



Youth Education towards Employment

Is Everyone's Needs being Recognised?



যুব সম্মেলন ২০১৮
বাংলাদেশ ও এজেন্ডা ২০৩০
তারুণ্যের প্রত্যাশা

১৪ অক্টোবর ২০১৮, ঢাকা, বাংলাদেশ

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Context

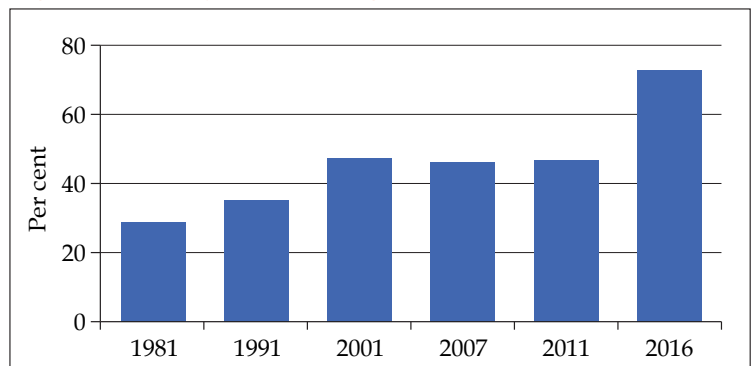
Bangladesh, in the past few decades, has seen notable growth in its education sector as shown by the increasing literacy rate. However, the country is yet to provide quality education and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is yet to facilitate an apt environment for the youth to be moulded into skilled human resources. Along with that, gender disparity seems to be rising, which is particularly noticeable in higher education, where the female enrolment rate has been declining

sharply. While the general scenario for the youth in terms of their learning and employment opportunities may appear dire, it is worse for the ones in marginalised communities.

Initial Findings from Secondary Data

Although the literacy rate of Bangladesh reached an all-time high of 72.76 per cent in 2016 (Figure 1) together with an exponential rise in student enrolment at the tertiary level, there has been an acute shortage of trained human resources. According to the report titled Lack of expertise in Bangladesh's labourer market by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), in 2013, only 10.4 per cent of the labourers in Bangladesh were found to be trained while the rest remained untrained¹.

Figure 1: Literacy Rate of Bangladesh between 1981 and 2016



Source: Reprinted from "Bangladesh: Literacy rate" by TheGlobalEconomy.com (2018).²

According to the Labour Force Survey of 2016-17 by

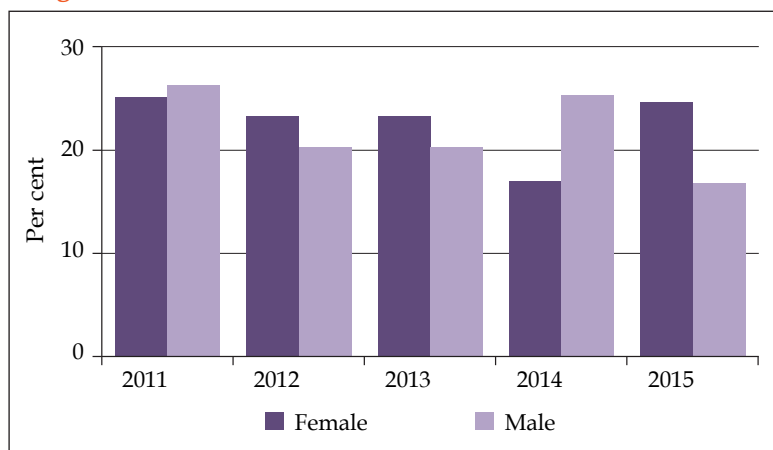
¹Kallol, A. S. (2017, July 24). Almost 90% of Bangladesh's workers are unskilled. *Dhaka Tribune*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/business/2017/07/24/almost-90-bangladeshs-workers-unskilled>

²Based on UNESCO's data for Bangladesh from 1981 to 2016. The average value for Bangladesh during that period was 46.42 per cent with a minimum of 29.23 per cent in 1981 and a maximum of 72.76 per cent in 2016. Visit https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Bangladesh/Literacy_rate/

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)³, the rate of unemployment among people with education up to the tertiary level increased to 11.2 per cent in Fiscal Year 2016-17 from 9 per cent in Fiscal Year 2015-2016. The so-called 'skill gap' is 'really a gap' in education and to tackle this crisis, the government has recently taken the initiative to expand its technical and vocational education capacity to better prepare the large youth population of Bangladesh through policies like the National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy and National Youth Policy. To promote the vision of this Digital Bangladesh, the government even has aims to modernise the Madrasa system by incorporating ICT in their teaching-learning process.

With the facilitation of new resources and strategies, old issues like gender disparity in the education sector have not been overlooked. The last 40 years have been characterised by lower

Figure 2: Dropout Rate from Upper Secondary Education in Bangladesh between 2011 and 2015



Source: Reprinted from *Education Scenario in Bangladesh: Gender Perspective* by BBS, UCEP Bangladesh and Diakonia Bangladesh (2017).⁵

female literacy rates compared to that of males⁴. The dropout rate of females had gradually decreased considerably from 25.07 per cent to 17.05 per cent between 2011 and 2014,. However, compared to 2014, the dropout rate increased sharply to 24.6 per cent from 17.05 per cent in 2015 (Figure 2).

Currently, in higher education, only 40 per cent of the enrolled students are female. The condition is even worse at public and private universities, where

only 26 per cent of the students are female. Figure 3 shows the gender disparity by male to female student ratio at the tertiary level is 0.7 in 2016.

In order to address the aforesaid concerns, the Seventh Five Year Plan (2016–2020) envisions providing special financial support to the female students and raising awareness of the importance of female education within the society.

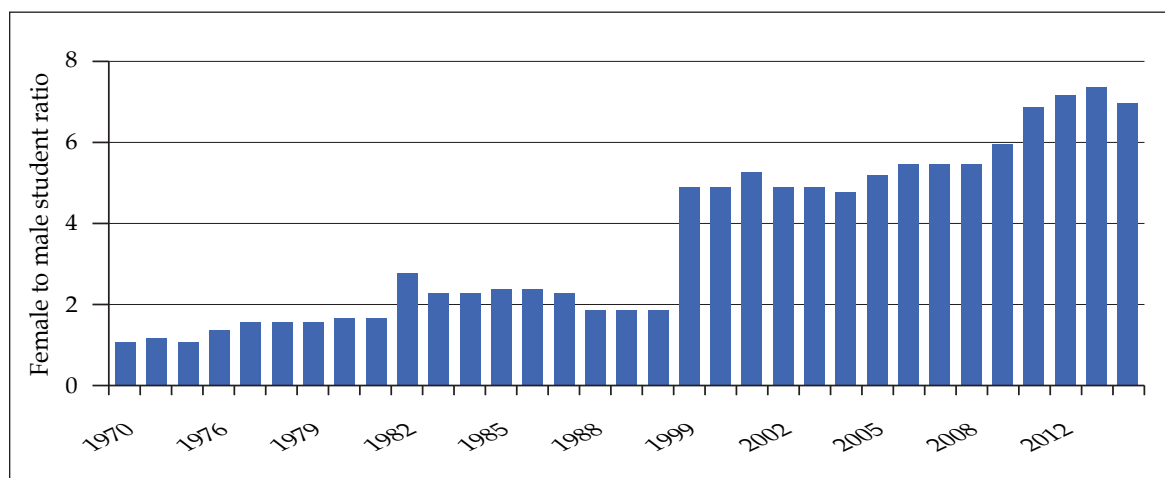
Despite taking these new initiatives and re-strategising plans to address these gruelling issues in the education sector, Bangladesh is still struggling to achieve the overall educational objectives. The non-formal education sector has the potential to help fill those gaps and find a solution for the long standing problems of illiteracy and create social awareness. While various policies and projects including the Non-Formal Education Act, 2014 and Permanent Non-Formal Education Project are set in motion, there are currently no specific non-formal education policies for the youth. Correspondingly, neither are there any definite youth policies for ethnic minorities (Chakma, Murma, Kuki, etc.), nor are there specific policies for the disabled youth population. Along with that, Bangladesh also does not have any database or survey results on the total number of people with disabilities and the types of disabilities. While the GoB plans to ensure the access of children with autism and other forms of disability, to all

³BBS. (2018). *Report on Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2016-2017*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh.

⁴BBS, UCEP Bangladesh and Diakonia Bangladesh. (2017). *Education Scenario in Bangladesh: Gender Perspective*. Dhaka: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh; Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP); and Diakonia Bangladesh.

⁵Based on data of Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) from 2011 to 2015. During that period, the female drop out percentage was minimum in 2014 at 17.05 per cent and a maximum in 2011 at 25.07 per cent.

Figure 3: Ratio of Female to Male Students at Tertiary Level in Bangladesh between 1970 and 2012



Source: Reprinted from “Bangladesh: Female to male ratio, students at tertiary level education” by *TheGlobalEconomy.com* (2018).⁶

types of educational institutions and believes that it will definitely heighten their enrolment in regular schools through strategies like Education Act, 2016 – it does not incorporate anything regarding how these individuals will be evaluated and assessed. Yes, general policies exist for integrating ethnic minorities and the disabled through education, but the lack of specific youth focused policies for the marginalised communities do not effectively help them fight the dissimilar battles they have to face, to win the war.

Policy Recommendations

While several policies and programmes have been created by the GoB to tend to the education sector in Bangladesh, only a handful of them focus on the education of the youth population.

Bangladesh’s youth – those aged 18–35 years – make up a large portion of the entire population as such that one in every three persons in the country is a youth today. Owing to the massive weight they carry, education is one of the best tools that can be employed to develop a generation of competent individuals and subsequently, bring a positive change in our society. In spite of recognising education as the main driver for making constructive changes in the lives of millions and its contribution to the overall development of the country, our education sector has a long way to go to guarantee quality inclusive education for the youth, to demonstrate relevant learning outcomes and guarantee education rights for all in Bangladesh, including the most deprived ones. The following are a few ways to fill some of these gaps.

Youth in General

- Develop a holistic curriculum for the training programmes that promotes technical learning and skill development for the youth, which are in turn, linked to their personal growth. Along with that, establish an independent body to monitor and evaluate the training programmes in order to determine its impact and to periodically review the mandate, nature and forms of the services.
- Form a clearinghouse of information, for instance – a web-based system that articulately links the current resources that can assist the youth to locating professional development information and opportunities. Such a system would link its consumers to relevant training,

⁶Based on UNESCO’s data from 1970 to 2016. The average value for Bangladesh during that period was 0.36 per cent with a minimum of 0.11 per cent in 1970 and a maximum of 0.74 per cent in 2014. Retrieved from: https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Bangladesh/Female_to_male_ratio_students_tertiary_level_educ/

professional development opportunities, and degrees, certifications, or other credentials that can be obtained.

Gender Disparity in Youth Education

- Campaign and raise awareness among young men and women, parents, teachers and employers about gender-stereotypical attitudes towards academic performances and the likely consequences of overall educational choices for employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, career progression and earnings.
- Encourage more women who have completed science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related studies to pursue professional careers in these areas, for example by means of career counselling, adult education, internships, apprenticeships and targeted financial support.

Youth in Marginalised Communities

- Create specific policies that provide the marginalised youth populations in the minority and transgender communities the opportunity to attain and maintain maximum independence, to obtain quality education at the tertiary level, higher studies and skills for respectable employment prospect. Additionally, ensure that educational and skill development training instructions are available in appropriate languages including vernacular and sign languages.
- Guarantee that adequate resources are allocated for collecting data and maintaining a database on the total number of youth with disabilities and their types along with the specific academic/vocational training that is available for them. Furthermore, it must be ensured that the information collected is used to adequately monitor the progress on increasing inclusivity in education, employment and entrepreneurship in national statistics and reports.



This Brief has been prepared by the BRAC (www.brac.net), a Partner organisation of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

The views expressed in this Brief are of the BRAC, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Platform or any of its other Partner organisations.

The **Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh** is a civil society initiative, taken at the national front, to contribute to the implementation of globally adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Platform was formally launched in June 2016, at the initiative of a group of individuals; the objective has been to track the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh and enhance accountability in its implementation process. The concept of the Platform was inspired by the participatory and multi-stakeholder approach promoted as a vital element for success in the attainment of all the SDGs. The Platform currently includes 88 Partner Organisations working on SDG issues across the country.



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Secretariat at: **Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Dhaka**

Telephone: (+88 02) 9141734, 9141703, 9126402 Web: www.bdplatform4sdgs.net E-mail: coordinator@bdplatform4sdgs.net