

# International briefing 24: training and development in Bangladesh

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*Training and development activities in Bangladesh have yet to be systematic and able to fulfil the needs of the economy and industry. The national educational and training system failed to provide adequate knowledge and skills to the workforce. However, private sector organizations are undertaking different initiatives to cope with the industry skill requirements and are trying to develop their own employees. Recent government initiatives seem to be encouraging for future training and development activities in Bangladesh.*

## Introduction

This briefing provides information about geography, population, economy and training and development activities in Bangladesh. It describes the education system and enrolment of students and trainees in different academic and skill training programmes. In its move towards industrialization, Bangladesh needs to develop enough skilled manpower to sustain itself in global competition. The critical assessment of the present training system reveals the limitations of both education and training in Bangladesh and calls for a greater initiative by government to overcome those limitations and move the country forward towards a more skilled-based economy.

## Geographic location and population

Bangladesh is a relatively new independent country, located in the north-eastern part of South Asia between 20°34' and 26°38' north latitude, and 88°01' and 92°41' east longitude. The country is bounded by India in the west, the north and north-west, Myanmar in the south-east and the Bay of Bengal in the south. During the British colonial period, it was part of Bengal province which comprises West Bengal and Assam, and after the end of British rule, it became part of Pakistan as the majority of its population is Muslim. Pakistan was divided into East and West, and due to the

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*Table 1: Employment in major industrial sectors in Bangladesh (millions)*

Sector	2006	2007	2008	2009 (estimated)
(1) Agriculture	22.83	22.89	23.41	24.07
Crops and horticulture	20.93	20.95	21.37	21.96
Forestry	0.74	0.75	0.79	0.82
Fisheries	1.16	1.19	1.24	1.29
(2) Industry	6.90	7.08	7.20	7.43
Mining and quarrying	0.10	0.11	0.12	0.13
Manufacturing	5.20	5.26	5.27	5.33
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.12
Construction	1.50	1.61	1.70	1.85
(3) Services	17.70	18.52	19.13	19.55
Trade, hotel and restaurants	7.80	8.29	8.46	8.50
Transportation, storage and communication	4.00	4.02	4.21	4.32
Finance, business services and real estate	0.70	0.71	0.75	0.80
Health, education, public admin and defence	2.60	2.77	2.86	2.91
Community, social and personal services	2.60	2.72	2.85	3.02
Total	47.43	48.49	49.74	51.05

Source: Bangladesh Bank (2008).

role of the West Pakistani rulers, discontent grew among the people of East Pakistan. After a 9-month liberation war, East Pakistan won its independence in 1971 and emerged as the new nation of Bangladesh. The surface area of the country is 56 977 sq. miles or 147 570 km<sup>2</sup>. Total population is 144.5 million. Bangladesh has the highest density of population in the world with 979 persons per km<sup>2</sup> (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b). The majority of the population still lives in rural areas: 78 percent in villages and 22 percent in cities. Among its population, 89.6 percent belongs to the Muslim faith, whereas 9.3 percent are Hindus, 0.6 percent are Christians and 0.3 percent are Buddhists (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Bangladesh is governed by a parliamentary form of democratic government. The Parliament consists of 300 members directly elected by the people and 45 selected members. The president is the head of state, whereas the prime minister is head of the government. The prime minister is assisted by a council of ministers to discharge her/his duties.

Given the large population and lack of sufficient productive opportunities for employment, Bangladesh offers the cheapest workforce in the South and South East Asia (Cameron, 1991; World Bank, 1996). Because of low wage rates and input costs, Bangladesh is perceived to be suitable for labour-intensive industries. In a fiercely competitive world market, low labour costs can provide an opportunity for entry into the global market with comparatively low production costs. The employment in major sectors in Bangladesh is given in Table 1.

## **Economy and industry**

Bangladesh is in the process of transition from a predominantly agricultural economy to an industry-based economy. Significant changes have occurred in the structure of economy with the share of agriculture in gross domestic product (GDP) falling from 55 percent in 1971 to 22 percent in 2008 (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b). However, the agriculture sector still accommodates about 48 percent of the total labour force of the country. Rice, jute, sugar cane, potatoes, pulses, wheat, tea and

tobacco are the principal crops. Although agriculture predominates in terms of economic growth, Bangladesh is also moving towards industrialization, albeit gradually. The manufacturing sector now contributes about 17 percent of the GDP (Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2009). Ready-made garments, cotton textiles, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, chemicals, ceramics, cement, electronics and plastic products are the main industries which dominate the large-scale part of the manufacturing sector. Among the cottage industries, handlooms, carpet making, shoe making, bamboo and cane products and small tools, etc. are important. However, the growth rate in the manufacturing sector is highest in the garments sector. Bangladesh is the fifth largest garment exporter to the European Union and among the top 10 apparel suppliers to the United States (Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2009).

After independence on 16 December 1971, the government was led by the Bangladesh Awami League which was committed to socialism and subsequently nationalized all of the jute, cotton, textile and sugar mills, as well as those enterprises abandoned by former West Pakistani owners. As a result, 86 percent of total industrial assets were brought under the government control. The industrial policy of 1973 set the maximum limit of Tk. 2.5 million for private sector investment, and public sector corporations were set up to run the nationalized industries. The Bangladesh currency is Taka (Tk) and 10 million Tk is equivalent to 1 core. During the First Five-Year Plan (1971–1975), over 85 percent of the total investment in the industrial sector went to the public sector. After a change in government in 1975, the ceiling on private investment was raised to Tk.10 million. Other measures taken to encourage private sector participation in the industrialization process included a decision to disinvest (denationalize) some of the smaller firms taken over after independence, the establishment of the Dhaka Stock Exchange, the setting up of the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh and a decision to pay compensation for the units that had been nationalized (Asian Development Bank, 2007).

Bangladesh has achieved considerable economic growth in recent years. The annual GDP growth rate has been 6–10 percent, and the export growth rate increased to 18 percent (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b). The trade liberalization of the early 1990s seems to have led to a dramatic increase in the openness of the Bangladesh economy, and consequently, the ratio of exports plus imports increased from an average of 13.1 percent of GDP in 1980–1981 to over 43.4 percent in 2007–2008 (Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2009). The government has changed its economic policies and now considers private sector development as the engine of overall development of the country (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b). The total national investment in the Bangladesh economy accounted to 19.99 percent of GDP in fiscal year (FY) 1995–1996 and progressively increased to 24.16 percent in FY 2007–2008. The share of private investment in the national economy was recorded at 19.15 percent of GDP in FY 2007–2008, whereas it had been 13.58 percent of GDP in FY 1995–1996 (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b).

The shift towards a liberalized trade and investment regime has attracted a large number of foreign investors in the manufacturing sectors. Trade liberalization also increased the comparative advantage of Bangladesh in many labour-intensive fields (World Bank, 2006). The foreign private investment flow is constantly increasing and the presence of multinationals is also significant. Most foreign investors expressed satisfaction at their profit levels and the growth of their business in Bangladesh (Kabir, 1997). In the World Competitiveness Report 2008, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has ranked Bangladesh at 110 among 180 economies. Also, the rank of 18 in the 'investor protection' category signalled that Bangladesh is an investor-friendly destination when compared with many developed economies. Inclusion of Bangladesh as one of the 'next 11' countries of potential by Goldman Sachs and one of the 'Frontier Five' countries by JP Morgan encouraged investors from home and abroad to consider Bangladesh as a competitive location for investment (Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2009). Statistics relating to industrial projects registered with the Board of Investment during the period 2001–2002 to 2007–2008 are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Local and foreign investment in Bangladesh

Fiscal year	Local investment		Foreign/Joint venture		Total	
	No. of units	Core*	No. of units	Core	No. of units	Core
2001–2002	2875	8006	89	1734	2964	10,540
2002–2003	2101	11,653	104	2067	2205	13,720
2003–2004	1624	13,546	130	2644	1754	16,190
2004–2005	1469	14,005	120	5298	1589	19,302
2005–2006	1754	18,370	135	24,986	1889	43,356
2006–2007	1930	19,658	191	11,925	2121	31,583
2007–2008	1615	19,553	143	5433	1758	24,986

Source: Government of Bangladesh, 2009b.

\* 1 Core = Tk 10 Million (\$1 = Tk. 68).

## The education system and training and development infrastructure

In Bangladesh, the education system comprises different streams, namely (1) general education, (2) Madrasha education, (3) technical and vocational education (TVE), and (4) specialized and special education (Ministry of Education, 2007). The system is summarized in Figure 1.

### General education

The general education has three stages: primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary education is provided by primary level institutions and comprises 5 years of formal schooling. Secondary education is imparted by junior, secondary and higher secondary educational institutions and comprises 7 years of formal schooling. In the secondary

Age	Grade														
26+															
25+	XX					Ph. D(Engr)	Ph.D(Medical)								
24+	XIX			Ph. D	PostMBBS Dip]				Ph. D (Education)						
23+	XVIII	M.Phil		M.Phil(Medical)											
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA			LLM	M B B S BDS	MSc(Engr)	MSc.(Agr)		MBA	M.Ed & M A(Edn)	MFA	MA(LSc)		
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)		LLB(Hons)		BSc.Eng BSc.Agr BSc.Text BSc.Leath	BSc.Eng	BSc (Tech.Edn)	BBA	B.Ed Dip.Ed & BP ED	Dip.(LSc)		Kami	
20+	XV		Bachelor								BFA				
19+	XIV		(Pass)						Diploma (Engineering)				Diploma in Nursing	Fazil	
18+	XIII														
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination				HSC			HSC Voc, C in Ag	C in Edu.	Pre-Degree	Diploma in Comm	Alim	
16+	XI		HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION												
15+	X		Examination				SSC	TRADE Certificate/ SSC Vocational	ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS					Dakhil	
14+	IX		SECONDARY EDUCATION												
13+	VIII		JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION												
12+	VII														
11+	VI														
10+	V		PRIMARY EDUCATION											Ebtedayee	
9+	IV														
8+	III														
7+	II														
6+	I														
5+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION													
4+															
3+															

Figure 1: The present educational structure of Bangladesh.

Table 3: No. of general educational institutions and student enrolments in Bangladesh

Primary education (2008)		Secondary education (2008)		Tertiary education (2008)	
No. of institutions	Students	No. of institutions	Students	No. of institutions	Students
Government Primary school 37,672	9,537,571	Lower secondary 4,378	930,512	General college (public and private) 1,454	1,505,812
Non-government, private and other registered primary school 44,546	6,464,034	Secondary 14,896	6,627,216	General universities (public and private) 82	387,433
		Higher secondary 4,340	321,267	Other institutions 411	124,841
Total 82,218	16,001,605	Total 23,614	7,878,995	Total 1,947	2,018,086

Source: Government of Bangladesh, 2009a.

education system, the first 3 years (grades VI–VIII) is referred as junior, the next 2 years (grades IX–X) as secondary and the last 2 years (grades XI–XII) as higher secondary education. Tertiary education comprises 2–6 years of formal schooling depending on the type and desired degree of education. This level of education is offered in the post-secondary level colleges, universities and diversified studies of professional, technical, technological and other special types of educational institutions. The number of educational institutions and student enrolments in the general education stream is given in Table 3.

### Madrasha education

The Madrasha education stream is a parallel system of general education which offers Islamic instruction to Muslim boys and girls. Similar facilities for Hindus and Buddhists are available to a certain stage through Sanskrit and Pali Colleges, respectively: these are known as Tol or Sanskrit and Pali education systems. The Madrasha education stream has five stages, viz. Ibteedayee, Dakhil, Alim, Fazil and Kamil. As of December 2008, the numbers of Dakhil, Alim, Fazil and Kamil Madrashas were 6779, 1401, 25 and 8, respectively, total of 8213, with student enrolment of 1,108,662, 341,295, 329,331 and 116,843, respectively, total of 1,896,131 (Government of Bangladesh, 2009a). Subjects taught in the Madrashas are Holy Quran, Arabic Language, Urdu Language, Islamic Theology, Mathematics, General Science, Geography, etc. The equivalency and duration of different stages of Madrasha education are given in Table 4.

### Technical and vocational education

TVE in Bangladesh is organized in different phases, namely Secondary School Certificate (SSC) (Vocational), Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) (Vocational), HSC (Business Management), diploma and degree programmes. Certificate courses prepare skilled workers in different vocations and are spread over 1 year or a shorter period. Diploma courses prepare engineers and other professionals for higher-level managerial positions. The different types of TVE courses and the number of TVE providers in the public and private sectors are shown in Tables 5 and 6. There are also different streams

*Table 4: Stages, equivalence and duration of Madrasha education in Bangladesh*

Stages	Equivalent level	Duration
(1) Ibtedayee	Primary	5 years
(2) Dakhil	Secondary	5 years
(3) Alim	Higher Secondary	2 years
(4) Fazil	Degree (Bachelor)	3 years
(5) Kamil	Master's Degree	3 years

Source: Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh, 2009a.

*Table 5: Number of private technical and vocational education providers*

Institution	No. of providers	Programmes	Duration
Technical schools and colleges (TSC)	1707	SSC (Vocational)	2 years
	1321	HSC (Business Management)	2 years
Polytechnic level institutes	143	Diploma programmes	2 years
Textile institutes	29	Diploma programmes	2 years
Agricultural institutes	88	Diploma programmes	2 years
Madrashas,	36	SSC (Vocational)	2 years
Other private providers	309	Short courses	Less than 2 years
Total	3633		

Source: International Labour Organization (2009) Dhaka Office.

in professional education, namely engineering and technology, agriculture, health, law, library and information science, etc. In addition, there are many professional institutes which offer certificates, diplomas and degrees. The Bangladesh Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh Marine Academy, Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management, the Institutes of Cost and Management Accountants, Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Bankers, Institute of Personnel Management, Bangladesh Institute of Management, etc. are prominent examples. The objective of all of the TVE provisions is to develop manpower at different levels on a work-oriented and need basis with special reference to industry.

### **Specialized and special education**

This is education which is needs-based and is tailored to particular trades and occupations. A major example is migrant workers. A sizeable number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled Bangladeshi workers are employed in different parts of the world, mainly in the Middle Eastern countries, and the Bangladesh government provides different types of specialized education for them. According to the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, a total of 6.57 million Bangladeshi skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers went overseas during 1976 to June 2009, and remittance from Bangladeshi workers amounted to US \$7014.78 in FY 2007–2008 which is 5.90 percent of the total GDP (Centre for Policy Dialogue, 2009). The government of Bangladesh has established a directorate, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), to provide different technical trainings to expatriate workers for overseas employment. The BMET maintains a network of 41 technical training centres (TTCs) and conducts a range of programmes including diploma-level

Table 6: Number of public technical and vocational education providers

Ministry/Directorate	Institution	Number	Programme	Duration	Enrolments
Directorate of Technical Education	Technical Schools and Colleges	64	SSC (vocational) HSC (vocational)	2 years 2 years	35,868
	Polytechnic and Monotechnic Institutes	47	Diploma programmes	2 years	58,975
	Technical Training Centre (TTC)	41	SSC (vocational) NSS II & III NSS Basic	2 years 1 year 2 months	27,473
Bureau of Manpower Employment & Training (BMET)	BMIT	1	Diploma Various marine courses	4 years 2 years	489
	Youth Training Centre	56	Various short programmes for agri-food industry, readymade garments, hospitality & IT	6 months–1 year	70,160
Department of Youth Development					
Department of Women Affairs	Women's Training Centre	64	readymade garments, hospitality & IT	1–6 months	9,825
	Agriculture Training Institute	13	Diploma programmes	4 years	2,400
Department of Agriculture Department of Textile	Textile Vocational Centres	40	SSC (Vocational) Textiles	2 years	1,968
	District Textile Institutes	6	Diploma programmes	4 years	4,147
Ministry of Industries	BSCIC Skill Development Centres	15	Various short programmes	1–12 months	1,000
	BSCIC Fashion, Design and Technology Centre	1	Various short programmes	1–6 months	1,000
Department of Health	BITAC & TICI	1	Various short programmes	1–12 months	2,000
	Medical Training Schools	7	Diploma programmes	3 years	650
	Institute of Health Technology	8	Diploma programmes	3 years	6,256

Source: International Labour Organization (2009) Dhaka Office,.



programmes, short courses, trade course, and most recently SSC vocational courses. The main functions of BMET are as follows.

1. Managing the overseas employment process, starting from registration of job seekers to the issuing of emigration clearance.
2. Management of recruitment agencies: issuing and renewal of licences and monitoring.
3. Providing skill-developing training by undertaking appropriate programmes to meet the demands of local and overseas markets.
4. Planning and implementation of development projects for skill-development training and promoting overseas employment.
5. Ensuring welfare and protecting the rights of migrant workers both at home and abroad.
6. Collection of information about overseas labour markets and their skill requirements.

### **The effectiveness of the education system**

The general education system in Bangladesh overemphasizes general and humanities educational programmes, and only 2–3 percent of its graduates attend science and technology programmes (World Bank, 2000, 2007). In Bangladesh, general education is preferred to science, TVE (World Bank, 2006), and those who graduate from technical or professional institutes also seek managerial rather than specialist technical jobs (PSC Annual Report, 2008, 2009; World Bank, 1996). The social stigma attached to vocational and technical education-oriented professions is due partly to the inadequate provision of career progression and a negative attitude to vocational and technical education in the country (Rahman, 1994, 1995; World Bank, 2000). The educational structure (Figure 1) leaves no room to absorb vocational- and technical-oriented curricula and modes of learning within the higher education system. Due to the abundant labour supply and other institutional reasons such as the low status of vocational training (International Labour Organization, 2008, 2009), an industrial structure of relatively low-skilled jobs (World Bank, 2006, 2007) and the absence of legal requirements or financial incentives for vocational training (Rahman, 1994; World Bank, 2006, 2007), most of the firms in Bangladesh do not want to participate in apprenticeship schemes. Only the public sector fertilizer and chemical industries employ apprentices from vocational institutes – approximately 500 in 2008 (International Labour Organization, 2009).

### **Training and development in the public sector**

The Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), on behalf of the government, conducts most of the training and development activities for all officers employed in ministries, departments and directorates. The prime objective of BPATC training programmes is to make officers aware of government policies, familiarize them with government rules and regulations and keep them up to date with contemporary issues of public administration and management (Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, 2009; Miyan, 1991). Since its establishment in 1984 to April 2008, BPATC has run 546 courses providing training to 23,822 officers and 141 seminars/workshops with a total of 6649 participants of diverse disciplines and status (Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, 2009). A list of typical training programmes offered by BPATC is shown in Table 7.

In addition to the BPATC, there are also a few training institutes in Bangladesh where civil service officers and other officials of the government's autonomous organizations are trained. The Bangladesh Civil Service (Administration) Academy, Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management, National Academy for Education and Management and Academy for Planning and Development are prominent. Most training institutes of this type engage only in orientation training: foundation training



Table 7: List of training programmes of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, 2008–2009

Sl. no.	Name of course	Duration (days)	Total course	Desired no. of participants	Minimum acceptable no. of participants	Maximum acceptable no. of participants	Total no. of desired participants
(1)	Senior Staff Course (SSC)	75	2	25	15	30	50
(2)	Advanced Course on Administration & Development (ACAD)	75	6	25	15	35	150
(3)	Foundation Training Course (FTC)	120	2	200	50	240	400
(4)	Policy, Planning and Management Course (PPMC)	12	1	20	15	25	20
(5)	Training of Trainers Course (TOT)	15	1	25	15	30	25
(6)	Project Management Course	15	1	25	15	30	25
(7)	Course on Trade and Aid Negotiation	05	1	25	15	30	25
(8)	Human Resource Planning Course	05	1	25	15	30	25
(9)	Financial Management Course	15	1	25	15	30	25
(10)	Environmental Management & Sustainable Development Course	15	1	25	15	30	25
(11)	Modern Office Management Course	15	1	25	15	30	25
(12)	Course on Information Technology & E-Governance	28	1	25	15	30	25
(13)	Foundation Refreshers' Programme	5	1	160	50	200	160
(14)	Course on Communicative English	15	2	50	15	30	50
(15)	Gender and Development Course	05	2	50	15	30	50
(16)	Total		24	6 × 40 = 240	6 × 40 = 240	6 × 60 = 360	1080
(17)	Seminar/Workshop		6				6 × 40 = 240
	Grand Total		30				1170

Source: Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre, 2009.

for different categories of employees in the respective departments. For public sector manufacturing organizations, the government relies on the Bangladesh Institute of Management (BIM) to run training and development programmes. The main objective of BIM is to train and develop managers at all levels engaged in commercial, industrial and service organizations of the public and private sectors, including non-government organizations (NGOs). BIM offers two types of courses: short courses of 1 to 4 weeks long and diploma courses of 1-year duration. Since its establishment to December 2008, BIM has conducted 2718 short courses with total participants of around 38,000, and granted diplomas and degrees to about 4000 graduates (Bangladesh Institute of Management, 2009).

However, for the regular and yearly training and development programmes of government ministries, departments and other public sector organizations, the government hardly allocates any budget at all. Sometimes, it may initiate special training programmes for particular government officials on the basis of bilateral agreements with donor countries or multilateral organizations. Whenever such opportunities arise, top officials of the ministry or departmental heads unilaterally select the trainees without conducting any training needs or job requirements analysis. In most cases, trainees are identified on the basis of their personal relationship with top officials or their links with political leaders of the particular ministry. In fact, in government departments, employees obtain promotion solely on the basis of their seniority, irrespective of their merit, performance or additional qualifications. Entry-level competitive testing determines individuals' seniority for higher-level promotions throughout their career, during which civil service officials need to pass two departmental examinations, one after 4 years of service and the other after 15 years. Both the tests, entitled Senior Service Departmental examinations, comprise mainly service rules for departmental activities. Anyone who fails these departmental examinations is barred from higher-level promotions. Therefore, employees never feel it necessary to attend training programmes for personal development or career advancement.

### **Training and development activities in the private sector**

There are no clear statistics of the numbers involved in and the extent of formal training and skill development in the private sector in Bangladesh. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) study pointed out that fewer than 5 percent of employees in the private sector receive formal employer-sponsored training either in the workplace or offsite (Asian Development Bank, 2007). However, the same study revealed that 78 percent of skilled workers in manufacturing organizations received on-the-job training to develop work-related competencies. A recent International Labour Organization report noted that there are about 500 large and small NGOs in Bangladesh currently delivering various short courses to provide basic numerical training to over 95,000 people each year (International Labour Organization, 2008).

Overall, the extent of training in the private sector in Bangladesh remains inadequate (Asian Development Bank, 2007; International Labour Organization, 2009; Miyan, 1991). In a huge labour-surplus economy, the private sector regards training initiatives as a cost rather than an investment, and it is hard to find any systematic training practices for employee development. In general, training is considered as the responsibility of employees themselves, although some industries are beginning to understand its importance and have undertaken initiatives to provide necessary skill-oriented training for employees (International Labour Organization, 2008; World Bank, 2006). For instance, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the Chittagong Skills Development Centre (CSDC) and the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) established their own training centres to deliver programmes to both new entrants and existing employees (International Labour Organization, 2009). To meet the capacity-building needs of the business community, DCCI established its own business institute in 1999. The main objective of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry Business Institute (DCCIBI) is to upgrade the knowledge and skills of entrepreneurs and business

executives by conducting short-, medium- and long-term training courses and by providing various business advisory and consultancy services. DCCIBI usually provides the following training services to member organizations and the business community in general.

- Short training courses for junior and mid-level officers.
- Diploma, advanced certificate and certificate courses on international purchasing and supply chain management jointly with the International Trade Centre, World Trade Organization, Geneva.
- Executive development programmes jointly with local universities.
- Special training courses, tailor-made training courses and consultancy services to small- and medium-sized enterprises.

The ready-made garments sector accounts for 76 percent of the total export earnings of Bangladesh and employs 4.5 million people, of whom 71 percent are women, none of whom have any formal training at all (Government of Bangladesh, 2009b). To meet the growing training and development needs of the garments sector, BGMEA established the Bangladesh Institute of Fashion and Technology (BIFT) in November 1999 affiliated with the National University of Bangladesh. BIFT is currently offering two 4-year undergraduate degree programmes: one in apparel manufacture and technology, the other in fashion design and technology. It also offers 1-year diploma courses in merchandising, apparel manufacture and technology, and in fashion design and technology. It also offers nine specialist 6-month certificate courses and a variety of other short courses as required by the sector, such as woven garments merchandising, knitwear merchandising, sweater merchandising, etc. (BIFT, 2009).

The CSDC was established in 1995 with technical support provided by the Penang Skills Development Centre of Malaysia. It focuses on delivering training programmes according to its members' present and evolving skill requirements. The human resource managers of member companies determine CSDC's training services to meet member organizations' skill needs. As of December 2008, CSDC provided technical skill training to 2500 workers and management development training to 1200 employees every year (CSDC, 2010). A typical list of training programmes of CSDC is given in Table 8. It operates by charging yearly membership fees and by pricing its training on a 'training cost-plus' basis. That is, training fees are determined by the actual cost of conducting its programmes plus a margin to sustain its operations. The vision and objectives of CSDC are as follows.

- Provide cost-effective training and educational programmes to current and future workforces.
- Forge strategic partnerships with local and foreign universities, training institutions and organizations to provide relevant programmes and training interventions in order to enhance workforce competitiveness.
- Support human resource development (HRD) initiatives in private and public sector organizations.
- Develop CSDC's own training programmes and courses.
- Share CSDC intellectual property, competencies and expertise with other training organizations in Bangladesh.
- Generate sufficient income to sustain the CSDC's operations and support the HRD capacity-building process in Bangladesh.

To cope with the changed skill requirements of the economy, the government established the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) in 2008 to address issues related to the structure and coordination of skills development in Bangladesh. The NSDC, under the guidance of the Ministry of Labour and Manpower, will formulate national skill development policy and oversee the implementation process. The key duties and responsibilities of NSDC as identified by the government are as follows.

- It is responsible for providing guidelines for the design of all kinds of governance and regulatory legislation related to human resource development and training

Table 8: List of Chittagong Skills Development Centre training programmes, 2010

Telecommunication	Executive development	Ready-made garments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GSM Fundamental-Basic level 1</li> <li>• GSM Fundamentals-Signalling, Protocols &amp; Applications</li> <li>• GSM Fundamentals-Infrastructure, Site acquisition &amp; Civil works</li> <li>• GSM Fundamentals-Fibre Optic Transmissions</li> <li>• GSM Fundamentals-RBS &amp; Microwave</li> <li>• Base Transceiver Station Installation</li> <li>• Basic Microwave Propagation &amp; Microwave Link Installation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Professional Module 1: PMBOK</li> <li>• Effective Leadership for Organizational Excellence</li> <li>• Managerial Effectiveness and Leadership Skills</li> <li>• Effective Performance Management</li> <li>• Management of Creativity and Innovation</li> <li>• Communication and Presentation Skills</li> <li>• Dealing with Emotional Intelligence</li> <li>• Negotiation Skills</li> <li>• Improving Service Quality</li> <li>• Managing Organizational Change</li> <li>• Team Building</li> <li>• Effective Decision Making and Problem Solving Skills</li> <li>• Interpersonal Skills</li> <li>• The 12 Secrets of Success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JUKI Garments Machine Maintenance</li> <li>• Garments Quality Control</li> <li>• Preventive Maintenance</li> <li>• RMG Social and Environmental Compliance</li> <li>• RMG Health and Safety Maintenance</li> </ul>

Source: Chittagong Skill Development Centre, 2010.

policies. The NSDC is also responsible for approving legislative and regulatory approaches and their implementation.

- It will provide guidelines for the design of legislation allowing training programmes to be conducted through public and private partnerships.
- It will coordinate a public sector curriculum designed and delivered by public and private providers under the guidance of the various ministries. It will also ensure that the institutions working under different ministries and agencies are using their capacity fully to ensure the maximum possible extent of training provision.
- It will work to coordinate both public and private initiatives which focus on the use of the full capacity of an organization's employees. It will provide technical support, planning and necessary direction for the institution on how to use its staff to their full capacity. It will maintain the national skill data system for the government.
- It will evaluate recommendations made by the Better Business Forum. Furthermore, it will explore the Forum's strategic plan and consider how to implement those recommendations that it accepts.
- It will perform general administrative duties associated with its own national council meetings.

## A brief critical assessment of present training and development programmes

The national education and training systems of Bangladesh seem to be outdated, impractical and obsolete in nature. They have failed to evolve adequately in line with the revolutions in science and technology, economic and political conditions and demographic and political structures. As a result, curriculum content does not help employees to perform their jobs independently. There is also a mismatch between employment needs and the basic form and content of the education system (World Bank, 2000). This occurs mainly because of a lack of co-ordination among different stakeholders – government, employers and educational institutions – in determining the demand and supply of the labour market arising from economic activities. The skills developed by individuals remain, to a large extent, unutilized or underutilized. As employment opportunities are limited, higher education does not ensure a better career or improved job prospects.

The educational system also creates stratification linked to educational institutions and subsequently influences the job grading and pay practices in organizations. In the colonial period, education was accessible to selective 'Zamidar' (landlord) groups and only they have the right to join government services and rule the common people (Jamil, 1998; Jones & Shafik, 1996). Due to limited access and an inability to bear the educational expenses, educational opportunities (particularly higher education) are still beyond the reach of lower or lower middle class income groups. This selective educational system reproduces social stratification among various working classes and generates submissiveness, fatalism, in-group/out-group distinctions and status orientation. The restriction on opportunities for higher education in Bangladesh creates social stratification in the organizational context, as noted by Selim (1995), who observed that educated officers (university graduates) refuse to recognize the 'labourers turned officers' as their equals, despite the latter being as many as the former. The former try to keep the latter in a subordinate status, maintain distance from them and indicate that they believe they are generally superior to them. A longitudinal survey of admissions to medical colleges, an engineering university and the Dhaka University revealed that an increasingly larger proportion of students come from a few selected educational institutions in the urban areas and have a higher socio-economic background (Ahmad, 1998). As inequality in access to higher education appears to be instrumental in creating disparity in educational performance, it influences the choice of jobs in the labour market.

The training system in Bangladesh can be termed voluntarist in nature in that neither employers nor employees are compelled to initiate employee training and development activities (Talukdar, 1996). Most private sector organizations, established by first-generation entrepreneurs, are managed by family members who do not like to utilize employee skills, but rather rely on their own capabilities. In the public sector, training is considered a 'waste of time' and training institutes are considered 'dumping grounds' for undesirable government employees (Siddiqui, 1996). Trainers and trainees both usually perceive training to be nothing more than an official ritual that has to be performed. The idea of work-related education and work-based learning is not known within the educational system of Bangladesh (Rahman, 1995) and students learn conceptual knowledge only through lectures, without any practical hands-on experience. Due to the lack of provision in the educational system, employers usually provide hands-on training in the workplace without depending on educational and training institutes. The education system also creates social stratification through the distinction between elite, selective higher education opportunities and the under-resourced TVE system. Additionally, it creates feelings of superiority or inferiority in the workplace and discourages non-managerial employees from acquiring further skills for future career development or advancement in the organization. In the absence of recognizable skills, a combination of informal competencies, personal qualities and networks, kinship links, common geographical origins,

shared educational backgrounds and perceived supremacy of specific educational attainments have become key, influential factors in employee career development and promotional opportunities.

The government needs to establish a national technical and vocational qualification framework which will focus on developing acceptable competency standards for various technical and vocational qualifications in order to meet employers' needs. The German apprenticeship system could be a model – government, employers' associations and trade union federations collaborate to identify acceptable qualifications and competency standards for different sectors. In Bangladesh, for the migrant workforce, the priority occupations and related skill requirements of overseas labour markets need to be identified and demand-driven courses and curricula need to be included in the BMET and TTCs' training programmes. This should be done in consultation with concerned stakeholders such as the Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies and Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited in order to facilitate forecasting. Bangladesh is the second largest garments manufacturer and exporter in the world, and the industry met its skill requirement because of the initiatives of its industry association. The BGMEA established its Institute for Fashion & Technology and was able to fulfil the demand for skilled manpower in the garment and textile sectors. Other private sector industries could follow BGMEA initiatives and prepare themselves to embrace future challenges. For public sector organizations, the government should conduct training needs analysis on a periodic basis and provide the resources to BPATC and other government training institutes in order to enable them to supply necessary training to government employees.

### **List of main training providers in Bangladesh**

1. Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre  
Savar, Dhaka 1343  
Tel: ++88-02-770010  
Fax: ++88-02-7710029  
E-mail: ppr@bpatc.org
2. Bangladesh Institute of Management  
4 Sobahanbag, Mirpur Road,  
Dhaka 1207  
Tel: 88-02-8117405  
Fax: 88-02-8114304  
E-mail: bim@bim.org.bd
3. Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management  
63 New Eskaton  
Dhaka 1000  
Tel: 88-02-9336110  
Fax: 88-02-9332865  
E-mail: info@biamfoundation.com
4. National Academy of Educational Management  
New Market  
Dhaka 1205  
Tel: 88-02-9670357  
Fax: 88-02-8650320  
E-mail: info@naem.gov.bd
5. DCCI Business Institute  
65-66 Motijheel Commercial Area  
Dhaka 1000  
Tel: 88-02-9552562  
Fax: 88-02-9560830  
E-mail: info@dhakachamber.com



6. Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training  
89/2 Kakrail  
Dhaka 1000  
Tel: 88-02-9357972  
Fax: 88-02-9349925  
E-mail: bmet@bmet.org.bd
7. Chittagong Skills Development Centre  
Chamber House, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Agrabad Commercial Area  
Chittagong  
Tel: 88-01819-210533  
Fax: 88-031-710183  
E-mail: mik@csrc.com.bd
8. BGMEA Institute of Fashion and Technology  
105 Uttara Commercial Area  
Dhaka 1230  
Tel: 88-02-8919986  
Fax: 88-02-8919988  
E-mail: info@bift.bd

No research on training and development is being conducted in universities in Bangladesh.

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