair and accessories market in Bangladesh. Financial Express, 2020.](#)

¹⁰² [Agricultural Mechanization in Bangladesh – The Future, 2022.](#)

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity of around 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Small enterprises may offer as much as 45000 entry level jobs.

Occupations that are in high demand

The demand for repair and service work is increasing day by day. Number of vehicles in Bangladesh is increasing rapidly. Number of registered vehicles in Bangladesh was 377,660 in 2020 and increased to 445,030 in 2021. Now Bangladesh has 578,151 registered vehicles¹⁰³. With the growing number of automobiles, the demand for automotive mechanics is also increasing. Same goes for mobile phone servicing technician, The number of mobile phone is users increasing multifold. Bangladesh produced 2.2 million mobile phones locally in 2018. The number has shot up and 30.1 million reached in 2022¹⁰⁴. Similarly, air cooler/ conditioner has become a necessity in Bangladesh hence, increasing the demand for Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) technician.

Occupations that are in low demand

Other occupations in this sector will also be in demand but not as much as the occupations mentioned above. The demand for electronics servicing and maintenance worker and welder will also increase but not at the same rate of automotive technician, mobile phone servicing technician and RAC technician.

“There is always a need for skilled repairman. We tried taking in amateur level workers, but the learning curve drains profit, therefore we now take in experienced hand any day. There are thousands of local bike repair shops outside who will hire a novice.”- A repair service enterprise owner

Table 32 Major Occupations in repair and maintenance

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Welder	Entry	Ethical consideration Lack of professional behavior Concentration Controlling impulses, managing emotion Respecting others resolving conflict	Self-control (Control impulses and managing emotions Self-control Social Skills (Appropriate Behavior)
Electronics Servicing and Maintenance worker	Entry		
Mobile phone servicing technician	Entry		
Refrigeration and Air Conditioning (RAC) technician	Entry		
Automotive Mechanics	Entry		
Note: All occupations mentioned above are recognized BTEB/ NSDA			

¹⁰³ https://brta.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/brta.portal.gov.bd/page/6d849ccb_09aa_4fbc_aef2_3d254a2a0cd1/2023-07-13-04-42-33a44c012d3ff84b84d15cace8a822a9.pdf

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bangladesh-made-over-10cr-handsets-so-far-3241061>

Recruitment Practices in the sector

Recruitment at small and medium-scale enterprises is more or less lenient. Therefore, a novice or amateur can enter the repair sector by being an apprentice. Physical attributes/ fitness is taken into consideration, according to a home appliance and RAC business owner. Large firms recruit medium level experienced (2-3 years) workers and provide in-house training before deployment.

Existing Gap in Soft Skills

In this sector all the occupations are high technical skills-dependent and therefore an entry barrier. However, some soft skills can help them to excel in their workplaces/ businesses. Attention to detail and proper communication are important for employees of this sector. Apart from these, engaging in ethical behavior also plays an important role in this sector given repair businesses are highly dependent on trust and therefore a metric for retaining customers. Customer orientation, verbal communication, and listening skills are considered crucial at large firms; however, smaller ones in this sector also value these attributes.

Although repair business owners feel the lack of soft skills, they do not take any formal steps to enhance worker's level of soft skills. In some cases, they informally or verbally impart how & what to respond to a customer, but very few businesses teach how to handle adverse situations that might occur in the sector.

"A few of my technicians have behavioral issues, sometimes they argue with the clients. These incidents are detrimental to my business. I told them over and over to forward the problems to me and not to engage in any such conversations"

- An RAC Repairing Business Owner, Gazipur

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

In the repair and maintenance sector, having technical skills is key. From fixing cars to repairing buildings, professionals need skills like diagnosing problems, using tools, and understanding technology. Technical skills come first in case of being a good professional in this sector then comes the soft skills for career boost.

Table 33 Technical skill gap in repair and maintenance sector

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Welder	• Lack of skills in arc Welding • Inefficiency in accurate measurement • Drawings knowledge gap
Electronics Servicing and Maintenance worker	• Lack of knowledge on modulation, demodulation • Lack of application of proper method for soldering, brazing
Mobile phone servicing technician	• Lack of application of proper method for soldering iron and hot air soldering • Skills gap in de-soldering • Inefficiency in reassembling a mobile phone
RAC technician	• Skills gap in cutting, Reaming, Bending, Flaring, Swaging of copper tube

	Lack of application of proper method for soldering, Brazing & Welding
Automotive Mechanics	- Gaps in proper knowledge on maintaining tools & equipment - Skills gap in disassembling & assembling of engine - Inefficiency in servicing of brake system - Skills gap in applying proper method for measuring voltage, current & resistance - Skills gap in removing & installing the axles

Inclusion Scenario:

In many cases the sector is not overwhelmingly female friendly. Although some smaller firms fear a deteriorating business environment, the underlying barrier to entry for female and youth with disabilities is physical attributes. Almost all of the repair businesses are agnostic of racial or caste-based prejudices, i.e. there is no social barrier to enter the repair and maintenance sector.

3.1.10 ICT Sector

The ICT sector of Bangladesh is one of the fastest-growing sectors of its economy. ICT has been declared as the thrust sector by the Government. A comprehensive ICT Policy has been formulated to boost the country's ICT sector. Bangladesh is also fast becoming a global player in the Information Technology (IT) industry, having already grabbed a major share of the IT market in South Asia.

Market Scenario

The ICT sector in Bangladesh encompasses IT/ITES (software), internet service providers, BPOs, call centers, and freelance work. It's distinct from the telecommunications and hardware industries, as per the National Industrial Policy 2022. According to the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS), this sector has made a significant impact with \$1.4 billion in exports for FY22 and nearly complete domestic production. It also holds a substantial portion of the local market, with earnings equivalent to \$1.5 billion. The ICT sector's contribution to the national GDP stands at 1.28 percent, and it has been instrumental in generating over 300,000 jobs.¹⁰⁵ The country's IT sector is expected to be valued at around \$30 billion by 2031.



Figure 21 ICT Market Size

ICT sub sectors: ICT sector includes IT, ITES, digital commerce and BPO industry. Bangladesh's ICT sector is thriving, boasting a diverse workforce spread across several sub-sectors:

- IT:** This is the backbone, with over 650,000 individual IT professionals and an additional 2,500 team-based freelance firms. These

Current Employment Disaggregation

- IT (650000 individual + 2500 team based freelance firms), 47%**
- ITES, 53%**
 - Digital Commerce (2500 e-commerce employ 100000 + 300000 f-commerce pages)
 - BPO (70,000 direct + 50,000 freelance)

Figure 22 Employee Desegregation in ICT Sector

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/308608/bangladesh-becoming-it-hub-of-south-asia>

individuals provide a wide range of IT services.

- **ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services):** The dominant player, employing an estimated 47 percent of the ICT workforce. This broad category encompasses various technology-related services.
- **Digital Commerce:** E-commerce is booming, with 2,500 established businesses employing over 100,000 people. The massive 300,000 active f-commerce pages showcase the popularity of social commerce platforms.
- **BPO (Business Process Outsourcing):** A significant contributor with a combined workforce of 70,000 direct employees and 50,000 freelancers offering various outsourced business processes.

Sector's Presence across Hubs

All over Bangladesh IT firms and freelancers are popping up. Even in a distant village an IT firm or a group of freelancers can be found. Though the sector may have its roots in small villages, metropolitan cities are bustling with IT and BPO firms, freelancers, e-commerce and f-commerce entrepreneurs. Dhaka, Jashore, Chattogram, and Khulna have substantial presence of this sector. IT parks and software parks are being built in different districts to boost the sector. IT parks in Jashore, Kaliakoir of Dhaka, Sylhet are already operating, creating hundreds of jobs and generating millions in earnings.

Growth Factors

There are multiple factors that will ensure the growth of this sector and will help to create thousands of jobs. Growth factors include:

1. **IT and high-tech parks:** The government is prioritizing IT as the replacement of RMG. The sector will grow at a rate of 22 percent in the domestic market¹⁰⁶ and the export from this sector will grow at a rate of 25% till 2031¹⁰⁷. The government has developed 8 IT/ Hi-tech parks, and more are under construction across the country. The sector is increasing its contribution both in GDP and employment rapidly.
2. **Skilled Workforce Development:** Government has invested in IT training and education programs to create a pool of skilled IT professionals to attract foreign investors and companies.
3. **Attracting Foreign Investment:** Government is also providing incentives and create a business-friendly environment to encourage international IT companies to set up R&D and service centers in Bangladesh.



Major IT parks and Hi-tech parks in Dhaka, Jashore, Chattogram, and Khulna

Figure 23 Major IT park locations

¹⁰⁶ <https://bida.gov.bd/information-technology>

¹⁰⁷ <https://file-dhaka.portal.gov.bd/uploads/3cd0d9a5-2bbb-4f5e-9796-6a68880d403d/63f706/21163f7062119efb056903235.pdf>

Demand for Workers

The world is relying on ICT sector heavily. New jobs are emerging in this sector regularly. At the same time some jobs are becoming obsolete and losing demand.

Demand for new Workers

Table 34: Demand for new workers in ICT sector

Sub sector	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
IT	Small	13000	80	10400	520000	5	26000
	Medium		15	1950	97500	7	6825
	Large		5	650	32500	10	3250
BPO	Small	1400	80	1120	56000	5	2800
	Medium		15	210	10500	7	735
	Large		5	70	3500	12	420
Digital commerce	Small	15000	90	13500	360000	2	7200
	Medium		9	1350	32000	3	960
	Large		1	150	8000	5	400

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information of sub sectors. The IT sub sector will offer the maximum new job opportunity. The sub sector will offer new job opportunities from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. However, the sector will create more entrepreneurship opportunities than jobs.

Occupations that are in high demand

In the era of AI there are still many jobs in ICT sector which continue to grow in demand. With the increasing number of IT firms, E-commerce sites and BPO firms jobs like medical scribe, IT support executive, social media executive, customer care executive will continue to increase. IT and software park will boost the demand multifold.

Occupations that are in low demand

Where some jobs will gain boost in demand some may lose demand due to increase in AI usage. For example, data entry operator position will be low in demand in future as AI technology can do many data entry automatically. For the same reason the demand for computer operator may also decrease or remain stagnant. Simultaneously, professional digital content creation management executive can see a lower demand in future as well due to the advent of ChatGPT and other AI technologies.

Table 35 Major occupation in the ICT sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Professional Digital Content Management executive	Entry	- Controlling impulses Listening - Attention Verbal and non verbal communication - Stress Management - Regulating Behavior	- Self-control - Communication - Self-control - Higher order thinking
IT Support executive	Entry		
Medical scribe	Entry		
Computer operator	Entry		
Data entry operator	Entry		
Customer Care	Entry		
Tele sales executive	Entry		
Social media executive	Entry		
Graphic designer	Entry		
Note: Italicized colored names are BTEB/ NSDA aligned occupations			

Soft Skills Dynamics in ICT Sector

Soft Skills Considerations during Recruitment

ICT is a soft skills-heavy sector. Industry like BPO is largely dependent on soft skills. Employees need to be better at communication, behavior, problem-solving. During recruitment, employers try to hire employees who have good communication skills, work attention, listening skills. BPO industry new employees actually get a long training of 2-6 months largely on soft skills.

“Communication skills is the biggest asset for a BPO worker. Yet, we struggle to find these skills among the new joinee. So, we give an extensive training to the new joinee on different soft skills.” -Vice President, ICT ISC

Gap in Soft Skills of Current Workers

Employees in this sector show a lack of quick decision making. Sometimes they lose their temper with their client. For example, a BPO call center executive need to have a better communication and client dealing skills. However, they sometimes get agitated with the questioning from the receivers.

Soft Skills for Promotion in the Workplace

Soft skills is the main skills component for this sector. Career success in this sector is largely dependent on communication, negotiation, appropriate behavior, and problem-solving. For example, employees in the freelancing company might have to communicate verbally with foreign clients, have to listen to him/her carefully and based on reasoning, they might have to negotiate either for quotation or for deadline. During the assessment, employers look for these soft skills and promote them on the basis of technical as well as these soft skills.

“Finding a graduate having basic communication skill—being able to speak clearly, understand the needs of customers and write properly.”- President of IT industry Association

Inclusion Potential: The ICT sector is one of the most suitable sectors for women’s inclusion. Many women are already engaged in freelancing. The majority of the workers in the BPO industry are



20% of ICT employees

65% of Instagram based Businesses

Figure 24 Inclusion scenario in ICT Sector

women. Overall, 20 percent of the employees¹⁰⁸ in this sector are women and 65 percent of the Instagram businesses are led by women.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, there is no entry barrier for any community member to enter the freelancing sector. Hence, the indigenous youth are entering the freelancing sector in a quick rush. However, due to lower tech readiness, Dalit youth remain behind in the ICT sector in general. SOGI people also have interest.

"I want to engage in freelancing and my brother wants to work in the ICT sector. But We neither do have computer nor smart phones. We also do not know how to operate a computer."- FGD Participant from Munda community.

¹⁰⁸<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/endpovertyinsouthasia/bangladeshs-women-rise-challenge-big-ideas-digital-innovation#:~:text=Here%2C%20internet%20use%20is%2036,are%20women%20as%20of%202017%20.>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/tech-startup/news/70-female-led-businesses-opened-bangladesh-pandemic-meta-2978261>

3.1.1.1 Retail

Market Scenario and Growth: Bangladesh's retail sector was a giant, estimated at a whopping USD 200 billion. Though traditional mom-and-pop shops dominated, modern trade was growing fast. Currently, 30 companies with over 200 outlets transforming the landscape of modern trade or supershop based retail. While the exact number of employees in modern trade wasn't readily available, the sector, along with wholesale and retail combined, was a major employer. They contributed a hefty 12% to the national workforce,¹¹⁰ a testament to the industry's size. The growth was impressive too, with the retail market size anticipated to reach a staggering \$280 billion by 2025, reflecting a growth rate exceeding 30%.¹¹¹

Sector Prevalence: Retail has significant potential to provide job opportunities for young people. Some common areas for employment are prevalent in almost all areas such as super shops, electronic band shops, mom-and-pop shops, medicine corners, groceries, and fashion retail shops. Apart from these, in the different districts, retail has vast diversities. For example, in Satkhira, apart from regular shops, there are a huge number of fruit and fish traders and wholesalers.

Demand for Workers:

Supermarkets alone are expected to create a staggering 200,000 new positions by 2025, with cashiers, customer service representatives, and warehouse personnel in high demand. Recent industry reports revealed that around 50,000 youths are entering this sector every year in various positions. The demand for workers (especially women) are increasing with the sector growth and diversity of products.

Demand for new Workers

Table 36: Demand for new workers in Retail sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	600000	99	594000	5700000	7	399000
Medium		1	600	300000	10	30000
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 7% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Small enterprises may offer around 400000 entry level jobs annually.

Gap in Soft Skills: For the entry-level positions such as, salespersons, storekeepers, listening, client dealing, situation handling, stress management and attention to details are the primary gaps that the employers have mentioned. For the salesperson, there is a gap in skills related to negotiations and proper communication. For mid-level positions, team management, decision making, conflict resolving are the key skills that the employees lack in the retail sector.

Table 37 Major occupations in retail sector

¹¹⁰ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/analysis/the-changing-retail-market-landscape-1518803754>

¹¹¹ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/corporates/empowering-small-retailers-unleashing-bangladeshs-retail-revolution-724410>

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Retail Sales Service</i>	Entry	• Verbal communication and presentation • Active Listening • Self-confidence • Problem-solving • Attention to details • Stress Management • Negotiation	• Communication • Higher-order thinking • Positive self-concept • Self-control
Storekeeper/ Assistant	Entry		
Supervisor	Mid	• Resolving conflict • Verbal and non-verbal communication • Team management	• Social skills • Communication
Cashier	Mid		
Self-employed	Entry-mid	• Verbal communication • Controlling impulses • Self-confidence	• Communication skills • Self-control • Positive self-concept
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/ NSDA aligned occupations			

Soft Skills Dynamics:

Soft Skills Considerations during Recruitment: Soft skills consideration during recruitment begins with evaluating candidates' interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence. Retail roles often require frequent interaction with customers and colleagues, making strong communication skills imperative. Employers look for candidates who can engage effectively with customers, listen attentively to their needs, and resolve any issues with empathy and professionalism.

Moreover, problem-solving skills are highly valued in the retail sector, where employees must navigate diverse challenges on a daily basis. Employers seek individuals who can think critically, make sound decisions under pressure, and proactively address issues to ensure customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Existing Soft Skills Gaps in the Workplace: Common soft skills deficiencies include poor communication, lack of teamwork, and limited adaptability. These gaps can impede productivity, hinder customer service delivery, and strain team dynamics, ultimately impacting the bottom line.

Soft Skills Considerations for Promotion: In the retail sector, employers value several key factors when considering an employee for promotion to a senior position. Leadership qualities such as initiative, decision-making ability, and the capacity to inspire and motivate others are highly prized. Additionally, candidates who demonstrate exceptional communication skills, both with customers and colleagues, are often preferred. Moreover, a track record of consistently exceeding performance targets, coupled with a proactive approach to problem-solving, can significantly enhance a candidate's prospects for promotion. Finally, adaptability and the willingness to embrace change are critical attributes, particularly in the rapidly evolving retail landscape. Overall, employers seek individuals who exhibit a combination of leadership, communication, performance, and adaptability to successfully transition into senior roles within the retail sector.

Inclusion scenario: The vibrant retail sector of Bangladesh thrums with untapped potential. Women, traditionally underrepresented, are finding their stride in sales and management roles. Indigenous groups and Dalit communities, with their rich cultural understanding, can cater to diverse customer

preferences. Persons with disabilities, with appropriate support systems, can excel in areas like customer service or data analysis. For instance, physically disabled persons can work as cashier in a retail outlet. Overall, by embracing inclusivity, retail can not only empower these groups but also unlock a wealth of talent to fuel its continued growth.

3.1.12 Transportation Sector

Bangladesh has stepped into a new era of connectivity with the development of major transportation projects like the Padma Bridge, Metro Rail, and Karnaphuli Tunnel, among others. These projects are not only creating thousands of jobs but also making a significant impact on the country's GDP. It's clear that the transportation industry in Bangladesh is set to thrive in the coming years. These opportunities open the door to a bigger vision for the transportation sector in the country.

Market scenario

The transportation sector of Bangladesh includes road, rail, water, and air transport, as well as postal and courier services. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the contribution of the transportation and communication sector to GDP is 7.34 percent and 7.32 percent during FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23 respectively and the rate of growth is 5.75 percent and 5.99 percent during FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23. The domestic market size of transport sector is 23 billion USD. The sector employs more than 3.17 million people.¹¹²

Sub-sectors Profile

The transportation sector consists of 4 major subsectors. The subsectors are explained below:

- **Road Transport:** The road network in Bangladesh has been expanding to support economic development and meet the demands of a growing population. Despite challenges like traffic congestion and safety concerns, the government has implemented policies and projects to improve the situation.
- **Rail Transport:** Railways in Bangladesh offer a safer and more environmentally friendly alternative to road transport.
- **Air Transport:** The air transport sector in Bangladesh supports thousands of jobs and contributes significantly to the GDP. With several operational airports, the Civil Aviation Authority oversees airport construction, maintenance, and air traffic regulation.
- **Water Transport:** Bangladesh's extensive network of rivers makes water transport a crucial part of the country's transport system. The World Bank and other organizations have supported projects to improve inland waterways, which are essential for domestic and regional connectivity.



Sub-sectors

- Road Transport
- Rail Transport
- Water Transport
- Air Transport

Figure 25 transport Sub-sector

Sector's Presence across Hubs

From small villages to metropolitan cities, the transport sector is common in every area. Dhaka and Chattogram are the largest transport hub of Bangladesh.

Growth factors

There are multiple factors that ensure the growth of this sector and will help to create thousands of jobs. Growth factors include_

- **Infrastructure Development:** Investments in infrastructure, such as roads, rail, ports, and urban transport, have been crucial. The Asian Development Bank has been a significant source of financing, supporting the development of these areas.

¹¹² <https://banglanews24.com/index.php/economics-business/news/bd/841343.details>

- **Urbanization:** The steady increase in urban population has heightened the need for efficient transport systems. This has led to improvements in the transport efficiency of cities and the national logistics system.
- **Economic Growth:** The overall economic growth of Bangladesh, supported by strong export growth and domestic consumption, has fueled the need for better transport infrastructure.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** The government's encouragement of public-private partnerships has attracted investments in the transport sector, leading to its expansion.
- **Advent of ride sharing app:** due to the advent of ride sharing apps like Uber, Pathao and other, transportation like bike and car sees a huge number of people involved in the sector.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 38: Demand for new workers in Transportation sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	30000	80	24000	1902000	10	190200
Medium		15	4500	792500	10	79250
Large		5	1500	475500	10	47550

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity of around 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. New entry level job opportunities in this sector are a bit as workers for most of the positions need to have certification. The sector can offer more than 300,000 entry level jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

Demand for skilled drivers has always been high. Employers want skilled drivers for road transport due to the industry's growth over the years. Similarly, demand for conductors will also remain high in the coming years. Similarly, ride sharing will continue to see increasing demand in the coming years along with gig workers.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Since the inauguration of Padma Bridge, the demand for sailors has been declining. On the other hand, ticketing agents and linemen also have stagnant demand in the industry due to the lower number of opportunities for these occupations.

Table 39 Major Occupation in Transport Sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Driver</i>	Entry	• Appropriate behavior • Managing emotions • Conflict Resolution	• Social skills • Self-control
<i>Conductor/ Helper</i>	Entry		
<i>Ticketing agent</i>	Entry		
<i>Lineman</i>	Entry		
<i>Sailor</i>	Mid		

Note: Italicized names are BTEB/ NSDA aligned occupations

Soft Skills Dynamics in Transport sector

Soft skills Requirement during recruitment

Soft skills requirement in this sector has traditionally been low. However, the rise of logistics companies made soft skills severely required for the industry. Now employers in logistics seek people who can think critically and make decisions during customer interactions. They also look for well-navigation and well conversant people to be employed in the sector.

Soft Skill for Promotion

When employers think about giving an employee a promotion, they try to think how he deals with passengers/customers, how s/he mitigates any problem that arises during any incident. For example, often drivers fall into bad situations due to his or conductor's improper behavior. It's the driver who can manage the situation during the crisis and save the transport.

Gap in soft skills of current workers

Appropriate behavior is the first soft skill gap that employers mentioned for workers. Often, they show inappropriate attitude especially towards female passenger/customers. This situation gets worse due to the inability of the employees to resolve any conflict. For example, often employees such as drivers, and conductors get beaten by the public due to their inappropriate behavior, using slang and others. Moreover, workers in the transport sectors also fail to manage their emotions quite convincingly. It is so often evident that drivers, due to their bad emotional state drive vehicles recklessly and often cause accidents.

Inclusion Scenario

transport sector is dominated by males as less than 01 percent of the female is involved in the sector.¹¹³ Similarly, very minimal presence of female in the rail, road and sea transport. However, in an interview with a placement service provider, the assessment team found that, now females are interested in ride sharing and food delivery activities. On the other hand, due to the advent of battery-driven rickshaw, persons with disabilities found some scope to work in the industry. Due to people's insensitive attitude towards SOGI people, they remain reluctant to work in the transport sector.

3.1.13 Furniture Sector

The furniture sector of Bangladesh has witnessed substantial development recently. Moreover, Bangladeshi furniture has found success internationally, with exports flourishing in overseas markets. The industry is segmented into organized (branded) and unorganized (non-branded) divisions. Yet, it is the non-branded or unorganized divisions that predominate, capturing 65 percent of the domestic furniture market.

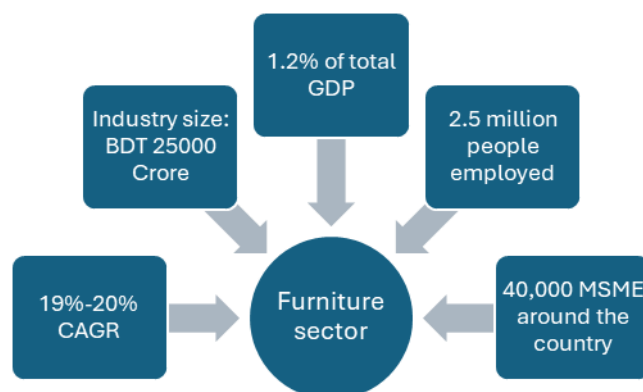


Figure 26 Furniture sector at a glance

Market scenario: The furniture industry in Bangladesh has seen remarkable growth in recent years with an annual growth rate of 19-20 percent. According to the Export Promotion Bureau, the current size of the furniture industry in Bangladesh is worth Tk 30,000 crore. The sector contributes around 1.2 percent to the country's GDP. There are around 40,000 cottage to large furniture manufacturing enterprises operating in the country creating employment of around 2.5 million people¹¹⁴. This industry is the second largest employment generating sector after

¹¹³ <https://www.metrans.org/assets/upload/razon%20chandra%20saha-0.pdf>

¹¹⁴ <https://bida.gov.bd/storage/app/uploads/public/636/0cd/b8d/6360cdb8d4361278042363.pdf>

RMG in Bangladesh¹¹⁵. Interview with related association and government officials revealed that to facilitate the highly promising furniture industry of Bangladesh, the government has already taken initiative to identify the bottlenecks/constraints faced by the stakeholders as well as to identify the way forwards to remove the barriers.

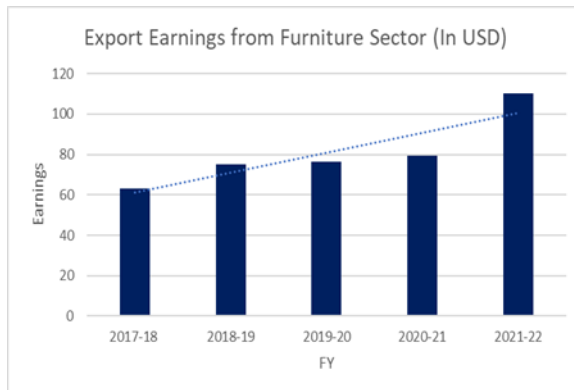


Figure 27 Export earning for furniture sector

Export prospects: Furniture industry is one of the most promising and potentially growing industries in terms of export volume. The Export Promotion Bureau source revealed that the contribution of this sector to the export basket has been boosting at an increasing rate since the last decade. In the fiscal year 2011-2012, the country's furniture exports totaled USD 27.14 million, which significantly surged to USD 76.41 million in the fiscal 2019-2020. Notably, there has been a remarkable 267 percent surge over the past decade, data from the Export Promotion Bureau showed¹¹⁶. At present, Bangladeshi furniture is

shipped to the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, the Middle East and European countries. The export market of furniture in 2021 stood at USD 290 billion¹¹⁷.

Sector's Presence across Hubs: Apparently Dhaka is the biggest furniture hub in Bangladesh. Shatarkool is the largest unofficial furniture industry cluster of Bangladesh which is situated in the Greater Badda area of Dhaka. Source of Bangladesh Furniture Industries Owners Association (BFIOA) revealed that there are more than 5000 furniture MSMEs conducting their business in in Shatarkool¹¹⁸. However, furniture sector is one of the most common industries across Bangladesh. The study team examined the furniture sector of Dhaka, Khagrachari, Khulna Sherpur. Rangpur. Jatrabaria, Shatarkool, Mohammadpur of Dhaka, KDA avenue, Sher-E-Bangla Road of Khulna, Sheripara, Ashtami tola, Moddhaboyra, khushumhati of Sherpur, Shapla Chattar, Gangachara of Rangpur are some of the notable clusters of furniture. The table below shows sector prevalence of furniture across hubs.

Table 40 Furniture sector across hubs

Hub	District	No of Enterprises	Workforce	Major clusters
Chattogram	Khagrachari	300-350	3000+	Sadar (Dighinala, Milonpur, bazar Road)
Dhaka	Dhaka	7000-10000	20000+	Jatrabari, Badda, Mohammadpur,
Khulna	Khulna	500+	7000+	KDA Avenue, Sher-E-Bangla Road
Mymensingh	Sherpur	300	5000	Sheripara, Ashtami tola, Moddhaboyra, khushumhati
Source: Local-level KII and desk research				

Growth Factors: The Bangladeshi furniture sector is experiencing a golden age. E-commerce and online platforms are revolutionizing accessibility, while a booming export market is showcasing Bangladeshi craftsmanship to the world. This surge in international demand is mirrored domestically

¹¹⁵ <https://a2i.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/11.-BJM-Furniture-Industry.pdf>

¹¹⁶ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/bangladeshi-furniture-industry-needs-reforms-reach-its-full-potential-hatil-chairman>

¹¹⁷ <https://bida.gov.bd/storage/app/uploads/public/636/0cd/b8d/6360cdb8d4361278042363.pdf>

¹¹⁸ <https://a2i.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/11.-BJM-Furniture-Industry.pdf>

by a growing corporate sector, hungry for high-quality furnishings. From homes to offices, the furniture industry in Bangladesh is flourishing. In short, growth factors are Rise of E-commerce and online-based furniture sales, increase in export, rising demand in corporate sector etc.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 41: Demand for new workers in Furniture sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Khagrachari	Small	350	70	245	1800	5	90
	Medium		28	98	750	7	53
	Large		2	7	450	10	45
Dhaka	Small	10000	70	7000	12000	5	600
	Medium		28	2800	5000	7	350
	Large		2	200	3000	10	300
Khulna	Small	500	70	350	4200	5	210
	Medium		28	140	1750	7	123
	Large		2	10	1050	10	105
Sherpur	Small	300	70	210	3000	5	150
	Medium		28	84	1250	7	88
	Large		2	6	750	10	75

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Dhaka district will offer the most, around 1200, opportunity and Khagrachari will offer the least, around 190 opportunities throughout the year.

Occupations that are in High Demand

With the increasing trend in housing sector and commercial building the furniture sector will also see a high demand which will ultimately convert to employment generation. As new technology emerges in furniture sector the demand for CNC operator will continue to increase. Currently, many enterprises are adopting advanced technology like CNC machine. As a result, there is a growing need for CNC machine operators in this sector. With growing demand of furniture, the demand for lacquer polisher will also increase.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Other positions in this sector will also be in demand in a saturated rate but will not see a growing demand like occupations mentioned above. Occupations like carpenter and helper will have demand but won't increase.

Table 42 Major occupations in furniture sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Assistant carpenter/ technician	Entry	• Ability to understand instruction • Attention to work • Verbal & Non-verbal communication	• Communication skills • Self-control
Helper	Entry		
<i>Lacquer Polisher</i>	Entry		
<i>Carpenter/ technician</i>	Mid	• Visualize design as per customer requirements • Concentration	• Higher order thinking • Self-control
<i>CNC operator</i>	Mid		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupation names			

Soft skills dynamics in furniture sector

- Soft Skills Consideration during Recruitment:** For entry level employees like polisher or entry level carpenter, employers generally do not seek technical skills among candidates as new workers normally go through an on-the-job training. Employers mainly seek efficiency in communication, ability to understand instruction, and sense of responsibility. These are actually soft skills that they look for in a new worker.
- Soft Skills Consideration for Promotion:** CNC and other automated machines are attracting small boutique manufacturers; therefore, a new category of machine operator jobs is being unveiled. Employers try to promote current employees if they possess the required skills. One of the major skills that employers seek within employees to promote in higher positions is the ability to produce unique design. These are much needed in non-branded vertical. Employers also seek leadership skills among employees during promotion. They try to promote those employees who can operate the business and manage employees in the absence of the owner.

"I rose to a higher position quickly as I had the ability to produce unique. This skill comes from the ability to do critical thinking. I also seek those people who can design well." - **Owner of a non-branded furniture manufacturing enterprise**

- Gap in Soft Skills of Current Workers:** Punctuality and attention to detail are highly regarded by employers in this sector. Branded employers weigh attendance, history of output, and knowledge beyond their own production section. KII with employers revealed that employees struggle to maintain punctuality. They lose attention during work, waste time doing unnecessary things like gaming, hang out.

"We value our work culture and workplace professionalism. No matter from which level an employee belongs, company norms and culture remain same for everyone." - **Manager of a branded furniture manufacturing enterprise**

Inclusion Scenario

only 7 per cent of women work in the furniture industry.¹¹⁹ Women do not work in the furniture sector in general as this sector is dominated by male. However, in CHT areas, indigenous people constitute a good portion of the total workforce. However, persons with disabilities are not employed in the furniture sector. Similarly, SOGI and Dalit youth are also absent in the furniture sector.

¹¹⁹ <https://seip-fd.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Skill-Gap-in-the-Furniture-Sector-of-Bangladesh-2.pdf>

3.2 Additional Priority Sectors

Apart from the 14 highest priority sectors, there are additional sectors prevalent in the Bijoyee Activity districts. These sectors comprise of a reasonable number of workforces in the districts or are niche markets that have a great potential for entrepreneurship and wage employment. Hence, a short summary of the sector followed by demand for workers, soft skill gaps and inclusion scenario is provided in this section.

3.2.1 Cricket Bat Manufacturing

Market Scenario and Presence in Hub

The cricket bat manufacturing industry in Jashore (Khulna hub) is still in its early stages of development. There are currently more than 70 enterprises operating in Narendrapur and nearby villages, employing over 700 people. The sector has the potential to create more jobs through entrepreneurship.

Demand For Workers

The demand for workers is not that much as the sector operates wholly on family and village-based. However, as the sector is growing, there is a chance of continuous workers in the existing enterprises as well as in prospective enterprises. However, during cricket events like the World Cup, or bilateral series of Bangladesh, about 20-30 temporary cricket bat factories emerge, creating employment opportunities for local people, including men and women. The industry will expand and demand for cricket bats will also increase as cricket has become the most popular sport in the country.

Demand for new Workers

Table 43: Demand for new workers in Cricket Bat Manufacturing sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Jashore	Small	70	95	67	630	10	63
	Medium		5	4	70	10	7

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector is concentrated in Jashore district and will offer a new job opportunity of around 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector can offer as much as 70 jobs annually.

Table 44 Major occupations in cricket bat industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Wood artisan	Entry	- Attention - Critical Thinking (market analysis) - Unnotified Absenteeism - Time Management - Adaptation - Teamwork	Communication Self-control Higher order thinking
Handle Maker	Entry		
Sticker worker	Entry		
Packaging worker	Entry		
Assemble worker	Entry		

Note: All occupations are found at the industry level, but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

“Cricket bat manufacturing can become an excellent opportunity for young people. However, they need to take the advantage of online marketing to be successful.” -Owner, Cricket bat manufacturing enterprise, Jashore

Demand for Soft Skills in the Sector

As the sector is still in its fledgling phase, there is less importance on soft skills. However, despite that, employers identified some soft skills important for the sector. Attention to work in the primary soft skills that are needed. Employers tend to use YouTube and Facebook and lag behind in the work which ultimately hampers the production cycle and produces a smaller number of bats than target as it requires teamwork. Unnotified absenteeism is also relevant in this industry for the person outside of the family. They do not receive calls in response to absenteeism. Moreover, business owners also lack critical thinking skills in the form of market analysis, and expansion and do not expand the business. Most businesses can't even understand the benefits of online marketing for the business.

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

Cricket bat making is a small industry. Most of the newly recruited workers do not have any technical skills. They learn technical skills by doing work. Here, in this sector one employee can do multiple tasks. A wood artisan may take over the responsibility of a handle maker because these positions require almost the same technical skills. Again, a packaging worker can take the responsibility of sticker worker. Still skills gaps are common in this sector

Table 45 Technical skill gap in cricket bat manufacturing

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Wood artisan	• Sills gap in smooth wood curving • Skills gap in proper sawing method • Lack of caution in gluing and clamping • Proper sanding and filing knowledge gap • Skills gap in proper sorting, packaging and sealing product without damaging • Lack of caution in gluing and clamping • Proper sanding and filing knowledge gap
Handle Maker	
Sticker worker	
Packaging worker	
Assemble worker	

Inclusion Scenario

Women constitute a major part of the workforce as the industry is family-based and nearly half of the workforce are women. There are opportunities for Youth with disabilities to work in the sector, such as putting stickers, packing, etc. as this requires working in a seating position.

3.2.2 Nursery

The nursery business is experiencing a boom owing to the high demand for plants for personal gardening, indoor beautification, and landscaping with a growing presence of plants business online. Nurseries also provide maintenance as per the customer's needs as well as replacement of trees every month in various public and private offices for beautification. Hundreds of nurseries and institutions in Dhaka and surrounding areas do this business under contract.

Market Scenario and Presence in Hub

There are more than 18,000 registered nurseries in the country. About .5 million people are directly and indirectly involved in this sector.¹²⁰ There are around 800 nurseries in Dhaka city and surrounding areas, over 3,000 people in 200+ nurseries in Bogura which are mainly vegetable nurseries that account for a major portion of vegetable saplings for the country, and more than 4,500 rural people are now involved in the nursery in Rangpur. This sector possesses tremendous potential for entrepreneurship for NEET youth as well as wage employment.

Table 46 Nursery sector in different hubs

Distinct Name	No of Enterprises	Major Cluster
Dhaka	800 enterprises ¹²¹	Agargaon, 100 feet, 300 feet, Diabari, Doyel Chattar, Baily Road, Kakrail, Beribadh.
Bogura	200 nurseries (3000 people) ¹²²	Shahnagar and its adjoining areas
Chattogram	500 enterprises ¹²³	DC Hill, Anderkilla, Laldighi, Bahaddarhat, Dewanhat, Wasa Intersection, Kotwali Intersection, Halishahar, Pahartali, Chandgaon, Agrabad and Fateyabad areas.
Jashore	400 nurseries ¹²⁴	Basudebpur village in Monirampur upazila
Rangpur	4500 people ¹²⁵	Jharbishla in Pirganj, Horkoli, Sholeyasha and Rotirampur villages and Modern Mour areas in Rangpur Sadar

Demand for workers

The demand for workers in the nursery sector is not high in number. However, the assessment team found that this sector possesses a tremendous opportunity for the NEET youth and further creating additional employment. As the demand for plants for personal gardening, indoor beautification, and landscaping in private and public offices, the sector poses potential for entrepreneurship in the above-mentioned districts which might create additional scope for the women and youth to be engaged in this sector.

¹²⁰<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/nursery-business-grows-pandemic-makes-people-think-more-trees-147745>

¹²¹<https://www.prothomalo.com/business/industry/wzl9fuwsvh>

¹²²<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/country/bogura-vegetable-nurseries-look-for-govt-patronage-1571499248>

¹²³<https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/thriving-plant-business-ctg-hits-tk150cr-year-sale-598054>

¹²⁴<https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/good-day-bangladesh/nurseries-in-400-homes-of-a-single-village>

¹²⁵<https://today.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/country/nursery-business-brings-fortune-to-01-million-people-in-rangpur-region-1612797342>

Demand for new Workers

Table 47: Demand for new workers in Nursery

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Dhaka	Small	800	100	800	8000	5	400
Bogura	Small	200	100	200	3000	5	150
Chattogram	Small	500	100	500	5000	5	250
Jashore	Small	400	100	400	3000	5	150
Rangpur	Small	450	100	450	4500	5	225
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.							

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity of around 5% of total workforce. Enterprises in this sector are normally small. No medium or large enterprise exists in this sector. The sector can offer around 1200 jobs annually in five districts.

Table 48 Major occupations in nursery

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Soil maker	Entry	Client Handling	Higher order thinking Communication skills
Gardener	Entry	Decision making	
Self-employed/Manager	Entry	Verbal Communication Attention	
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap for Soft Skills

As there is a trend of continuing business with customers from corporate and public offices, employees need to understand how to behave with different levels of customers. They also need to understand quickly what plants could attract customers and place them in the front side of the stores. On the other hand, employees tend to use mobile phones in the presence of the customer, play games and remain inattentive to the customer's demand. Hence, employers focused on the above-mentioned soft skills gaps in the industry.

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

Nursery workers must possess some technical skills to perform better in the workplace. Workers in different position in a nursery have some gaps in technical skills. Having soft skills along with technical skills in this sector can make a worker better than other workers.

Table 49 Technical skill gap in Nursery sector

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Soil maker	• Lack of proper soiling knowledge • Lack of knowledge on using fertilizer appropriately • Lack of proper knowledge of pest control • Inefficiency in seeding method • Incaution in chemical mixing • Knowledge gap on appropriate timing for spray • Skills gap in spray machine operation
Gardener	
Self-employed/Manager	
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.	

Inclusion Scenario

Nursery sector is dominated by male. However, family-based nurseries in Jashore, and Bogura tend to have female member of the family involved in the business as well. Usually, the female members work as watering the plants, soil makers and male persons tend to engage in selling and in outdoor activities. However, through providing training for women and youth in nursery business, especially in homestead gardening, they can earn their livelihood from them.

On the other hand, employers mentioned that, although it requires physical labor in the business, a person with disabilities might thrive in the sector. Nurseries can also be a good employment opportunity for the Dalit youth in Dhaka, Chattogram, Rangpur, Jashore and Bogura.

3.2.3 RMG Accessories

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Bangladesh has made significant progress in manufacturing garment accessories and packaging materials, meeting 90 percent of the demand of the export-oriented garment industry.¹²⁶ Entrepreneurs have recognized the huge potential of this backward linkage industry to become a primary sourcing hub for global buyers. This sector earned about US\$ 8.22 billion (deemed & direct export) for the country during the year 2022-23, out of which about US\$ 1.0 billion was direct export and set target to fetch US\$ 12.00 billion by the year end of 2025.¹²⁷ This sector employs around 0.7 million people.¹²⁸ There are more than 1900 factories located in the country, 96 percent (1906) of the total RMG accessories factories are located in Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Chattogram. Dhaka with the most number of factories (1056) followed by Gazipur (348), Chattogram (306), and Narayanganj (196).¹²⁹

Demand For workers

¹²⁶ <https://www.textiletoday.com.bd/bangladeshs-apparel-accessories-and-packaging-industry-becoming-a-global-sourcing-hub>

¹²⁷ <https://www.bgapmea.org/index.php/>

¹²⁸ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/trade/high-powered-body-formed-to-boost-export-of-rmg-inputs>

¹²⁹ KII extrapolation

Demand for new Workers

Table 50: Demand for new workers in RMG Accessories sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	7000	50	3500	350000	5	17500
Medium		30	2100	175000	7	12250
Large		20	1400	175000	10	17500
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 1% to 5% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector may offer more than 45000 jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

There is a high demand for technicians in the industry who can operate the machine as well as repair the machine. A machine operator might get to work for 2-3 years and become a technician. A technician is hard to find in the sector. A technician might operate different types of machinery in the sector. Similarly various type of machine operators such as film blow machine, button pull tester machine etc are also in high demand right now.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

On the other hand, demand for helpers, and loader/unloader staff to maintain the daily basis work and warehouse workers as well as maintenance workers will remain stagnant as apart from warehouse workers, they are temporary workers.

Table 51 Major occupations in RMG Accessories

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Apprentice worker	Entry	Problem-solving Attention to details Respecting others Non-verbal communication Calmness Dedication to work	Higher order thinking Social skills Self-control
Machine Operator	Entry		
Technician	Entry		
Warehouse worker	Entry		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

"At first, we want to check his/her not verbal communication like eye contact, understand how aggressive minded s/he is and how calm s/he is". -AGM, A large RMG accessories enterprise, Chattogram.

Demand for Soft Skills

During recruitment, employers within the industry try to find out if the worker possess aggressiveness, has a mindset to steal from the factory and their attitude towards women. However, as they work in industry, due to the heavy noise of the machinery, employees lose attention to work which sometimes creates wastage. On the other hand, they also find workers engaged in malign attitude towards women in the workplace. The industry owners conduct soft skill sessions on social skills, teamwork, ethics

and conduct activities to improve their concentration level. However, there are still some gaps among the employees.

Technical Skills Gap in This Sector

Similar to RMG sector, workers need to have technical skills in RMG accessories sector. Worker's productivity in this sector largely depends on their depth of technical skills as in some positions workers are paid on piece rate. Yet technical skills gap is prevalent among the workers in this sector.

Table 52 Technical skill gap in RMG accessories

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Machine Operator	• Skills gap in smooth sewing and cutting • Skills gap in machine disassembling and assembling • Inefficiency in coiling properly • Skills gap in applying proper method for measuring voltage & resistance • Skills gap in lifting machine operation
Technician	
Warehouse worker	
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.	

Inclusion Scenario

More than 20 percent of the total workforce is women. There is a small prevalence of youth with disabilities in the sector.¹³⁰ Inaccessible pavement in multi-staired buildings is one of the reasons for the lower number of persons with disabilities in the sector. However, indigenous communities almost do not have presence in the sector. Employers have expressed eagerness to hire indigenous communities. On the other hand, employers are reluctant to include SOGI people in the sector. One of the primary reasons is the community's attitude towards them and they also mentioned that SOGI people will face harassment in the workplace although they are hired. It is because of the fact that orientation of the general people is not suitable for them right now.

3.2.4 Beekeeping and Honey Production

Market Scenario

In Satkhira, around 7000-8,000 people are employed in the beekeeping and honey-production sector. Honey firms are mostly clustered in Satkhira, which collects honey from -Litchi gardens, mustard fields, Khalisha flower fields, black cumin fields, and Sundarbans (flowers).

Demand for workers

There is a significant demand for entry-level workers in the expanding honey industry. After gaining one year of experience in a honey firm, many entry-level workers venture into establishing their own firms, resulting in a continuous demand for new recruits. Hence, this sector possesses a great potential for entrepreneurship for NEET youth that creates room for feed boy and box set up workers. As it is still in its fledging stage, they require more workers as they can due to the growing demand for honey across the country and employer's mindset of taking over the domestic market rule by Indian products.

Demand for new workers

Table 53: Demand for new workers in Beekeeping sector

¹³⁰<https://www.bgapmea.org/index.php/>

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprises	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprises by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Satkhira	Small	800	100	800	8000	12	960

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

This sector was seen in Satkhira district where around 800 small enterprises exist which can offer 960 new jobs annually.

Table 54 Major occupations in beekeeping industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Apprentice	Entry	Critical Thinking Problem-solving Appropriate Behavior	Higher-order thinking Communication skills Social Skills
Feed Boy	Entry		
Box set up worker and Cleaner	Entry		

Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

Demand for Soft Skills

While previous work experience is highly valued in recruitment, the position of 'apprentice' requires no such prerequisite, only a willingness to work diligently and willingness to travel remote areas and stay there. While entry-level employees are essential, there are observed shortcomings, particularly in terms of adapting hygiene practices, which are crucial for maintaining honey quality. Additionally, some may lack the adaptability needed to move from place to place during honey collection. On the other hand, during their stay that remote areas of the country, often they face agitating situations from the farmer's side. And beekeepers need to think critically and solve the crises without indulging in any conflict with the local communities. These soft skills are therefore required in the beekeeping sector for any type of position.

Technical Skills Gaps in This Sector

There are multiple technical gaps in the beekeeping industry. Farmers lack knowledge in colony splitting and management, they also lack knowledge in efficient colony transfer and colony-nectar flow management. The most dominant gap that hampers their quality of honey is lack of knowledge in quality honey handling during harvesting, processing, storage and marketing. By providing these skills, they can generate more revenue and set up new ventures across the country for honey collection from different sources.

Table 55 Technical skill gap in Beekeeping sector

Occupations	Existing Technical Skill Gaps
Feed Boy	-Knowledge in colony splitting and management, -Knowledge in efficient colony transfer and colony-nectar flow management
Box set up worker and Cleaner	-Knowledge in quality honey handling during harvesting, processing, storage and marketing

Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

Inclusion Scenario

Due to the association with physical activity and movement, females show less interest in this sector. However, this sector poses great entrepreneurship opportunities for marginalized communities as per the employers. In conversation with the employers, the assessment team also found that beekeeping could be a potential employment generation for marginal and indigenous communities such in CHT area as well as in in Sherpur. This also possess potential for the Dalit community in Satkhira and different districts. However, to succeed, they would need a better training on both technical and soft skills to thrive in the sector.

3.2.5 Floriculture

Market Scenario

Floriculture is mostly clustered in Jashore (Godkhali, Panisara areas of Jhikargachha Upazila) and Dhaka (Birulia, Savar). Over 0.1 million individuals are directly or indirectly engaged in floriculture in Jashore, contributing to an annual revenue of BDT 5.5 billion. In Savar, around 1,500+ farmers are commercially cultivating flowers.

Table 56 Clusters for floriculture

District	No of Enterprises	Workforce	Major clusters
Jashore	6500+ farmers	100000+	Godkhali, Panisara
Dhaka	1500+ farmers	2000+	Birulia, Shyampur, Mostapara, Bhakurta and Bhabanipur.

**Source: KII extrapolation and field visit*

Demand for workers

Entry-level workers have higher demand, especially during the festive seasons (pickers and loaders, sorters and packagers). Given the sector's ongoing expansion, this demand is expected to persist in the future. Also additionally, new persons are increasing in the farming of flowers, this also creates additional employment opportunities.

Demand for new Workers

Table 57: Demand for new workers in Floriculture sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Jashore	Small	6500	95	6175	80000	10	800
	Medium		5	325	20000	12	2400
Dhaka	Small	1500	100	1500	2000	12	240

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector is concentrated in Jashore and Dhaka district and will offer a new job opportunity from 10% to 12% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector can offer as much as 3200 jobs annually.

Table 58 Major occupations in floriculture

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Pickers and Loaders	Entry	Critical thinking Attention Critical Thinking	Higher order thinking Social Skills Self-control
Sorter and packager	Entry		
Farmer/Self-employed	Entry to Mid		

Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

Demand for Soft Skills

Entry-level employees often exhibit deficiencies in critical thinking and appropriate behavioral sense. For instance, they may express dissatisfaction or disappointment when approached by media outlets for interviews during festivals, without fully grasping the significance of this exposure at the marketing level. Timing precision is another vital soft skill for flower producers in various tasks such as planting, fertilizing, and harvesting. However, often, farmers pick flowers before their maturity in search of money. But they lose the trust of the customers due to this. This also shows their lack of critical thinking abilities.

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

Farmers in the floriculture sectors suffers from limited knowledge on diseases, (integrated) pest management and bio pesticides, lack of knowledge on what to spray, when to spray and how much to spray for which flowers, they also exhibit lack of knowledge in sorting products and post-harvest management.

Table 59 Technical skill gap in floriculture

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Pickers and Loaders	Limited knowledge on disease

Sorter and packager	• Lack of knowledge on integrated pest management and bio pesticides • Lack of knowledge on what to spray, when to spray and dose rate • Knowledge gap in post-harvest management • Skills gap in sorting and packaging flower without damaging
Farmer/Self-employed	
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.	

Inclusion Scenario

There is a high employment potential for women in the production, sorting, and seeding of flowers. Currently, women are involved in this sector in occupations like pickers and loaders, sorting and packaging flowers and seedlings. More than half of the total farmers are female in this sector. Moreover, men tend to work hand in hand with women in the flower field, and also they sell it to the local markets. In flower processing and sorting, persons with disabilities can work this at home, however, there are no persons with disabilities right now in the floriculture sector. No Dalit youth is also employed in the sector.

3.2.6 Wig Industry

Market Scenario and Sector presence

As people grow more cautious over their appearance and fashion in the age of social media, wig products made in Bangladesh have found a new avenue into the global market through quality, customization and price competitiveness. Districts such as Nilphamari and Sherpur are currently the major location for wig manufacturing as around 15,000 women in fifteen villages in the Sharper's Sadar are involved in wig manufacturing.¹³¹ Similarly, 11,000 workers at a factory in Uttara EPZ manufacture a wide range of hair products and around an additional 5,000 women have been engaged in different factories set up in rural houses of the upazila.¹³² Moreover, the under-construction facility of Evergreen aims to employ an additional 10,000 new workers in the near future.¹³³ Chinese company Red Forest Limited is going to set up a wig and carnival costume manufacturing industry in Uttara EPZ with an investment of USD 2.26 million. This will create 379 employment opportunities.¹³⁴

Table 60 Cluster for Wig industry

District	Workforce	Cluster
Nilphamari	16000+	Kashiram Belpukur, Kamarpur, Chowpothi, and Shipaigonj of Saidpur and Uttara EPZ.
Sherpur	15000+	Bada Teghuria, Choitankhola, Gangpar, Taragor, Baluakanda, Bhatiapara, Palashia, Dhola, Panjorbhanga, and Girdapara

¹³¹ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/224819/fallen-hair-business-changes-fate-of-sherpur-women>

¹³² <https://businesspostbd.com/nation/wig-making-makes-rangpur-women-self-reliant-2022-03-20>

¹³³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/feature/panorama/evergreen-shines-uttara-epz-86593>

¹³⁴ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/chinese-company-signs-deal-to-invest-226m-in-uttara-epz>

Demand for workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 61: Demand for new workers in Wig sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Nilphamari	Small	500	95	475	12800	10	1280
	Medium		5	25	3200	12	384
Sherpur	Small	500	95	475	12000	10	1200
	Medium		5	25	3000	12	360

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector is concentrated in Sherpur and Nilphamari district and will offer a new job opportunity from 10% to 12% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector can offer more than 3000 jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

As the wig industry continues to fetch dollar in the country, the demand for occupations such as designers, Kempting workers, washing workers and wig makers continue to rise. There is not much training needed to get involved in the sector. Hence, a greater number of women and men are starting to get involved in the sector either as wage employers or as entrepreneurs.

Occupations that are in Lower Demand

Packaging workers for the entry-level positions and supervisors for the mid-level positions are of lower demand right now due to lack of number of opportunities for both of the occupations. Hair collector is also of a stagnant demand.

Table 62 Major occupations in wig industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Hair collector	Entry	Attention to details Patience Teamwork	Self-control
Washing worker			
Kempting worker	Entry		
Wig Maker	Entry		
Packaging worker	Entry		
Supervisor	Mid		

Note: Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

Gap in Soft Skills

Attention to details is the first thing in the industry as knotting a wig requires sharp eyes for detail. Due to this, employers recruit women workers aged 18-23 mostly as they tend to show work better for the sector. Moreover, employees also have to be patient during work hours as the work needs to be patient while sorting hair and knotting a wig. Also, this sector requires teamwork skills as when someone new enters the workforce

Technical Skills Gap in this sector

Workers in wig industry face technical difficulties while working. Some of the most common gaps are knowledge of hair type, renovating new designs and their replicability, reviving a damaged old wig, fixing a torn lace, trimming and cutting to perfection, and knotting hair stands into wig caps etc

Table 63 Technical skill gap in wig industry

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
Hair collector	• Knowledge of hair type, its pattern and usability • Measuring the density and length of the wigs • Innovating new design and replicability • Reviving a damaged old wig • How to fix a torn lace • Trimming and cutting to perfection • To knot or ventilate hair strands into wig caps
Kempling worker	
Wig Maker	
Packaging worker	
Supervisor	
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.	

Inclusion Scenario

Women are the major portion of the workforce in wig industry as nearly 60 percent of the workforce constitute female workers.¹³⁵ The sector also possesses the opportunity for persons with disabilities and SOGI people to be employed. However, they are not aware of this and as well as do not possess the technical and soft skills required for the sector. Wig making can also change the fortune for the Dalit community if they can be trained as well as get forward and backward market linkage.

Anybody can do well in wig making. Its like handicraft, however, knowing from where to acquire raw materials to sell in market requires a bit from training from experts. Only then success will come. patience is required to work in this sector.” **Wig making enterprise owner from Nilphamari**

3.2.7 Jute Industry

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

There are 20 jute mills in the district where some 10,000 workers are employed. Over the last decade, some 20 small and large jute mills were set up in Sadar, Shibganj, Shahjahanpur and Kahalu upazilas. On the other hand, the government has planned to lease out all the mills to the private sector. This could reopen the gate for employment in the jute sector after the government shut down all the BJMC controlled jute mills due to excessive production costs. Major areas for jute mills in Khulna are Khalishpur, Rupsha and Fultola.

Demand for workers

Occupation that are in High Demand

¹³⁵ KII extrapolation from interviews with Nilphamari based employers

The entry level position of weaving and spinning machine operators might have a high demand in future, especially who do the work of softening, carding, spinning, winding, beaming, damping, lapping, and weaving.

Occupation

The entry-level positions of maintenance workers and workers who does piling and bleaching will have lower demand in the industry.

Table 64 Major occupations in jute sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Weaving Machine Operator</i>	Entry	Verbal Communication Critical thinking Problem solving	Communication skills Higher-order thinking
<i>Spinning Machine Operator</i>	Entry		
Maintenance technician	Entry		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations and black ones are found in the industry, but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

Communication skills is the primary gap in the sector. Employees do not possess good communication skills even with fellow workers. On the other hand, employees do not address issues properly such as delays, shortages, or disruptions to ensure the smooth flow of materials due to lack of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Technical skills required in this sector

The jute industry once almost died. But now it is reviving creating many employments. Different types of machine operators are in high demand in this sector. These operators must come with few technical skills to work in this sector.

Table 65 Technical skill gap in jute industry

Occupations	Existing Technical Skills Gap
<i>Weaving Machine Operator</i>	• Knowledge gap on properly winding a bobbin. • Skills gaps in accurate needle setting • Failure to maintain thread tension adjusted. • Inefficiency in fixing threads in bobbin
<i>Spinning Machine Operator</i>	• Knowledge gap in appropriate way of threading the machine • Inefficiency in smooth trimming
Maintenance technician	• Lack proper skills on disassembling and assembling parts without damaging
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations and black ones are found in the industry, but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.	

Inclusion Scenario

Currently, only a handful number of women work in jute mills sector. Although the ratio of male to female was at 1:3 before. On the other hand, youth with disabilities are usually not recruited in the industry. Employers mentioned that the industry is not suitable for them. Lower social acceptance also made the entry difficult for Dalit and SOGI people in the industry.

3.2.8 Recycling Industry

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

More than 40 thousand people are involved in Jhut¹³⁶-based product manufacturing in the Bogura district.¹³⁷ Similarly, In Saidpur, the fabric scrap-based garment industry employs approximately 8,000 workers across 500 factories,¹³⁸ with the export of these products commencing around 2021. E-waste is growing at a 15percent rate domestically and according to industry insiders, the business can create employment for around 50,000 people.¹³⁹ The major locations of the E-waste business are in Dhaka and Narayanganj.

Demand for workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 66: Demand for new workers in Recycling sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprises	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Bogura	Small	800	90	760	36000	5	1800
	Medium		10	40	4000	10	400
Saidpur	Small	800	100	800	8000	1	800

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. They may offer a new job opportunity from 1% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise and location. The sector can offer as much as 2000 jobs annually. These are mostly small enterprises.

Occupations that are in High Demand

In the recycling industry, waste segregators, sorting and shredding machine operators are in high demand and will continue to see increasing demand in the future. because it is the preliminary task in the industry that the employers depend on. As the industry continues to grow, these occupations will increase in greater numbers.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Entry-level positions such as waste collectors and packaging workers are surprising witness stagnant demand. For waste collectors, it is rational because many enterprise owners depend on contractual/on demand workers to collect waste. Due to the nature of the industry, these occupations hence might see a stagnant demand.

¹³⁶ Garment and textile waste

¹³⁷<https://shorturl.at/fhHRV>

¹³⁸ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/fabric-scraps-based-clothing-business-boom-saidpur-714290>

¹³⁹ <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/wasted-potential-e-waste-561538>

Table 67 Major occupations in recycling industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Waste Collector	Entry	Attention Time management Using PPE	Self-control Positive Self-concept
Sorting workers	Entry		
Packaging worker	Entry		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

The employees in this sector often neglect the personal protective equipment and hence, get easily sick as they are involved in waste collection and sorting. Employers mentioned that, despite numerous efforts, workers still show negligence towards it. It shows that they are not well informed about personal well-being. On the other hand, adaptability and attention are two crucial soft skills as employees need time to get accustomed to the sector. time management is another crucial soft skills gap among the employees. They often come later in the morning and want to leave early.

Inclusion Scenario

The jhut-based factories in Bogura and Nilphamari are dominated by women as almost three fourth of them are women. Moreover, in jhut based factories, there is an opportunity for persons with disabilities to work in the sector. However, the E-waste sector is dominated by male workforce. The employers however are open to recruit anybody irrespective of their gender or social status. Hence, it could be a greater option for SOGI, Dalit and

3.2.9 Steel Industry

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Currently, the steel industry in Bangladesh is worth USD 6.2 billion.¹⁴⁰ At present 40 modern and 150 traditional factories are producing steel. In the past few years, the implementation of mega projects in the government sector, the development of economic zones, the increase in the construction of pucca houses in villages with expatriate income, in addition to power plants, have been the main reasons for the growth of the steel sector. In this context, entrepreneurs are focusing on increasing production by expanding modern technology and factories. Apart from that, six conglomerates, including Meghna Group of Companies, PHP Group of Industries, Bashundhara Group and Anwar Group of Industries, are setting up new factories and expanding manufacturing capacities.¹⁴¹ This will create additional news jobs in the sector. Currently, the industry employs 1 million individuals, both in direct and indirect employment.¹⁴²

Demand for Workers

Occupations that are in High Demand

¹⁴⁰<https://idlc.com/mbr/article.php?id=568#:~:text=Currently%2C%20the%20steel%20industry%20in,annual%20growth%20rate%20of%2010%25.>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/steel-industry-heat-new-players-joining-race-3155591>

¹⁴²<https://idlc.com/mbr/article.php?id=568#:~:text=The%20nation's%20steel%20consumption%20exceeds,to%20a%20perfectly%20competitive%20one.>

It is noteworthy to mention that recruitment in the sector happens through third parties who provide day-to-day laborers as well as monthly laborers. Entrepreneurs connect with the local manpower providers and place their required workers. The most demanded jobs in the industry for NEET youth are Furnace operator, cutter machine operators, welder, rod binders etc. As the industry continues to grow in size, these occupations will see a rise in demand as well.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Occupations like air hose maintainers will see a stagnant demand due to a lower number of positions offered in the industry.

Table 68 Major occupations in steel industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Rod binder	Entry	Verbal Communication Pressure Handling Physical Fitness	Communication Skills Self-control Positive self-concept
Welder			
Furnace Operator			
Cutter machine operator			
Cylinder maintainer			
Air hose maintainer			
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

Communication skills is much needed for employees working in the industry. As the blue-collar workers are hired through guiding the section workers through the production process if there is a sudden change at the plant level. On the other hand, workers tend to show weak pressure handling skills in the industry. They remain idle, silent and not-proactive during the peak hours due to heavy pressure. Improving this pressure handling skill can improve their capacity and assist the managers in completing daily production targets. Moreover, as the industry involves heavy labor work, workers need to remain physically fit to continue in the industry. Often workers tend to drop out of the sector due to the weak physical attributes. Employers mentioned that choosing a balanced diet, and having sound sleep could help the workers.

Inclusion Scenario

The steel industry jobs involve extensive physical labor, hence, it's not suitable for women and youth with disabilities. However, for white collar job there is a chance based on the education and experience level of the candidate in the sector. On the other hand, this industry also offer job opportunities for Dalit youth as per the interviews with the employers. However, due to outsourcing the recruitment of blue-collar workers, Dalit youth need to be connected with the placement providers for their recruitment.

3.2.10 Ceramics

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Over the last decade, the Bangladeshi ceramic industry has witnessed a 20percent average annual growth. currently there are 68 ceramic manufacturing factories in Bangladesh with a market size of BDT 6000 crore. Of them, 18 factories make sanitaryware, 20 make tableware and the remaining

make tiles.¹⁴³ About 48,000 people are employed directly by industry. There are 22 ceramic factories in Gazipur, 4 factories from sanitaryware, 6 from tableware, and 12 from tiles segment.¹⁴⁴ On the other hand, there are 5 ceramic factories in Bogura.¹⁴⁵

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 69: Demand for new workers in Ceramics sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	68		48	28800	7	2016
Medium			17	12000	10	1200
Large			3	7200	12	864

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 7% to 12% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Small enterprises may offer around 28000 entry level jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

The ceramic industry has a high demand for workers like decoration and printing workers. Body and glaze preparing worker, firing worker etc., for entry-level. However, for mid-level occupations, the industry has a high demand for quality control workers.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Occupations like firing workers, and packing workers are of lower demand as per the point of views from employers. These will not see an increase in future. This is because sometimes, other workers engaged in the packing sector as well.

Table 70 Major occupations in ceramics

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Decoration & Printing worker	Entry	Anger management Time management Teamwork	Self-control
Body and Glaze Preparing worker	Entry		
Glazing worker	Entry		
Packing worker	Entry		
Firing worker	Entry		

¹⁴³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/industry/large-conglomerates-expanding-ceramic-footprints-367366>

¹⁴⁴ <https://bcmea.org.bd/Information/IndustryMap>

¹⁴⁵ https://lima.dife.gov.bd/public-report/establishment-list-filter?factory_name=&industry_id=20&license_number=®istration_number=&district=45&upazila=&category=&status=&employee_from=&employee_to=&filter=filter

Quality Control worker	Mid		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations.			

Gap in Soft Skills

Employees within the sector lack anger management skills as mentioned by the employers. The industry also suffers from the lack of punctuality of the workers. Sometimes, they rush in plants which makes them susceptible to injuries and accidents or damage to materials. On the other hand, there is also a need for developing teamwork among the sector's employees.

Inclusion Scenario

Only a small portion of female employees work in the industry. They work mostly in cleaning tiles, and also in loading and unloading tiles. The assessment team has not found any youth with disabilities working in the sector. However, there are opportunities for youth with disabilities to work in tiles factories other than visually impaired people, anyone such as Dalit, indigenous people can have the chance to work in the sector.

3.2.11 Automobile Assembly

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

The past two decades (2000-2020) have witnessed a significant surge in motorized vehicles in Bangladesh. By May 2021, data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) revealed a staggering 4,729,393 registered vehicles, with passenger cars leading the pack at 544,616 units. Sedans reign supreme, capturing nearly 68percent of the passenger car market, while SUVs and microbuses hold shares of 12.40percent and 19.27percent respectively.¹⁴⁶ This rise in vehicle ownership can be attributed to the increasing purchasing power of the masses. The industry encompasses a wide range of vehicles, including two-wheelers like motorcycles, private cars like sedans and SUVs, and commercial vehicles like buses, trucks, and pick-up vans. This market has experienced tremendous growth over the years, reaching a value of USD 1 billion.¹⁴⁷ Recognizing this potential, the government implemented the Automobile Industry Development Policy 2021. This policy aims to reduce reliance on imported vehicles, promote electric transportation, and establish Bangladesh as a regional hub for automobile manufacturing by 2030. Currently, at least 10 automobile plants in Bangladesh operate using completely knocked-down (CKD) kits. These include established names like Pragoti Industries, PHP Automobiles, and Nitol Motors, alongside newer players like ACI Motors and Fair Technology. Furthermore, a local company, Bangladesh Auto Industries, is setting up a dedicated manufacturing unit for electric vehicles at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar in Chattogram. On the other hand, Jashore turned out to be the country's largest automobile spare parts and body making hub. There are more than 1,000 automobile workshops in Jashore city and eight upazilas of the district.

Demand for Workers

Assembly plants being automated do not require a lot of employees in the factories. However, as new companies are becoming interested in establishing car assembly, there are few occupations that might see a demand for the industry. Those include painter, welder, assembler for entry-level positions. On the other hand, quality control worker is the mid-level position for the industry.

Table 71 Major occupations in automobile assembly

¹⁴⁶ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/analysis/supply-chain-of-the-automobile-industry-in-bangladesh>

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.thedailystar.net/supplements/four-wheeler-special/news/realising-the-potential-bangladesh-automotive-industry-2904441>

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Welder	Entry	Critical thinking Decision-making Focused attention	Higher-order thinking Self-control
Assembler	Entry		
Painter	Entry		
Quality control	Mid		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

As the cars and bikes are at a fresh level, employees working at the plant need to ensure that they do not make any spots to the vehicles by any chance. Focused attention is the key to this. Problem solving is another crucial soft skill for employees during the assembly. Employees may find different problems and they need to understand that and carefully solve problems by taking quick decisions. This is more applicable for the quality control staff.

Inclusion Scenario

The industry does not have a woman in the workforce as they are yet to be interested in the sector. The same thing is also applicable for persons with disabilities as well as Dalit and SOGI people. However, to work in this sector, they would require a good technical knowledge.

3.2.12 Cement Industry

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

At present, over 42 cement manufacturing companies operate in the market employing 60000 people¹⁴⁸. Local companies hold over 80percent of the market share and allowing Bangladesh to become a cement exporter while also meeting the demands of domestic market. Currently, cement is being exported to India, Myanmar, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka. According to the BCMA, the cement industry in Bangladesh recorded an estimated annual sale of USD 3 billion in 2020.¹⁴⁹ The cement industry is primarily located in Munshiganj and Narayanganj.

However, due to the slowing down of the mega projects, the decrease in individual building constructions from the rising cost of living and the lack of real estate companies' new investments and projects, cement industry is suffering a setback right now.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, as most of the raw material for the industry is being imported, the sector got hit again by the foreign exchange rate and the increased cost of transportation.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 72: Demand for new workers in Cement sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
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¹⁴⁸ <https://idlc.com/mbr/article.php?id=363>

¹⁴⁹ https://www.eblsecurities.com/FileRender/GetDocument?path=/Content/EBSLAdmin/images/ResearchFeature/03bb628a-bad9-42f2-9daa-39bd3006392924042023094557.pdf&fileName=Bangladesh%20Cement%20Industry%20Overview%20by%20EBLSL_April%202023

¹⁵⁰ <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/panorama/small-cement-companies-will-find-it-difficult-absorb-shock-764878>

Medium	42	50	21	30000	10	3000
Large		50	21	30000	12	3600

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 10% to 12% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector comprises of medium and large enterprises which may offer 6600 jobs annually.

Occupation that are in High Demand

Although the industry is suffering from a backlash, there is demand for a few occupations like junior and senior technicians. Plant and workshop helpers etc. These occupations are primarily required to maintain the continuity of production.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

The mid-level positions of yard foreman and senior technicians will remain stagnant in demand due to their low job offering in the industry.

Table 73 Major occupations in Cement Industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Workshop helper	Entry	Adaptability to work Communication Problem solving	Communication skills Higher-order thinking
Plant helper	Entry		
Junior Technician	Entry		
CCR Operator	Entry		
Yard foreman	Mid		
Senior Technician	Mid		

Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.

Gap in Soft Skills

Adaptability to work in a factory environment wearing special attire the whole day is something that the employees do not enjoy and want to avoid. On the other hand, workers must have the ability to communicate effectively with technicians if any problem occurs in the production chain, they should also have the ability to learn from observing and clarifying doubts and questions during this period. However, often they lack these skills. for a mid-level position like senior technician, he should be calm and not absent minded. Need to think about a solution when any problem arises during the production process. However, they tend to panic during that time and take time in taking decisions.

Inclusion Scenario

Cement plant workforce is dominated by male as women and persons with disabilities are not working at the plant level as the industry is labor intensive and possess greater health hazard. However, they can be employed in white collar jobs such as admin, accountant etc. On the other hand, Dalit youth have the opportunity to work in the plant if the employers and employees are sensitized.

3.2.13 Packaging industry

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

The packaging industry is a backward linkage sector and relies on sectors such as food-processing and readymade garments. The sector expanded at an annual pace around 20 percent in the decade before the coronavirus pandemic. Currently, there are more than 100 packaging factories.¹⁵¹ The domestic market size for the industry is BDT 6,000 crore and employs around 50,000 people. Packaging factories are located in Dhaka, Khulna, Chattogram, Gazipur, and Narayanganj. However, as the industry is 100 percent dependent on imported raw materials, it felt the heat of dollar crisis and slowdown of economic activities at home. Consequently, production dropped by around 25 percent due to a lack of necessary raw materials in 2023.¹⁵²

Demand for workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 74: Demand for new workers in Packaging sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	100	50	50	30000	5	1500
Medium		25	25	12500	7	875
Large		25	25	7500	10	750
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. The sector may offer more than 3000 jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

The industry is going through tough times as mentioned earlier, there are some occupations that are demanded by the industry. There might be a low demand for those occupations right now but can be of high demand when the situation becomes normal. Those occupations include assistant operator, operator for entry-level positions and senior operator for mid-level positions.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

On the other hand, occupations such as helper, senior helper, Junior operator will remain in low demand as they are yet to develop skills in comparison with the assistant operators and operators.

Table 75 Major occupations in Packaging industry

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Helper	Entry	Verbal communication Ability to read both Bangla and English Physical fitness Problem solving	Communication skills Positive self-concept
Sr. Helper	Entry		
Junior Operator	Entry		
Assistant Operator	Entry		

¹⁵¹<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/output-falls-25-packaging-industry-amid-lower-demand-3520086>

¹⁵²<https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/output-falls-25-packaging-industry-amid-lower-demand-3520086>

Operator	Entry		Higher order thinking
Sr. Operator	Mid		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

Employers in the packaging sector identified communication as the primary soft skill gap. Due to miss communication, often workers get scolded by the line managers. In the workplace, due to miscommunication, sometimes orders get delayed as workers do not pay close attention to the managers. They also face trouble while reporting everyday activities to the managers because of limited reading and writing skills. All the employees in the workplace need to report the production of the day to the managers. Due to this, one of the major players in the sector mentioned that candidates must complete at least 8 grades to enter this sector. The workers also need to maintain a proper diet to stay healthy. As every day, some workers tend to be absent due to sickness. Extensive work pressure and physical labor make them vulnerable to sickness and without a nutritious diet, they fall sick easily and businesses had to bear the consequence of it.

Inclusion Scenario

There is very minimal presence of women in the sector. Employers mentioned that though female with required technical knowledge can do this type of jobs but in current working environment women are not suitable. As there are no separate facilities in packaging factories for women and persons with disabilities. There are no SOGI people as well in the industry.¹⁵³

3.2.14 Salt

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Cox's Bazar district is the largest crude salt producing area in terms of volume as well as employment. Almost 15 per cent of the total rural households of this district are salt farmers. In terms of production, around 95 per cent of the 1.8 million MT crude salt produced per year in Bangladesh is produced in Cox's Bazar area.¹⁵⁴ Islampur of Cox's Bazar is the largest hub of salt cultivation and process in Bangladesh. Other clusters include Maheshkhali, Kutubdia, Teknaf, Pekua, and Chakaria upazilas along with Cox's Bazar. There are more than 39000 farmers and around 3000 mill workers in this sector.¹⁵⁵ in 2023, Farmers have surpassed previous year's output by an impressive 22 percent, reaching a production level unseen in the past 62 years.¹⁵⁶

Demand for workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 76: Demand for new workers in Salt sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Cox's Bazar	Small	42000	7	2940
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.				

¹⁵³ KII with employers.

¹⁵⁴ <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/views/economic-trends-and-insights/the-economic-context-of-coastal-salt-farmers-of-coxs-bazar>

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/salt-production-hits-historic-high-3305361>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/285545/highest-salt-production-in-bangladesh-in-62-years>

Salt cultivation is only limited to Cox's Bazar. 95% workers are farmers and only 5% works in salt processing mills which are small in size. This sector may offer jobs around 3000 annually in Cox's Bazar.

Occupations that are in High Demand

As salt production is increasing day by day, the demand for workers in the salt industry is increasing. Occupations such as mill worker, assistant Majhi have high demand in salt sector. Additionally, the surge in production was also attributed to an increase in the number of farmers engaged in salt production, which rose from 37,231 in 2022 to 39,467 in 2023.¹⁵⁷

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Involvement of a new farmer totally depends on the yielding of the previous year. Hence, more farmer involvement will not be increasing in future. Similarly, Majhi/supervisors will remain in low demand as they are not required in bulk number in salt field.

Table 77 Major occupations in Salt sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Farmer	Entry	Reluctancy to maintain hygiene and safety Patience and focus to work Respecting others	Self-control Positive self-concept Social skills
Assistant Majhi	Entry		
Mill worker	Entry		
Majhi/ Supervisor	Mid		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft skills

Workers in this sector are highly reluctant to maintain hygiene, they even work with wounds in salt. They also spit on anywhere, do not use toilet for peeing. This is a critical gap in the sector as it involves improper hygiene practices. Moreover, during work hours, they have to work without any break for 3-4 hours. One has to be patient to give physical labor for a long time and this hampers production by controlling patience. On the other hand, they do not possess good social skills like appropriate behavior and showing respect. For example, as female workers are not prevalent in this sector male workers do not have the knowledge how to behave with female workers.

Inclusion Scenario

At field level there is hardly any opportunity for female as the cultivation process is very labor some and need immense physical strength. However, at mill level there are only few female workers involved in packaging section. On the other hand, employers mentioned that due to labor intensive work and health hazard involved in the sector, persons with disabilities are not encouraged to be involved in the sector.

3.2.15 RMG Sector

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/285545/highest-salt-production-in-bangladesh-in-62-years>

Exporting to over 150 countries and contributing 16 percent to GDP, Bangladesh has the world's 3rd largest apparel industry (2020)¹⁵⁸. At present, the industry consists of over 4000 factories which employ more than 4 million people. 58 percent of the workforce are female.¹⁵⁹ With the CAGR of 10.27 percent, RMG exports touched a new milestone of about \$47 billion in 2023¹⁶⁰. However, The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) set a \$100-billion apparel shipment target by 2030.¹⁶¹ The majority of RMG factories are concentrated in only four districts, namely: Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Chattogram. in Gazipur, there are 2,287 RMG factories,¹⁶² some 1300+ factories are located in Dhaka, over 600 factories in Narayanganj, and 400+ factories in Chattogram.¹⁶³ Additionally, there are 6 factories in Manikganj and only one factory in Magura.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 78: Demand for new workers in RMG sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprises	Proportion of enterprises by size (%)	Number of enterprises by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Dhaka	Small	1300					
	Medium		60	780	160000	10	16000
	Large		40	520	240000	10	24000
Gazipur	Small	2287					
	Medium		60	1372	280000	10	28000
	Large		40	915	420000	10	42000
Narayanganj	Small	600					
	Medium		60	360	80000	10	8000
	Large		40	240	120000	10	12000
Chattogram	Small	400					
	Medium		60	240	48000	10	4800
	Large		40	160	72000	10	7200

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity of around 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Gazipur district will offer the most, around 70000, opportunity and Chattogram will offer the least, around 12000 opportunities throughout the year.

¹⁵⁸ <https://bida.gov.bd/storage/app/uploads/public/625/65e/c8c/62565ec8ca713951696003.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ BIDA

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.tbsnews.net/thoughts/threads-triumph-record-breaking-milestones-bangladeshs-rmg-industry-770946>

¹⁶¹ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/economy/news/bgmea-targets-100b-export-2030-3064956>

¹⁶² <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/local-news/z36lkm8pxu>

¹⁶³ <https://map.rmg.org.bd/?district=Dhaka>

Occupations that are in High Demand

Occupations such as sewing machine operator, sweater machine operator, pressing operator, knitting operator, cutter, dyeing operator and hand trimmer will be in high demand in the future.¹⁶⁴ Despite ongoing automation, these occupations will see an increase in demand in the upcoming years.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

The mid-level occupations such as sewing supervisors, quality controllers, packaging and warehouse workers will remain in low demand in comparison with the occupations in high demand. This is because some

Table 79 Major occupations in RMG sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Sewing Machine operator</i>	Entry	Communication Conflict resolution Financial literacy Leadership	Communication skills Higher order thinking
<i>Circular Knitting Machine operator</i>	Entry		
<i>Sweater Machine Operator</i>	Entry		
<i>Apparel Screen Printing operator</i>	Entry		
<i>Sewing Supervising</i>	Mid		
<i>Quality Control Management</i>	Mid		
Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations.			

Gap in Soft Skills

During the assessment, the study team found that employees have a skill gap in communication while at the workplace. They also have shortcomings in conflict resolution skills. On the other hand, financial literacy is also another crucial gap among the employees. For example, due to lack of financial literacy, they miscalculate the overtime hours and payment and consequently, remain deprived of their rights.

Inclusion Scenario

As mentioned earlier, nearly 60 percent of the total workforce are women. Many RMG employers are increasingly recognizing the value of persons with disabilities in their workforce. They say that persons with disabilities can equally contribute to the production process of certain jobs, even with higher job retention rates. A smaller number of persons with disabilities and transgender are working in the RMG sector now. In Chittagong, indigenous youth are also employed in RMG sector.

Some youth from the CHT move to Chattogram in search of work and get employed in the RMG sector. -
Chamber of Commerce, Khagrachari

¹⁶⁴https://www.hdrc-bd.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/03.-PKSF-Skill-Survey_-RMG-and-Textile-Sector.pdf

3.2.16 Electronic Manufacturing

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Bangladesh is turning into a manufacturing hub for consumer electronics thanks to its affordable wage structure, expertise in information technology and light engineering industries. The industry in Bangladesh mostly produces consumer items such as mobile phones, home appliances like refrigerators, air conditioners, televisions, electronic fans, radios, DVDs and CD players, ovens, blenders etc. Electrical equipment such as accumulators, transformers, diodes are also manufactured and exported. There are around 3,000 organizations involved in the sector employing around 1 million people.¹⁶⁵

The market size of the electronics industry, which includes both industrial and consumer electronics, was estimated to be around USD 5.29 billion at the end of 2019. The industry is expected to grow at a rate of 15 percent per annum and reach around USD 12 billion by 2025. The size of the consumer electronics market was estimated to be around USD 2.4billion in 2020 and it is expected to reach USD 10 billion by 2030. Annual sales of home and kitchen appliance products such as washing machines, ovens, blenders and juicers, rice and electric cookers, kettles and gas stoves will reach around Tk 3,000 crore by fiscal year 2027-28 with a consistent market growth rate of around 7 percent. On the other hand, Sales of electrical appliances such as fans, LED lights and electrical accessories are expected to reach around Tk 18,000 crore with a 23 percent growth rate in 2024.¹⁶⁶ This sector has a presence in Narayanganj, Dhaka, Gazipur, and Chattogram.

Demand for workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 80: Demand for new workers in Electronic Manufacturing sector

Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Small	3000	70	2100	600000	5	30000
Medium		25	750	250000	7	17500
Large		5	150	150000	10	15000
Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.						

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector data is not segregated by district rather it is showing a national level extrapolated information. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise. Small enterprises may offer around 62000 jobs annually.

Occupations that are in High Demand

As electronic products are growing rapidly catering to domestic and foreign markets, the industry continuously looks for workers such as welders, assemblers, and press machine operators. The demand will be high in future for these occupations as well. However, large enterprises often recruit through third parties or through TVET's placement platforms.

However, assistant press machine operators will not see that much increase in comparison with press operators.

¹⁶⁵ <https://bida.gov.bd/electronics>

¹⁶⁶ <https://www.thedailystar.net/business/news/bangladesh-turning-consumer-electronics-manufacturing-hub-3568926>

Table 81 Major occupations in electronic manufacturing

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Welder	Entry	Verbal communication Aspiration Commitment to work	Communication skills
Assembler	Entry		
Press Operator	Entry		
Assistant Press Operator	Entry		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list			

Gaps in soft skills

Communication skills in day-to-day workplace is the primary gap in soft skills. During working hours, if the employee does respond to whatever his/her manager has assigned him/her and continues to do so. And if difficulties arise, they need to report to the managers. Workers sometimes hesitate to communicate in this type of situation. Aspiration to go further in the sector is missing among the employees. Due to that, they do not have any vision and hence, after some time, they become bored in the industry and switch industries. Similarly, those who do not enjoy the work in the sector due to lack of commitment to work often get terminated.

Inclusion Scenario

Women inclusion opportunity is growing. However, most of the employers do not have women friendly infrastructure. Inclusion of women is possible provided women friendly infrastructure is developed in the factory level. A similar approach is also applicable for persons with disabilities. For example, if someone has listening or hearing problems but has the required technical expertise they can work in this sector as per the employer's suggestions.

3.2.17 Fruit Garden

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Fruit production in Bangladesh has been growing at a rate of 12.5 percent for the last 20 years, according to the FAO.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, about 15 per cent of the total fruit produced across the country comes from these three hill tract districts now.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, mango orchards in Rangpur, and Mango and plum orchards in Satkhira, Litchi, dragon orchards in Magura are providing employment as well as income generation for the people in these districts.

Table 82 Cluster for fruit garden across hubs

District	No of Enterprises	Workforce	Major clusters
Khagrachari	2000 gardens	15,000	Sadar, Dighinala , Panchari , Laxmichhari , Mohalchari, Manikchari , Ramgarh, Matiranga
Bandarban	1200-1500 gardens	8,000-10,000	Chimbuk hill, Balaghata, Kulang, Rowangchhari, Naikhyangchhari, Ruma
Satkhira	5000+	13,000	Sultanpur, Beltola, Moutola, Kaliganj, Assasuni, Nalta

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.daily-sun.com/post/591968/Bangladesh-sees-highest-growth-rate-in-fruit-production>

¹⁶⁸ <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/good-day-bangladesh/chittagong-hill-tract-is-the-new-fruit-hub>

Magura	1500	25,000+	Mirzapur, Birpur, Rautora, Bamonpur, Alaiapur, Norihat Hazipur and Raghaddair Union- Ichakhada, Mithapur, Gangulia, Khalimpur, i
Rangpur	4,000+	50,000 ¹⁶⁹	Akhirhat, Podaganj and Matherhat in Mithapukur and Gopalpur of Badarganj,

Source: KII extrapolation and field visit

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 83: Demand for new workers in Fruit Garden sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise by size (%)	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by enterprise size	Percentage of new jobs by enterprise size (%)	Opportunity of new jobs annually (% of total workforce)
Khagrachari	Small	2000	98	1960	12000	10	1200
	Medium		2	40	3000	12	360
Bandarban	Small	1500	98	1470	8000	10	800
	Medium		2	30	2000	12	240
Satkhira	Small	5000	98	4900	10400	10	1040
	Medium		2	100	2600	12	312
Magura	Small	1500	98	1470	20000	10	2000
	Medium		2	30	5000	12	600
Rangpur	Small	4,000	98	3920	40000	10	4000
	Medium		2	80	10000	12	1200

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 10% to 12% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Rangpur district will offer the most, around 5200, opportunity and Bandarban district will offer the least, around 1000 opportunity throughout the year.

As fruit gardens are expanding day by day in different districts, demand for a few occupations in them will increase simultaneously although it is a seasonal business. Moreover, during peak seasons, gardeners face troubles in finding workers. Even in some areas like Magura, gardeners recruit seasonal workers from the north Bengal due to their experience in the sector.

However, demand for supervisors and assistant supervisors may remain low as the number of these positions is pretty low in number.

Table 84 Major occupations in fruit garden

Occupations	Level (Entry/Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
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¹⁶⁹ <https://bangladeshpost.net/posts/rangpur-becoming-famous-for-haribhanga-mango-85838>

Assistant Supervisor	Entry	Focused attention Critical thinking Decision-making	Self-control Higher-order thinking
Fruit picker	Entry		
Sorting and packaging worker	Entry		
Sprayer	Entry		
Supervisor	Mid		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gap in Soft Skills

Individuals involved in the litchi-plucking process often lack carefulness, leading to accidental exposure of the litchis. Additionally, some overlook the importance of meticulous sorting, resulting in inconsistencies in the number of litchis per crate. Farmers also lack critical thinking and decision-making skills including strategic business thinking regarding choice of fruit trees. Most of the farmers go for traditional fruits. Only a few choose to introduce a variety of fruits and try to understand market demand for each of the fruits.

Inclusion Scenario

Presence of female worker is low in the gardens as around 25 percent of the workforce are female, most of them work in sorting, packaging, cleaning of fruits.¹⁷⁰ On the other hand, there are opportunities for youth with disabilities in the sector. For example, they can work low intensity jobs like giving water and packaging. However, employers often choose not to recruit them, fearing a potential delay in their assigned work.¹⁷¹

3.2.18 Mariculture

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Seaweed, a type of algae that grows at the bottom of oceans and rivers, is often used by some local Indigenous communities in Bangladesh. And in recent years, a few urban restaurants have also used seaweed in fresh salads, cooked vegetables, fish curries and meat dishes. It is estimated that Bangladesh has a ready market for the product with a potential market value of nearly \$20 million, as the plants can supply raw materials for biochemicals, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics industries.¹⁷²

Seaweeds cultivation could be one of the alternative sources of income for fishers in the near future. It is the most rapidly expanding component of global food production. Seaweeds farming helps conserve biodiversity while providing opportunities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, in Cox's Bazar, 30 families consisting of 300 members are currently involved in seaweed production. On the other hand, in 2021, the USAID funded ECOFISH II project provided training for 200 fishermen and women in seaweeds farming techniques, harvesting, processing, and marketing. At the end of December, 9,350 kg (wet weight) of seaweed were harvested.¹⁷³

Demand for workers

¹⁷⁰ KII extrapolation

¹⁷¹ KII with gardener

¹⁷² <https://news.mongabay.com/2023/10/seaweed-untapped-economical-potential-in-bangladesh/#:~:text=the%20global%20production-,Bangladesh%20currently%20produces%20some%20400%20tons%20of%20seaweed%2C%20valued%20at,species%20were%20identified%20in%20Bangladesh.>

¹⁷³ <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/seaweeds-farming-coxs-bazar-ray-hope-fisher-families-374680>

Demand for new Workers

This sector is still in trail phase. Roughly 200-300 people works in this sector. There is limited option for new jobs rather this sector is suitable for entrepreneurship. This sector possesses a tremendous opportunity for entrepreneurship for NEET youth. As this is informal in nature, there is no need for workers right now as the sector is wholly family-dependent. However, once new entrepreneurship starts to boom in the sector, demand will be increased for workers like cleaning and maintenance, rope setter etc. However, for entrepreneurship, they need both technical and soft skills training.

Table 85 Major occupations in seaweed

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
Supervisor	Entry	Critical thinking Decision Making Self-confidence	Higher order thinking Positive self-concept
Cleaning and Maintenance Worker	Entry		
Rope Setter	Entry		
Note: All occupations are found at the industry level. but not listed in the BTEB/NSDA list.			

Gaps in Soft Skills

Those who want to get involved in this sector need to have good critical thinking abilities regarding where to harvest seaweed, its management and post-harvest activities. The employees involved here also need to have good decision-making skills and self-confidence. It might take some time to develop the businesses, however, during this time, they do not need to lose confidence and make decisions accordingly.

Inclusion Scenario

Majority (80 percent) of the female farmers are working with family.¹⁷⁴ This sector also offers good entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities as well as Dalit, SOGI and indigenous youth if they are offered training and required support for seaweed production

3.2.19 Leather and Footwear

Market Scenario and Sector Presence

Leather and footwear industry is the second-highest export-earning sector of the country. The sector aims to achieve \$12 billion in exports by 2030, compared to only \$1.22 billion in FY 2023. Around 300+ leather goods factories are mostly clustered in Hazaribagh and Siddique Bazar of Dhaka; and tanneries are situated in TIE, Savar and 300+ footwear factories in Chattogram. There are around 12000 people involved in Savar tannery. Moreover, the shoe city limited in Gazipur will create 25000 new employment opportunities for the leather and footwear sector. Additionally, the proposed leather industrial park at Hemayetpur will create another 0.1 million new jobs.

Demand for Workers

Demand for new Workers

Table 86: Demand for new workers in Leather and Footwear sector

District	Enterprise Type	Total enterprise	Proportion of enterprise	Number of enterprise by size	Total workforce by	Percentage of new jobs by	Opportunity of new jobs annually (%)
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¹⁷⁴ KII extrapolation

			by size (%)		enterprise size	enterprise size (%)	of total workforce)
Dhaka	Small	300	70	210	7200	5	360
	Medium		25	75	3000	7	210
	Large		5	15	1800	10	180
Chattogram	Small	300	70	210	6000	5	300
	Medium		25	75	2500	7	175
	Large		5	15	1500	10	150

Note: The data has been extrapolated from IDI and KII.

New job opportunities are mainly entry level jobs for which experience is not required. The sector will offer a new job opportunity from 5% to 10% of total workforce based on the size of the enterprise, where Dhaka district will offer around 700 job opportunity and Chattogram will offer around 625 opportunities throughout the year.

Occupations that are in High Demand

There is a high demand for machine operators in leather, footwear and tannery. Similarly, demand is higher for occupations like cutting machine operators, and leather sewing machine operators. For mid-level positions, supervisors at the tannery, leather and footwear industry will remain in high demand.

Occupations that are in Low Demand

Occupations such as machine maintenance workers, tannery workers, will not increase in demand due to tanneries not being in full production and the number of lower rooms for maintenance workers.

Table 87 Major occupation in leather and footwear sector

Occupations	Level (Entry/ Mid)	Perceived Soft Skill Gap	PYD Skills
<i>Machine Operator – Footwear and leather and tannery</i>	Entry	Resolving conflict Verbal communication Ethical considerations	Social skills Communication, Self-control
<i>Cutting Machine Operator</i>	Entry		
<i>Machine Maintenance worker – Leather</i>	Entry		
<i>Supervisor – Tannery, Leather Goods and Footwear</i>	Mid		
<i>Leather Sewing Machine Operator</i>	Entry		

Note: Italicized names are BTEB/NSDA-aligned occupations.

Gap in Soft Skills

Conflict resolution is one of the primary gaps in soft skills among employees. As workers come from different locations and communities, different opinions might not be acceptable to everyone. Hence, conflict arises, during this time, workers need to equip themselves with conflict solving skills for both him/herself and for others. Similarly, lack of communication skills is also prevalent among employees, where members work too much on their own and lose touch with how their work relates to others. Sometimes, due to lack of communication, different ideas are not incorporated to solve a problem in

the industry. On the other hand, lack of self-confidence is one of the crucial gaps among the employees as well. Whenever any new design or new models come, some workers start to doubt themselves that they might not do it. This also hampers the team's overall productivity as well.

Inclusion Scenario

53 percent of the workforce are women in the leather products industries.¹⁷⁵ Women's employment within the leather sector varies significantly; most of them are employed in leather footwear manufacturing, followed by in the manufacturing of luggage & handbags and only a handful number of women are employed in tanneries. The sector also possesses opportunities for persons with disabilities other than visually impaired persons.

3.3 Cross Sectoral Soft Skills Gaps/Needs

There remain myriads of soft skills related gaps, however a few salient ones are amassed below based on supply and demand side analysis:

Lack of consciousness about physical fitness: Food choices play a significant role in the performance/productivity of the workforce. Most workers do not know how to ensure a platter of food within budget that will help boost self and HH level productivity/growth.

Lack of aspiration and absence of hard work: A number of blue-collar workers simply don't want to work as soon as the 'bare minimum' money is earned. Blue collar workers also frequently switch job within the industry for small increment of money without considering the career building opportunity in the current firm.

Lack in process thinking orientation: Workers often fail to follow set processes and simply follow what the others are doing. A lot of medium and small factory employers failed to switch the behavioral shift towards usage of PPE (masks, gloves, glasses etc.) among workers simply because they want to follow what the 'long standing senior workers' are doing.

Lack of awareness and practice of standard occupational safety and wellbeing: Many workers demonstrate a lack of awareness regarding standard safety protocols and practices within the workplace, leading to an increased risk of accidents and injuries.

Interpersonal behavior ignorance: Workers often exhibit behaviors that indicate a lack of understanding or consideration for appropriate interpersonal interactions in the workplace create conflicts and misunderstandings.

Lack of gender sensitivity: There is a notable absence of sensitivity and awareness regarding gender-related issues in the workplace, leading to potential instances of discrimination, harassment, or unequal treatment based on gender.

Missing orientation of social media usage and cybersecurity: Many workers (even white-collar employees) appear to lack sufficient awareness on the appropriate use of social media platforms within the professional context, leading to potential breaches of confidentiality or reputational risks for the organization.

¹⁷⁵ <https://businessinspection.com.bd/leather-industry-of-bangladesh/>

Chapter 4

**Supply Side Analysis: Youth's
Perspective on Soft Skills**

4. Supply Side Analysis: Youth's Perspective on Soft Skills

The supply side in this document refers to the youth population perspective. This section dissects information gathered from people aged between 18-35 years inclusive within the geographic scope of Bijoyee Activity project. The following cohort perspectives were taken into consideration during analyses:

- Status – NEET, EET
- Hub – Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna, Rangpur
- Gender – Male, Female
- Age Class – Younger Youth, Older Youth
- Region – Urban, Peri-urban
- Vulnerability – Mainstream and Vulnerable (i.e. YwD, SOGI, Dalit, Indigenous)

The goal of this analysis is to ascertain the status of the youth in discussion, their willingness to soft skills development, their training challenges, and their current soft skills baseline. Supply side analyses are more concrete, and constant and less prone to be deviated global or local market demand/ trend.

4.1 Bangladesh Youth's Status Quo

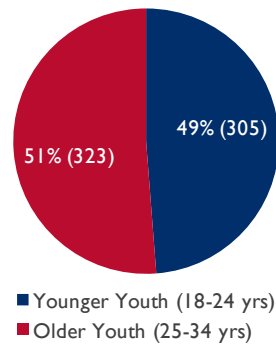
Around a fifth (19.1%) of the overall population fall under NEET category¹⁷⁶. The disparity is stark when looked through gender lens as male and female NEET proportions are 18.6% and 61.7% respectively. However, these proportions may not entirely reflect the scenario of youth subset. As manifested in Labor Force Survey 2022, around 83% of the unemployed bucket in Bangladesh are youth while the country now boasts 28% of the population in youth category (15-29), the highest ever¹⁷⁷. It has now become imperative to trace out the root of the unemployment problem from youth/internal end.

In this study, the youth group was split into two age categories to explore discrepancies or similarities between age classes in analysis, each of the age groups constituted with similar number of participants: the younger youth (51%), aged 18-24 years, and the older youth group (49%), with ages ranging from 25-34 years. Overall, 20 respondents (3.14%) were youth with disabilities and the proportion was roughly the same for male and female youth with Disabilities.

¹⁷⁶ [Rise in NEET population rings alarm. The New Age, 2024.](#)

¹⁷⁷ [Labor Force Survey 2022. BBS.](#)

Age Distribution of Youth Respondents (%), n= 628



Proportion of NEET between Two Youth Age Classes (%), n=628

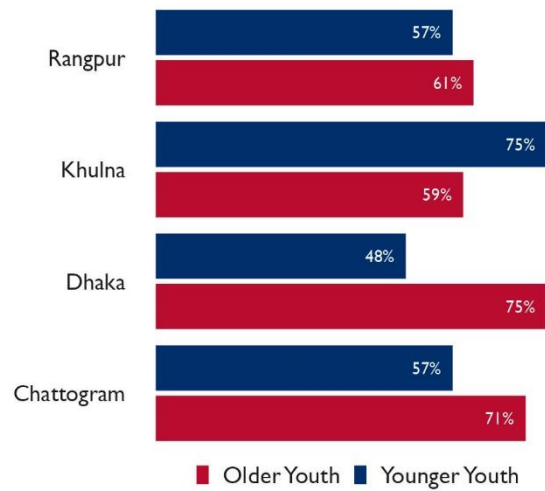


Figure 28: Age distribution of Youth Respondents (left); Proportion of NEET between two youth age classes (right)

Among these two age groups, the study found the Dhaka and Chattogram hubs to have a relatively higher percentage of NEET individuals within the older youth category. In the younger youth category, the Khulna hub has the highest percentage of NEET individuals at 75%. The following sub sections will illustrate on youth status quo from three different perspectives:

4.1.1 Education and Employment

Among the EET youth surveyed, approximately 40% of both males and females had completed education up to the higher secondary level. Within the NEET youth group, 23% of males had completed education up to the secondary level, while 23% of females had attained a graduate/diploma level of education. In both NEET and EET youth groups, female respondents showed significant participation up to the higher secondary level, but this participation began to decline thereafter.

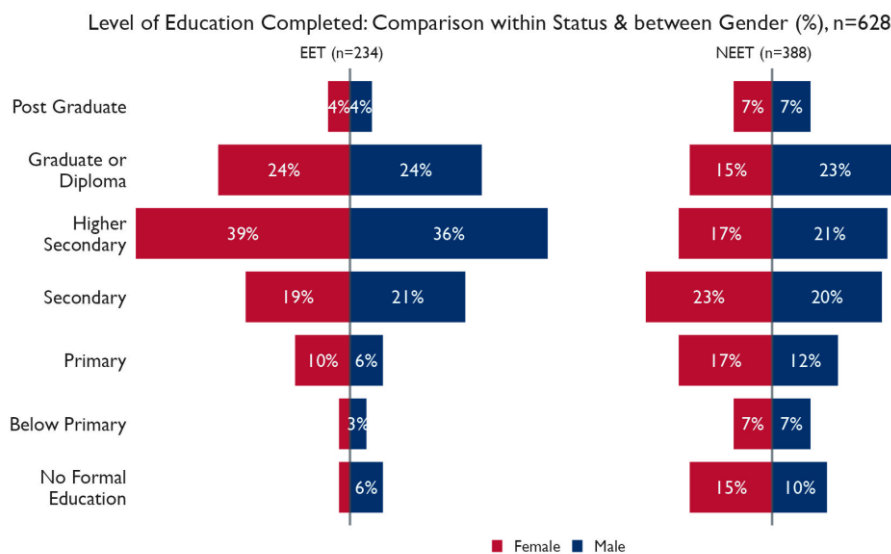


Figure 29: Level of education completed: comparison within status and between gender.

The highest education level of the NEET group surveyed does not vary significantly from secondary to graduate/diploma levels. The percentage of individuals who received these degrees as their highest level of education ranges from 17% to 23% for both males and females. This implies that irrespective of gender, a considerable proportion of NEET individuals have attained education up to secondary and higher secondary levels, with a notable presence at the graduation level as well. The similarity in educational level between males and females within the NEET group indicates that level of educational attainment may not be a significant differentiating factor in the status of being not in employment, education, or training. This situation becomes clearer when we look at the 2022 data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), which found that Bangladesh had nearly 800,000 unemployed graduates. This number is particularly concerning because those with higher education experienced the highest unemployment rate of 12%, as reported by the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022.¹⁷⁸ This highlights a possible gap between what the education system offers and what the job market needs, as well as broader economic issues that may be limiting job creation or the fit between jobs and educational achievements. On the other hand, around 2 out of 5 (40%) youth with disabilities respondents did not receive any formal education, here only 30% of them received primary or below primary level education.

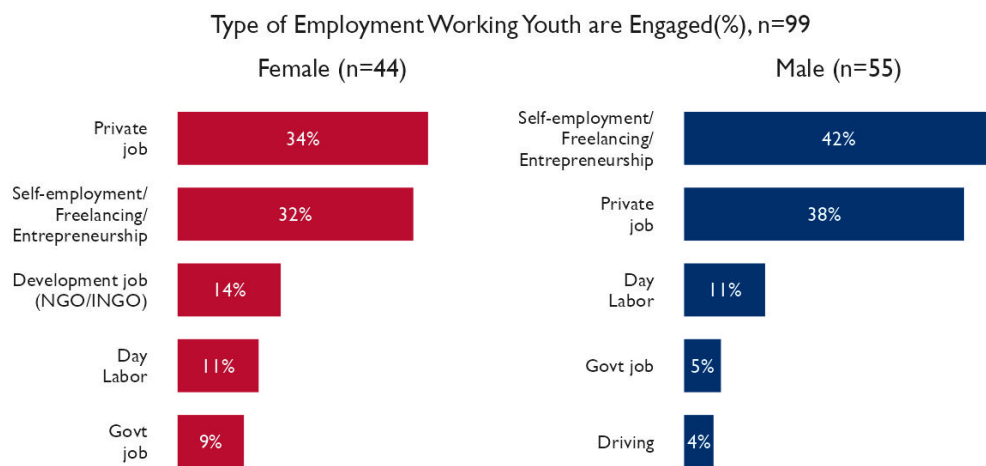


Figure 30: Type of employment working youth are engaged with.

Among the employed EET youth, self-employment/freelancing/entrepreneurship and private sector job emerged as the predominant employment options for both males and females. Self-employment/freelancing/ entrepreneurship was found the most common for males (42%) whereas, private job was found most dominant among females (34%). The preference for choosing self-employment/freelancing/entrepreneurship might be due to the independent nature of work or the lack of formal sector job opportunities. According to LFS 2022, 85% of the current workforce is engaged in the informal sector and this value is higher for female in employment (96.6%). The development sector job was exclusively notable for employed females, accounting for approximately 14% of the female workforce.

¹⁷⁸ [Nearly 8 lakh graduates unemployed. The Daily Star, 2023.](#)

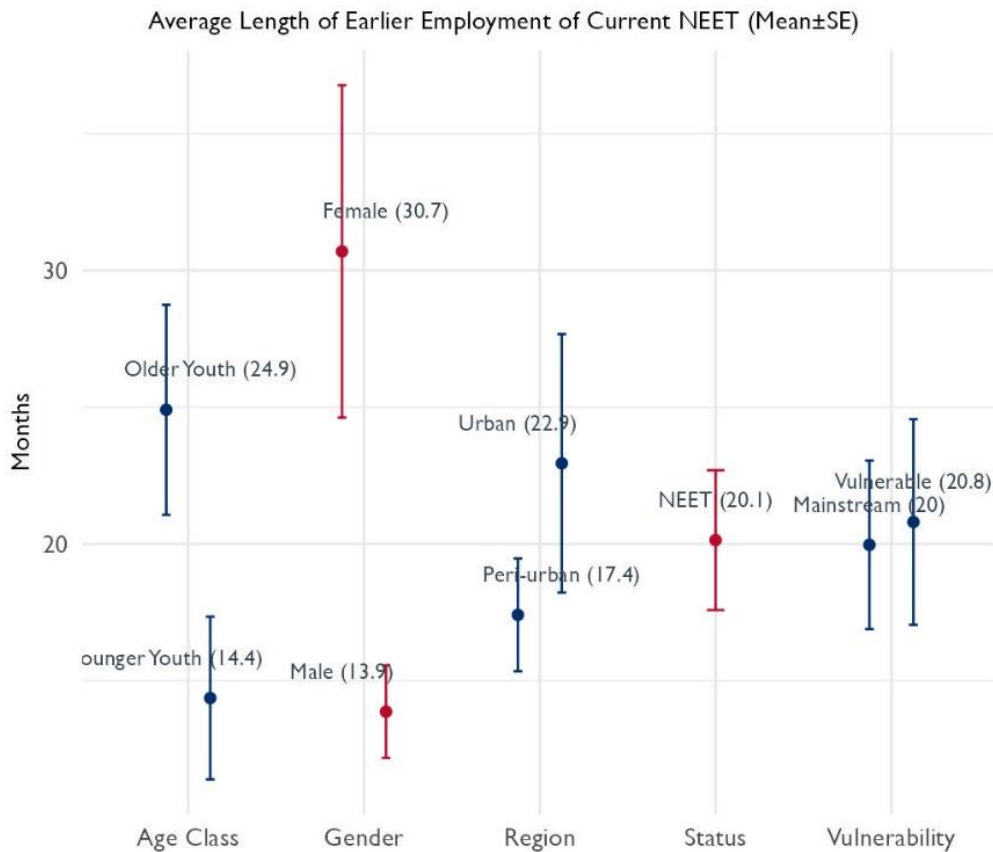


Figure 31: Average length of earlier employment of current NEET

The study also considered history of employment for current NEET youths. It was taken in length of earlier employment i.e. number of months been employed before becoming NEET. The average length of earlier employment of current NEET ranges from 1 year 1 month to 2.5 years depending on the different type of cohorts. For the specific status cohort, NEET youth have 1.5 years of average length of earlier employment. Although the lowest and highest duration is observed from gender perspective, indicating a significant difference between males and females in their average length of earlier employment. Figure 4.4 also suggests that females were employed for a wider range of durations compared to males. Despite having been at a job for a longer period than their male counterparts, women are more likely to leave or lose their jobs. It is also evident from the concerning decline in the number of female employees in Bangladesh, dropping from 19.6 million in 2017 to 17.3 million in 2022. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, this decline has resulted in a decrease in the proportion of women in the total urban workforce, falling from 31% to 23.58% by 2022.¹⁷⁹ One of the reasons is the adoption of new machinery and technologies in industries like the readymade garment industry and a persisting social stigma that women are not able to adapt to technology¹⁸⁰. Again, females are often expected to take on more childcare and family responsibilities than males. This can lead to them interrupting their careers for periods of time.

Another significant difference can be seen between urban vs peri-urban region cohorts. Urban NEETs exhibit a higher average length of earlier employment (nearly 2 years). This disparity may be attributed to several factors, including the relatively higher educational qualifications and the availability of a wider range of formal job opportunities in urban areas compared to peri-urban regions. Conversely, the

¹⁷⁹ [More women fall out of employment in Bangladesh](#)

¹⁸⁰

[Analyzing the key barriers of adopting Industry 4.0 in Bangladesh's ready-made garment industry: an emerging economy example.](#) |

peri-urban areas are characterized by a higher concentration of informal employment and shorter-duration work, which likely contributes to their shorter duration of employment on average.

Furthermore, the duration of earlier employment of older youth vs younger youth differs as well. Older youths, due to their age and experience, have an average job duration of more than two years. They were exposed to work at an earlier stage compared to younger youths. In contrast, younger youths have an average employment duration of only one year and four months.

4.1.2 Digital Footprint

Smartphone and internet penetration among the youth is massive in Bangladesh. Nine out of ten adolescents were found to have cellphones¹⁸¹. Apart from that, secondary data shows that mobile internet connection serving 102 million people. It also shows that 62% of persons with disability owns a mobile phone among which only 29% uses smartphones meaning they have internet access¹⁸². This study found less than half of the YwD respondents (45%) to be equipped with both smartphone and internet.

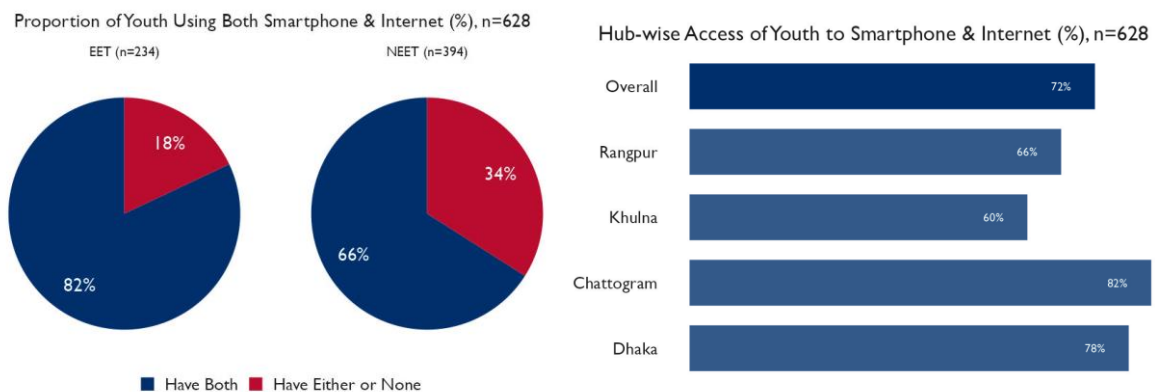


Figure 32: Proportion of youth using both smartphone and internet (left); Hub wise access of youth to smartphone & internet (%), n=628

In general, 72% of the surveyed youth reported having access to smartphones and the Internet. It is also found that nationally the same proportion of youth using the internet in their daily lives¹⁸³. EET respondents have a higher rate of using both smartphone and Internet (82 percent) compared to their NEET counterparts (66 percent). EET youth might require smartphones and internet access for their studies, job applications, or communication with employers/educators. The survey also found that irrespective of regional differences, youth have commendable access to both smartphones and the Internet, with coverage of at least 60 percent in each while Khulna shows the lowest percentage (60 percent) of smartphone and internet user among the regions.

Figure 33 shows the highest percentage of both EET (79%) and NEET (83%) youth use the internet for consuming short entertainment contents (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok etc.) A study on technical education conducted by BRAC found, only 28% of the youth use internet to gain new skills and knowledge¹⁸³. However, this study found 27% of EET youth use internet for the mentioned purpose. Where in the case of NEET, this proportion boils down to only 19%. The data also reveals that the least number of youth (9% EET & 6% NEET) uses smartphones and internet for professional

¹⁸¹ [Survey: Over 90% adolescents use mobile phones in Bangladesh, Dhaka Tribune, 2021](#)

¹⁸² <https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/mobile-for-development/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Achieving-mobile-enabled-digital-inclusion-in-Bangladesh.pdf>

¹⁸³ [Over 72% of youth uses Internet, but only 28% searches technical education info, The Business Standard, 2021](#)

networking (Linked In, Github), indicating a gap in awareness or utilization of online resources for career advancement or skill development. In the case of internet-based services that require moderate level of digital literacy like mobile banking and online shopping, NEET youth fall behind EET youth.

From youth with disability's perspectives, nearly all of the smartphone and internet users use their device for entertainment only. Around 40% and 30% use their device for communications and learning purposes respectively.

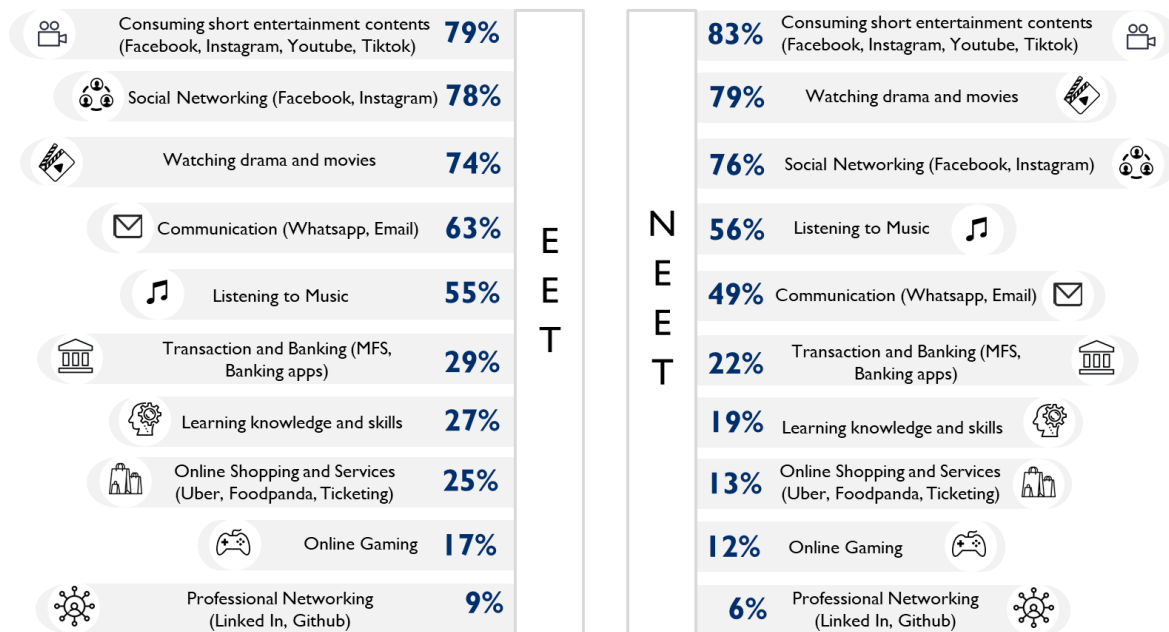


Figure 33: Activities performed using smartphone and internet.

4.1.3 Exposure to Skills Development Training

A global conjecture depicts that over 800 million young individuals will lack the fundamental/ basic skills required for employment, representing half of the youth population¹⁸⁴. It is not far-fetched in case of Bangladesh as well. Since formal and informal education in Bangladesh do not recognize soft skills as core competency skills, it is difficult to ascertain the number or proportion of youth particularly received soft skills training.

¹⁸⁴ [Skills Development Training for Exploring Youth Skills. Daily Sun, 2023](#)

Proportion of Youth Received Skills Development Training (%), n=628

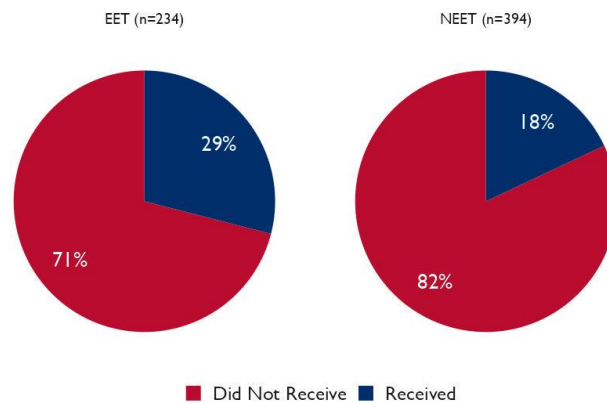
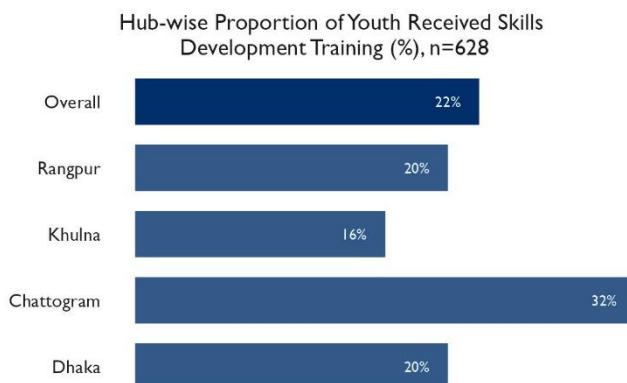


Figure 34: Proportion of youth received skills development training.

The youths were asked whether they partook in any skills development training in their lifetime. The data indicates that a significant portion of both EET (71%) and NEET (82%) youth have not received any skills development training. Similarly, 20% of the YwD were not exposed to any skills development training. This lack of participation may be attributed to factors such as the unavailability of training programs, limited awareness of their importance, and high costs. Consequently, a larger percentage of NEET youth remain inactive, highlighting the need for initiatives to expand access to affordable training opportunities and raise awareness about their benefits.



In general, 22% of the overall surveyed youth had participated in skill development training before (figure 32). The highest rate of participation was found in Chattogram (32%) whereas the least was found in Khulna (16%). This regional disparity might be attributed to the differences in demand of skilled labor or unavailability of enough training programs. Among the training topics, notable choices for males included ICT and Freelancing, Computer Fundamentals, and Electronics. For females, popular selections comprised ICT and Freelancing, Tailoring, and Computer Fundamentals.

Figure 35: Hub-wise proportion of youth received skills development training.

The most prevalent training duration was found to be 6 months, accounting for 32 % respondents. Six (6_ months may be seen as the perfect duration between providing enough time to learn a new skill and not being too long a commitment for young people who may also be balancing school, work, or other responsibilities.

4.1.4 Summary

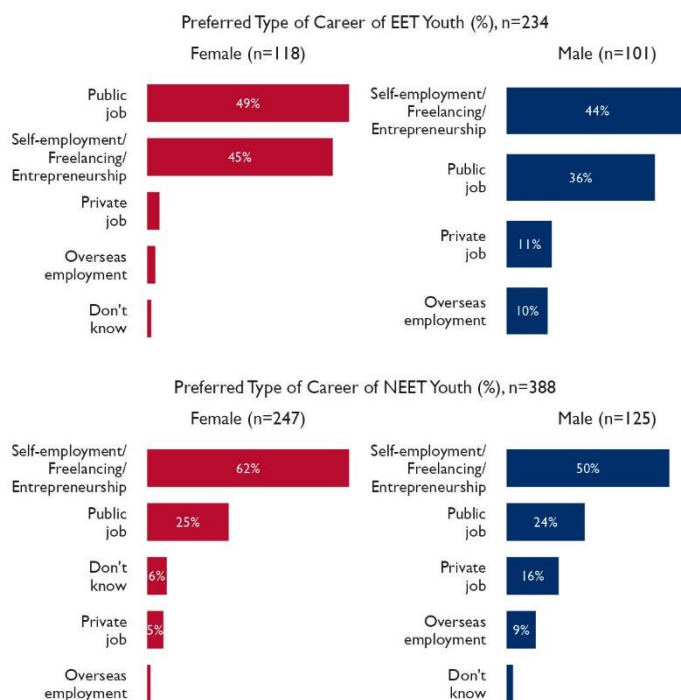
Most of the EET youths received higher secondary level education (37%) where most of NEET reached up to secondary level education (21%). Since NEET includes job seeking educated youth as well, the proportion distribution from low to high education level were found more or less evenly distributed. In a comparison between NEET male and female, female education dropped after secondary while it was the opposite in case of male youths.

Majority of the working youths were found involved with **private job** or self-employment. Male working youths were found comparatively more engaged in these two categories than their female counterparts.

One out of three NEET youth still do not have both smartphone and internet, while it is only one out of five in case of EET youth. Youth from Khulna hub (60%) lagged behind the most followed by youth from Rangpur hub (66%).

About 30% of the EET youth received any form of skills development training while it is only 18% for NEET youth. Among the hubs, youth from Khulna (16%) were the least recipient of skills development training while on the opposite end Chattogram youth (32%) received the most in comparison.

4.2 Youth's Aspirations



Among the EET respondents, female EET preferred office-based roles such as government and self-employment/freelancing/ entrepreneurship, with 49% and 45% respectively. For males the case is slightly reversing, with self-employment/freelancing/ entrepreneurship being their first choice (44 %) and public jobs (36 %) being the second. FGDs in target areas revealed female participants' particular interest in NGO jobs. This pattern was found applicable for indigenous groups as well. Employed youth leaned towards entrepreneurship and overseas employment for the foreseeable future. Self-employment/ entrepreneurship/ freelancing is desired by 70% of the YwD youth. The high proportion is associated with social unacceptance,

Figure 36: Preferred type of career of EET youth (left), Preferred type of NEET youth (right).

stigma, and YwD compliance in other employment options.

Whatever job we pursue should have a sense of security. From that sense, Govt. job is a safe option. Govt. jobs may not be lucrative in monetary terms but most of the govt. jobs come with commendable social value and not to mention the perks of job security.

- A Male Respondent (in education) from Rangpur



Upon completing my education, my aspiration is to become an NGO worker. Witnessing the dedication of NGO workers in supporting disadvantaged people like our community and transforming lives has deeply inspired me.

- A Female Respondent of Munda Community (in education) from Satkhira



Upon completing my training in solar electricals, I plan to relocate to Croatia. I've found that foreign countries offer superior job opportunities in the field of solar energy compared to ours.

- A Male Respondent (in training) from Khulna



Self-employment/entrepreneurship/freelancing was found a common avenue for both male and female NEET youths with 50% of males and 62 %of females (Figure 33) expressing interest in these paths. This can be a major benefit for NEET youth who may need to balance work with other commitments, such as childcare or education. Preference to build a career in government jobs ranks second, irrespective of gender. However, youth conveyed a degree of uncertainty about specifying their job, especially the females (6%). About 9% of male NEET respondents expressed a desire to explore opportunities abroad, though they lacked clarity on specific roles and skill acquisition. They may see working abroad as an opportunity to find better job prospects and higher wages than what is available in Bangladesh.

I want to become a freelancer. I've read numerous success stories highlighting how freelancing made people self-dependent. However, I currently lack clarity on how to generate income through freelancing. There's an information gap that I need to bridge regarding the specifics of freelancing.

- A Male NEET Respondent from Khagrachari



Given my marital status and the responsibility of caring for my children, a home-based earning option is most suitable for me. I am keen on the idea of hand stitched design on cloths alongside managing household activities as a means of generating income.

- A Female NEET Respondent from Gazipur



I will go abroad to earn a living. I am not sure though what type of work I will do there. But I'm hopeful that I'll find suitable opportunities and will work hard to succeed.

- A Male NEET Respondent from Jashore



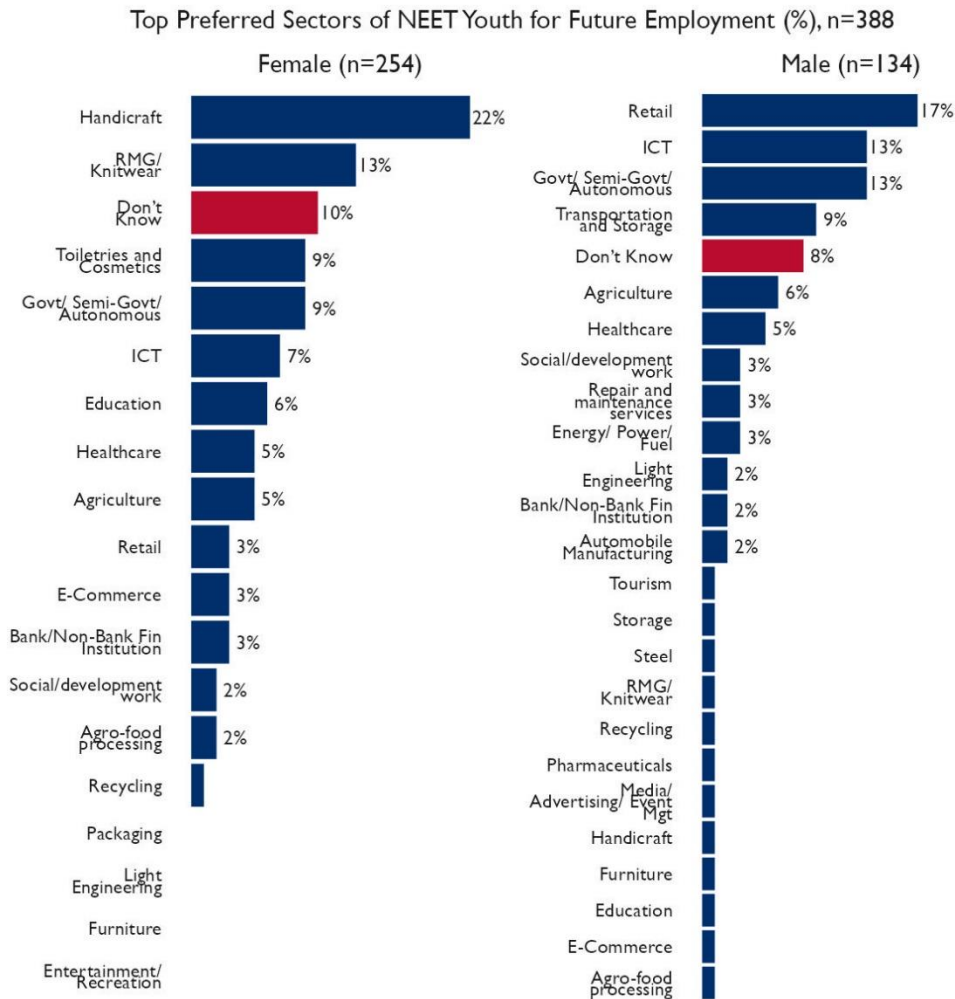


Figure 38 Top preferred sectors for NEET youth for future employment

For specific career preferences, a significant proportion of female NEET respondents favored home-based options such as handicrafts, with 22% expressing interest in this field. This preference may be attributed to the constraints imposed by family responsibilities and restrictions on their career choices. Home-based handicrafts offer these individuals flexibility in their work schedule, allowing them to balance childcare or other familial obligations effectively. This option can be particularly appealing to NEET youth who may have children or other dependents to care for. Additionally, many of these individuals may already possess handicraft skills acquired at home or within their communities, making this career option easily accessible to them. Other priority career choices of females are in the RMG sector, toiletries, and cosmetic shops, govt jobs, ICT, Education, healthcare etc.

On the other hand, male NEET youths show a preference for retail (17%, ICT (13%), and government/semi-government/autonomous jobs (13%) the most. Retail jobs are preferred because they are relatively easy to obtain and do not require extensive qualifications. It is noteworthy that a significant number of youths, both male and female, couldn't specify their desired career option. This indecision can stem from a lack of exposure to different career options and insufficient guidance in educational or vocational planning. Social stigma and lack of social acceptance also hinder vulnerable youths' career aspirations.

Some region-specific career aspirations emerged from FGD with NEET youths. Male youths (including indigenous youths) from Khagrachori, Bandarban, and Cox's Bazar have shown particular interest in building a career in the tourism sector, given that these areas are popular tourist destinations with a growing hospitality industry and have available job opportunities in this sector. Apart from handicrafts, female NEET also specified their preference for tailoring, livestock rearing, working in a beauty parlor etc., highlighting the need of training for effectively pursuing these career paths.

On the other hand, during FGD, EET youth who are undergoing training expressed a preference for seeking employment abroad in their respective fields, particularly in electrical and mechanical jobs. Again, youth who are currently receiving education and training revealed some more specific career preferences similar to the NEET youths such as tailoring, teaching, poultry farming etc.

I aspire to pursue a career in the hospitality industry, particularly in hotels catering to tourists. However, there exists a prevailing perception in my community that females employed in hotels possess questionable character traits. Unless these perspectives undergo a shift, it will continue to be challenging for women to pursue careers in the hotel industry.

- A Female NEET Respondent from Khagrachari



I want to run my own beauty parlor. However, I am afraid that my business may face challenges due to social stigma in certain areas, as transgender people are not welcomed everywhere.

- A Transgender NEET Respondent from Dhaka

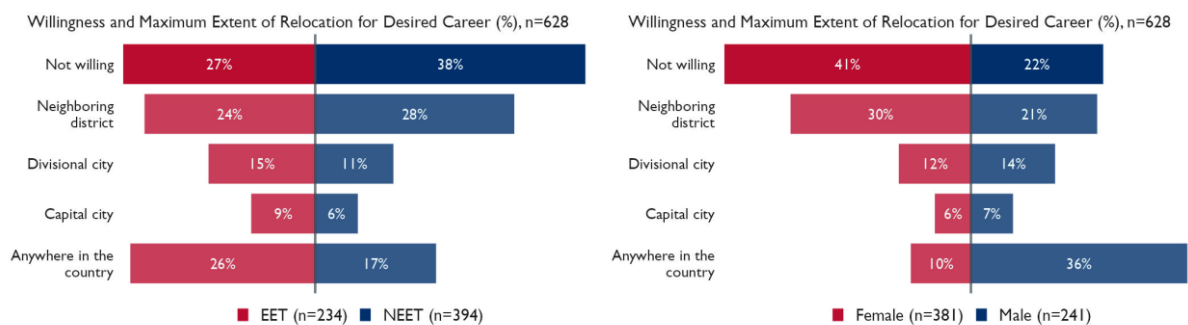


Figure 4.12: Willingness and maximum extent of relocation for desired career. Status perspective (left); Gender perspective (right)

NEET youth have shown a greater reluctance to relocate for their desired career (around 40%) when compared to EET youth (around 30%). Without a secure job or savings, covering moving costs, securing housing, and managing expenses can be significant obstacles for them. Female respondents have shown a greater reluctance to relocate irrespective of NEET and EET status for their desired career (41%), when compared to male respondents (around 22%), social and familial responsibilities being the primary reason. This reluctance among females is almost twice the number of male youths, highlighting the significant disparity in willingness to relocate between genders. Cultural norms and safety concerns are also a crucial parameter. Although 22% male respondents were not willing to relocate, 36% male have shown the willingness to move anywhere in the country for their desired career. FGD findings revealed that male participants from Khagrachari, Bandarban and Cox's Bazar also expressed similar desire. They can move anywhere in the country as long as it's good pay. Youths

from Jessore and Satkhira expressed the desire to stay in their region. Irrespective of region, female NEET youths do not want to move out of their area. However, it is worth mentioning that the least number of youths, irrespective of status and gender, showed interest in moving to the capital city. Factors attributed to this unwillingness can be the high cost of living, polluted environment, increased competition, and the reduced quality of life in Dhaka.¹⁸⁵ Besides, there is also an issue of apathy and lack of commitment among the youths from peri-urban districts. A key official from Kurigram DYD quoted “Youth of this district do not have clear goals and they are unwilling to move to a district with high employment opportunities”.

Self-employment/Entrepreneurship is the most desired career path, however, neither EET or NEET youths have any definite plan towards this path. Female youths, particularly from NEET category mentioned about it the most. EET youth’s primary concern is to enter public service job.

About one in ten NEET female and one in twelve NEET male do not know what sector they want to work. Handicraft and retail sector are the major desirable sectors for former and latter respectively. Tourism for Chattogram indigenous youth and beauty parlor for transgender youth.

About a third of the youths do not wish to relocate beyond their home for desired career. It is two times high for female than male. EET youths are less rigid to relocation than NEET youths. Former group is also more agnostic regarding the distance from hometown.

4.3 Current Status of Youth’s Soft Skills

Around a third (31%) of the youth respondents heard the term “soft skills” either in Bengali or English.

Exposure to the Term vs Internalised Comprehension, $p=0.00438$
 Have Heard about the Term “Soft Skills”

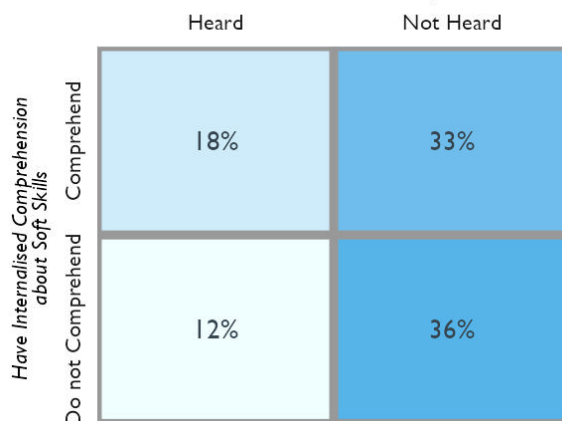


Figure 37: Exposure to the term vs internalized comprehension.

Contrarily, around half (52%) of the youths can identify the factors of soft skills (i.e. the other half could not). It is evident that the youths may not be much acquainted with what the term “soft skills” means, however a good number of them could identify how soft skills work in one’s personal/ professional life. Interestingly from **Error! Reference source not found.** figure 35, it is evident that less than a fifth (18%) of the youth who both heard and understand soft skills but a third (33%) of them understand how soft skills work but have not been acquainted with the term earlier. However, plurality of the youth (36%) have not heard and do not understand what soft skills are. So, lack of orientation remains the primary issue followed by the lack of soft skills.

Overall, a chi-square test between the two variables depicted that the degree of independence is lacking significantly ($p<0.05$).

Figure 38 figure 36 depicts the proportions from five different perspectives where stark differences can be observed from status and region perspectives in terms of being acquainted with the term before. Here EET youths (41%) and urban youths (38%) are found to be more exposed to the term respectively. It is also evident that male youths (34%) were marginally more aware of the term than

female youths (29%), however, no major differences found from age class and vulnerability perspectives on this metric.

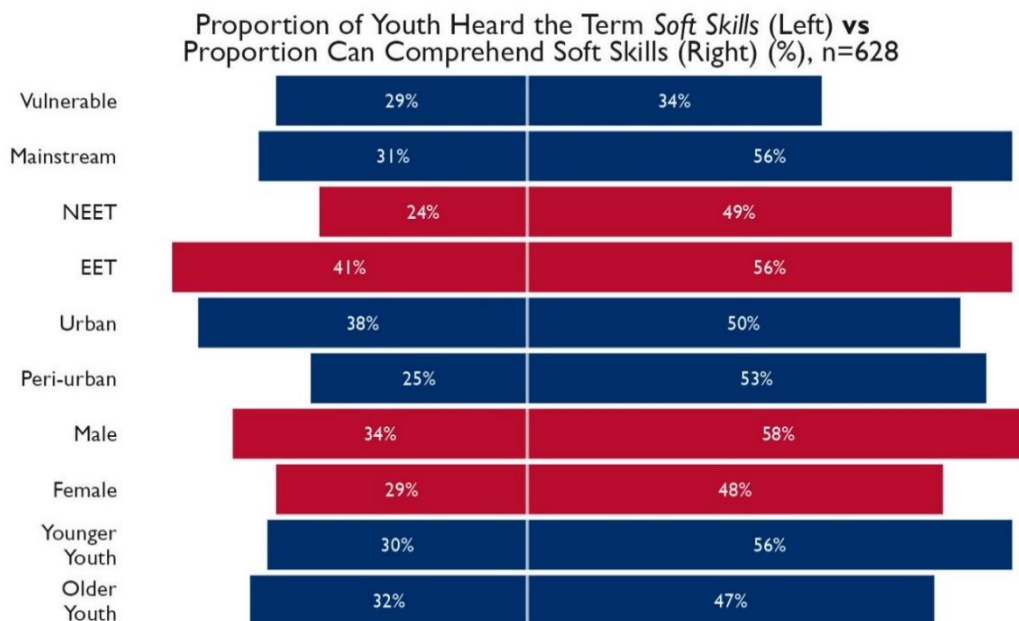


Figure 39 Proportion of youth who have heard of the term soft skill

How the Internalized Comprehension of Soft Skills is Measured

Mention your agreement/ disagreement on the following statements.

1. Behavior of a person plays good a part in his/her job promotion **(positive)**
2. Technical skill will start your career, but communication skill will take you higher **(positive)**
3. A sophisticated employer is content with only the technical capability of an employee **(negative)**
4. Social skills are not important for a successful business **(negative)**

On the contrary, out of all five perspectives vulnerable youths lagged the in terms of basic comprehension of soft skills, only 34% of the vulnerable youths gave the right answers compared to 56% of mainstream youths. There is also a 10% gap between male and female on the matter of identification/ comprehension of soft skills where female youths lagged. More EET youths (56%) could identify the issues of soft skills than NEET youths (49%). Surprisingly comparatively younger youth (56%) were able to comprehend soft skills more than older youths (47%).

"We have never heard of soft skills before. It is surprising that there can be training programs on these life related skills"

- Male NEET FGD Respondent, Jashore



4.3.1 Higher Order Thinking Skills

It is the capability of a person to pinpoint a problem and glean insights from multitude of sources for the purpose of appraising alternatives and arriving at a sound judgment (Lippman et al, 2015)¹⁸⁶. The key sub skills under this category include critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving. Higher order thinking skills are instrumental to enhance early career development of youth.

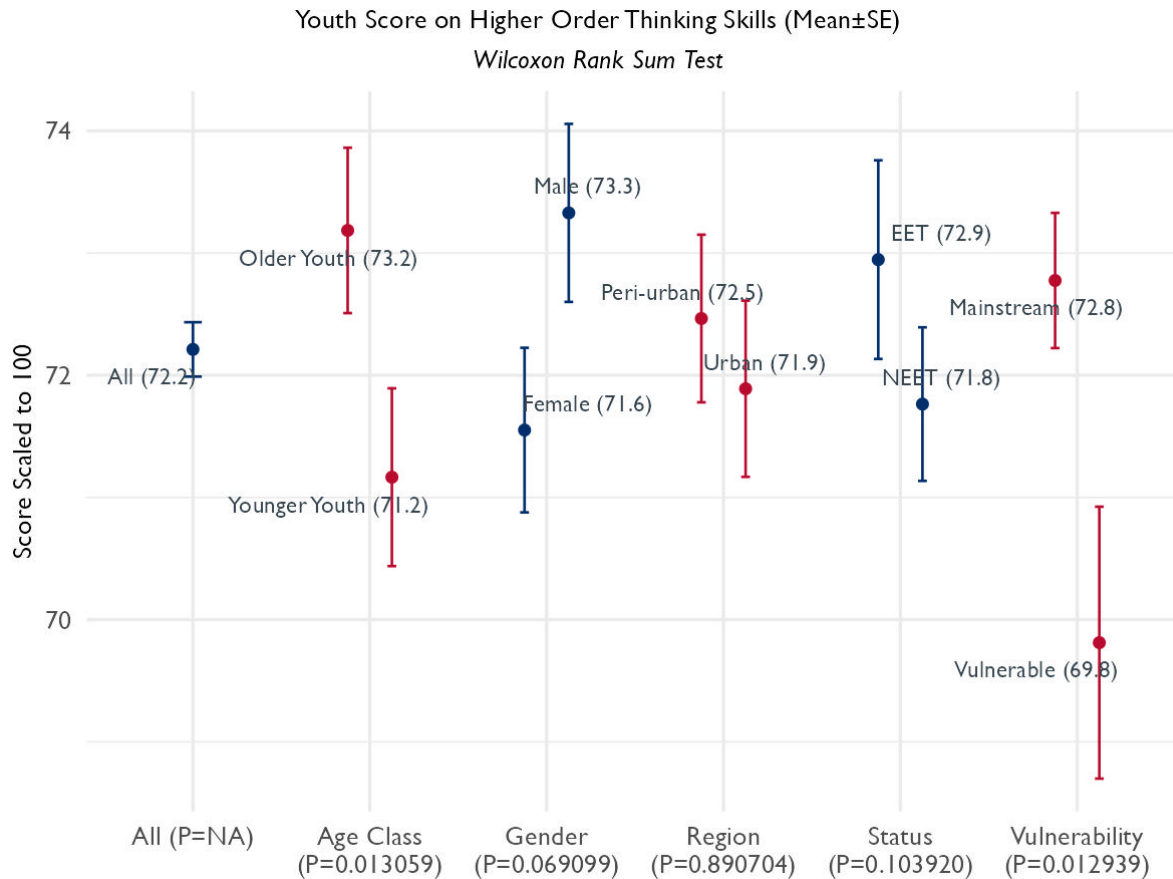


Figure 40: Youth score on higher order thinking skills.

Disparity in Higher Order Thinking Skills can be ranked as:

Vulnerability > Age Class > Gender > Status > Region.**

** Color gray within the box indicates lack of significant difference based on p value

Overall, the surveyed youths scored 72.2 on Higher Order Thinking Skills (Figure 37). It ranged from around 69 to 73 depending on the type of cohort. Male & older youth cohort scored the highest while vulnerable cohort scored the least in comparison. Significant difference is observed between mainstream vs vulnerable as well as older youth vs younger youth cohorts.

Vulnerable (i.e. indigenous, Dalit, YwD) youths as the most diverse category showed highest amount of variability on standard error scale. It means population mean will vary a lot when compared to that of the score of mainstream youths. In this study's FGD assessment, youth respondents were appraised

¹⁸⁶ Lippman, L.H., Ryberg, R., Carney, R. and Moore, K.A. (2015). Key "Soft Skills" that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus Across Fields. Washington, DC: USAID, FHI 360, Child Trends. Published through the Workforce Connections project managed by FHI 360 and funded by USAID.

"We should take matters on our own hand when we come across any injustice or apparent injustice and call whoever we know nearby"

- Female NEET Respondent from Nilphamari



by seeking solutions for an imaginary situation. In an FGD with Indigenous NEET group, they were given a scenario where a girl witnessed an apparent harassment case. Almost all of them either given responses that lacked proper assessment of the situation (critical thinking) and provided solutions that would aggravate the situation if the case were true (decision making). In the case of female FGD respondents, the study team found they were initially unsure of what to be done; around 1 out of 8 respondents thought of seeking help from law enforcement without being directly engaged. Most of the respondents were quick jump to

conclusions and expressed short term solutions which may render in lose-lose consequences.

4.3.2 Positive Self-Concept

Positive self-concept is the self-perception that acknowledges one's capabilities and potential, leading to a positive self-view. The key sub skills under this skill are awareness of self-capacity, self-confidence, self-efficacy, self-esteem, sense of well-being, and pride. A positive self-concept is more likely to develop intrapersonal communication and guides awareness and increased capacity.

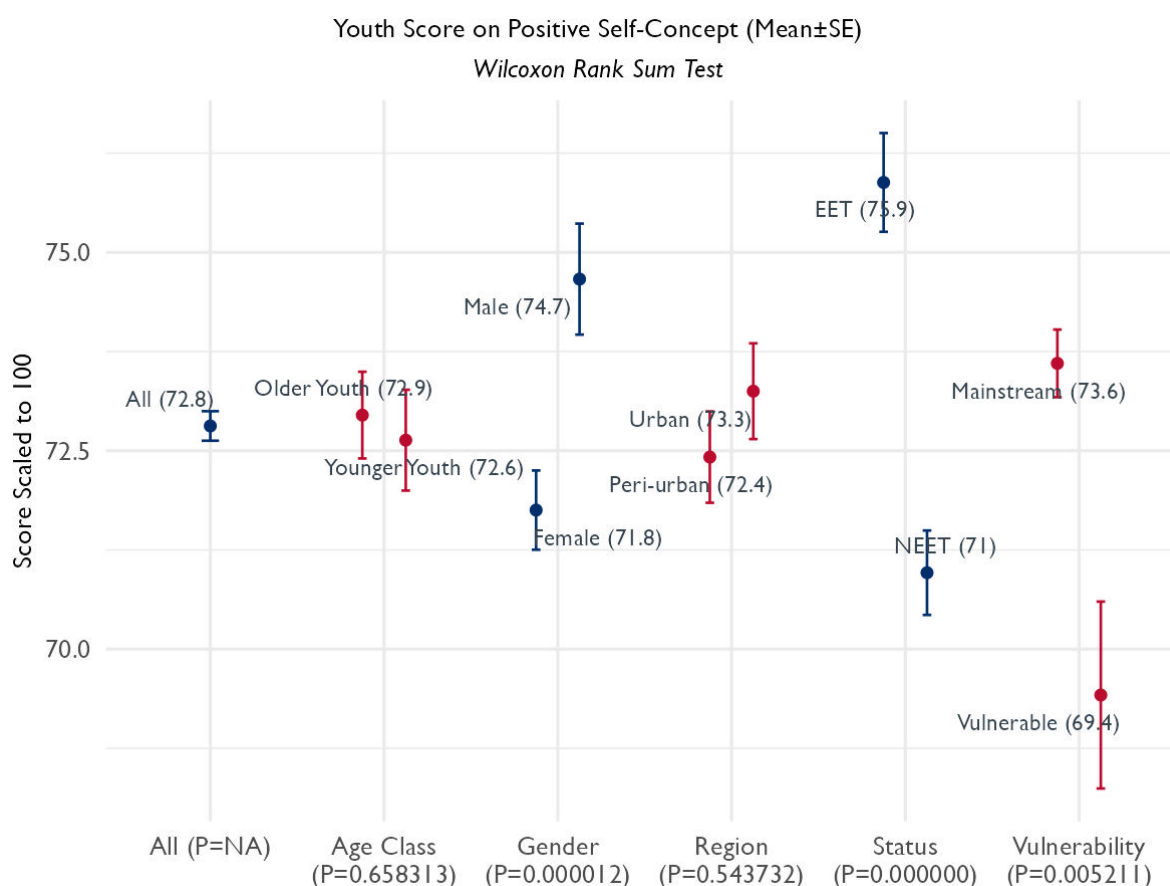


Figure 41: Youth score on positive self-concept.

Disparity in Positive Self-Concept can be ranked as:

Status > Gender > Vulnerability > Region > Age Class.**

**** Color gray within the box indicates lack of significant difference based on p value**

Overall, the surveyed youth scored 72.8 on Positive Self Concept. It ranged from around 69 to 76 depending on the type of cohort. EET cohort scored the highest while vulnerable cohort scored the least in comparison. A significant difference is observed between males vs females, NEET vs EET, and mainstream vs vulnerable groups. Akin to the higher order thinking skills score, a standard error variability is also high in case of vulnerable youths.

According to EET youth in education, having positive thinking of one's own ability is a pre-requisite to good fortune. A key difference is found between EET in education and EET in the employment category: the former thinks self-awareness should be commensurate to the person's own capacity not more or less whereas in case of the majority of employed youth, they expressed that having any type of positive thinking or self-esteem is a good trait, whether it crosses someone's existing competence level or not.

However, when looked from gender lens, female NEET respondents were found less self-aware. Even when they are capable of undertaking a task, they would like to consider themselves below the realistic level.

"Only studying hard will not ensure success in career, one must have to have ample confidence in his/her capabilities"

- EET (Education) FGD Respondent,
Dhaka



The youth were given a story of a girl with high ambition and low effort in the FGDs. A good number of female respondents (almost half) discarded the fact of effort. In their fallacious opinion, there are geniuses among us who do not have to put much effort to achieve something, which discards the fact that less talented individuals also have or need of positive self-concept to achieve a goal and it is not specific to gifted persons.

4.3.3 Self Control

Self-control is the capacity to manage one's actions and feelings, encompassing the restraint of immediate desires, the concentration of attention, and the adjustment of emotions and conduct. It is a category of soft skills that fosters room for continuous improvement or growth and accentuates a person's personality. It includes delay in gratification, control of impulses, attention, managing emotion etc.

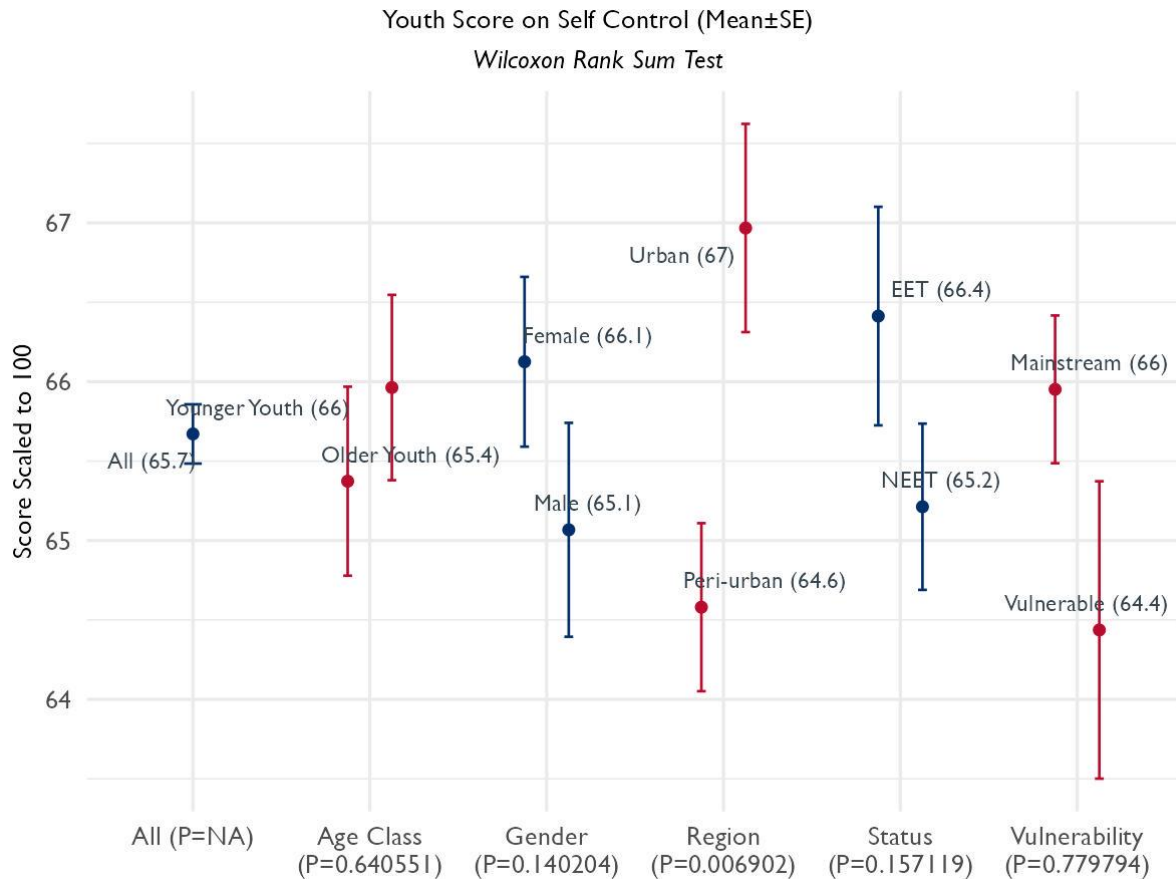


Figure 42: Youth score on self control.

Disparity in Self Control can be ranked as:

Region > Gender > Status > Age Class > Vulnerability.**

** Color gray within the box indicates lack of significant difference based on p value

Overall, the surveyed youth scored 65.7 on self control and the value ranged from around 64 to 67 depending on the type of cohort. It accentuates narrower differences between cohorts. The urban cohort scored the highest while the vulnerable cohort scored the least in comparison to the other cohorts. A significant difference is only observed between urban vs peri-urban cohorts. Although there were no significant differences found from gender and age class perspectives, younger youths (score of 66) as well as female youths (score of 66.1) scored marginally better than their counterparts. Although there remains a gap between the scores of mainstream and vulnerable youths, due to a high standard error for vulnerable groups, the difference is not significant.

During the FGDs the respondents were given an imaginary situation where a line manager had to be reasonably/unreasonably harsh to their subordinate. In this case, their reaction to the situation was evaluated as well as their ability to seek optimum solutions.

Urban females exhibited comparatively calmer and more composed attitudes to the situation during the FGDs. In their opinion, no matter how harsh the situation may appear, an employee must not lash

“A manager should not throw derogatory comments towards his/her subordinate, he must find the best way to balance both side of the problem”

- EET (Education) FGD Respondent, Rangpur



out to others, especially to their subordinates. Most of them suggested controlling their anger during the time of stress but could not provide tactical solution(s) on how to handle an issue if it occurred in a recursive manner.

Regardless of the cohort, around half of the youth FGD respondents think getting agitated is bad for their career, however, when asked how they would have reacted differently most of them could not provide another solution.

4.3.4 Communication Skills

Communication is the skill of clearly conveying and comprehending thoughts and information. Communication skills broadly constitute verbal & non-verbal communication and listening skills. It is fundamental to collaboration and understanding in both personal and professional settings, making it a key soft skill for success in a wide range of roles.

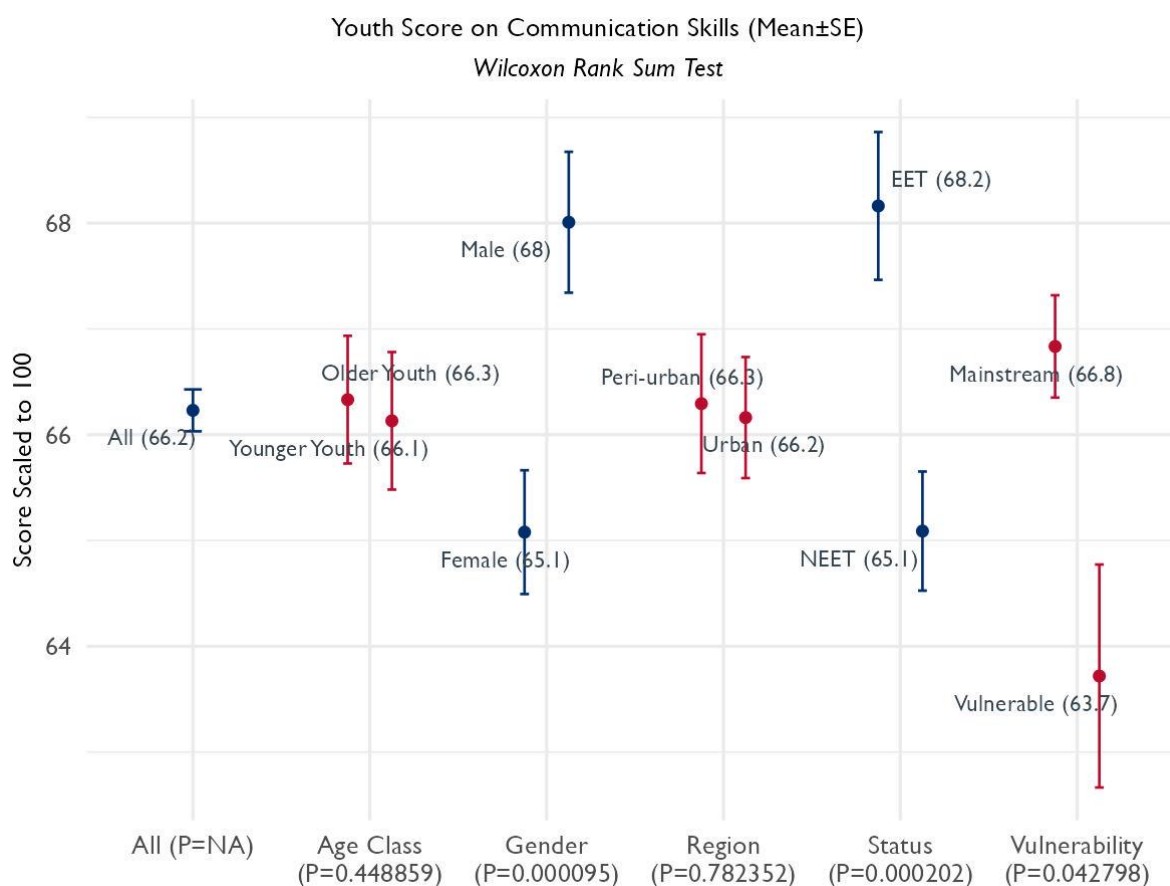


Figure 43: Youth score on communication skills

Disparity in Communication Skills can be ranked as:

Status > Gender > Vulnerability > Age Class > Region**

** Color gray within the box indicates lack of significant difference based on p value

Overall, the surveyed youth scored 66.2 on communication skills. The scores ranged from around 63 to 68 depending on the type of cohort (narrower difference between cohorts). Male and EET cohort scored the highest altogether while the vulnerable cohort scored the least in comparison. A significant difference is observed between NEET vs EET, male vs. female, and mainstream vs. vulnerable cohorts.

“Why would I buy a slightly inferior product just because the behavior of the seller is good, it is secondary for me while making a purchase decision”

- Female NEET Respondent from Nilphamari



On a superficial level, the FGD respondents seem to regard communication skills highly. However, when asked with an imaginary story, their answers became murky. A story of two brothers with disparate communication skills were described in front of them and sought their opinion on who will be financially successful in the long run.

EET youths expressed how some businesses are highly dependent on communication skills and some are less. In their opinion, they would sometimes accept a slightly inferior product just because the seller maintained good behavior

with the customer. It is especially applicable in the case of tea stalls. However, most of the NEET female participants would rate product quality over good behavior. As per the study team’s FGD observation, although female respondents in general were found to be better in non-verbal communication as well as to better perceive the pulse of another person comparatively, this type of communication is lacking in general in the youth scenario. Oral and straightforward communication over non-verbal communication is mentioned more often than not within communication skills.

4.3.5 Social Skills

Social skills encompass a wide array of abilities that facilitate effective interaction and the formation of meaningful connections with others. It includes an individual’s capacity for conflict resolution, appropriate behavior, respect for others etc., all of which help the person in developing genuine relationships with their peers and acquaintances.

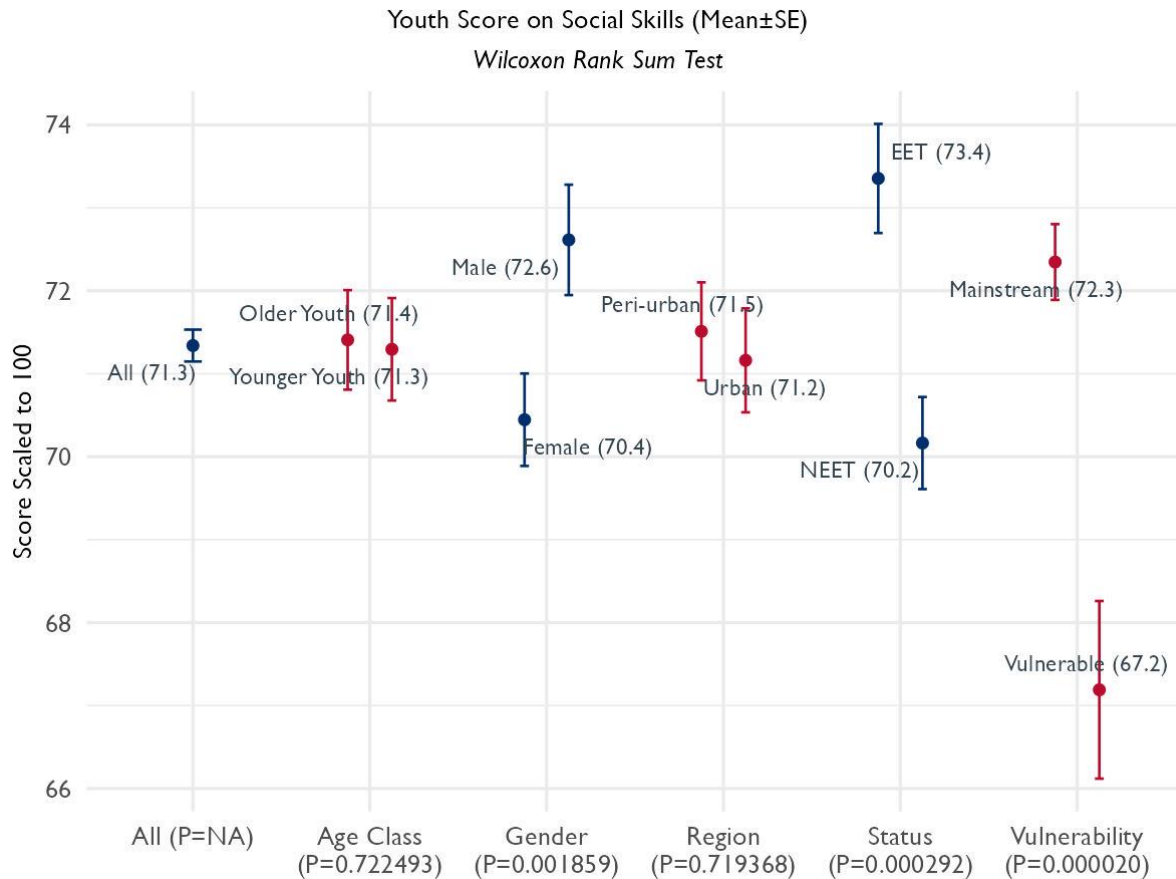


Figure 44: Youth score on social skills.

Disparity in Social Skills can be ranked as:

Vulnerability > Status > Gender > Region > Age Class**

** Color gray within the box indicates lack of significant difference based on p value

The youth surveyed overall scored 71.3 on social skills. It ranged from around 67 to 73 depending on the type of cohort. The EET cohort scored the highest while the vulnerable cohort scored the least in comparison. A significant difference is observed between NEET vs EET, male vs, female, and the mainstream vs, vulnerable cohorts. This indicated that the female, NEET and/or vulnerable groups may lag the most in terms of social skills.

According to the FGD findings, the majority of the female or vulnerable youth rarely participate in conflict resolution with others. It is considered a high-stake involvement where the consequences are not likely to favor them. For internal conflicts, the respondents claimed that they solve their internal conflicts but could not provide any hint, step, or method to doing so.

"Fraud people usually show welcoming behavior. Speaking the truth should be the ideal way, whether it sounds good or bad"

- Female NEET Respondent from Gazipur



The EET youth were found to be more engaged in various social activities due to their exposure to social functions and their acceptance across society. In a FGD with blue collar workers, a participant expressed that having friends at different types and level of industries is beneficial for him,

therefore more friends (or larger network) at good places means a higher possibility of referral for that person. On the contrary, NEET youths' insular way of life makes them perceived to be a less valuable member of society. Therefore, they remain less interested in societal engagements and activities. Consequently, it hinders their individual behavioral improvement and social attributes. This makes the problem to be double edged from both societal and individual end for NEET youths.

4.3.6 Summary

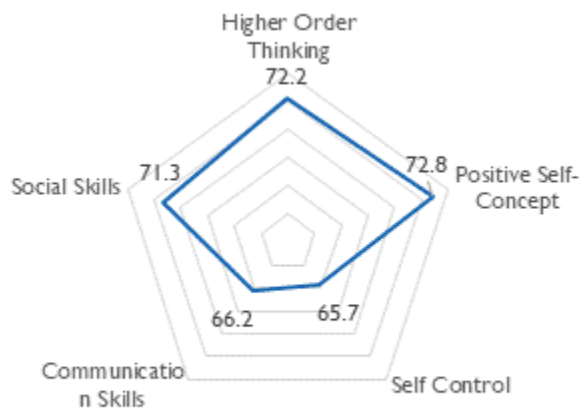


Figure 45: Overall PYD Soft Skills Scores

Around a third of the youths had heard the term “soft skills” somewhere. Comparatively, a higher proportion of youth understand how soft skills are recognized in a work environment, although it is not more than half of the youth population. Vulnerable youth are the least aware.

Within the five PYD soft skills, youth in general were found to score more on Positive Self-Concept, Higher Order Thinking, and Social Skills. Contrarily the scores on Self-Control and Communication Skills paled in comparison (Figure 45).

Vulnerable youths (i.e. indigenous, Dalit, YwD, SOGI) were found significantly lacking in comparison with mainstream youth in all five soft skills facets. In the areas of Communication Skills and Positive Self-Concept, , female and/or NEET youths were more lacking. Urban youths were found with more with Self Control. Higher order thinking is only found significantly higher for older youths in comparison to younger youth.

4.4 Willingness to Training

In general terms, almost all the youth surveyed are willing to participate in training programs. However, when it comes to only soft skills training, the proportion of interest turns out next to nothing (Figure 43). It is found from the FGD that the concept of soft skills is more or less familiar to the youth, however, they usually do not proactively think about this category of skills when applying for a job. The novelty of this type of training program renders youths confounded on whether to participate in a soft skills-only program or not.

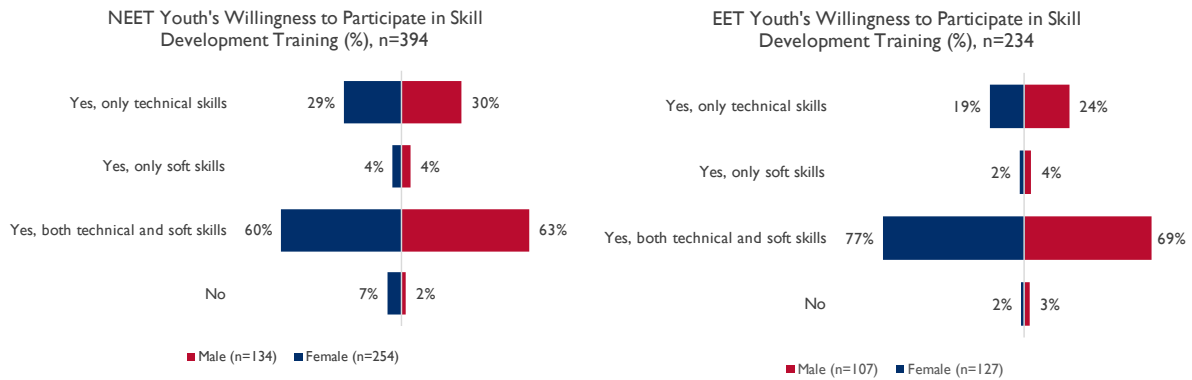


Figure 46: NEET (left) and EET (right) youth's willingness to participate in soft skills training.

Two-thirds of the respondents (about 66%) expressed willingness to participate in skill training which is focused on both technical and soft skills, irrespective of gender and NEET-EET classifications. Anyhow, a very paltry amount of youth respondents from either end of gender or status are willing for soft skills training only, given the novelty of the concept of soft skills. Therefore, it weighs less than that of 'technical skills only' factor. Over the top, the acceptance and willingness to receive training is expressed by more than 95% of the youth.

In-person training is the majority choice (56%) from both the NEET and EET perspectives. A different global perspective is observed even after Covid-19. A report from Pew Research Center in 2022 found that about 65% of the learners preferred in-person learning.¹⁸⁷ From a comparative standpoint, EET respondents veered more towards online and blended training at 19% and 14% respectively against 16% and 8% of NEET youth. It is justifiable given EET youths are engaged with education and/or employment turning them busier than NEET youths.

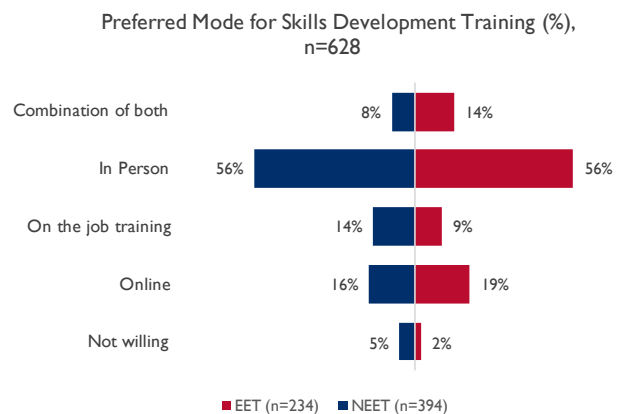


Figure 47: Preferred mode for skills development training.

"I don't think going beyond Stakhira Sadar is feasible for me. My family won't allow me considering hassle and safety"

- Female NEET Respondent from Satkhira



female counterparts.

Travel distance to the training venue is a crucial factor to all youths (youths preferring blended or in-person mode) regardless of region or gender perspective (Figure 45). Around 54% of female youths would like to have the training sessions arranged within their area where in this case 31% of the male youth expressed so.¹⁸⁸ If we demarcate from subdistrict up to district boundary, around 21% of the training seeking male youths can travel anywhere within this range, where for female youths it is only 13% of them. Over the top, more male youths expressed flexibility with higher order of mobility than their

¹⁸⁷ [65% of Students Prefer In-Person Learning. New Survey Finds. Healthline. 2022.](#)

¹⁸⁸ "Within area" here means ward, precinct, or union of the respondents.

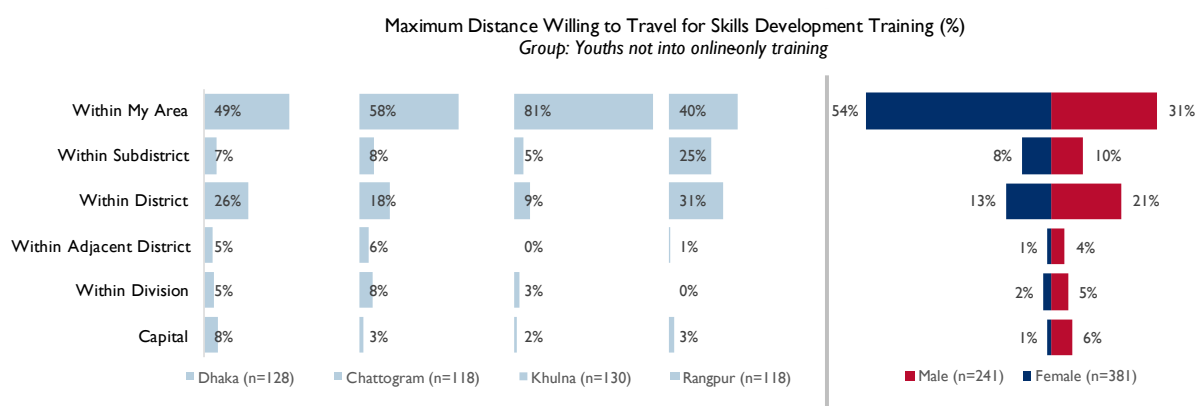
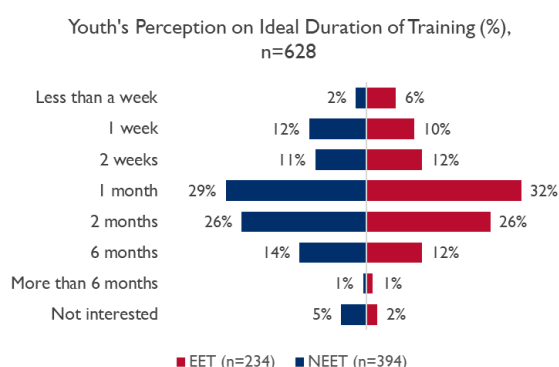


Figure 48: Maximum distance willing to travel for skills development training (%).

From regional perspective, although a similar proportion (around 18%) of training seeking youth from Dhaka and Chattogram are willing to go beyond their district boundary, Dhaka itself being the capital may dilute the result. Therefore, youths from Chattogram can be considered more open to travel/relocate. Around 81% of the training seeking youths from Khulna do not want to travel beyond their area for training which is highest among the different hubs and on the lower end lies Rangpur (40%). Youths from Rangpur hub found to be comparatively more flexible up to subdistrict (25%) and district (31%) level. However, very few youths from Khulna and Rangpur are willing to travel beyond their own districts.

Regardless of youth status most youths (55% NEET & 58% EET) perceive a training should range between 1 to 2 months. Around 30% of youths from both groups expressed the desire for 1-month long training. However, a considerable portion of youth (25% NEET, 28% EET) would like a training program less than or equal to 2 weeks. Less than 15% of the youths expected a training duration of 6 or more months.



Afternoon is a widely accepted time of the day for participating in a training session as corroborated from FGDs. However, for working youths this schedule may only work out if the employers of the youths are convinced to allow for training participation.

Figure 49 Youth's perception on ideal duration for training

Training will be helpful in the afternoon, as we have classes during the day at the college. It will also give us a breathing space between the two learning sessions, one at college and another at the training center.

- A Female EET (Training) Respondent from Satkhira



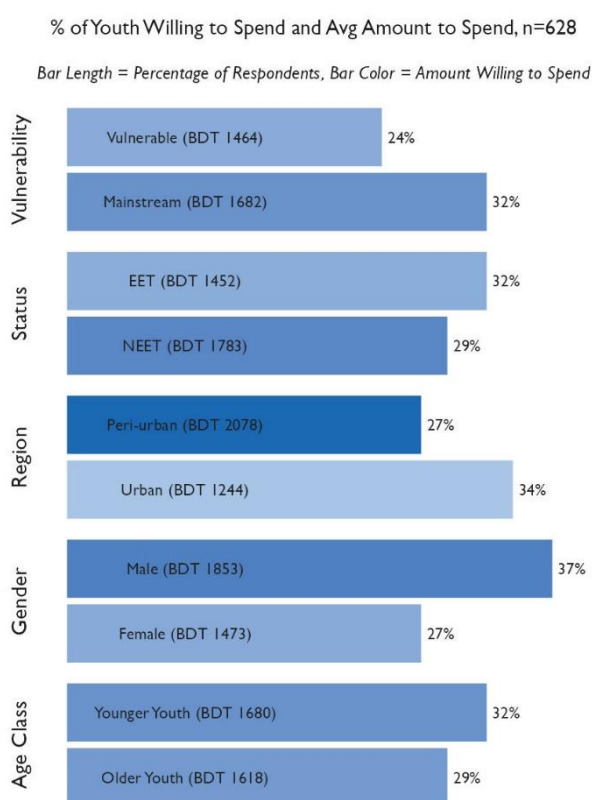
We have household chores to attend to during the day, making the afternoon the most convenient time for training. By then, our husbands and children will be at home, allowing us some spare time to focus on the training.

- A Female NEET Respondent from Nilphamari



We are willing to take training on soft skills but not during working hour. Our boss won't let us do that. Hence to accommodate our work schedule, I prefer after dusk training several days a week.

- A Male EET (Employment) Respondent from Chattogram



Willingness to spend for a training program is a reliable indicator to assess the tenacity of a potential trainee. Here in (Figure 48) this indicator is measured from five different perspectives.

Overall, approximately 30% of the youth surveyed were found to be willing to spend money on skills development training. On average, respondents were willing to spend about an average of BDT 1650 (USD \$15.2) on the training.

The greatest discrepancy is observed from a gender perspective as a higher number of males (37%) were willing to spend (compared to 27% female) and their average amount that they would spend was found to be higher at around BDT 1853 (compared to BDT 1473). From a vulnerability perspective, the proportion of mainstream youth willing to spend money on training was 6% higher than vulnerable youths. Vulnerable youths were also found less willing/capable of spending cash for a training program.

Figure 51: % of youth willing to spend on training and average amount

Although comparatively lower proportion of NEET youths (29% against 32%) were willing to spend, the aggregated value of a training program was found to be higher than that of EET youths (BDT 1783 against BDT 1452). This lower youth proportion and higher monetary valuation could be attributed to 1) Low number of NEET youths being solvent; 2) NEET being at a disadvantage in the labor market than their EET peers. A similar case can be observed from the regional perspective where Peri-urban youths although being smaller in number but possess higher spending potential.

Soft skills are needed, I understand, but exclusive training on soft skills might be considered a luxury. Including technical aspects could encourage a broader participation in such training programs.

- A Male NEET Respondent from Nilmaphari



Yes, I will participate in a training that accommodates soft skill, but that needs to be well accepted by the employers. Employers have to take our soft skill training in consideration while evaluating us among the candidates.

- A Female EET Respondent from Magura



Although very few expressed not to participate in training, Willingness to receive only soft skills based training is next to nothing. A training with both technical and soft skills components is the most desired with in person mode.

Travelling beyond a set area distance is the least favorable in the Khulna hub and the most allowable in the Rangpur hub. Female youths were most restrictive in case of travel distance to training center.

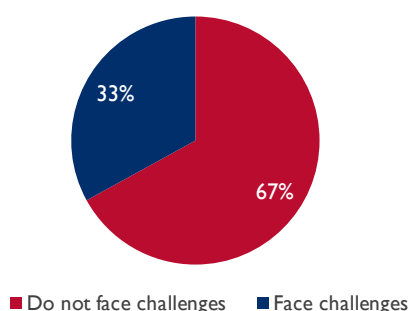
One to two months of training length is more preferable to the youths regardless of their status.

Youth with higher training potential is found to be around 30% based on the proportion of willingness to pay.

4.5 Challenges of Participation in Training

4.5.1 General Challenges

Proportion of Youth Facing Challenges in Terms of Skills Training (%), n=628



Main Challenges	Vulnerable	Female	NEET
Lack of support from family	15%	24%	19%
High cost of such courses	12%	23%	21%
Distance from training institute	16%	16%	16%
Social backlash	8%	13%	9%
Complex course content	5%	10%	9%
Lack of motivation	10%	5%	6%
Utility of the course is unknown	3%	5%	4%
Language of the course	3%	4%	4%
Duration of the course	1%	1%	2%

Figure 53: Proportion (left) and type (right) of challenges youths face in receiving skills training.

In general, a third of the surveyed youth (33%) faced challenges to participate in skill development training. Similarly, it is 35% for the youth with disabilities. Cost is the highest concern of receiving training for NEET youth and it is followed by the lack of family support. It is also reflected along with the issue of social backlash from the perspective of female youth. In the case of vulnerable youth, the distance to training centers is a grave concern followed by the lack of family support. Vulnerable youths acknowledge (10%) their lack of motivation to a training program. FGDs with NEET youth also have specified challenges like high cost, lobbying, fraudulence, lack of awareness about soft skills, lack of

publicity of such trainings in rural areas, etc. Participants expressed uncertainty about the practical application of soft skills training in real-life scenarios. While acknowledging the importance of soft skills, they harbor doubts about employers requiring tangible proof of possessing these skills. Female youths from FGDs further expressed that getting permission from guardians/husbands is a challenge as most of them give importance to technical skills only.

Around half of the youths with disabilities who faces challenges in receiving trainings (57%) expressed lack of family support, distance to training venue, and cost of the course as the major challenges. Additionally, YwDs face challenges with accessibility and communication when compared to mainstream youths.

We have never heard of soft skills before. It is surprising that there can be training programs on these life related skills. Nobody reached out to us regarding such training courses so far.

-A Male NEET Respondent, Jashore



An NGO came to us and said they will provide training on sewing. They scammed us by taking money through assuring us that they will supply us with sewing machines

- A Female NEET Respondent, Gazipur



4.5.2 Specific Challenges

During the FGDs, all youth both male and females mentioned several challenges for online and in-person training. They specially expressed their concerns of accessing unknown platforms, inadequate access of internet or poor network, lack of socialization, unproductive environment, and distractions when a training module is online. The lack of familiarity with online tools and platforms can hinder their ability to fully engage with training materials and interact with instructors effectively. If the training is held in-person, they face challenges due to their social anxiety, distance from the training institute, lack of accommodation and having a fixed schedule, limiting their flexibility.

Challenges to Online Training	Vulnerable	Female	NEET
Inadequate internet access	59%	60%	58%
Uncommon or unknown platform	29%	44%	40%
Limited digital skills	41%	33%	38%
Poor network	29%	35%	36%
Lack of digital device	41%	22%	20%
Unproductive environment or Distractions	29%	17%	20%
Lack of socialization	18%	24%	18%
No challenges	24%	11%	11%

Figure 50: Challenges to online training from vulnerable, female, and NEET perspective.

In the case of online training, inadequate or inconsistent internet access emerges as the predominant concern, affecting 60% of vulnerable individuals, including females and NEET youths. Lack of adaptation to new learning platform is the second most issue of concern to female and NEET groups. Many

individuals find it challenging to navigate and utilize unfamiliar digital platforms, hindering their ability to fully engage with online learning opportunities. It also echoes with the limitation of digital skills which is the third ranking problem. Inaccessibility of digital devices as well as lack of digital skills are two prominent problems that set vulnerable youths from the rest. Without access to personal computers, laptops, or tablets, individuals are unable to fully participate in remote education and training initiatives.

Challenges to In-Person Training	Vulnerable	Female	NEET
Distance from training institute	59%	69%	70%
Lack of accommodation	53%	49%	42%
Social anxiety	41%	37%	32%
Fixed schedule	26%	32%	30%
Physical constraints	32%	16%	16%
No challenges	0%	7%	9%

Figure 51: Challenges to in-person training from vulnerable, female, and NEET perspective.

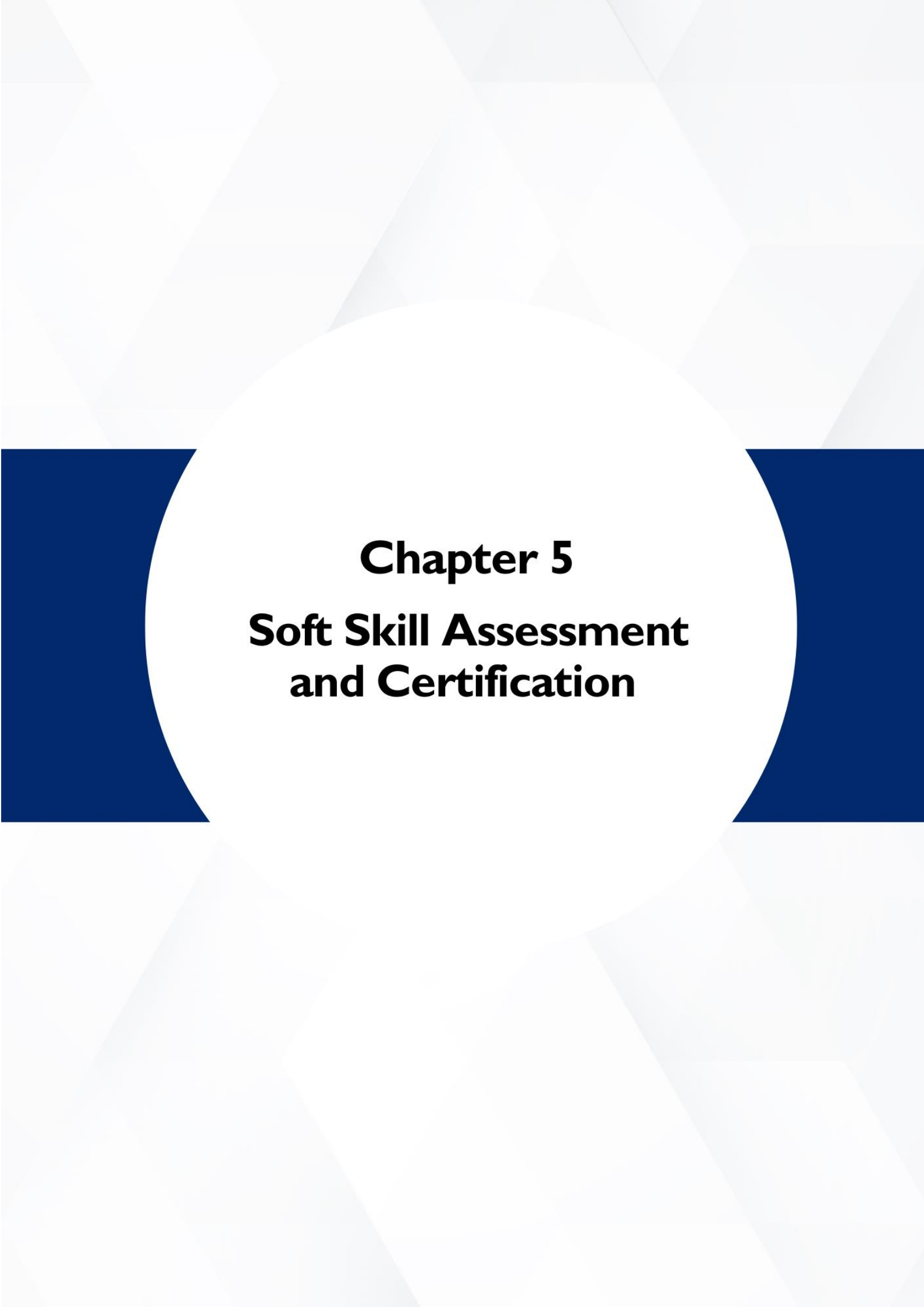
For in-person training, the distance to the venue is the most significant issue from all three perspectives. Here the perceived distance for female (69%) or NEET (70%) youth is higher. The FGD findings suggest that they are willing to travel up to *Sadar upazila*.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, a lack of accommodation as well as social anxiety ranks second and third as barriers overall, however, vulnerable youth are more concerned about these two issues which is followed by female youth and then NEET youth. For vulnerable youth, physical constraints are also a concern in the case of in-person training.

Lack of family or peer support for training is a primary concern for female, vulnerable and NEET groups. Higher cost (from their perspective) of training is also considered a challenge for the mentioned groups. Social backlash for female youth and a lack of motivation for vulnerable youth are worth mentioning.

In the case of online training, special interest groups claimed to have less access to internet, lack of platform knowledge, and lack of digital skills. Lack of access to a reliable and connected digital device is an issue for vulnerable youth.

In case of in person training, the distance to training institute, a lack of accommodation, social anxiety, and a fixed schedule is found to be among the core issues. Physical constraints were a key issue for vulnerable youth.

¹⁸⁹ An upazila is an administrative division in the country, functioning as a sub-unit of a district.

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Chapter 5

Soft Skill Assessment and Certification

5. Soft Skill Assessment and Certification

The study team explored the current soft skills content in different training programs, discussed with employers, associations and related government authorities regarding the soft skills assessment and certification. The team also dived deep into secondary sources to extract information regarding soft skills content, assessment, and certification practices.

Current Context of Soft Skills Assessment and Certification

Opinion of related Government Authorities

Currently BTEB and NSDA are the two prime bodies who set Curriculum Standards (CS), assess, and certify for different occupations¹⁹⁰. Soft skills are included in BTEB and NSDA prescribed CS of different occupations which is referred to as a generic unit of competency. However, there is no unique CS for any soft skills competency; it is included in CS of technical skills. Also, during the assessment of technical skills, they only assess the technical competency of a trainee although soft skills was a part of the whole syllabus. Among soft skills, BTEB and NSDA CSs mainly include numerical competency, negotiation competency, writing competency, communication competency, team management competency, and behavior competency.

However, an official of NSDA recognized the importance of soft skills as some industry skills councils (ISCs) have reported that they are keen to get certification on soft skills only for few occupations.

Opinion of Industry Associations

The study team discussed soft skills assessment and certification practices within the industry with different associations. It was found that there are sometimes arrangements of training by associations, but these are mainly for technical skills. Training in only soft skills is hard to find. Also, these trainings are conducted in accordance with BTEB and NSDA prescribed CS. Moreover, if any formal certification is needed, trainees are guided to take assessment and certification from BTEB or NSDA as associations normally do not provide any certification as their certification won't carry any value to the employer.

Opinion of Employers

Many business enterprises provide on-the-job training on various technical aspects of the job. It was also found that large organizations provide training in soft skills as well. They provide training mainly on occupational health and safety, workplace behavior, rules and regulations though the employees do not have to go through any assessment for this type of training.

The situation in the ICT sector is somewhat different. For a few occupations, enterprises provide a mandatory soft skills training to the employees. For example, occupations like medical scribe, BPO call center executive are heavily dependent on soft skills. Hence, enterprises invest in soft skills training. And, employees also must go through an assessment developed by the organization itself. The assessment also is not followed by any certification as the certificate won't be valued outside of that particular organization.

From the above insights extracted from government authorities, employers and associations suggest that there is a presence of soft skill component in training materials developed by BTEB and NSDA. Also, employers and associations stated that they also provide few trainings to their employees which can be regarded as soft skills training. However, some soft skills components of training in a specific

¹⁹⁰ According to UNEVOC: Occupation refers to the kind of work performed in a job. The concept of occupation is defined as a "set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarity"

sector can be termed as technical skills in another sector. The above insights also suggest that there is no formal assessment mechanism for soft skills.

Method for Soft Skills Assessment

Though soft skills assessment is not something very much available currently, the study team formulated an idea how the soft skills assessment could take place. Based on the interviews with NSDA and BTEB, it was summarized that there should be a 3-step assessment mechanism for soft skills. 1) Written test 2) Role play/ Acting 3) Oral test/ questioning. This 3-step mechanism will measure the knowledge, skills and attitude of a trainee.

- 1) **Written Test:** A written test will examine the knowledge of a trainee acquired from the training program. In the case of soft skills, this written test should be more analytical than theoretical. However, many trainees may not have even a primary education. so they may not have the ability to read and write. For them, an audio test can be a possible solution, where they could listen to audio questions and record their own answers.

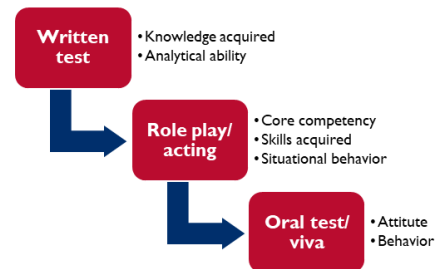


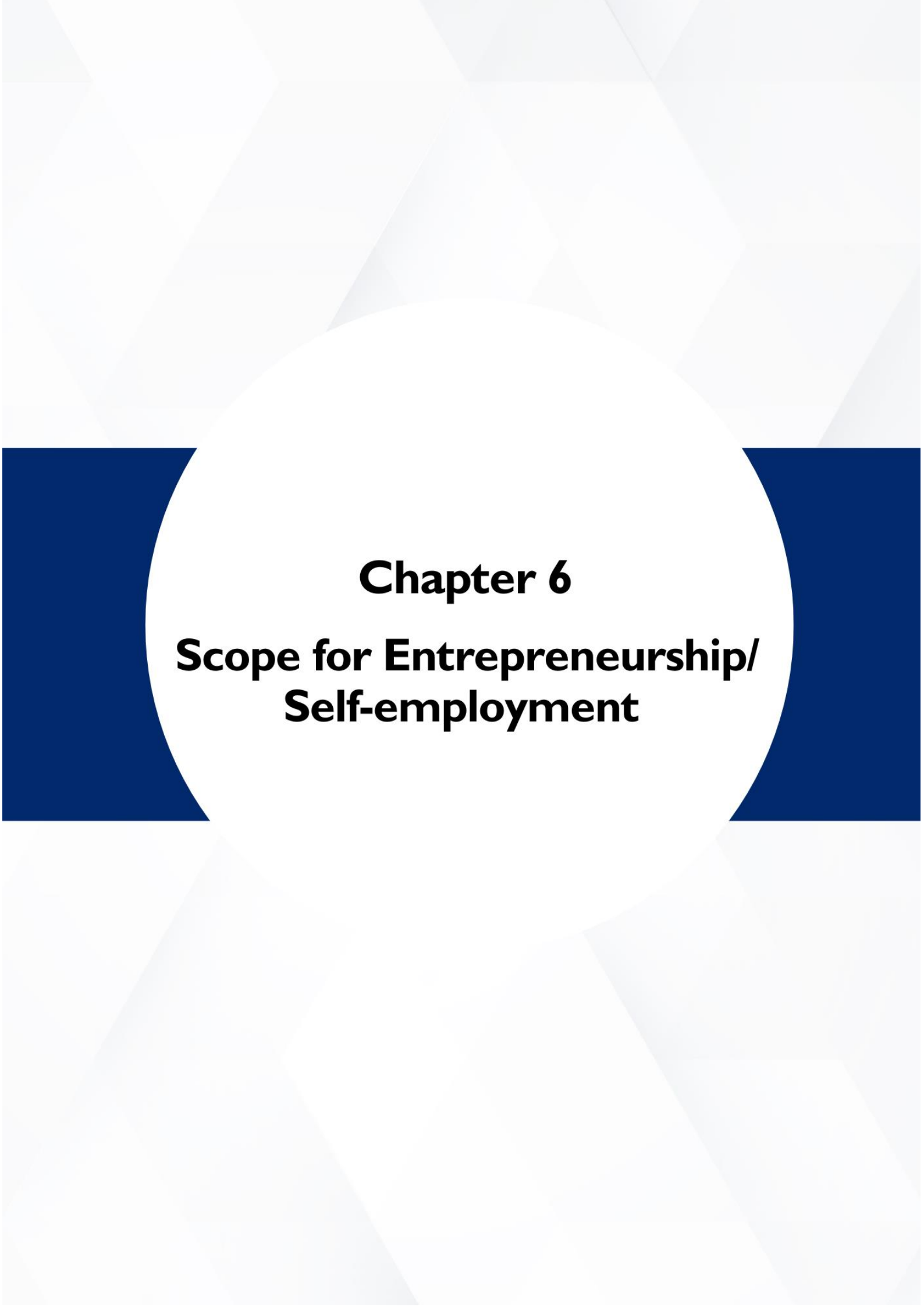
Figure 52 Soft Skill Assessment Mechanism

- 2) **Role Play/ Acting:** This part should carry the most weight in the assessment mechanism. This will examine the skills of the trainees acquired from the training program. Here, the trainees will act on a given situation where they will demonstrate their skills of soft skills. For example, a trainee may have to act on a situation where s/he needs to deal with an angry customer.
- 3) **Oral Test/ Viva:** This is the last stage of the assessment process. Here trainees will sit for a viva where examiners will assess mainly trainees' attitude and behavior.

Soft Skills Certification

During KII and IDI with industry associations and employers they opined that soft skills certification does not carry much value in the industry.¹⁹¹ However, enterprises are willing to value a soft skills certificate if it comes from their industry association of government authority.

¹⁹¹ KII with Industry employers and association



Chapter 6

Scope for Entrepreneurship/ Self-employment

6. Scope for Entrepreneurship/Self Employment Analysis

The assessment team explored sectors where there are opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment. However, to start a business in any sector, youth would require technical training as well as soft skills. These vary sector to sector. On the other hand, to start a business, there are some support such as access to finance, business set up and promotion, market linkage in the form of forward and backward markets. The following section provides information regarding sectors where there is an employment opportunity for the NEET youth.

Table 88 Sector wise entrepreneurship opportunities

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
ICT (Freelancing)	Web development SEO optimization Digital marketing Graphic designing Content writing Translating articles	Freelancing possesses a tremendous opportunity for self-employment. This is also evident from the youth group survey as 50% of males and 62 % of females want to involve in freelancing. Equipped with necessary technical skills, youth can have the chance to place themselves in freelancing markets such as Fiver, Upwork etc., after getting a training in verbal and written communications, client handling and decision making. They also require support on purchasing desktop/laptops, access to technical and soft skills, SOP of operating on the market places,	-Graphic design software -Coding language -English Language	-Verbal and written Communication skills -Client Handling -Decision making	-Access to training on technical and soft skills - Support in purchasing laptop/desktop -SOP of operating on market places like Fiver, Upwork etc.
Handicraft	Hand-stitched items Nakshi Kantha Bamboo and Cane products	Handicraft holds a greater potential for self-employment/entrepreneurship opportunities as 22 % expressing interest in this field. However, they would require training on soft skills such as leadership, decision-making, client handling and business operation. However, for business set up, they might require access to finance and forward market linkage for the sale of products.	-Sewing and tailoring skills -Creating new designs -Operating embroidery machine	Critical Thinking Client Handling Business management	-Access to training -Access to finance -Forward market linkage

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
Crop and Horticulture	Mushroom Sack gardening for spices Rooftop gardening	Nowadays, demand for mushroom is growing and especially in Magura, there is a village called Mushroom village-initiated by a person with disabilities. Following him, many youths are now engaging in mushroom production. In saline-prone areas like Satkhira, youth are also initiating different climate smart-technologies. For example, sack gardening for spices like ginger is getting popular. These two sectors provide future self-employment opportunities. However, they would require some technical training in mushroom production, harvesting, market capturing and business. They would also require soft skills like critical thinking, problem-solving.	-Mushroom production -Mushroom processing -Quality assurance	-Problem solving -Critical thinking -Client communication	- Access to finance -Access to training - forward market linkage -Support for business set up and management
Livestock and Poultry	Poultry Livestock Rearing	During the assessment, the team found that poultry and livestock rearing are getting popular in districts such as CHT, Satkhira, Gazipur etc. Hence, it could be a good opportunity for youth to be engaged in the sector through self-employment. However, youth would require technical training on preparing houses and litter for livestock, poultry, preparing feed and vaccination. On the other hand, they would also require soft skills like problem solving, negotiation skills, critical thinking. Some of the supports required to be employed include access to training, access to finance and business set up and management.	-Prepare poultry house and litter -Prepare Poultry feed -Brooding& Rearing of Poultry -Collect and store eggs -Vaccination	Problem solving, Negotiation skills Business management	-Access to finance -Access to training -Business set up and management - Market linkage
		Tourist areas like Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Khagrachari and Sherpur offer local youth to be involved in photography and tour guide services. As the government plans to increase the number of tourists, and an easy communication system, a	-Navigation skills -Photography and video making	-Appropriate Behavior -Negotiation skills -Verbal communication	-Access to training -

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
Tourism	Tour Guide Photography	greater number of tourists will visit these spots. This offers the potential for youth to be a guide for people who want to visit the areas and also to make their visit memorable, they want to capture them. This indicates a higher surge in self-employment opportunity in photography. However, apart from the technical skills, they would require soft skills like appropriate behavior, communications and negotiation skills.			
Cricket Bat Manufacturing	Cricket Bat production	During bilateral series and world cup and other cricket festivals, the demand of domestically produced cricket bats increases. Youth of the Jashore areas can be entrepreneurs in this sector as this requires minimal technical training. Availability of raw materials and easy training can lead to a successful entrepreneurship. However, they would require training in business operation, leadership, online business promotion to increase the footprints.	-Cutting and shaping bats -Roller machine operation	Leadership Critical thinking Teamwork	-Access to training - Access to finance -Business promotion and market linkage
Wig	Wig manufacturing	Wig manufacturing is booming in Nilphamari, creating opportunities for pro-poor people as more than 5000 people are currently involved in the sector and continues to rise. The youth of this district and others can be entrepreneurs as this sector does not require a large sum of money and a vast technical training. They would also require access to finance and forward market linkage upon getting training in soft skills like attention to details, and patience in line with business management, operation, leadership and market capturing.	-Washing -Kempting -Knotting wigs	-Attention to details -patience -leadership	-Access to finance -Access to training - Market linkage

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
Nursery		As nurseries are growing due to interest from personal and corporate verticals, demand for more entrepreneurs in the sector looms in future. However, they would require training on appropriate behavior, appropriate behavior, verbal communication, listening and focused attention and also business operation and management.	-Tree maintenance -Watering - Soil making	-Appropriate behavior -Verbal communication -Listening and focused attention	-Access to finance -Access to training -Market linkage -Business set up and management
Repair and maintenance	Phone Servicing Electronic Servicing RAC Servicing	As the number of mobile phone users and consumer electronics is increasing day by day, demand for repair and maintenance workers continues to rise and offer self-employment potential. However, this does only require buying some tools required to operate in the sector. Apart from these, there is a need for soft skill training in client management, problem solving, communication and critical thinking.	-Practice of soldering and de-soldering, -Disassembling -Re-assembling of devices -Servicing different devices and electronic parts	- Client management - Problem solving - Critical thinking - Verbal communication	-Access to training -Business set up and management -Access to training
Gig Economy	Ride Sharing Delivery Service	Gig economy offers an excellent opportunity for the NEET youth to be involved in services like ride sharing and delivery services. However, for the work they would require technical skills like driving and navigation and software handling. On the other hand, they would require good communication, appropriate behavior and emotion management skills.	-IT knowledge such as navigation -Input software handling -driving	- Communication, - Appropriate behavior - Emotion management	-Access to training -Placement
Fruit Garden	Mixed Fruit Gardening Mango Litchi Dragon Watermelon Plum	Seeing changes in fortune by owning and managing fruit orchards, more youths in CHT, Rangpur, Magura, Satkhira, wanted to be involved in the sector. However, they could not do so, because they require extensive training in gardening, fruit production, pest control, post-harvest management and forward market linkage and land	-Fruit production -Soil making - Pest control -Post-harvest management	- Communication, - Business management - Client negotiation - problem solving	-Access to finance -Access to training -Market Linkage -Storage facility

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
		for gardening that requires a large sum of money. To succeed in the sector, they would also require skills like communication, business setup and management, client negotiation, and problem solving.			
Floriculture	Flower production Flower processing and selling	Flower production is increasing in Jashore and Savar as nearly more than 0.1 million people are involved in this sector. This also possesses a great opportunity for youths to be involved in sector through flower production or processing flowers and selling them. However, they require	-Flower production -Picking flower from fields -Sorting and processing flowers	Critical thinking Problem solving	
Beekeeping		Due to a surge in honey in domestic, there is increased number of beekeeping firms in Satkhira as this offers an excellent opportunity for youth to be entrepreneurs. However, youth need training in honey production, refinement and beekeeping as well as skills like problem solving, decision-making, and appropriate behavior.	-Beekeeping and management -Honey Production -Honey refinement	Problem solving Decision-making Appropriate behavior	-Access to training -Access to finance -Business set up and promotion
Agro-food processing	Homemade foods (Ready to cook and ready to eat)	Homemade food business is very renowned in Bangladesh for long since although this gets momentum during COVID-19 outbreak. Notably, huge number of women got into online based business and arranged earning opportunity. Popular and demand products/items from the study are many such as RTC-processed fish and meat, spices etc. and RTE-pickles, daily meals/lunch boxes, snacks, puffed rice, flattened rice, treacle, dairy products, etc. Market oriented planning and service can broaden the opportunity of entrepreneurship in this trade. Eventually, the FtF producer groups can be linked with the food	-Preparing food -preservation -Packaging	Customer orientation Ethics Negotiation Communication Presentation Marketplace understanding (trends, SOPs etc.)	-Initial capital and/or resources -short technical training -business operation training -online business training -backward and forward market linkage

Sector	Product/Services	Entrepreneurship/Self-employment Perspective	Technical Skills	Soft Skills	Support Required
		processors which can strengthen the overall value chain.			



Chapter 7

Inclusion Scenario

7. Inclusion Scenario

This section provides an analysis of inclusion scenarios based on different types of vulnerability, emphasizing the specific needs of vulnerable individuals.

Inclusion of Female

Due to socio cultural barriers in Bangladesh females are lagging behind in employment. However, Bangladesh is witnessing a slow but steady climb in overall female labor force participation. Tradition and social norms can make it difficult for women to enter the workplace. The Labour Force Survey 2022¹⁹² reveals that overall, 42.77% of female population are involved in employment which was 36.3 in 2016-17. The surprising fact is that in urban areas this participation rate is much below the overall average while in rural areas it is much better. In urban areas, women participation rate in labor force is 23.68% and in rural areas, it is 51%¹⁹². Bangladesh needs further initiatives to break down barriers and ensure women have a rightful and equal place in the workforce.

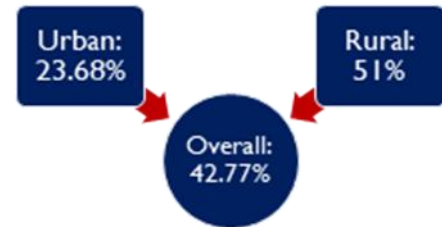


Figure 53 Female participation in employment

Preferred occupations, existing inclusion scenario and sector with future inclusion potential for women

In many of priority sectors, women's participation is generally low, with a few exceptions like the plastic, agriculture, handicraft, and healthcare sectors. However, in additional priority sectors deemed important, such as ready-made garments (RMG), RMG accessories, leather, footwear, mariculture, and wig production, women's employment is more common, especially in RMG where they form the majority of the workforce. Beyond these areas, there are other sectors with high potential for employing more women. The tourism industry, for instance, offers great opportunities for women, particularly in roles like front desk operations, spas, beauty parlors, and as baristas. Additionally, industries such as jute, nurseries, beekeeping and honey production, fruit cultivation, and flower growing are also well-suited for women workers.

Table 89 Inclusion of women in labor force

Preferred Sector		Existing Sectors with inclusion		Future Potential Sectors for Inclusion	
Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation
Agriculture	Gardening	Agriculture	Sorting worker Seeding worker Gardening worker Packaging worker Cleaning worker	Tourism	Front desk executive Spa workers Catering service workers
Handicraft	Tailoring	Handicraft	Designer Weaver Tailor Supervisor	Jute	Weaving machine operator Spinning operator Sewing Machine Operator
Healthcare and care economy	Nurse Nanny	Healthcare and care economy	Nurse Caregiver Supervisor Daycare teacher	Nursery	Gardener Soil Maker

¹⁹²https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2023-10-25-07-38-4304abd7a3f3d8799fbc59ff91007b1.pdf

NGO	Field officer	RMG and accessories	RMG Operator Packaging and printing workers Finishing workers Cutting machine operator	Machine Beekeeping and honey production	Packaging workers Quality controller
Freelancing	Graphic designer Image editor and designer Call center executive	Leather and footwear	Sewing machine operator Cutting machine operator Setting and assembling worker	Cricket bat	Sticker worker Packaging worker Assemble worker
Entrepreneurship	E-commerce F-commerce Tailoring	Mariculture	Cleaning and Maintenance Worker	Freelancing (under ICT sector)	Graphic designer Content creator Call center executive
-	-	Wig production	Washing worker Kempting worker Wig Maker Packaging worker		
-	-	Floriculture	Pickers and Loaders Sorter and packager		

Source: The data in this table is primarily extracted from FGD, KII and IDI

The above table shows that women are already working in different sectors. And there are many sectors where they can pursue a good career. Government and different development partners are also working closely to ensure inclusivity of women in all sectors. Nevertheless, women face many challenges in getting a job and even if they get a job, in many cases they have to struggle to retain the job due to many societal and structural challenges and barriers.

Challenges in getting jobs and attending training on soft skills

In general women have to face many challenges in getting employment and even training. Challenges that women face in getting a job and attending training especially soft skills training _

Societal challenges

- **Family barrier:** In most cases women get the first hurdle from their families. Many families consider it as socially disgraceful for women to do a job in a workplace. Though in some cases some family prefer home-based job for women such as tailoring.
- **Societal barrier:** In the context of Bangladesh societal roles of male and female are expected to be fixed by the members of the society. They view women participation in workplace as a taboo. Which discourage women from being employed. The same view bar women from getting training.

Employment challenges

- **Gender Discrimination:** Women often encounter discrimination in job searches, hiring, and promotion processes, as well as in entering high-skill and management jobs.
- **Inadequate Supportive Infrastructure:** One of the main barriers for women in participating for jobs is the lack of supportive infrastructure in workplaces such as breastfeeding room, separate women toilet etc. During interviews with employers some informants reported that, there are many suitable jobs for women. But as they do not

have supportive infrastructure for women, it is not immediately possible for them to hire female employees.

Skills development challenges

- **Inadequate Supportive Infrastructure:** Training institutions lack supportive facilities like CC cameras, accommodation for women, separate restroom. These lacking prevent women in participating from training programs.
- **Lack of female trainers:** It was stated during FGDs by many female participants that they would prefer female trainers in some cases. They think that female trainers are not adequately available in training institutions thus, it discourages them to participate in training programs.

Challenge mitigation measurements

During FGDs, KII and IDI many suggestions came as to how these challenges can be mitigated. Challenge mitigation measurement are as follows_

- **Mitigating societal challenges:** In many cases family members do not have any problem to let their female children to do a job or attending a training program. But they become concerned about the safety and security for female in workplace and training institutions. So, family members need to be included in the hiring process and training process. For example, inviting family members in the workplace and training institutions and orienting them on safety and security measurement of the organization so that they can feel relieved. Also, awareness campaigns are inevitable to mitigate societal challenges.
- **Mitigating employment challenges:** There are few male dominated occupations which can be better managed by female. For example, front desk management was stated to be better done by female by many employers and association. In such cases, numerous awareness programs and sensitization sessions are required to make employers understand how women can better handle certain occupations.

“We are observing a growth in tourism sector of Bandarban. I our hotel and accommodation sector we can create hundreds of jobs for female. But the owners are still reluctant to hire female employee.” -
President, Bandarban Women Chamber of Commerce

- **Mitigating skills development challenges:** It was observed during FGDs that many women were excited to attend training but due to transportation barriers they do not feel it safe to travel a long distance to attend a training program. Thus, they suggested online training if it is not possible to provide training in their proximity. And also, in case of offline training, they expect female trainers.

Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

In Bangladesh, the employment status of persons with disabilities has long been a challenging issue. societal stigmas and inaccessibility have hindered their access to employment opportunities. However, the government is introducing policies and initiatives aimed at promoting inclusivity and accessibility of Persons with disabilities. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and advocacy groups are actively working to empower persons with disabilities by providing vocational training, skills development programs, and job placement assistance.

The current situation of Persons with disabilities in employment is quite concerning. The National Survey on Persons with Disabilities (NSPD) 2021 shows that only 27.21% of persons with disabilities are involved in employment among which most (54.94%) of them are self-employed and only 16.34%

are employed in private sector.¹⁹³ In case of female the stats are more concerning. Only 7.30% of women with disabilities are involved in any kind of employment. These stats indicate an alarming situation for persons with disabilities especially for women with disabilities.

There are different types of disability. However, most prevalent disability types are physical disability, visual disability, speech disability, hearing disability.

Preferred occupations, existing inclusion scenario and sector with future inclusion potential for persons with disability

As there are different forms of disabilities, there is no specific suitable position for persons with disabilities. For example, those who have speech disability can work in repair and maintenance sector, visually impaired people evidently have been employed in education and teaching profession. There is also evidence for visually impaired people to work on computer operation related jobs. One of the most suitable work types for persons with disabilities according to employers is assembly line work.¹⁹⁴

Physical disability refers to a limitation or impairment in a person's physical functioning or mobility, which may be caused by injury, illness, congenital conditions, or other factors. Physical disability is the most prevalent type of disability in Bangladesh. Though persons with physical disability in many cases are capable of doing traditional jobs, employers are reluctant to keep them in employment. They can do assembly line jobs in RMG and RMG accessories sectors. They can easily do jobs in BPO sector as call center executives, content writers etc. They can work as a salesman in retail sector as well.

Visual disability refers to a range of impairments or limitations in vision that may affect a person's ability to see, interpret, or process visual information. These disabilities can vary in severity, from mild vision loss to total blindness. Depending on the severity of visual disability, there are few scopes for them like working as a translator. They can even work on ICT sectors. There are many programs and software available for visually impaired people to let them work on computer like a normal person.

On the other hand, speech disability, refers to a condition that affects a person's ability to produce sounds, articulate words, or communicate effectively through speech. Speech disabilities can manifest in various forms and degrees of severity, impacting the clarity, fluency, or intelligibility of speech. This type of disable people can do any jobs where verbal communication is not necessary during work. RMG, RMG accessories, agro food processing are some of the most suitable sectors for them where they can easily work in packaging, sorting and assembling section. Apart from those, they are working as a teacher of sign language. They also can work in handicraft sector.

Hearing disability, also known as hearing impairment or deafness, refers to a partial or total loss of hearing ability. This can range from mild to profound, affecting an individual's ability to hear sounds, speech, and communicate effectively. People with mild disability can do any job like normal people with the help of hearing aid. However, those with severe disability can work in handicraft where they can imitate a design from a sample or picture. They also can work as a teacher of sign language.

Table 90 Inclusion of persons with disabilities in labor force

Preferred Sector		Existing Sectors with inclusion		Future Potential Sectors for Inclusion	
Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation
Tourism	Front office management executive	Education	Teacher	Agriculture (Aquaculture)	• Seaweed cultivator

¹⁹³ https://bbs.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/bbs.portal.gov.bd/page/b343a8b4_956b_45ca_872f_4cf9b2f1a6e0/2022-06-13-15-24-ca6f018ab83c88a4db8ff51386439794.pdf

¹⁹⁴ KII with employers and association based in Dhaka

					Hatching process monitor and supervisor
ICT (Freelancing)	Content creation	Retail	Salesman	Agriculture (Crops and horticulture)	• Sorting worker • Packaging worker • Cleaning worker • Mushroom cultivator • Gardener
RMG	Sewing machine operation	RMG	• Sewing machine operator • Packaging worker	ICT	• Call center executive • Graphic designer • Image editor and designer • Content writer
Handicraft	Craftsman	RMG accessories	• Sewing machine operator • Packaging worker • Sorting worker	Handicraft	• Designer • Weaver • Tailor • Supervisor
Livestock	Poultry farming	Recycling	• Sorting worker • Disassembling worker	Agro food processing	• Sorting worker • Packaging worker • Cleaning worker

Challenges in Getting Jobs and Attending Training on Soft Skills

Societal challenges

- **Social stigma:** Societal stigma and a lack of awareness about disabilities lead to outright discrimination during recruitment. There is a prevalent assumption that individuals with any form of disability are incapable of performing work tasks effectively.

Workplace challenges

- **Inaccessible workplaces:** Many workplaces lack basic accessibility features, like ramps, elevators with braille buttons, or adapted washrooms. This makes it physically difficult or impossible for Persons with disabilities to navigate the work environment.

Systemic challenges

- **Reluctancy in complying with government policies:** There are few policies in place to ensure the inclusivity of Persons with disabilities in workplace, but employers are highly reluctant to maintain these policies. For example, there is a provision in the budget that if an employer keeps 10% Persons with disabilities in their workforce, they will get a 5% tax rebate, but employers do not abide by this provision as they think organization will lose productivity if they employ Persons with disabilities.

Skills development challenges

- **Absence of suitable training content based on disability types:** Different types of disability may require different types and forms of training contents. This is also applicable for soft skill training as well. But stakeholders do not give emphasis on suitable training contents based on disability types.
- **Absence of career counseling platform for Persons with disabilities:** Persons with disabilities find it really difficult to choose a career path and prepare them accordingly. They also don't know how and from where they can get career-related information. A well functioned career counseling platform is a burning need for them.

Challenge Mitigation Measurements

During FGDs, KII and IDI many suggestions came as to how these challenges can be mitigated. Challenge mitigation measurement are as follows_

Mitigating Societal Challenges: Awareness campaigns can be launched to sensitize the public and employers about the capabilities of PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES through media campaigns, workshops, and community outreach programs. Many Persons with disabilities lose confidence on themselves. Showcasing successful professionals with disabilities can inspire them to believe in their potential.

Mitigating Employment challenges: Just some few simple adjustments in workplace layout and logistics can make the workplace accessible for Persons with disabilities. Employers need to be highly sensitive to make their workplace Persons with disabilities friendly

Mitigating Systemic challenges: Sector specific inclusion act can ensure equal opportunity for Persons with disabilities in case of employment. And strong monitoring is required to make employers abide by the existing laws and provisions.

Mitigating skills development challenges: Training programs need to be developed tailored to the specific skills required for various jobs also training institutions need to be guided to incorporate accessibility measurement for Persons with disabilities. To help Persons with disabilities to develop skills and get information of career dedicated online platforms with accessible resources on career options, training opportunities, and job listings can be developed for persons with disabilities. Connecting persons with disabilities with successful professionals with disabilities who can offer them guidance and support can also help them to gain confidence.

Inclusion of Indigenous Communities

According to Population and Housing Census 2022 there are 1.65 million indigenous people live in Bangladesh⁴. There are two broad categories of indigenous minorities in Bangladesh: groups that reside in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in the southeastern Chattogram Division, and groups that reside in the northern divisions, often referred to as plainland indigenous groups.

Preferred occupations, existing inclusion scenario and sector with future inclusion potential

Indigenous minority groups in Bangladesh are mostly found in certain regions, especially in the CHT and surrounding districts. They are actively involved in various key local industries. In the CHT, for instance, they are a significant part of the retail business. While the study didn't focus on the NGO sector, these groups are also well-represented there. They play a role in the area's agriculture, tourism,

transportation, and handicrafts industries. Moreover, there's a growing interest among these communities to engage in sectors like information and ICT, healthcare, and fruit farming.

Table 91 inclusion of Indigenous community

Preferred Sector		Existing inclusion	Sectors with	Future Potential	Sectors for
Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation
Agriculture	• Gardener • Sorting worker • Packaging worker	Agriculture	• Sorting worker • Seeding worker • Gardening worker • Packaging worker • Cleaning worker	ICT	• Graphic designer • Image editor and designer • Content writer
NGO	Field officer	Handicraft	• Designer • Weaver • Tailor • Supervisor	Healthcare	Nurse
Freelancing	• Graphic designer • Image editor and designer • Call center executive	Tourism	• Housekeeping • Cook • Beautician • Tour operator	Entrepreneurship	• E-commerce • F-commerce • Tailoring
Entrepreneurship	F-commerce	NGO	• Field worker • Executive		
		Retail	Salesperson		

Source: The data in this table is primarily extracted from FGD, KII and IDI

We can see that indigenous minorities are involved in different sectors. However, during FGDs with indigenous minorities stated that though they get involved in different jobs but most of the time they have to struggle to get a better job. They are mostly preferred in low level jobs even if they have equal qualifications.

Challenges in getting jobs and attending training on soft skills

Societal challenges

- **Social acceptance:** The main stream society in many cases view them as inferior to them which impede these minority community people from leading a standard life. They are not accepted in leadership position and as representatives.

Workplace challenges

- **Workplace discrimination:** Even with required qualifications indigenous minorities are looked down upon in workplace. Sometimes they face racism in workplace. The situation is more dire for female from indigenous minority community.

Systemic challenges

- **Lack of policy in workplace:** Government has formed many policy to ensure the inclusion of indigenous minorities in different platform. Still there is a policy gap for ensuring employment of the community people specially in private sector.

Skills development challenges

- **Absence of native training:** During FGDs with indigenous minorities, participants demanded training content in their native language. Educated people can understand content in Bangla and English but those who have less education struggle to understand Bangla writing.
- **Absence of training institutions:** Specially in CHT, there is a vast vacuum of TVET training institutions. People there also face communication barriers if they want to travel outside of their area for training purpose.
- **Lack of trainers:** There is a lack of trainers from minority community. Trainers from main stream society do not prefer to train in minority led areas as they think they won't get commercially benefitted.

Challenge mitigation measurements

During FGDs, KII and IDI many suggestions came as to how these challenges can be mitigated. Challenge mitigation measurement are as follows__

Mitigating societal challenges: Awareness campaign, platform to practice leadership for minority people can mitigate societal challenges faced by indigenous minorities

Mitigating employment challenges: Employers are needed to be sensitized on the rights of minority people. Dialogue should be exchanged with employer to empower minority people in the workplace.

Mitigating systemic challenges: First, there needs to have a policy to ensure the rights of indigenous minorities in the workplace. And then this has to be rigorously monitored to ensure effective implementation.

Mitigating skills development challenges: Trainer and training content can be localized so that they can adapt to training program. Also there need to be adequate training facilities in their proximity so that they can get quality training without leaving their area.

Inclusion of SOGI

The employment status of the SOGI community in Bangladesh is a complex issue. Bangladesh government recognized transgenders in 2013 but has not yet recognized any other orientation like transman, transwomen etc. Even the transgender community continues to face significant challenges in securing stable employment, it is more challenging for other SOGI community. The transgender community in Bangladesh is highly stigmatized, which has led to a lack of job opportunities. Many transgenders are uneducated, further limiting their employment prospects. Even if people with other sexual orientations are educated, employment opportunities are still dire for them.

The Population and Housing Census 2022 say, Bangladesh has 12,629 transgender people across the country.

Preferred occupations, existing inclusion scenario and sector with future inclusion potential

This cohort has the least opportunity to be included in considered sector due to socio-cultural norms of our country. However, they can be seen employed in some sectors like parlor and beautification. In some cases they get jobs in general sectors but they lose/ leave jobs for many reasons like workplace harassment, volatile gender identity.

Even though transgenders in Bangladesh are having bundles of challenges and social disparities, there are some hopes of prosperity and welfare for them in future. Transgender are participating in national

election in Bangladesh. SME foundation, Bangladesh Small & Cottage Industries Corporation, National Skill Development Council and Ministry of Industry are offering skill development program for the transgender, and they are also encouraging trans to be entrepreneur through financial and technical assistance.

Table 92 Inclusion of SOGI

Preferred Sector		Existing Sectors with inclusion		Future Potential Sectors for Inclusion	
Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation
Beauty care	Beautician	Informal sector	• Beautician • Parlor worker	Agro food processing	• Sorting worker • Packaging worker • Cleaning worker
NGO	Field worker	RMG and RMG accessories	• Sewing machine operator • Packaging worker • Sorting worker	Handicraft	• Designer • Weaver • Tailor

Source: The data in this table is primarily extracted from FGD, KII and IDI

Challenges in getting jobs and attending training on soft skills

Societal challenges

- **Disregarded by family:** The SOGI community is either overlooked or disregarded by their own family. They do not get the necessary support that they expect from their family. Their family view them as a matter of shame and a threat to their reputation in the society.
- **Disregarded by society:** Many people of the society see them as dangerous. Most of the time they feel unaccepted by society and that they are disrespected because of their gender expression.

Workplace challenges

- **Workplace discrimination:** Transgenders struggle to get mainstream jobs. Even if they get any, they remain in constant fear of losing the job due to their gender identity. Against this backdrop, many transgenders give up finding jobs in the private sector altogether. Those who overcome these fears and manage to get into a position in an organization are often dismissed from their position, facing verbal and physical harassment as soon as they start expressing their gender.
- **Workplace harassment:** During FGD with transgender, they expressed that sexual harassment in workplace is a severe problem for them. Even if they complain about the matter to the higher management, their complaints are looked down upon.

Systemic challenges

- **Lack of awareness program from government:** Even the government has limited program for this community. People still don't know they have been recognized as a gender identity by the government and they have equal access to everything that a human being should have as a citizen of the country.
- **Limited access to social safety net:** They have limited access to different social safety net programs and any other government development programs. They also do not

have the information of how they can access to the available safety net programs that have been designed particularly for them.

- **No policy for them:** Government has just recognized them a gender but still has not formulated any policy to ensure their inclusivity in the education, workplace, healthcare and other basic necessity.

Skills development challenges

- **No specific program of institution for them:** As the society has not accepted them yet, they hardly can take part in skills development program. There is no special institution available for them to teach them life skills, technical skills etc.

Challenge mitigation measurements

During FGDs, KII and IDI many suggestions came as to how these challenges can be mitigated. Challenge mitigation measurement are as follows_

Mitigating societal challenges: There is no other way to increase SOGI community's acceptance in the society but heavily sensitizing people by campaign and ad. There can be a safe house for them where they can report violence against them also where they can bring their family for sensitization.

Mitigating employment challenges: Employers should reserve specific positions with clear career path for transgender people. SOGI community should get opportunity for internship and apprenticeship so that employer can compare their work with other people. As a result, employers won't have the stigma that they are less capable than other people.

Mitigating systemic challenges: It has become a pressing need for SOGI community to establish their right through proper policy. Policy advocacy needs to be taken place with the government with different stakeholders to formulate a policy for them.

Mitigating skills development challenges: Skill development institutions can be established in the area where transgender community live so that they can have their isolated training program and they do not have the fear of being rejected by others.

Inclusion of Religious Minority

In Bangladesh there are different religious minorities and sub castes who face various forms of social exclusion. This minority communities includes Dalits, Rishi, Munda, Horizon, Bedey, Malo and Bihari so on. There are around 5.5 million Dalits only living in Bangladesh⁵. The exact number of these type of minority population is unknown. These communities are excluded not only from decent jobs but also from other basic needs like education, healthcare. Most of the are involved in low level and dirty jobs like sweeper, removing human waste which are normally regarded as disrespectful profession in Bangladesh.

Within the Bangladeshi country context, exclusion of religious and lower caste minorities are witnessed in various forms and it is much inter-related. It revolves around the societal interventions and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate and deprive some groups on the basis of group identities like caste, language and ethnicity.

Preferred occupations, existing inclusion scenario and sector with future inclusion potential

In Bangladesh, the religious minority and lower caste community is diverse, encompassing a variety of occupations, languages, and cultural backgrounds. There's an absence of comprehensive national statistics regarding the spectrum of their occupations. Urban dwellers from these groups are often engaged in jobs like sanitation, waste disposal, and street cleaning. In rural areas, their employment spans across sectors such as tea cultivation, fisheries, leather treatment, and cobbling. The degree of hardship they face is closely tied to the nature of their employment.

Preferred Sector		Existing Sectors with inclusion		Future Potential Sectors for Inclusion	
Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation	Sector	Occupation
Education	Teaching	Informal sector	- Sweeper - Waste disposal - Cobbler	RMG and RMG accessories	- Sorting worker - Packaging worker - Cleaning worker
Care economy	Nursing	Aquaculture (under agriculture)	Fishing	Agriculture	- Sorting worker - Gardening worker - Packaging worker - Cleaning worker
Nursery	Self-employed	Salon	Barbar	Handicraft	- Weaver - Tailor
ICT	Graphic designer	Informal	Cobbler	Agro food processing	- Sorting worker - Packaging worker - Cleaning worker
Light Engineering	Lathe machine operator	Informal	Cleaner	-	-

Challenges in getting jobs and attending training on soft skills

Societal challenges

- **Social stigma as untouchables:** It has been a long-standing social fact that these groups are regarded as untouchables by the society. People correlate them with the lowest standard jobs like waste management, sweeping. They lack social acceptance in every aspect.

Workplace challenges

- **Workplace discrimination:** They are rarely found in any formal work setup. Most of the time they do informal jobs in informal sectors. Even in formal sectors they are offered with similar job that they do traditionally like waste management, sweeping, cleaning. It is very common that they are viewed as lower caste inferior people in the workplace.

Systemic challenges

- **Lack of initiative to increase their standard of living:** Even the government also do less to increase their standard of living. Those who live in urban areas are sometimes provided with living facilities in a designated building for them known as ‘Sweeper Colony’ which sometimes lack basic facilities. Apart from that government government is progressing slowly in including them in mainstream sectors for employment.

Skills development challenges

- **Deprivation from basic education:** They fight to attend basic education let alone skills development training. They must be equipped with diversified skills so that they can be included in typical employment and can live a life with dignity and respect.

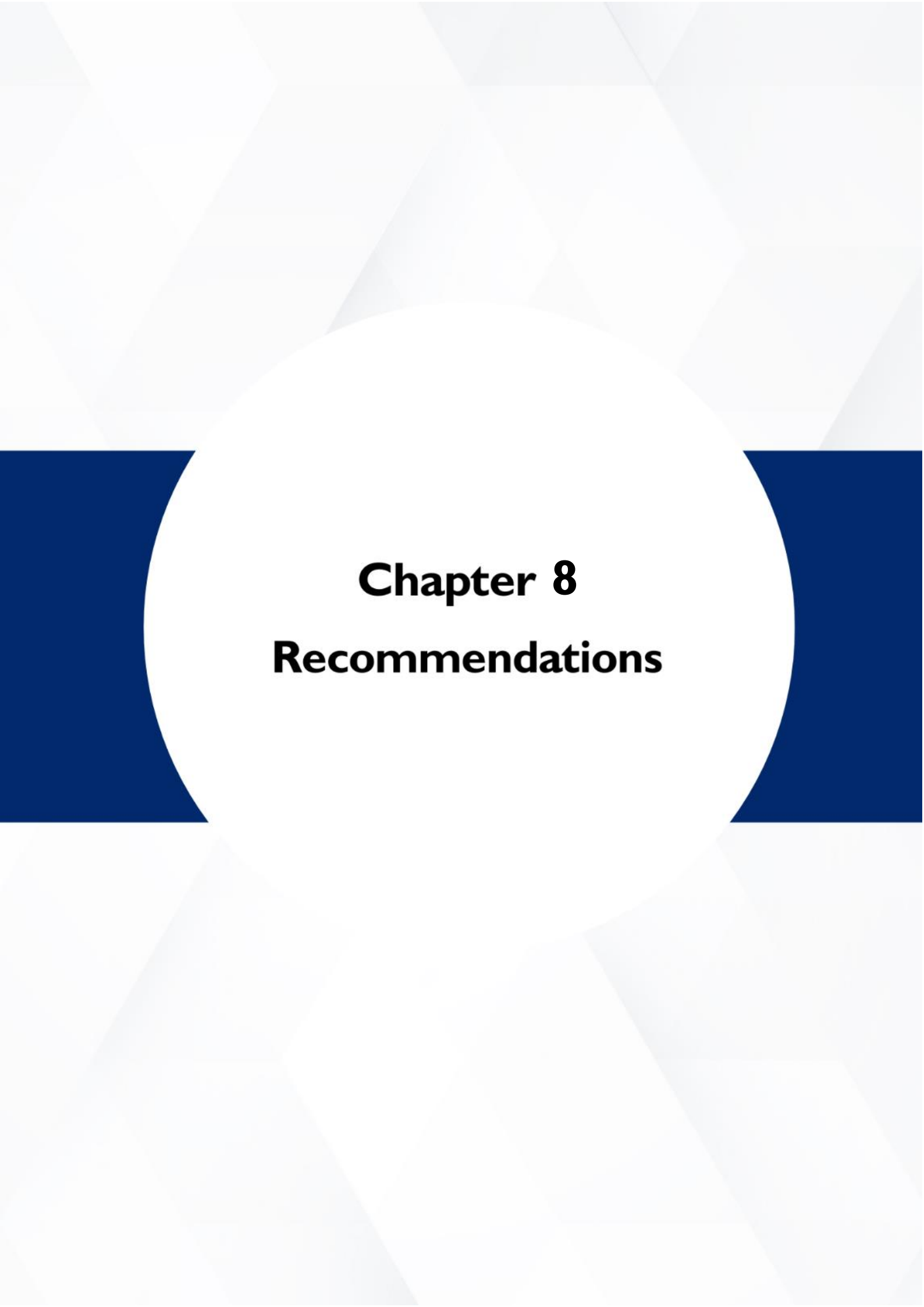
Challenge mitigation measurements

During FGDs, KII and IDI many suggestions came as to how these challenges can be mitigated. Challenge mitigation measurement are as follows_

Mitigating societal challenges: Multi-dimensional awareness campaign must be initiated to aware people on these community’s rights and inclusion More interventions are needed from development organizations to ensure their inclusion in every aspect of societal life.

Mitigating employment challenges: They can be some reserved jobs for them if different sectors, not just sweeping or cleaning jobs.

Mitigating skills development challenges: There can be adequate training facilities in their proximity so that they can get quality training without leaving their area and community. Also, these training facilities can also have placement cells to include them in mainstream sectors.

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Chapter 8

Recommendations

8. Recommendations

Recommended Sectors and Occupations Require Only Soft Skills

The following table highlights the priority sectors and occupations based on the requirement of soft skills as primary skill.

Table 94: Recommendations for soft skill driven occupations

Sector	Occupations	Soft Skills Training Required
BPO – Contact Center	Customer care/call center representative	Verbal communication (English and/or Bengali) Non-verbal communication – text-based customer support and sales (English and/or Bengali) Listening Problem understanding and solving Attention to details
E-commerce and F-commerce	Virtual Assistant	Listening Problem understanding and solving Attention to details. Non-verbal communication – text-based customer support and sales (English and/or Bengali)
Scribing, Data Processing, and AI	Annotator	Non-verbal communication – text-based customer support and sales (English and/or Bengali) Attention to details.
Consumer Goods Sales, Modern Trade, and Retail shops	Sales Representative/ Shop Keeper	Verbal communication Presentation
Gig economy	Delivery Rider	Navigation Listening
Transport	Helper – Public Transport	Listening Attention to details Signage recognition
Miscellaneous	Helper/Apprentice of all industries	Confidence Listening Attention to Details Adherence to work
Tourism	Tour Guide	Navigation Problem understanding and decision making Planning
Entrepreneurship	Online/offline retail trade	Understanding and forecasting demand Listening Presentation Ethics Team management Negotiation

Building a Bridge to Employment: A Multi-Tiered Soft Skills Development Program

Rationale: Many youths have a deficit in essential soft skills crucial for employment, including proficient job searching, writing compelling resumes, navigating interviews, delivering effective presentations, using effective communication, maintaining appropriate attire, and upholding personal

and occupational hygiene standards. This deficiency significantly diminishes their employability and promotion prospects in competitive positions.

Recommendation: Bijoyee can consider the following skills training and support for the job seeker as a part of their career development.

- Identifying suitable jobs using professional platforms (e.g. bd jobs, linked in)
- Navigating the job application (includes job description understanding, company/occupational responsibility reviewing, CV writing, online-offline application to dos, networking, and follow-up)
- Navigating interviews (includes self-introduction, personal hygiene and attire, facing interviews, presentations etc.)
- Building application of workplace behavior, safety, and hygiene
- Supporting career counselling (includes clarifying career pathways, improvement requirement and opportunity discussion, and follow-ups)
- Navigating opportunities for apprenticeships and internship in the enterprises.

Building a Supportive Ecosystem for Soft Skills: Employer Engagement and On-the-Job Training

Rationale: Employers in both sectors especially in the informal sector often lack awareness of the importance of soft skills, leading to an environment where these skills are not prioritized or practiced. Without recognition of soft skills' value, employees may not receive adequate training or opportunities to develop these abilities. This ignorance creates a barrier to fostering a work culture that values communication, teamwork, and adaptability, ultimately impacting productivity and success.

Recommendation: To effectively address this, Bijoyee can prioritize employer engagement through a two-step approach: pre-training orientation and post-training support.

Employer Orientation Program:

Program Objectives:

- Support employers or the training providers to develop soft skills inclusive technical training curriculum.
- Educate employers on the importance of soft skills in the workplace.
- Highlight the benefits of soft skills, such as improved communication, teamwork, and customer service leading to increased productivity and customer satisfaction.
- Explain how to create a work environment that encourages the use and development of soft skills. This could include providing opportunities for feedback, open communication channels, and collaborative work practices.

Delivery Methods: Organize workshops, seminars, and industry-specific events tailored to the needs of informal sector employers. Utilize digital platforms to expand reach and accessibility.

Trained Youth Placement and On-the-Job Training:

- Strategic Placement: Work with employers who have participated in the orientation program and understand the value of soft skills.
- On-the-Job Training: Integrate soft skills development into the job placement process.
- Collaborate with employers to redefine tasks that allow youths to practice and refine soft skills learned during training.

- Collaborate with employers and follow-up youths for continuous improvement status check to advise both for the future retention.

Overcoming Barriers to Female NEET Onboarding: A Tailored Approach

Rationale: Female NEET individuals are less inclined to engage in training programs, particularly those focused solely on soft skills, due to societal and familial stigmas. This may result in lower willingness and participation rates among this demographic.

Recommendation: To address the female onboarding challenges, a set of 5 strategies is recommended as following:

Reframing Soft Skills Value:

- Conduct workshops and outreach programs specifically designed for Female NEET and their families.
- Highlight the transferable nature of soft skills, emphasizing their application beyond the workplace. For example, showcase how effective communication, problem-solving, and teamwork can empower them in various aspects of life, such as managing finances, navigating healthcare systems, and advocating for themselves and their families.

Family Consent and Support:

- Partner with local community leaders and social workers to engage with families of female NEET.
- Organize information sessions to explain the program benefits and the importance of soft skills development.
- Establish a clear process for obtaining informed consent from families before onboarding participants.

Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment:

- Arrange training in closer destination of women cohort and hybrid (mix of online and offline) approach to accelerate the participation of women.
- Offer training sessions possibly led by female instructors who can serve as role models and mentors.
- Ensure a gender-inclusive learning environment that fosters open communication and mutual respect.
- Provide childcare services, if necessary, to remove logistical barriers to participation.

Integration of Technical Skills:

- In addition to soft skills training, incorporate technical skills relevant to female-friendly, home-based, or low-mobility work opportunities.
- Consider areas like handicraft production, tailoring, bookkeeping, computer literacy, or freelancing platforms.
- This combined approach empowers participants with practical skills for income generation while enhancing their employability.

Addressing Stigma:

- Partner with local NGOs and women's empowerment groups to address societal stigmas associated with female employment and skill development.

- Share success stories of female NEET graduates who have secured jobs or started their own businesses to inspire and motivate others. Moreover, a mentorship program through the successful women entrepreneurs can add value.

Bridging the Gap: Empowering Youth with Disabilities Through Inclusive Training

Rationale: Youth with disabilities encounter various obstacles when participating in training programs, primarily stemming from movement barriers, family non-cooperation, and social barriers. Physical limitations make accessing training facilities difficult, while family members may be unable to provide necessary support. Additionally, stigma and discrimination create a hostile learning environment, leading to feelings of isolation and exclusion. These challenges result in lower participation rates and hinder the success of disabled youth in training programs.

Recommendation:

Here are some recommendations to create a more inclusive and successful training experience for youth with disabilities:

- **Accessibility Audits and Adjustments:** Conduct accessibility audits of training venues to ensure they meet physical and technological accessibility standards. Provide assistive devices, modify learning materials, and offer alternative formats upon request.
- **Flexible Training Options:** Offer a variety of training formats, such as online modules, blended learning (combining online and in-person), and flexible scheduling to accommodate diverse needs and transportation limitations.
- **Supportive Services:** Provide transportation assistance, childcare options, and peer mentoring programs to address family and social barriers. Partner with disability-focused organizations to connect youth with mentors and support groups.
- **Sensitivity Training for Staff:** Train trainers and staff on disability etiquette, inclusive communication techniques, and best practices for supporting learners with various disabilities.
- **Positive Reinforcement and Mentorship:** Create a supportive and encouraging environment by celebrating successes, offering personalized feedback, and fostering peer-to-peer learning.

Reintegration and Empowerment: A Program for Returnee Migrants

Rationale: Following the influx of migrants post-COVID-19, a significant number of youth are permanently returning and encountering challenges in job placement or societal reintegration.

Recommendation:

Returnee migrants often possess valuable technical skills gained through international work experience. It's recommended to provide entrepreneurship training to these returnee migrants, leveraging their international-level technical skills to facilitate self-employment. Additionally, integrating soft skill training can enhance their adaptation and success in this endeavor. Moreover, skill recognition in Bangladesh can ease the process of reintegration in the economy.

- **Skill Recognition and Validation:** BTEB official has recommended that program should be launched to support migrants in obtaining recognition of prior learning (RPL) certificates from the government. RPL recognizes their skills and experience gained abroad, making them more competitive in the job market.
- **Streamlined Process:** Bijoyee can collaborate with government agencies (e.g. NSDA, BTEB) to streamline the RPL process, ensuring efficient skill evaluation and certification of the returnee migrants.

Standardizing Soft Skills Training: A Partnership Proposal for Bijoyee and Training Authorities

Rationale: NSDA, BTEB, DYD, DWA, and other relevant government authorities currently offer courses that touch upon soft skills but lack a structured approach. Most of the course modules and assessment procedures focus on technical skills.

Recommendation: NSDA is in the process (primary planning level) of developing competency standards for soft skills. Collaboration with the Bijoyee activity could assist NSDA in formulating these standards, as well as piloting the uniform assessment and certification system for soft skills training. Bijoyee can contribute to the national level soft skills training, curriculum, competency standards, assessment, and certification system initiatives by following activities such as –

Developing Competency Standards (CS): Bijoyee can collaborate with NSDA to define clear and measurable learning outcomes for various soft skills relevant to different job sectors. This will involve:

- **Job Market Analysis:** Providing information/findings on the specific soft skills demanded by employers in different industries.
- **Skill Breakdown:** Delineating the various components of each soft skill, such as communication skills encompassing active listening, public speaking, and written communication.
- **Performance Levels:** Establishing different levels of proficiency for each skill, allowing for progressive learning and assessment.

Piloting a Uniform Assessment and Certification System: Bijoyee can partner with NSDA to pilot a standardized assessment and certification system for soft skills training. This will involve:

- **Developing Assessment Tools:** Creating reliable and valid methods to evaluate a trainee's mastery of each soft skill, potentially including simulations, role-playing exercises, or standardized tests.
- **Certification Process:** Establishing a clear process for awarding certifications based on successful completion of the assessment.
- **Pilot Implementation:** Testing the assessment and certification system in selecting NSDA or BTEB courses to gather feedback and refine the approach.

Breaking the non-recognition paradox of soft skills: A Multi-pronged Approach

Rationale:

Employers' lack of recognition of soft skills leads to associations and Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) overlooking them, subsequently hindering BTEB/NSDA from developing competency standards or arranging specific training.

Recommendation: To address this challenge, Bijoyee can implement a multi-pronged approach:

- **Partnership and Sensitization:** Develop partnerships and targeted campaigns/sensitization workshops for employers, industry associations, and ISC members. Lobby for the inclusion of soft skills competency standards in national training frameworks and curricula. Partnerships

can also be valuable for adding soft skills components into the existing technical skills training programs.

- **Standardizing Terminology:** Work with industry experts and training providers to establish a unified terminologies for soft skills across different sectors and develop a comprehensive glossary of soft skills with clear definitions and descriptions to ensure consistency in communication. This can also streamline the development and use of these skills in the workplaces.

Soft Skills Awareness Campaign: Bridging the Gap

Rationale: Most youths and even the employers do not recognize the term “soft skill”. Also, they could identify only a few skills as soft skills such as good behavior and clear communication, etc. The terminologies, effectiveness of soft skills in occupational roles, and soft skills gaps are not widely recognized by the market and youth.

Recommendation: To effectively address this, a comprehensive soft skills awareness campaign is proposed before launching the soft skills training program for the potential Bijoyee youths beneficiary which may serve as a foundation for the training programs. The following components shall be included in the campaign but not limited to:

- **Terminology Demystification:** Clarify the meaning of "soft skills" and differentiate them from technical skills. Highlight their importance in the workplace and career success.
- **Expanded Skill Recognition:** Move beyond basic skills like communication and etiquette. Showcase a broader range of soft skills, such as teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence.
- **Value Proposition for Youths:** Demonstrate the impact of soft skills on employability, retention and job promotion. Showcase how these skills enhance communication, collaboration, and leadership, leading to career advancement.
- **Value Proposition for Employers:** Emphasize the economic benefits of a workforce equipped with strong soft skills. Highlight how these skills foster a positive work environment, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction.

The campaign will utilize targeted messaging across various channels for youths and employers, incorporating interactive content like infographics and videos. Success stories will illustrate the impact of soft skills, while partnerships with educational institutions and industry bodies will enhance outreach and credibility.

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Chapter 8

Annex

9. Annex

Annex I

Sampling Formula:

Sample size of the youth survey: The sample size of the target youths was calculated by using Cochran's sample size formula for the known population. The sample size of the targeted youths (2,81,200) is calculated applying Cochran's Simple Random Sampling formula for the known population. Based on the calculation (considering 95% confidence level, 1.5 design effect, and 5% non-response rate), 608 sample size is determined. Then the total sample number was proportionally distributed by the weight of the number of districts in each hub.

Cochran's prevalence formula with population adjustment

$$n_0 = \frac{\frac{z_{(\alpha, n-1)}^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left(\frac{z_{(\alpha, n-1)}^2 p(1-p)}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$$

Where,

z = Z value at 95% Confidence Interval

p = Maximum proportion of variance (0.50)

d = Margin of error (5%)

N= Target youth population (281,200)

n_0 = Derived sample number without adjustment

Since all the cohorts could not be sampled randomly, the total number of samples have to be adjusted for non-random selection. Therefore, the sample value is adjusted with a design effect of 1.5.

$$N_0 = 1.5 \times n_0 = 1.5 \times 385 = 577.5 \approx 578$$

Furthermore, by adjusting 5% non-response rate, the sample size boils down to

$$N = 578 + (578 \times 0.05) = \mathbf{608 \text{ (Target)}}$$

Figure 54 Sample Size calculation

Division/Hub-wise Sampling Breakdown

Table 95 Hub- wise sampling breakdown

Region/hub	Number of targeted districts	Number of samples
Dhaka	5	169
Chattogram	4	135
Khulna	4	135
Rangpur	4	135
Mymensingh	1	34

	Total=18	Total= 608
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The Bijoyee Activity is prioritizing the NEET youth, as 82% of the beneficiaries will be from NEET category whereas the remaining 18% will be from EET category. Although BBS Labor Force Survey 2022 stated that the ratio of the NEET youth population is 22%, the assessment was purposively following a **70:30 ratio for NEET and EET youths**, respectively to justify the representation. The following table shows the breakdown of the samples following the ratio mentioned above.

Table 96 Youth category wise sampling breakdown

Division/hub	Youth category	Number of samples	Sub total
Dhaka	NEET	119	169
	EET	50	
Chattogram	NEET	95	135
	EET	40	
Khulna	NEET	95	135
	EET	40	
Rangpur	NEET	95	135
	EET	40	
Mymensingh	NEET	24	34
	EET	10	
Grand Total			608

Gender Disaggregated Sample Distribution

To gain insights into the gender dynamics within the soft skills scenario, it was essential to conduct a gender-wise breakdown of samples. The samples have been segregated into **urban and peri-urban categories, maintaining a 50:50 ratio**. The distribution based on gender has been further delineated with a focus on achieving a **60:40 women and men ratio**. The analysis frame was: **Urban/Per-urban > NEET/EET > Gender disaggregated response**.

Table 97 Gender disaggregated sample distribution

Area	Youth category	Number of samples	Gender*	Number of samples	Total sample
Urban	NEET	213	Male	85	304
			Female	128	
	EET	91	Male	36	
			Female	55	
Peri-urban	NEET	213	Male	85	304
			Female	128	
	EET	91	Male	36	
			Female	55	
					Total= 608

*Inclusive of youth with disabilities (1-3%) and indigenous youth (1.7%) including SOGI, Dalit, and Gig workers.

District-wise Sample Distribution

Region /hub	Youth category	No of samples	Dhaka	Munshiganj	Manikganj	Gazipur	Narayanganj	Sub total
Dhaka	NEET	119	24	24	24	24	23	169
	EET	50	10	10	10	10	10	

Region/hub	Youth category	No of samples	Chattogram	Khagrachari	Bandarban	Cox's Bazar	Sub total
Chattogram	NEET	95	24	24	24	23	135
	EET	40	10	10	10	10	

Region/hub	Youth category	No of samples	Magura	Jashore	Satkhira	Khulna	Sub total
Khulna	NEET	95	24	24	24	23	135
	EET	40	10	10	10	10	

Region/hub	Youth category	No of samples	Kurigram	Rangpur	Nilphamari	Bogura	Sub total
Rangpur	NEET	95	24	24	24	23	135
	EET	40	10	10	10	10	

Region/hub	Youth category	No of samples	Sherpur	Sub total
Mymensingh	NEET	24	24	34
	EET	10	10	

Annex 2

Qualitative Informant Breakdown:

a) In-Depth Interview (IDI):

In total, 96 IDIs were conducted with large, medium, small, and micro enterprises across agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors.

Table 98: Industry-wise distribution of interviews

Cohort ¹⁹⁵	Urban	Peri-urban	Total
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¹⁹⁵ The industry classification was made following the [Bangladesh Bank Circular of 2019](#).

Large Industry/Formal	15	4	19
Medium Industry/Formal	8	5	13
Small Factory /Informal	12	31	43
Microenterprise/Informal	3	18	21
Grand Total			96

Table 99 Sector-wise distribution of interviews

Sector Cohort*	Urban	Peri-urban	Total
Agriculture	2	16	18
Manufacturing	23	34	57
Services	13	8	21
Grand Total			96

Key Informant Interviews (KII):

In total, 57 KIIs were conducted with different stakeholders, as shown in the Table below.

Table 100 KII distribution

Cohort	Respondents	Number
Industry Associations (22)	Chamber of Commerce and Industry	6
	Industry Owners' Association/Malik Samiti	16
Govt. Stakeholders (20)	Department of Agricultural Extensions (DAE)	2
	Department of Fisheries (DoF)	1
	Department of Women Affairs (DWA)	2
	Department of Youth Development (DYD)	3
	Department of Social Services (DSS)	1
	BSCIC	5
	Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)	1
	National Skill Development Authority (NSDA)	1
	Others (Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, Horticulture Center Cox's Bazar, Salt Industries Development Cox's Bazar and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Khagrachari)	4
Training Service Providers (5)	Mangrove Institute of Science and Technology, Khulna	1
	NISAI-Global Trust Bangladesh, Dhaka	1

	Bangladesh Hostoshilpo Association Training Center, Magura	I
	BSCIC Skill Development Training Center, Sherpur	I
	UCEP-Khulna Branch	I
Development Partners and Peer Organizations (10)	Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC)	I
	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP)	I
	JAAGO Foundation	I
	Access Bangladesh Foundation	I
	Bandhu Social Welfare Society	I
	Tahzingdong	I
	The Earth Society	I
	Dhrubotara Youth Development Foundation	I
	Agrogoti Sangstha	I
	Nowabenki Gonomukhi Foundation (NGF)	I

Annex 3

Data Quality Assurance and Validation Framework

Table 101 Data Quality Assurance

Pre-Study Preparation	
Define Objectives and Variables	Research objectives were clearly defined, guiding the development of structured quantitative surveys and qualitative interview guides.
Development of Data Collection Tools (DCT)	- Structured quantitative surveys and qualitative interview guides were developed and aligned with research objectives. - After developing the DCTs, the technical experts of the study reviewed the DCTs and suggested changes accordingly. - After adjusting feedback taken from the expert, the core research team refined the DCTs and checked the further errors. - The DCTs submitted to the client for feedback and after getting feedback, the team refined and incorporated the feedback.
Training and Enumerator Preparation	
Enumerator Selection and Training	- Data enumerators were carefully selected based on their previous experience, knowledge, and integrity. - A comprehensive training program was conducted covering data collection methods, ethical guidelines, and tool utilization.

Pilot Testing	- A pilot study was conducted involving data enumerators to practice data collection methods and tools before the main study. - Evaluation and refinement of tools was ensured based on the pilot study feedback.
Data Collection	
Ethical Standards	Informed Consent: - Participants were provided with clear information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks before obtaining informed consent. - Participants were provided with the option to withdraw their participation at any stage. Confidentiality and Anonymity: - Safeguard policies were strictly followed and anonymity for participants in reporting and publication of findings. - Codes or pseudonyms were used to protect participant identities in qualitative data analysis.
Quantitative Data Collection	- Standardized procedures for administering surveys, such as clear instructions and uniform administration protocols were administered to ensure consistency and accuracy. - A system for tracking completed surveys and managing any inconsistencies or missing data was implemented.
Qualitative Data Collection	- Detailed records of interviews or focus group discussions, including audio recordings, and transcripts were maintained during qualitative data collection. - Interviews were conducted in a comfortable setting, respecting confidentiality.
Quality Control and Assurance	
Quality Control Measures	To ensure the quality of the data and to verify if the response is taken from the right respondent or not, a three-step authentication check was be applied. High-Frequency Checks - Survey responses were taken via the KoBo Toolbox. The field coordinator checked the adequacy of the responses against the set target for the respective demographic or any other data irregularities from the KoBo App server instantaneously. If the daily quota for any demographic was not filled up the enumerator was advised to find the right respondent and cover the remaining quota the very next day. Survey responses also included GPS location of the respondents. The field coordinator also checked the responses through GPS locations.

	Back-checks- 10% of the survey respondents were be contacted the following day to verify their responses' authenticity. This verification was conducted through a series of targeted questions derived from the survey tool. Spot-checks - The field coordinator paid unanticipated visits in the field to verify enumerators were surveying at the right place and the right respondent.
Documentation and Reporting	Comprehensive documentation of the entire data collection process, including protocols, revisions, and challenges faced was maintained.
Managing Data	
Data Entry, Storage, and Checks	- Experienced personnel oversaw data entry, employing double-entry verification to minimize errors. - Secure and encrypted storage systems were used to safeguard collected data, and regular checks were implemented to rectify inconsistencies.
Regular Data Checks	- Periodic data checks to identify and rectify inconsistencies, outliers, or missing data were implemented - Cross-check was maintained for quantitative and qualitative data to ensure alignment and comprehensiveness.
Post-Data Collection	
Data Analysis and Interpretation	- Quantitative data were analyzed using appropriate statistical methods and tools (For example: IBM SPSS Statistics and R-Studio). - Qualitative data undergone rigorous qualitative analysis techniques (e.g., thematic analysis) for interpretation.
Validation and Verification	Findings were validated by triangulating quantitative and qualitative data, ensuring credibility and reliability.

Annex 4

Ethical Considerations

The research team followed:

- **Ethical Study Design and Implementation:** Designed and implemented the study in an ethical and professional manner, and protect the rights and well-being of the participants, especially the youth who are the main respondents.
- **Adherence to Professional Ethical Guidelines:** Followed the ethical principles and guidelines of the relevant professional associations and institutions, such as the American Evaluation Association (AEA) and the International Development Evaluation Association (IDEAS).

- **Strict Adherence to Ethical Standards and Protocols:** Adhered to the ethical standards and protocols that have been established for the evaluation study, such as the informed consent and confidentiality procedures, the referral and reporting pathways, and the data protection and management protocols.
- **Respect for Participant Dignity, Rights, and Culture:** Ensured respect for the dignity, rights, and culture of the participants, and avoided any harm, coercion, deception, or manipulation during the data collection and analysis process.
- **Transparent Participant Engagement and Consent:** Obtained the necessary approvals and permissions from the clients, the beneficiaries, and the authorities, and informed the participants about the purpose, scope, methods, and expected outcomes of the study, and obtained their informed consent before collecting any data from them.
- **Confidentiality and Data Protection Measures:** Protected the confidentiality and privacy of the participants and the data, and used encryption, anonymization, and secure storage methods to prevent unauthorized access and disclosure during the data collection and analysis process.
- **Honest Reporting and Acknowledgment of Limitations:** Reported and presented the data and the findings clearly and honestly, and acknowledged the limitations, uncertainties, and assumptions of the study during the data collection and analysis process.
- **Incorporation of Participant Feedback and Validation:** Sought feedback and validation from the participants and the stakeholders on the data and the findings and incorporated their views and suggestions in the study reports and recommendations during the data collection and analysis process.
- **Support for Participant Well-being and Distress Handling:** Responded to any disclosures or distress that may arise during the data collection and analysis process and referred the participants to the appropriate services or support, if needed.
- **Support and Debriefing for Data Collectors:** Provided the necessary support and debriefing to the data collectors and addressed any issues or challenges that they may face during the data collection and analysis process.
- **Ongoing Monitoring of Data Quality and Ethical Compliance:** Monitored and supervised the data quality and the ethical compliance of the data collection and analysis process, and implemented any corrective or preventive actions, if needed.

Annex 5

Item statement used in surveys to understand the perception of youth

Soft skills	Item statements to understand perceptions
Higher Order Thinking Skills	When answering these next four questions, think about the last few problems you have had. Q. I took action to solve the problems Q. I asked other people for help to solve the problems Q. I tried to think of different ways to solve the problems Q. I made a plan to solve the problems When answering these next Two questions, think about the last few times someone told you an interesting story. Q. I questioned why someone in the story did what they did Q. I connected pieces of evidence together When answering these next three questions, think about the last few times you made a decision. Q. I collected a lot of information before making the decision Q. I thought about how other people would be affected before making the decision Q. I considered different options before making the decision
Positive Self-Concept	Q. Last 5 years I learned new things Q. I know what I'll be doing next 5 years Q. My family members ask about my opinion while taking any decisions Q. Community members ask about my opinion before taking decisions Q. My peers praise about my good qualities very often Q. My skills can add value to any relevant business Q. I know about my skill strengths and weaknesses Q. I have a clear and concise future goal
Self Control	Q. I have a hard time concentrating on one thing Q. I have difficulty starting a task Q. When things go wrong for me, I usually lose my temper Q. I sometimes get annoyed by bad behavior Q. If a friend tells me I did something wrong, I disregard his complaint Q. I find it rude when someone gives me instructions Q. I do whatever feels good to me, without thinking about the results Q. If my friends are doing something risky, I feel obliged to help them
Communication Skills	Q. People can easily understand my writings Q. Last year I have resolved at least one conflict or disagreement Q. It is easy for me to ask questions in a public setting Q. Rude behaviors should not be dealt publicly Q. It is easy for me to share my feelings with others
Social Skills	Q. I'm able to stand up for myself without putting others down Q. I once resolved a dispute between two persons where both were happy with the outcome Q. I get along well with people from different backgrounds Q. I find it easy to make friends Q. I can control my anger when I have a misunderstanding with a friend

Annex 6

Data Collection Tools

Introduction

The assessment team reviewed the USAID Bijoyee Activity project documents, factsheets, PYD Measurement Toolkit, YP Action Soft Skill Tool, and other relevant documents of CARE to prepare the data collection tools. The data collection tool is a compact document includes quantitative and qualitative tools with data collection guidelines. The structure of this document is given below:

Set	Respondent Cohort	Type	Page
Survey Guidelines			
1	NEET Youth	Survey Questionnaire	
	EET Youth	Survey Questionnaire	
IDI Guidelines			
2	Employer (Large/Medium/Small)	IDI Checklist	
3	Self-employed youth	IDI Checklist	
FGD Guidelines			
4	NEET Youth	FGD Checklist	
5	EET Youth (Education and Training)	FGD Checklist	
6	EET Youth (Employment)	FGD Checklist	
KII Guidelines			
7	Government Stakeholders	KII Checklist	
8	Industry Associations	KII Checklist	
9	TVET Institutes	KII Checklist	
10	Other Development Practitioners	KII Checklist	

Survey Guidelines

(for NEET and EET)

The authorized enumerator will read out the following brief in front of a potential respondent and take consent before starting the survey.

Brief

This survey aims to assess youth status, readiness, capacity regarding employment, and the importance of soft skills at the workplace in emerging sectors. Your participation will enable us to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the competency and work readiness of the youth population which will in turn unravel the value of soft skills in the workplace. The results of this assessment will guide USAID Bijoyee Activity toward a tailored project intervention.

The data collected through this questionnaire will be used in aggregate form and kept anonymous and confidential. The data collected from this survey will only be used for research purposes. It may take approximately 30 minutes to complete the survey. Please note that you do not need to think about right or wrong answers. Feel free to raise your opinion of what you originally think. In case of any clarification, don't hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator, **Mr. Nayem Ahmed** using his email address nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com or his mobile number [+8801798081338](tel:+8801798081338).

Set-I: Youth Survey Questionnaire

Do you give your consent to participate in the survey?	• Yes • No
Name of the interviewer:	Date:

Question	Response Type	Responses	Skip
I. Demographic Information			
Q.1.1 What is your full/ alias/ nickname?	Text		
Q.1.2 Can you please provide us with your phone number?	Text		
Q.1.3 What is your date of birth?	Date		
If Q.1.3 <=18 and Q.1.3>35, end survey			
Q.1.4 In which gender group do you belong?	Select One	1. Male 2. Female 3. Neither	
Q.1.5 In which division does the respondent belong to?	Select One	1. Dhaka 2. Chattogram 3. Khulna 4. Rangpur 5. Mymensingh	

Q.1.6 In which district does the respondent belong to?	Select One	1. Dhaka 2. Munshiganj 3. Manikganj 4. Gazipur 5. Narayanganj 6. Chattogram 7. Khagrachhari 8. Bandarban 9. Cox's Bazar 10. Magura 11. Jashore 12. Satkhira 13. Khulna 14. Kurigram 15. Rangpur 16. Nilphamari 17. Bogura 18. Sherpur	Cascade of Q.1.5 & Q.1.6
Q.1.7 Do you belong to any ethnic group?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.1.8 Please mention the name of your ethnicity.	Select One	1. Bangshi 2. Barman 3. Bihari 4. Chakma 5. Dalit 6. Dalu 7. Garo 8. Hajong 9. Horijon 10. Kiang 11. Lusai 12. Marma 13. Malo 14. Mro 15. Munda 16. Rajbangshi 17. Rakhain 18. Santal 19. Tanchangya 20. Tripura 21. Other (Specify)	Q.1.7=1
2. Status of Youth			
Q.2.1 Have you received any formal education from an educational institution?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	

Q.2.2 What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Select One	1. Below Primary 2. Primary/ Ebtedayi 3. Secondary/ Dakhil 4. Higher Secondary/ Alim 5. Diploma 6. Graduate/ Fazil 7. Post Graduate/Kamil or Above 8. Other	
Q.2.3 What are you currently doing?	Select One	1. Working 2. Student 3. In Training 4. None	
Q.2.4 What type of work are you currently engaged with?	Select One	1. Private job 2. Development job (NGO/INGO) 3. Govt job 4. Overseas employment 5. Entrepreneurship 6. Self-employment/freelancing 7. Other (specify)	Q.2.3=1
Q.2.5 What type of occupation are you engaged with?	Text		Q.2.3=1
Q.2.6 For how long have you been working? (in months)	Numeric		Q.2.3=1
Q.2.7 Have you worked or been employed somewhere before?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	Q.2.3!=1
Q.2.8 Which type of occupation were you engaged with?	Text		Q.2.7=1 & Q.2.3!=1
Q.2.9 For how long were you engaged there? (in months)	Numeric		Q.2.7=1 & Q.2.3!=1
Q.2.10 Do you own a smartphone?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.2.11 Do you have access to the internet?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.2.12 How many hours do you spend on the internet in a day?	Numeric		Q.2.11=1
Q.2.13 What activities do you perform on the internet?	Select Multiple	1. Watching drama and movies 2. Listening to music 3. Consuming short entertainment contents (Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Tiktok) 4. Social Networking (Facebook, Instagram) 5. Professional Networking (Linked In, Github)	Q.2.11=1

		6. Communication (Whatsapp, Email) 7. Online Shopping and Services (Uber, Foodpanda, Ticketing) 8. Transaction and Banking (MFS, Banking apps) 9. Online gaming 10. Learning knowledge and skills 12. Other (specify)	
Q.2.14 How much do you spend in a month for internet access only?	Numeric		Q.2.11=1
Q.2.15 Have you participated in any skills development training as of now?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.2.16 What type of training is it?	Select One	1. Trained from a mentor/ business 2. Internship from a business 3. Trained from an institute	Q.2.15=1
Q.2.17 What was the duration of the training? (in months)	Numeric		Q.2.15=1
Q.2.18 What was the name of the training?	Text		Q.2.15=1
3. Aspiration of Youth			
Q.3.1 What is your preferred ideal career type?	Select One	1. Public/ Private job 2. Overseas employment 3. Entrepreneurship 4. Self-employment/freelancing 5. Other (specify)	
Q.3.2 Before being an entrepreneur what would be your ideal career?	Select One	1. Public/ Private job 2. Overseas employment 3. Self-employment/ freelancing 4. Other (specify)	Q.3.1=4
Q.3.3 In which domain/sector do you want to build your career?	Select One	1. ICT 2. Healthcare 3. Retail 4. Agriculture 5. Agro-food processing 6. Recycling 7. Construction 8. Transportation and Storage 9. Furniture 10. Repair and maintenance services 11. Social/development work 12. Packaging 13. Leather 14. Plastic 15. RMG/ Knitwear	

		16. Light Engineering 17. Automobile Manufacturing 18. Electrical Manufacturing 19. Toiletries and Cosmetics 20. Tourism 21. Pharmaceuticals 22. Ceramics 23. Steel 24. Ship-breaking 25. Handicraft 26. Cement 27. Salt 28. Bank/Non-Bank Fin. Institution 29. Education 30. Energy/ Power/ Fuel 31. Govt./ Semi-Govt./ Autonomous 32. Entertainment/ Recreation 33. Media/ Advertising/ Event Mgt. 34. Telecommunication 35. E-Commerce 36. Don't Know	
Q.3.4 Which occupation do you want to see yourself in?	Text		
Q.3.5 Do you want to switch locations for your desired career?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.3.6 In which areas do you want to relocate for your desired career opportunities?	Select One	1. Neighboring district 2. Divisional city 3. Capital city 4. Anywhere in the country	Q.3.5=1
4. KAP of youth regarding soft skills			
Q.4.1 Have you heard the term “soft skill” before?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Now I will give you some statements and you are free to agree or disagree:			
Q.4.2 Mention your agreement/ disagreement on the following statements. a. Behavior of a person plays good a part in his/her job promotion b. Technical skill will start your career but communication skill will take you higher c. A sophisticated employer is content with only the technical capability of an employee d. Social skills are not important for a successful business	Select One	1. Agree 2. Disagree 3. Don't Know	

I am going to mention a number of statements about your personal self, there is no right or wrong answer here. You can agree or disagree with the following statements to your heart's content.

Positive Self-Concept

Q.4.3 Last 3 years I learned new things

Q.4.3a Ask him/her to list at least 2 new things.

What is your rating?

Q.4.4 I know what I'll be doing next 3 years

Q.4.4a Ask him/her to name 2 specific tasks he/she will do in the next 3 years.

What is your rating?

Q.4.5 My family members ask about my opinion while taking any decisions

Q.4.5a Ask about the last 2 decisions where he/she was asked.

What is your rating?

Q.4.6 Community members ask about my opinion before taking decisions

Q.4.6a Ask him/her to mention 2 community activities where the person gave opinions.

What is your rating?

Select One

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Q.4.7 My peers praise about my good qualities very often

Q.4.7a Name 3 good qualities his/her friends and family members talk about

What is your rating?

Q.4.8 My skills can add value to any relevant business

Q.4.8a Ask to mention his/her 3 skills that would elevate a business.

What is your rating?

Q.4.9 I know about my strengths and weaknesses

Q.4.9a Ask to name 2 strong and 2 weak points about him/her

What is your rating?

Q.4.10 I have a clear and definite future goal

Q.4.10a Ask about the future goal.

What is your rating?

Self Control

Q.4.12 I have a hard time concentrating on one thing			
Q.4.12a Ask to give an example of a concentration problem. What is your rating?			
Q.4.13 I have difficulty starting a task			
Q.4.13a Ask an example of a task that was procrastinated What is your rating?			
Q.4.14 When things go wrong for me, I usually lose my temper			
Q.4.14a Ask about the time when he/she could not control the temper What is your rating?			
Q.4.15 I sometimes get annoyed by bad behavior			
Q.4.15a Ask about someone's bad behavior that made the respondent annoyed. What is your rating?	Select One	1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree	
Q.4.16 If a friend tells me I did something wrong, I disregard his complaint			
Q.4.16a Ask whether the respondent has disregarded any complaints. What is your rating?			
Q.4.17 I find it rude when someone gives me instructions			
Q.4.17a Ask about the time when he could not handle instructions. What is your rating?			
Q.4.18 I do whatever feels good to me, without thinking about the results			
Q.4.18a Ask about a recent action that was done without enough foresight. What is your rating?			
Q.4.19 If my friends are doing something risky, I feel obliged to help them			
Q.4.19a Ask about the time when he did something risky with his/her friends. What is your rating?			
Communication Skills			
Q.4.20 People can easily understand my writings	Select One	1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree	
Q.4.20a Ask about his/her last write-up and how it was perceived by others			

What is your rating?			
Q.4.21 Last year I have resolved at least one conflict or disagreement			
Q.4.21a Ask about the type of conflict and who were involved. What is your rating?			
Q.4.22 It is easy for me to ask questions in a public setting			
Q.4.22a Ask about the question he/she raised in a public discussion. What is your rating?			
Q.4.23 Rude behaviors should be dealt with publicly			
Q.4.23a Ask about a situation when he/she has dealt with rude behavior publicly. What is your rating?			
Q.4.24 It is easy for me to share my feelings with others			
Q.4.24a Ask about how hard or easy it was to articulate his/her thinking to others. What is your rating?			
Social Skills			
Q.4.25 I'm able to stand up for myself without putting others down	Select One		
Q.4.25a Ask about the time when the respondent had to mocked someone and made fun of the person. What is your rating?			
Q.4.26 I resolved a dispute between two persons last year where both were happy with the outcome			
Q.4.26a Ask about the reason for the dispute and what was the solution. What is your rating?			
Q.4.27 I get along well with people from different backgrounds			
Q.4.27a Ask about the background of the people he/she gets along with. What is your rating?			
Q.4.28 I find it easy to make friends			
Q.4.28a Ask whether he/she puts effort or approaches others to make friends or not. What is your rating?			

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Q.4.29 I can control my anger when I have a misunderstanding with a friend

Q.4.29a Ask how frequently he/she gets angry with the friend.

What is your rating?

Higher Order Thinking Skills

When answering these next four questions, think about the last few problems you have had and tell us how much you agree with each statement.

Q.4.30 I took action to solve the problems

Q.4.31 I asked other people for help to solve the problems

Q.4.32 I tried to think of different ways to solve the problems

Q.4.33 I made a plan to solve the problems

When answering these next Two questions, think about the last few times someone told you an interesting story and tell us how much you agree with each statement.

Select One

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Q.4.34 I questioned why someone in the story did what they did

Q.4.35 I connected pieces of evidence together

When answering these next three questions, think about the last few times you made a decision and tell us how much you agree with each statement.

Q.4.36 I collected a lot of information before making the decision

Q.4.37 I thought about how other people would be affected before making the decision

Q.4.38 I considered different options before making the decision

5. Willingness to training on soft skills

Now please explain soft skills to the respondent:

It is a set of personal attributes or abilities that helps an individual to interact effectively with others in a professional setting.

In a super shop you will see the sellers come forward to ask you whether you need any help. In customer care service you'll see the operators listen carefully to the problems. In a workplace scenario, finishing your task within the deadline and coming forward to help your colleague after you are done with your task. All these little attributes enhance the business environment and these are collectively known as soft skills.

Q.5.1 Mention some ways to develop soft skills	Select Many	1. Getting training 2. Watching tutorials 3. Reading books 4. Joining voluntary organizations 5. Apprenticeship 6. Don't Know 7. Others (Please specify)	
Q.5.2 Do you want to upgrade your skills for a better career?	Select One	1. Yes, only technical skills 2. Yes, only soft skills 3. Yes, both technical and skills 4. No	
Q.5.3 Which learning platform would you prefer most to get skill training?	Select One	1. Online 2. In Person 3. Combination of both	Q.5.2!=4
Q.5.4 If in person or blended, to what extent are you willing to travel to receive good soft skill training?	Select One	1. Within Subdistrict 2. Within District 3. Within Adjacent District 4. Within Division 5. Capital	Q.5.3=2 or Q.5.3=3
Q.5.5 What would be the ideal duration of the training for you?	Select One	1. Less than a week 2. 1 week 3. 2 weeks 4. 1 month 5. 2 months 6. 6 months 7. More than 6 months	Q.5.2!=4
Q.5.6 Are you willing to spend money on the employability-enhancing skill?	Select One	1. Yes, for technical skills 2. Yes, for soft skills 3. Yes, for technical skills blended with soft skills 4. Cannot spend money for training	Q.5.2!=4
Q.5.7 What would be the ideal cost for you to spend for the full course training? (in BDT)	Numeric		Q.5.2!=4 & Q.5.6!=4
6. Availability of Soft Skills Programs			
Q.6.1 Do you know any skills training provider within your reach?	Select One	1. Yes, for technical skills 2. Yes, for soft skills 3. Yes, for both technical and skills 4. No	
Q.6.2 Which modality do they use to provide training?	Select One	1. Online 2. In Person 3. Combination of both 4. Don't Know	Q.6.1!=4

Q.6.3 What is the name of the training provider?	Text		Q.6.I!=4
7. Barriers to participation in soft skills training			
Q.7.1 Is there any challenge for you to receive soft skills training?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.7.2 What are the main challenges/ barriers to access to soft skills training?	Select Many	1. High cost of such courses 2. Complex course content 3. Language of the course 4. Lack of support from family 5. Social backlash 6. Distance from training institute 7. Lack of motivation 8. Duration of the course 9. Others (Please specify)	Q.7.I=1
Q.7.3 What are the challenges in the case of online training?	Select Many	1. Poor internet 2. Uncommon/ unknown platform 3. Inadequate communication 4. Limited digital skills 5. Lack of socialization 6. Unproductive environment/ Distractions 7. Lack of digital device 8. No challenges 9. Other (specify)	Q.7.I=1
Q.7.4 What are the challenges in the case of in-person training?	Select Many	1. Distance from training institute 2. Lack of accommodation 3. Physical constraints 4. Fixed schedule 5. Social anxiety 6. Pace is too fast or slow 7. No challenges 8. Other (specify)	Q.7.I=1
8. Recommendation			
Q.8.1 To what extent do you feel that soft skills improvement training will contribute to career enhancement?	Select One	1. Very much 2. Somewhat 3. Not Necessary	
Q.8.2 Would you recommend your friends/ family members to take training on soft skill enhancement?	Select One	1. Yes 2. No	
Q.8.3 In your perspective what is the main motivation for taking soft skills training?	Text		Q.8.I!=3

KAP analysis method (section 4)

Half of the statements/ items on Q.4.2 were written with positive connotations and the rest half in negative. The answers will be taken in “Agree”, “Disagree”, and “Don’t Know” options format. The number of respondents giving all right answer choices will be calculated through row operation (aggregated variable) in a statistical software. This internalized comprehension about soft skills will give a perspective against Q.4.1 where the prevalence of familiarity with the word “soft skills” will be depicted.

A number of items/statements were extracted and contextualized from USAID’s PYD framework and eventually listed from Q.4.3 through Q.4.38. The items will be answered on a 4 point likert scale. These were as well written in both positive and negative perspectives, therefore the ordinal scales will be reversed during analysis to harmonize and facilitate the calculation of aggregated scores in each key soft skill. I.e. for positively worded statements: Strongly agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, Strongly disagree=1. And for negatively worded statements: Strongly agree=1, Agree=2, Disagree=3, Strongly disagree=4.

Set-2: In-depth Interview (IDI) Checklist for Employers

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

This is to inform you that CARE Bangladesh has commissioned Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited to conduct a study titled “**Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity**”. The primary objective of the Bijoyee project is to achieve more effective, sustainable development that is locally led and inclusive of Bangladeshi youth, specifically women and socially excluded young people, as core participants and decision-makers. Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited will conduct the assessment to identify an inclusive youth labor market assessment in the five target divisions in Bangladesh, focused on the **demand for soft skills** in emerging sectors with high employment potential.

As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out In-depth **Interviews (IDIs) with the employers and key stakeholders**. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

We do not share any data collected with people outside the organization. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The results of this study will be used for project and intervention design purposes only.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

Nayem Ahmed Siddik
 Research Coordinator
 Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd.
 Phone: - 01798081338
 Email: nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com

Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	● Male ● Female ● Neither
Designation	
Name of the company	

Name of the Sector	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Office Address	

Contextual Understanding

10. Please tell us about your enterprise. When and how did you engage in this sector?
11. What is the existing situation of your sector/enterprise in terms of business growth, and workforce contribution?
 - a. What is the current geographical coverage of your enterprise? Do you have any expansion plans?
 - b. What are the existing challenges of your sector/enterprise? How do you mitigate those?
12. What are the existing job levels in your sector/enterprise? What are the entry-level and mid-level occupations in the sector/enterprise?

Name of the Major Occupations	Level of Jobs (Entry and Mid-Level blue-collar workers)	
	Administrative Jobs	Technical Jobs

13. What are the common technical skills required for your particular business? How do you source your employees?
14. According to you, what do the soft skills of the employees mean at the workplace? What relevance/importance does it bear for the business? Please explain.
15. Who do you hire for the following scenarios and why/why not, please explain:
 - c. During the assessment phase, you find two candidates, one is the candidate with better technical skills and lower soft skills, and the other candidate with better soft skills and lower technical skills.
 - d. Would you be interested in hiring someone technically skilled who has left the job earlier?
16. Do you evaluate the productivity of your workforce? If yes, please explain how.
 - e. What are the major reasons you think are responsible for the good/poor productivity rate of the workforce? Can you please mention any factors that can increase labor productivity?

- f. Is there any connection between soft skills and labor productivity? If yes, can you please explain?
17. Can you please share specific examples of how an employee's soft skills have impacted your business, either positively or negatively?

Soft Skill Landscape

18. Do you assess the soft skills of the candidates (entry and mid-level blue-collar workers) during recruitment? If yes, what methods/processes do you apply to evaluate them?
19. Occupation-wise which soft skills do you think are getting prioritized in your sector/enterprise? Please mention.

Name of the occupations	Level of jobs (entry and mid-level blue-collar workers)	Top 5 soft skills in demand

20. How do you Evaluate the status of the soft skills of existing workers of your company? Is there any gap in the soft skills of existing workers in your company?
- g. What are the reasons behind the gap in soft skills among your employees? Is there any business implication of the gaps?
21. Did your company carry out training on soft skills for your employees in the past? If yes, for which soft skills?
- h. What was the impact of the training?
22. In your experience, what are the challenges associated with assessing and developing soft skills in employees?
23. What are the top three attributes of the potential candidates that affect recruitment decisions? What is the ranking?
- i. How much do technical skills affect decision-making in recruiting entry and mid-level workers and why?
- j. How much do the soft skills of the candidates affect the recruitment decision for entry and mid-level workers and why?

Demand for Skilled Workers and Employment Opportunities

24. How does your company recruit employees? How long does the candidate search last on average? Please explain.
- k. Which platforms do you consider mostly while recruiting potential candidates and why?
25. How many workers does your company usually hire in a year and why? What are the main reasons behind the worker's departure?

26. What are the major challenges associated with finding the most suitable workers with both technical and soft skills? What measures does your company undertake, If it does not find employees matched with the technical and soft skills criteria?
27. Are you hiring skilled workers within 1 year or have a plan to hire after that? If yes, for which occupations? Does it have the potential to include women/youth with disabilities/SOGI/indigenous people?

Demand for Skilled Workers (Occupation wise)	Technical Skills Required	Soft Skills Required	Type and number of workers needed (immediate or future)	Inclusion potential for (Women, YwD, SOGI, Indigenous people)

28. What are the Opportunities to recruit female candidates? What are the Opportunities in your company for YwD candidate recruitment?
- l. if not, please mention the reasons.
29. Is there any process existing in your firm to reach out to the indigenous youth population?
- m. if not, please mention the reasons.
30. What are the Opportunities for religious minorities candidate recruitment?
- n. if not, please mention the reasons.
- o. if yes, please mention the occupations and reasons for choosing those occupations.
31. Does your company promote hiring SOGI people? Why/Why not, please explain.

Recommendations

32. What additional skills are needed for women, YwD, SOGI, and indigenous people to get employment/promotion in the workplace?

Cohorts	Occupations (Existing Opportunities)	Additional Skills Needed
Women		

YwD		
SOGI		
Indigenous people		

33. What assessment methods do you think will be compatible with your sector to evaluate a new candidate's soft skills?
34. What and which type of certification process do you think will be acceptable in your sector? Do you think that these certifying bodies also have soft skills in their training curriculum?

Set-3: In-depth Interview (IDI) Checklist for Self-Employed

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locally led and inclusive of Bangladeshi youth, specifically women and socially excluded young people, as core participants and decision-makers. Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited will conduct the assessment to identify an inclusive youth labor market assessment in the five target divisions in Bangladesh, focused on the **demand for soft skills** in emerging sectors with high employment potential.

As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out In-depth **Interviews (IDIs) with self-employed and entrepreneurs**. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

We do not share any data collected with people outside the organization. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The results of this study will be used for project and intervention design purposes only.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

Nayem Ahmed Siddik
 Research Coordinator
 Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd.
 Phone: - 01798081338
 Email: nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com

Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	● Male ● Female ● Neither
Designation	
Name of the company	
Name of the Sector	
Contact Number	
Email Address	

Office Address	
----------------	--

Contextual Understanding

35. Please tell us about your enterprise. When and how did you start your business?
36. What is the existing situation of your enterprise in terms of business growth, and workforce contribution?
 - p. What were the challenges you faced while starting your enterprise? How did you solve those challenges?
 - q. What is the current geographical coverage of your enterprise? Do you have any expansion plans?
 - r. What are the existing challenges of your enterprise? How do you mitigate those?
37. What are the existing job levels in your enterprise? What are the entry-level and mid-level occupations in your enterprise?

Name of the Major Occupations	Level of Jobs (Entry and Mid-Level blue-collar workers)	
	Administrative Jobs	Technical Jobs

38. What are the common technical skills required for your particular business? How do you source your employees?
39. According to you, what do the soft skills of the employees mean at the workplace? What relevance/importance does it bear for the business? Please explain.
 - s. How do you overcome the challenges related to soft skills that arise in the initial phase of your entrepreneurship?
40. Do you evaluate the productivity of your workforce? If yes, please explain how.
 - t. What are the major reasons you think are responsible for the good/poor productivity rate of the workforce? Can you please mention any factors that can increase labor productivity?
 - u. Is there any connection between soft skills and labor productivity? If yes, can you please explain?
41. Can you please share specific examples of how soft skills have impacted your business, either positively or negatively?

Soft Skill Landscape

42. How do you evaluate the state of your existing soft skills? How do you develop your soft skills? Did you attend any training on soft skills in the past? Was there any cost implication for the training?
- v. If yes, for which soft skills? What was the impact of the training?
43. What are the gaps in existing soft skills development training and how that can be addressed?
44. Are there any business implications for gaps in soft skills? What are the reasons behind the gap in soft skills among your employees?
45. In your experience, what are the challenges associated with assessing and developing soft skills?
46. Do you assess the soft skills of the candidates (entry and mid-level blue-collar workers) during recruitment? If yes, what methods/processes do you apply to evaluate them?
47. Occupation-wise which soft skills do you think are getting prioritized in your sector/enterprise? Please mention.

Name of the occupations	Level of jobs (entry and mid-level blue-collar workers)	Top 5 soft skills in demand

48. What are the top three attributes of the potential candidates that affect recruitment decisions? What is the ranking?
- w. How much do technical skills affect decision-making in recruiting entry and mid-level blue collar workers and why?
- x. How much do the soft skills of the candidates affect the recruitment decision for entry and mid-level blue collar workers and why?

Demand for Skilled Workers and Employment Opportunities

49. How does your company recruit employees? How long does the candidate search last on average? Please explain.
- y. Which platforms do you consider mostly while recruiting potential candidates and why?
50. How many workers does your company usually hire in a year and why? What are the main reasons behind the worker's departure?
51. What are the major challenges associated with finding the most suitable workers with both technical and soft skills? What measures does your company undertake, If it does not find employees matched with the technical and soft skills criteria?
52. Are you hiring skilled workers within 1 year or have a plan to hire after that? If yes, for which occupations? Does it have the potential to include women/youth with disabilities/SOGI/indigenous people?

Demand for Skilled Workers (Occupation wise)	Technical Skills Required	Soft Skills Required	Type of Need (immediate or future)	Inclusion potential for (Women, YwD, SOGI, Indigenous people)

Recommendations

53. What assessment methods do you think will be compatible with your sector to evaluate a new candidate's soft skills?
54. What and which type of certification process do you think will be acceptable in your sector? Do you think that these certifying bodies also have soft skills in their training curriculum?

Set-4: Focus Group Discussion With NEET Youth

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

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Focus Group discussion aims to assess youth status, readiness, capacity regarding employment, and the importance of soft skills at the workplace in emerging sectors. Your participation will enable us to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the competency and work readiness of the youth population which will in turn unravel the value of soft skills in the workplace. The results of this assessment will guide USAID Bijoyee Activity toward a tailored project intervention.

The data collected through discussion will be used in aggregate form and kept anonymous and confidential. The data collected from this survey will only be used for research purposes. Please note that you do not need to think about right or wrong answers. Feel free to raise your opinion of what you originally think.

In case of any clarification, don't hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator **Mr. Nayem Ahmed** using his email address nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com or his mobile number +8801798081338.

Name of the facilitator	
Date	
Location	
Time	

Sl	Name of Respondents	Age	Highest Level of Education	Contact Number	Gender			Signature
1					Male	Female	Neither	
2					0	0	0	
3					0	0	0	
4					0	0	0	
5					0	0	0	
6					0	0	0	
7					0	0	0	
8					0	0	0	
9					0	0	0	
10					0	0	0	

**This questionnaire applies only to NEET youth*

Introductory

55. Please tell us about yourself and your family.
56. Please describe your community and its economy. How do you procure your finances?
57. Please describe what are the pressing needs of your community.
58. What is your highest level of education?
 - z. Have you worked before or been employed somewhere? If yes, why did you leave?
 - aa. What is your plan for the next 2 years?

Youth's Aspiration

59. What is your preferred career? Please explain.
 - bb. In which sector are you interested in?
60. What is your preferred location to be employed in? What is your preferred occupation?
 - cc. Are you willing to relocate? why/why not, please specify.

61. Do you know what are the skills required for the preferred position? If yes, what are those, and how are you planning to develop them?
- dd. What are the technical and soft skills required for this occupation? Did you attend any formal/informal training centers to acquire those skills? why/why not, please explain.

KAP of Youth regarding Soft Skills

I am going to tell you a story (Self-control): Rashed works at a factory as a line supervisor, a machine operator once produced a faulty product. Rashed was agitated with the result and berated him in front of everyone. Because Rashed has to take the blame for this incident from upper management

62. Do you agree that what Rashed did was right? Why do you think so?
63. Do you think Rashed's action was wrong? What would be the best method to handle the situation?

I'm going to tell another story (HOTS): Mita is a meritorious student in her college. One day she saw one of her classmates was being harassed by a group of people. Mita thought of helping her classmate by facing the boys but she was afraid that she would be persecuted as well if she got involved. Therefore, she refrained from helping.

64. Do you think what Mita did was right? Why do you support her action?
65. Do you think she was wrong? What could be done better if you were there?

I'm going to tell another story (Communication and Social Skills): Akash and Alif are brothers. They have a tea stall in the Bazaar and both of them manage the stall in rotation. Akash is very friendly and everyone finds it easy to talk with him while sipping tea. Alif on the other hand, is wary of people and does not engage in conversation that much, however, he makes slightly better tea than Akash.

66. Between Akash and Alif, who has the potential to succeed in the business?
67. Why do you think Akash has more business potential than his brother? Can you give an example of a similar kind that you have seen?

I'm going to tell another story (Positive self-concept): Moriom does not enjoy reading and does not prepare well for the exams. But she gets average grades in the exams which is not that bad. She wants to be a doctor in the future and believes she will become a successful doctor one day.

68. To what extent do you agree with her?
69. Do you think she knows her strengths and weaknesses?

Willingness to training on soft skills

70. What are the ways to develop soft skills? According to you, Which one is the most suitable way for you to develop soft skills?
- ee. Do you have access to those?
- ff. What would be the ideal duration for the training?
71. What is your preferred platform to get training? Did you ever attend any training on that platform? Tell us about your experience.
- gg. For in-person training, to what extent would you like to travel to develop soft skills?
72. Are you willing to spend money on soft skills training? If yes, how much? If not, please explain.
- hh. On which soft skills do you want to spend money? why/why not, please describe
73. What are the major challenges associated with attending training on soft skills?

- ii. How can those be mitigated?

Set-5: Focus Group Discussion With Youth in Education and/or Training

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

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Focus Group discussion aims to assess youth status, readiness, capacity regarding employment, and the importance of soft skills at the workplace in emerging sectors. Your participation will enable us to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the competency and work readiness of the youth population which will in turn unravel the value of soft skills in the workplace. The results of this assessment will guide USAID Bijoyee Activity toward a tailored project intervention.

The data collected through discussion will be used in aggregate form and kept anonymous and confidential. The data collected from this survey will only be used for research purposes. Please note that you do not need to think about right or wrong answers. Feel free to raise your opinion of what you originally think.

In case of any clarification, don't hesitate to contact the Research Coordinator **Mr. Nayem Ahmed** using his email address nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com or his mobile number +8801798081338.

Name of the facilitator	
Date	
Location	
Time	

SI	Name of Respondents	Age	Contact	Informant Type*		Education/Training	Gender			Signature
I				YiE	YiT		Male	Female	Neither	

2				0	0		0	0	0	
3				0	0		0	0	0	
4				0	0		0	0	0	
5				0	0		0	0	0	
6				0	0		0	0	0	
7				0	0		0	0	0	
8				0	0		0	0	0	
9				0	0		0	0	0	
10				0	0		0	0	0	

**This questionnaire applies to youth in education (YiE) and youth in training (YiT)*

Introductory

74. Please tell us about yourself and your community.
75. Please tell us about your current education/training. In which grade/trades are you currently enrolled in? When are you going to complete your education/training?
76. What is your plan after completing your training/education? Please explain.
77. What are the technical skills covered in your training/education?
78. Do the organizations/TVETs cover any soft skills topics in your courses/education? If yes, what are those? To what extent do these soft skills bear importance? Please share your opinion.
 - jj. How do they assess soft skills?
 - kk. What are other soft skills that should be considered for training/education? Please share your opinion.

Youth's Aspiration

79. What is your preferred career and why?
 - ll. In which sector, do you want to build your career and why? What is your preferred occupation? In which district do you want to be employed?
 - mm. Do you want to switch your location? If yes/no, please explain.
80. What types of skills do you think are required to excel in your career?
 - nn. What technical skills do you think will help you achieve your career goal?
 - oo. What type of soft skills do you think is critical or required for you to

KAP of Youth regarding Soft Skills

I am going to tell you a story (Self-control): Rashed works at a factory as a line supervisor, a machine operator once produced a faulty product. Rashed was agitated with the result and berated him in front of everyone. Because Rashed has to take the blame for this incident from upper management

81. Do you agree that what Rashed did was right? Why do you think so?
82. Do you think Rashed's action was wrong? What would be the best method to handle the situation?

I'm going to tell another story (HOTS): Mita is a meritorious student in her college. One day she saw one of her classmates being harassed by a group of people. Mita thought of helping her classmate by facing the boys but she was afraid that she would be persecuted as well if she got involved. Therefore, she refrained from helping.

83. Do you think what Mita did was right? Why do you support her action?
84. Do you think she was wrong? What could be done better if you were there?

I'm going to tell another story (Communication and Social Skills): Akash and Alif are brothers. They have a tea stall in the Bazaar and both of them manage the stall in rotation. Akash is very friendly and everyone finds it easy to talk with him while sipping tea. Alif on the other hand, is wary of people and does not engage in conversation that much, however, he makes slightly better tea than Akash.

85. Between Akash and Alif, who has the potential to succeed in the business?
86. Why do you think Akash has more business potential than his brother? Can you give an example of a similar kind that you have seen?

I'm going to tell another story (Positive self-concept): Moriom does not enjoy reading and does not prepare well for the exams. But she gets average grades in the exams which is not that bad. She wants to be a doctor in the future and believes she will become a successful doctor one day.

87. To what extent do you agree with her?
88. Do you think she knows her strengths and weaknesses?

Willingness to Training on soft skills

89. What are the existing organizations/TVETs that provide soft skills training?
 - pp. Did you attend any training on soft skills? why/why not, Please explain
90. Are you willing to attend any courses/training on soft skills? why/why not, Please explain.
 - qq. What is your preferred method for the training?
 - rr. To what extent, are you willing to travel for the training?
 - ss. What is the ideal duration for the training?
91. Are you willing to spend money on training for soft skills? If yes, how much? If not, please explain.
 - tt. On which soft skills do you want to spend money and why?
92. What are the challenges associated with attending training on soft skills? How can these be mitigated?
93. Which type of certification and assessment would you prefer and why? Please explain.

Set-6: Focus Group Discussion With Youth in Employment

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

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Name of the facilitator	
Date	
Location	
Time	

S I	Name of Respondents	Ag e	Sector involved	Age of Experienc e	Contact	Gender			Signatur e
						Male	Female	Neither	
1									
2						0	0	0	
3						0	0	0	
4						0	0	0	
5						0	0	0	
6						0	0	0	
7						0	0	0	
8						0	0	0	
9						0	0	0	
10						0	0	0	

**This questionnaire applies only to youth in employment*

Introductory

94. Please tell us about yourself and your community.
95. Please tell us about your family background.
96. Please tell us about your highest level of education.

97. Please tell us about your current employment. What types of occupation are you currently engaged with?
- uu. How did you get this job? Please share your experience.
 - vv. Were you employed somewhere else before? If yes, please share your experience.
98. What are the technical skills required for your current job? How did you learn these skills?
- ww. How much cost was associated with developing your technical skills?
99. What are the soft skills required for this type of work? How did you learn these skills? Did you attend any training program on soft skills? please explain.
100. What is the implication of these soft skills in your workplace?
- xx. What do you do when you know that any new employee does not have these soft skills? How do you/your enterprise assess those skills?
 - yy. Can you share any incident where your soft skills have brought any negative/positive consequences?

Youth's Aspiration

101. What is your ideal career type?
- zz. In which sector do you want to build your career?
 - aaa. What is your preferred occupation?
102. What technical skills do you think are required for getting the occupation? How can you acquire these skills?
103. What soft skills do you think are required for the occupation?
- bbb. What is your plan to acquire those skills? How can you acquire these skills?
 - ccc. Which soft skills from your current occupation might help you in acquiring the preferred occupation and why? Please explain.

KAP of Youth regarding Soft Skills

I am going to tell you a story (Self-control): Rashed works at a factory as a line supervisor, a machine operator once produced a faulty product. Rashed was agitated with the result and berated him in front of everyone. Because Rashed has to take the blame for this incident from upper management

104. Do you agree that what Rashed did was right? Why do you think so?
105. Do you think Rashed's action was wrong? What would be the best method to handle the situation?

I'm going to tell another story (HOTS): Mita is a meritorious student in her college. One day she saw one of her classmates being harassed by a group of people. Mita thought of helping her classmate by facing the boys but she was afraid that she would be persecuted as well if she got involved. Therefore, she refrained from helping.

106. Do you think what Mita did was right? Why do you support her action?
107. Do you think she was wrong? What could be done better if you were there?

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109. Why do you think Akash has more business potential than his brother? Can you give an example of a similar kind that you have seen?

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110. To what extent do you agree with her?
111. Do you think she knows her strengths and weaknesses?

Willingness to Training on soft skills

112. Do you know any existing organizations/TVETs that provide soft skills training?
ddd. Did you attend any training on soft skills? why/why not, Please explain
113. Are you willing to attend any courses/training on soft skills? why/why not, Please explain.
eee. What is your preferred method for the training?
fff. To what extent are you willing to travel for the training?
ggg. What is the ideal duration for the training?
114. Are you willing to spend money on training for soft skills? If yes, how much? If not, please explain.
hhh. On which soft skills do you want to spend money and why?
115. What are the challenges associated with attending training on soft skills? How can these be mitigated?
116. Which type of certification and assessment would you prefer and why? Please explain.

Set-7: Key Informant Interviews (KII) Checklist for Government Stakeholders

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

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As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with the Government officials. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

We do not share any data collected with people outside the organization. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The results of this study will be used for project and intervention design purposes only.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

Nayem Ahmed Siddik
 Research Coordinator
 Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd.
 Phone: - 01798081338
 Email: nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com

Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	• Male • Female • Neither
Designation	
Name of the Agency	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Office Address	

Growth Sectors and Employment

117. What are the key growth sectors in terms of projected employment, GDP contribution, export?
- iii. Can you rank the top 3-5 growth sectors based on their potential for sustainable job creation and inclusive economic development?
- jjj. What are the rationales behind your ranking?
118. Within these prioritized sectors, what are the specific skills and jobs expected to have high demand in the near future? Can you provide examples of jobs that will be created compared to existing ones?
119. Do you see any potential skill gaps between the expected needs of these sectors and the current skills of the workforce?
- kkk. If yes, what form of skills gap will emerge?

Government Initiatives Towards Skills Development

120. Considering the identified skill gaps, what specific initiatives are being implemented by the government to equip the workforce with the necessary skills for these growth sectors?
- lll. How the government is planning to train the workforce?
- mmm. Who will be the target beneficiaries for this training program or other initiatives?

121. How is the government partnering with private companies and training institutions to develop and deliver these skill development programs? Are there any successful examples of such collaborations you can share?
122. What measures are being taken to ensure the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of these programs?

Perceived importance of Soft Skills

123. While technical skills are crucial, how important will soft skills be for employees to succeed in each of these prioritized sectors?
- nnn. Can you identify the top 3-5 soft skills that are most in demand in the workplace for employees?
124. In your experience, do employers adequately recognize the value of soft skills in their hiring and promotion decisions? How soft skills can actually help employees to grow in the workplace?
125. Do existing technical education and training programs adequately integrate soft skills development into their curricula? If so, what are the best practices for incorporating soft skills effectively?

Inclusive Workforce Development

126. Which of the identified growth sectors offer the most promising opportunities for women's employment and career advancement? What specific soft skills are crucial for women to succeed in these sectors? Are there any targeted initiatives to support women's entry and progress in these fields?
127. What are the most suitable sectors for employment and empowerment of person with disabilities? What soft skills will they need to excel on those sectors? Are there any existing policies or programs specifically designed to promote PWD inclusion in workplace?
128. What are the most suitable sectors for SOGI? What soft skills will they need to excel on those sectors?
129. Based on your insights, what specific policy recommendations would you suggest for the government to enhance soft skills development among youth and prepare them for success in the workforce?

Set-8: Key Informant Interviews (KII) Checklist for Industry Associations

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

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As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with the employers’ associations. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

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If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

Nayem Ahmed Siddik
 Research Coordinator
 Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd.
 Phone: - 01798081338
 Email: nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com

Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	● Male ● Female ● Neither
Designation	
Name of the Association	
Contact Number	

Email Address	
Office Address	

Introductory

130. Please tell us about yourself and your role at the association.
131. Please tell us about the role of association in the sector/economy.
132. Beyond your formal role, how does your association actively contribute to the development and growth of your specific business sector? (e.g., advocacy, skills development initiatives, collaboration with government/training providers)
133. In your experience, what are the top 3-5 growth sectors within Bangladesh? How do these priorities differ for your specific region/district in terms of economic contribution, projected employment growth, and emerging trends?
134. Within these prioritized sectors, what are the specific skills and jobs expected to have high demand in the near future? Can you provide examples of jobs that will be created compared to existing ones?
135. For the high-demand occupations you mentioned, what specific technical and soft skills do you see becoming increasingly critical for both entry-level and mid-level positions?
136. How can soft skills impact workplace productivity? Can you identify some occupations, especially for entry and mid-level positions within the identified sector where soft skills play more important roles than technical skills?
137. Do you anticipate any significant shifts in the required soft skills for these sectors in the near future? How are technological advancements and changing work dynamics influencing this?
138. Based on your interactions with employers, what specific soft skills gaps do you observe among the current workforce in this sector? What factors contribute to these gaps? (e.g., inadequate training, outdated curricula, lack of access to soft skills development opportunities)
139. Do you believe these skill gaps negatively impact the overall productivity and efficiency of the sector? If yes, how? Please provide specific examples.
140. Do you see recruiters actively evaluating the soft skills of candidates during the interview process? If so, what tools or methods do recruiters use for soft skills evaluation?
141. Does the industry face any challenges in finding competent workers with the necessary soft skills? If yes, please elaborate what specific challenges are faced in attracting, hiring and retaining qualified talent with strong soft skills?
142. In your opinion, which occupations within this sector are most suitable for women and why? What specific soft skills are crucial for women to excel in these roles?
 - ooo. What are the existing challenges and opportunities for women's participation in this sector?
143. Do you see potential employment opportunities for people with disabilities in this sector within your district? If so, which occupations are most suitable and what soft skills are necessary for them?
144. Do you see potential employment opportunities for indigenous people/ethnic minorities in this sector within your district? If so, which occupations are most suitable and what soft skills are necessary for their success?
 - ppp. What are the existing cultural and social barriers that may hinder their participation in the sector?

- l45. How do the soft skill requirements differ at different career stages?
 qqq. What are some essential soft skills for entry-level positions?
 rrr. What are some essential soft skills for mid-level positions?
- l46. What strategies does your association employ to promote the importance of soft skills development to employers and businesses within the sector?
- l47. Beyond traditional policy solutions like funding and incentives, what innovative approaches could policymakers adopt to enhance soft skills development among youth, particularly those interested in your sector? (e.g., integrating soft skills into technical curricula, public-private partnerships for training programs)
- l48. How can your association effectively collaborate with government agencies, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive and sustainable ecosystem for soft skills development?

Set-9: Key Informant Interviews (KII) Checklist for TVET Institutions

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

This is to inform you that CARE Bangladesh has commissioned Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited to conduct a study titled **“Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity”**. The primary objective of the Bijoyee project is to achieve more effective, sustainable development that is locally led and inclusive of Bangladeshi youth, specifically women and socially excluded young people, as core participants and decision-makers. Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited will conduct the assessment to identify an inclusive youth labor market assessment in the five target divisions in Bangladesh, focused on the **demand for soft skills** in emerging sectors with high employment potential.

As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with the TVET Institutions. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

We do not share any data collected with people outside the organization. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The results of this study will be used for project and intervention design purposes only.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

Nayem Ahmed Siddik
 Research Coordinator
 Inspira Advisory and Consulting Ltd.
 Phone: - 01798081338
 Email: nayem.ahmed@inspira-bd.com

Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	• Male • Female • Neither
Designation	
Name of the TVET Institution	
District Name	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Office Address	

Institutional Information:

149. Are you an RTO (Registered Training Organization)?
150. In which BTEB or/ and NSDA-accredited occupations does your institution provide training?
151. What are the other training programs your institution offers?
152. Does your institution provide any training on any specific soft skills/ core life skills? If yes, what are those training?
153. Does your institution have a placement cell?

Skills Demand and Soft Skills:

154. Based on your interactions with employers and industry experts, what are the top 3-5 sectors that will create substantial employment opportunities?
155. What are the specific occupations or jobs expected to have high demand in the near future in the growing sectors?
156. While technical skills are crucial, how important will soft skills be for employees to succeed in each of these occupations?
157. In your experience, do young people prioritize technical skills or soft skills when making career choices? What factors influence their preferences? (e.g., access to training, perceived importance in the job market, personal strengths and interests)
158. How women view soft skills. Do they put more emphasis on soft skills than men? If yes, why?
159. In your opinion, which occupations within the growth sectors are most suitable for women and why? What specific soft skills are crucial for women to excel in these roles?
- sss. What are the existing challenges and opportunities for women's participation in this sector?

160. In your opinion, which occupations within the growth sectors are most suitable for persons with disabilities and why? What specific soft skills are crucial for them to excel in these roles?
- ttt. What are the existing challenges and opportunities for women's participation in this sector?
161. Which specific group(s) are most interested in your soft skills training programs - students, employees, or unemployed individuals? Why do you think this group is particularly interested in soft skills development?
162. How do you address the needs and learning styles of diverse learners within your soft skills training programs?

Soft Skills Integration and Assessment:

163. Do you currently integrate soft skills development into your technical training programs? If so, how are these skills incorporated into the curriculum and course delivery? Can you provide specific examples?
164. What methods do you use to assess and measure the level of soft skills in your trainees?
165. Beyond test scores, how do you track improvements in soft skills among your trainees? Can you share any success stories or case studies?
166. What challenges do you face in integrating soft skills training into your programs? How are you addressing these challenges?

Impact and Importance:

167. From your perspective, how can strong soft skills benefit employees in the workplace? Can you provide concrete examples of how soft skills have contributed to success in specific cases?
168. Do you believe young people are sufficiently aware of the importance of soft skills for career success? What role do you play in raising awareness and educating both youth and employers about the value of soft skills?
169. Based on your experience, are employers actively seeking candidates with strong soft skills? How often do they consider these skills during the recruitment process? Can you share any examples of how they assess or value soft skills in candidates?
170. What specific policy recommendations would you suggest for strengthening the link between TVET institutions, industry, and government agencies in promoting soft skills development?

Set-10: Key Informant Interviews (KII) Checklist for Other Development Practitioners

Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity

This is to inform you that CARE Bangladesh has commissioned Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited to conduct a study titled **“Youth Labor Market Assessment: USAID Bijoyee Activity”**. The primary objective of the Bijoyee project is to achieve more effective, sustainable development that is locally led and inclusive of Bangladeshi youth, specifically women and socially excluded young people, as core participants and decision-makers. Inspira Advisory and Consulting Limited will conduct the assessment to identify an inclusive youth labor market assessment in the five target divisions in Bangladesh, focused on the **demand for soft skills** in emerging sectors with high employment potential.

As a part of the consultancy work, the research team will carry out **Key Informant Interviews (KII)** with the peer organization. They may contact you to acquire permission to carry out such data

collection. In this regard, we would be grateful if you could cooperate with Inspira team and assist them with information and data they may need for the effectiveness of this assignment. Please note that any information provided will be anonymized and the assessment results will be presented only at the aggregated level.

Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to answer any particular question, you are free to skip the question.

We do not share any data collected with people outside the organization. Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The results of this study will be used for project and intervention design purposes only.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact us at

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Interviewer	
Date	

Informant Name	
Gender	• Male • Female • Neither
Designation	
Name of the Organization	
District Name	
Contact Number	
Email Address	
Office Address	

Organizational Profile and Expertise

171. Can you provide an overview of your organization, its mission, and its focus areas in Bangladesh?

172. What are your organization's key activities and programs related to youth development and skill building?

Growth Sectors and Skills Demand

173. Do you prioritize any specific economic sector in any of your interventions? If yes, what are those sectors and what interventions are in place for those sectors?
uuu. What were the rationale behind choosing those specific sectors (e.g, economic growth, employment opportunity, inclusion potential, Green job potential etc)foreign investment)
174. Other than your prioritized sectors, what are some other growth sectors which have substantial employment generation possibilities?
175. Considering the increased employment opportunities in the growth sectors, is our labor market ready to fulfill the required skilled worker requirements in these sectors? What challenges these sectors may face in ensuring an adequate skilled workforce?
176. (Considering the peer organization have job placement facility in action) From your interaction with employers and industry experts, can you elaborate on what are the specific skills and jobs specially in entry level expected to have high demand in the near future?
177. From your interaction with employers and youth in these sectors, what are the current demand for soft skills? Which soft skills are prioritized most valued by employers?
178. Do you observe any skill gaps in terms of soft skills among youth in these sectors? If so, what are the factors contributing to these gaps?

Recruitment and Employability

179. In your experience, how much importance do employers give on soft skills compared to technical skills in the recruitment decisions of employers? Can you provide examples of situations where one skill type was prioritized over the other?
180. In your opinion, for which occupations within the growth sectors employers give preference to women over men and why? What specific soft skills are crucial for women to excel in these roles?
vvv.What are the existing opportunities and challenges for women's participation in this sector?
181. Do you see potential employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the growth sector? If so, which occupations are most suitable and what soft skills and technical skills are necessary for them? How their integration in employment can be ensured through skill development?

Soft Skills Training and Development

182. What are the aspirations and attitudes of young people towards soft skills training in Bangladesh? Do they recognize the importance of soft skills for career success?
183. What are the main challenges faced by young people in accessing soft skills training programs?
184. Does your organization currently offer any soft skills training programs for youth? If so, what types of soft skills are covered, and what are the training methods used?
185. Can you shortly describe the training and assessment process? Do you provide certificate for these types of training program? How much value do these types of certificates add to the chance of getting jobs(Do the employers give importance to these types of certification?

Recommendations and Future Interventions

186. Based on your experience and insights, what types of soft skills should be prioritized in training programs for youth, considering different sectors, occupations, and gender?
187. What are your recommendations for feasible assessment and certification options for the recommended soft skills?
188. What are some potential areas for policy recommendations that could enhance soft skills development among youth in Bangladesh and improve their success in the workforce?
189. Do you have any suggestions for future training interventions or initiatives aimed at improving soft skills development among youth in Bangladesh?