

The Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh: prospect and challenges

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Abstract:

As a developing country Bangladesh is facing a worsening employment crisis. In response, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) keeps important significance on the development agenda year after year. Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is widely recognized as a vital driving force for the socio-economic growth and technological development of nations. In achieving the goals and objectives of TVET in Bangladesh, the quality of the program needs to be improved and sustained. The study showed that the process of TVET, training and retraining of TVET to the students, provision of required TVET facilities, objectives of technical and vocational education, vision of TVET, benefits of TVET and the challenges to TVET programs in Bangladesh. It was recommended that the government, stakeholders, policy makers and TVET providers in Bangladesh should focus on TVET quality assurance best practices that have worked in countries around the world.

Keyword: Technical, Vocational Education, Training,

Introduction:

Education is a general term which refers to an exercise that engages every one. It is a process of enabling individuals to live as useful and acceptable members of a society (Aigbepue, 2011). [1] Education is the backbone of the nation and it is a basic human right for national development. The World Bank (2002), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) [2], United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [3] all suggest that Bangladesh urgently needs to utilize its overcrowded population and large labour market. In Bangladesh there are two types of educational system-General education and Technical & Vocational education. TVET is defined by UNESCO as “Those aspects of the educational process involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupation in various sectors of economic life”. [3] Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country in the world which presents an immense opportunity in terms of labour force. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is essential in ensuring the country’s competitiveness in the global labour market and ensuring decent work for all. Education, be it formal, informal, non-formal, academic, technical or vocational has been used in the world from ancient cultures to the present as a means of acquiring knowledge (ILO, 2012)[5] According to Mclean and David (2009)[6] TVET is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the world of work

to increase opportunities for productive empowerment and socio-economic development in knowledge economics and rapidly changing work environment. TVET thus equips people not only with technical and vocational skills, but with a broad range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are now recognized as indispensable for meaningful participation in work and life. TVET has numerous goals which vary from countries to countries. In Bangladesh, TVET is conducted by Bangladesh Technical and Education Board (BTEB) and Director of Technical Education (DTE) with a view to meeting the nation's need for skilled manpower and support the economic state of individual and the nation in general.[7] As qualitative TVET is increasingly recognized as the bedrock of every development, quality assurance therefore is an indispensable process for achieving the national goals in TVET which will in turn lead to the production of qualitative human capital for sustainable national development.

Objectives of study:

The study will investigate the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to solve the unemployment problem in Bangladesh. Study objectives also include identifying and analyzing the challenges to implement the technical and vocation education and training in Bangladesh. Besides these, this study will try to present the prospect of TVET in developing countries like Bangladesh. Finally the study aims to create further research scope in this area.

Methodology of the Research:

Behind every academic research, it is required to adopt the method of the research. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. The articles are obtained from refereed journal sources. The primary data are the students and employees of related institutions and the secondary data are the text books, articles of journals, newspaper articles, reports, websites etc. The collected data have been processed and prepared in the present form in order to make the study very much comprehensive, informative and useful for the readers.

Limitations of study:

There were some limitations for conducting the research. Beside the difficulty of collection recent information were particularly the main challenges that encounter the study in obtaining sufficient information as easily as needed. However, it was attempted to make the study complete as possible.

Scenario of TVET in Bangladesh:

In 1960 the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) was established for development of technical and vocational education. The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) initiated rapid development and expansion works of degree, diploma and certificate programme in the country. Total number of institute under this department is 118. Every year about 99108 students are get the opportunity to admit here. There are 64 technical schools and 1 vocational teachers training institute in certificate level, 49 polytechnic institutes in diploma level and 1 technical training college & 3 engineering college in degree level. [8]

To cope up with increasing magnitude of academic activities, the need for establishment of a "Statutory Board" was keenly felt. A statutory body namely "The East Pakistan Technical Education Board" was established through Act. No. 1 of 1967 of the then East Pakistan Assembly, which is now Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). Thus the Bangladesh Technical Education Board came into existence with the jurisdiction over the entire area of Bangladesh to organize, supervise, regulate, control and develop technical and vocational education. The Board in its present form became operative with effect from June 1969. There are four academic level i. Diploma level ii. HSC level iii. SSC level and iv. Short courses in various trade. These academic level is conducted by public and private institution. [9]

Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) takes the responsibility for curricula and associated matters. It arranges for development of learning materials, grants the affiliation to the concerned institutions, conducts examinations of the students completing different courses in different areas of vocational and technical education, and awards certificates to the successful candidates, among others.[10]

General Education and Technical Education:

General education aims at imparting knowledge stemming from various sources. It is the process that teaches a student to think critically, develop values, understand traditions, respect diverse cultures and opinions and use knowledge for the edification of society. It is holistic, integrative and must be implemented. General education renders a person socially functional. Technical education imparts theoretical and practical knowledge for the purpose of economic progress of the individual. It is highly specialized and fractioned. Technical knowledge equips a person with necessary skills and techniques to have an edge in the cut-throat competitive environment. The dependence on technology even for small jobs has raised the necessity to learn more about technology. Moreover, day-to-day developments in science and technology have increased the fields of knowledge and thus the number of people required for the job.

Purpose of TVET:

TVET refers to deliberate interventions to bring about learning which would make people more productive (or simply adequately productive) in designated areas of economic activity (e.g., economic sectors, occupations, specific work tasks). This is the distinctive purpose of TVET. However, TVET will also have other purposes which are not unique to TVET, and which also apply to other forms of education, e.g., knowledge, skills, insights and mindsets which are deemed to be generally valuable for the learners, not only in designated areas of economic activity. Such "other" aims will be especially pertinent for longer and full time courses for youth—in contrast to short and episodic training events (e.g., for persons already at work in the occupations concerned). TVET also needs to be conducted according to general social norms about how learners and people in general are to be treated by institutions, e.g., that persons be treated with respect. Thus, "work productivity" is not the only aim and

concern of TVET, but it is its distinctive objective which sets it apart from other forms of education and training. [11]

Objectives of TVET: [12]

The objectives of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) include the following:

- (a) To provide trained man power in applied science, technology and commerce particularly at sub professional levels.
- (b) To provide people who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement and solution of environmental problems for the use and convenience of man.
- (c) To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.
- (d) To give an introduction to professional studies in engineering and other technologies.
- (e) To give training and impart the necessary skills leading to the production of craftsman, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-employed.

Vision of TVET in Bangladesh: [13]

1. National skill development council (NSDC) action plan is more than 80% implemented
2. Industry standards and qualifications have progressed
3. Gender equality is being achieved in the TVET sector
4. The National Training and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF) is accepted as the future skills model
5. Quality assurance system is implemented by Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)
6. Skills data system is fully operational
7. One competency-based instructor qualification exists
8. Government training institutions are restructured
9. The popularity of formal apprenticeships has increased
10. Training is integrated into human resources practices
11. Beginning of national and international recognition
12. Prior learning is recognized and awarded
13. Persons with disabilities are becoming skilled workers
14. Vocational training is becoming a career option
15. Public sector training includes TVET competencies
16. Traditional courses are now competency-based
17. Training is becoming inclusive of all in Bangladesh
18. TVET institutions are closely linked to industry

Benefits of TVET: [14]

TVET benefit can be classified in two major types i) Economic benefit and ii) Social benefit. Economic benefits can be considered as Economic Growth, Labour-market outcomes, Firms' performance, Employees' productivity, Employment opportunities, Earnings, Professional status or career development. Socials benefits are described as Crime reduction, Social cohesion, Health, Intergenerational benefits, Inclusion disadvantaged groups, Life satisfaction, and individual motivation.

Challenges to TVET in Bangladesh: [15]

1. Increasing number of TVET seats available which implies more investment
2. Enhancing capacity of TVET institutions
3. Making programs more demand-driven rather than supply-driven
4. Providing better quality courses with credentials recognized nationally and internationally
5. Promoting higher profile for TVET and new qualifications
6. Strategic funding for skills development and new sources of funding
7. Developing models for work placements for instructors and students
8. Finding qualified staff (combining technical and teaching skills)
9. Establishing and strengthening the links between industry and TVET institutions

Conclusion:

TVET is essential to national development. In order to provide TVET programs that can create impact in the development of human resources who can be the driving force for technological and economic growth of the nation, quality and standard will have to be created. Various factors (students'; school; and government) have been identified as the challenges of attaining quality TVET programs in Bangladesh tertiary institutions.

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that

- 1) The government, stakeholders, policy makers and TVET providers in Bangladesh should focus on TVET quality assurance best practices that have worked in countries around the world.
- 2) The government should adequately fund, plan, implement, and manage TVET programs in related institutions in Bangladesh.
- 3) The quality of input TVET programs must be considered. This can be achieved through the provision of adequate facilities, equipment's, consumable materials, and hand tools; provision of qualified TVET personnel; adequate provision of instructional materials; provision of in service training for TVET personnel.
- 4) Provision of scholarship/grants for TVET teachers/ instructors; proper supervision and monitoring of the implementation of TVET programs by government.
- 5) The introduction of competency based TVET programs in Bangladeshi institutions.

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