

**SKILL GAP ANALYSIS OF THE MIGRANT WORKERS OF
BANGLADESH**



**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Management, University of Dhaka
for Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy**

By

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis, entitled ‘Skill Gap Analysis of the Migrant Workers of Bangladesh,’ to the underprivileged Bangladeshi expatriate workers deployed across the GCC countries. These workers, through their relentless efforts and sacrifices, endure long hours of labor, striving for both their economic betterment and the welfare of their families. Their unwavering dedication not only contribute to their personal progress but also plays a significant role in the overall development of our nation. This work is a tribute to their resilience and hard work.

Acknowledgement

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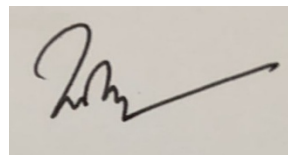
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Declaration

I hereby declare that the research work titled ‘Skill Gap Analysis of the Migrant Workers of Bangladesh’ has been conducted under the Department of Management, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Dhaka, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This thesis is based on original research findings gathered by me, supplemented with references from published literatures. It has not been submitted, in part or in full, to any other institution for the award of any other degree. I also affirm that this thesis contains no plagiarized content.



Dated: 29 November 2025

Dhaka, Bangladesh

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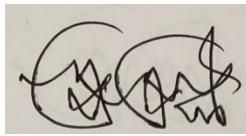
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Certificate of the Supervisor

I have the pleasure to certify that the dissertation titled ‘Skill Gap Analysis of the Migrant Workers of Bangladesh’ has been completed and submitted by Mr. Md Shahedul Islam for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy was carried out by the researcher himself under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge, this is an original research work and an addition to the field of knowledge which has not been submitted for any other degree to any other university or educational institution.



Signature of the Supervisor: ---

Dated: 30 November 2025

Name of the Supervisor: **Dr. Md. Mosharraf Hossain**

Place: Dhaka

Relevant Publications in Peer-Reviewed Journals

1. **Islam, Md. Shahedul.** (2020). *Need Based Skilled Human Resource for Overseas Employment*. NDC E Journal, Volume 01, Number 01, October 2020. ISSN: 1683-8475.
2. **Islam, Md. Shahedul.** (2021). *Overseas Employment Opportunities and Skills Development: Bangladesh Perspective*. NDC Journal, Volume 20, Number 01, June 2021. ISSN: 1682-8475.

Abstract and Keywords

Bangladesh, the eighth most populous and most densely populated country in the world, faces severe challenges as its population exceeds the available land and resources. This imbalance has resulted in widespread unemployment and underemployment, placing immense pressure on the economy, social safety nets, basic human needs, and the Human Development Index (HDI). In response, large-scale migration for employment began in the 1970s, primarily toward Middle Eastern countries. Today, overseas employment has become a critical driver of foreign currency earnings, contributing approximately 27 billion United States dollars (USD) in 2024, or 5.3% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This trend is expected to accelerate. However, the overseas employment sector has long faced numerous challenges, exacerbated by the rapid rise of automation and digitalization in the era of Industry 4.0, as a large proportion of Bangladeshi migrant workers remain unskilled and less educated. Skilled workers earn significantly more than unskilled workers, enjoy greater job security, and benefit from improved working and living conditions.

This study explores the critical skill development needs in the service sector of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for skilled and semi-skilled jobs, identifying both the skill needs and skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers. The research employed an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data from 12 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with quantitative analysis based on surveys of 100 employers and 408 workers. Grounded in Human Capital Theory, which asserts that investments in skills directly improve productivity and earning potential, the study followed a systematic analytical process involving reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.944), sample adequacy tests (KMO = 0.911), and correlation and regression analysis ($R = 0.940$; $R^2 = 0.883$).

The findings reveal significant skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, including lack of experience, inadequate educational backgrounds, absence of professional technical skills, poor language proficiency, and deficient communication skills. Statistical analysis shows that technical training (Beta = 0.684, $p = 0.000$) and work experience (Beta = 0.224, $p = 0.000$) are strong predictors of higher earnings. English-speaking and writing proficiency, educational qualifications, ICT skills, manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, and basic knowledge of legal aspects were also found to influence wage earnings.

To develop the aforementioned skills among Bangladeshi workers, the study recommends strengthening the vocational and technical education system, improving ICT skills, enhancing language proficiency, and developing soft skills such as communication, manners and etiquette, and cultural adaptability. Furthermore, the study advocates for the establishment of a standardized national certification system aligned with GCC market requirements. These measures are expected to improve the skill levels of Bangladeshi workers, ultimately enhancing the employability and earning potential of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Keywords: Skill Development, Migrant Workers, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Human Capital Theory, Remittance Earnings

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List of Abbreviations Used

Abbreviation	Full Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AQTF	Australian Quality Training Framework
ATI	Advance Training Institutions
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BCE	Before Common Era
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies
BNQF	Bangladesh National Qualification Framework
BLA	Bilateral Labor Agreement
BSN	Bachelor of Science in Nursing
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BTK	Bangladeshi Taka
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited
CBT&A	Competency Based Training and Assessment
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average

3D	Dirty, Demeaning, and Dangerous
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
DTE	Department of Technical Education
DGET	Director General of Employment & Training
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education
DNI	Department of National Intelligence
EU	European Union
EWOEP	Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy
EPS	Employment Permit System
ECDHR	European Centre for Democracy and Human Rights
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GA	General Assembly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
G2G	Government to Government
GAMCA	Gulf Approved Medical Centers Association
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
HDI	Human Development Index
HR	Human Resource
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMT	Institute of Marine Technology
ICS	Industry Skill Councils
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All

	Migrant Workers
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ITI	Industrial Training Institutes
ICDDRDB	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
IDEB	Institution of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
KII	Key Informant Interview
KI	Key Informant
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MMC	Migration Monitoring Commission
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
MENA	Middle East and North African
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MOHRSS	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security
MOL	Ministry of Law
MOLE	Ministry of Labor and Employment
MOLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MOP	Ministry of Planning
MOSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

MOHRE	Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTESDP	National Technical Education and Skills Development Plan
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSDA	National Skills Development Authority
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NOC	No Objection Certificate
NOSS	National Occupation Skills Standards
NACE	National Association of Colleges and Employers
NCVT	National Council for Vocational Training
NTQF	National, Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework
OEMA	Overseas Employment and Migrants Act
OJT	On the Job Training
OFW	Overseas Filipino Workers
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEMC	Overseas Employment Monitoring Commission
PKB	Probashi Kallyan Bank
PDT	Pre-Deployment Training
PDP	Professional Development Programs
QCI	Quality Council of India
RMG	Ready-Made Garments
RAIMS	Recruiting Agencies Information Management System
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTO	Registered Training Organizations
RVTI	Regional Vocational Training Institutes
SM	Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

SA	South Asian
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSS	Saudi Skills Standard
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SAR	Saudi Arabian Riyals
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
SSC	Sector Skill Council
SCVT	State Council for Vocational Training
SEIP	Skills for Employment Investment Program
SCDC	Skills and Career Development Centers
SLR	Simple Linear Regression
TSC	Technical Schools and College
TTI	Technical Training Institute
TTC	Technical Training Centers
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TOT	Training of Trainers
TITP	Technical Intern Training Program
UN	United Nations
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNB	United News of Bangladesh
USD	United States Dollar
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
DNI	US Department of National Intelligence
VTTI	Vocational Teacher Training Institute

WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board
WB	World Bank
WW	World War
WHO	World Health Organization

Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Bangladesh, with a population of 174¹ million, constitutes 2.15% of the global population, making it the 8th most populous country in the world. It is also the most densely populated country, with a density of 1,329 people per square kilometer (worldometers, 2024). While such a large population offers potential economic advantages, it also presents significant challenges. Whether a large population becomes an asset or a burden depends largely on a country's capacity to meet its citizens' basic needs, particularly in terms of employment opportunities. For Bangladesh, with a GDP per capita of only USD 2,529.1 (World Bank, 2024), ensuring adequate employment remains one of its most urgent concerns.

In recent years, Bangladesh has faced a high unemployment rate, which stands at 5.1%² (World Bank, 2024), but the situation worsens when considering underemployment, which pushes the unemployment figure to as high as 24% (Khatun, 2012). The unemployment crisis in Bangladesh not only impacts HDI³ but also contributes to a range of social issues such as poverty, lawlessness, and insecurity. To mitigate this, Bangladesh has turned to overseas employment as a solution, which has led to a steady increase in the number of workers migrating abroad since the 1970s. In 2023, Bangladesh sent 1.3 million workers in more than 160 countries of the globe which was 1.13 million in 2022, and 0.61 million in 2021 (Mirdha & Hasan, 2024). While remittance plays a vital role in the economy, Bangladesh continues to face critical challenges concerning the quality of its migrant workforce, which remains largely unskilled or less skilled.

This study addresses these challenges by exploring the skill gaps among Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly in the context of overseas employment. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the skills needed for migrant workers, identify the existing skill gaps, and prioritize skills development areas in line with global employment market demands, especially in the GCC countries.

1.2 Background of the Study

¹ The population of Bangladesh is 174,792,475 as of 21 July 2024, based on Worldometer elaboration of the latest UN data.

² The data is based on 2023 statistics of the World Bank. In Bangladesh, the unemployment rate means the number of populations looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force.

³ HDI is calculated by UNDP to rank countries in order of development taking primarily 03 (three) indices, i.e., life expectancy (long and healthy life), knowledge base (including female education), and decent standard of living (UNDP, 2019).

The history of migration from Bangladesh dates back to the 1960s when the United Kingdom (UK) government opened its doors for immigration. However, large-scale migration for temporary employment began in the 1970s, particularly to the Middle East, following the oil boom, as reported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2016). Since then, overseas employment has become a crucial mechanism for alleviating unemployment in Bangladesh, while also serving as a vital source of foreign currency through remittances.

Over the years, remittances from Bangladeshi expatriates have grown tremendously, becoming a key pillar of the national economy. In 2024, remittances reached an all-time high of 27 billion USD, surpassing the 2021 total of 22 billion USD (Alam, 2025). This represents 5.3% of the country's GDP, according to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET, 2024). Beyond just numbers, these remittances are lifelines for millions of families, providing essential support and bolstering Bangladesh's foreign currency reserves, as reported by the Department of National Intelligence (DNI, 2021). According to Bangladesh Bank (2024), the steady flow of money has played a vital role in lifting people out of poverty, improving living standards, and driving national development. In the wake of the pandemic and amidst political shifts, remittances have proven even more crucial for sustaining economic growth, maintaining liquidity in the banking sector, and reducing the need for external borrowing (Bangladesh Bank, 2024). Today, Bangladesh stands among the world's top 10 remittance-receiving countries (The Business Standard, 2024), with these funds continuing to be an indispensable source of income for countless households.

Despite these successes, the overseas employment sector has faced significant challenges. These include fraudulent recruitment practices, lack of information regarding job contracts, poor living and working conditions in host countries, and violations of workers' rights, as reported by the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2022). In addition, many workers are exposed to health risks and adverse working conditions, which have led to the deaths of thousands of workers over the years, with more than 46,000 Bangladeshi workers having died abroad up to 2023 (Amaders Somai, 2023). Moreover, emerging threats such as political instability in the Middle East, competition from new entrant countries like Nepal, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Vietnam, and the effects of automation and digitalization in the labor market further complicate the situation for Bangladeshi migrant workers.

A key issue that continues to impede the overseas employment sector is the lack of skilled labor. Most Bangladeshi workers are unskilled or less-skilled, which limits their earning potential and put them at a disadvantage in comparison to workers from countries like the Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka, etcetera. Skilled and semiskilled workers, on the other hand, tend to receive better wages, job security, good working and living conditions. According to a 2021 study, a Filipino housemaid in Saudi Arabia earns Saudi Arabian Riyals (SAR) 2,700 while Bangladeshi earns SAR 600 due to the lack of necessary skills (Siddiqui & Farabi, 2021). Average monthly remittance earning per migrant for Bangladesh is 203.33 USD which is 395.71 USD for India, and 564.1 USD for the Philippines (Siddiqui, 2023). Filipino workers are among the most sought-after in the global labor market because of their high level of education, technical expertise, experience, awareness in internationally accepted rules of behavior, proficiency in spoken English, and communication skill, etcetera. Salman (2022), citing Amin⁴ states that remittance inflow to Bangladesh could triple if the country were able to send more skilled workforce abroad. Therefore, scholars emphasize the need to invest in skill development training (Salman, 2022).

The skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, especially in areas like professional technical skills, language proficiency, and cultural awareness, remain a significant barrier to improving their employability and wage earnings (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017). In this context, the government of Bangladesh has taken steps to promote skills development, including the establishment of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE) in 2001 and the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) in 2019. However, despite these efforts, the shortage of skilled workers persists, and the country's aspirations are at risk without addressing these gaps. Therefore, it is overarching significance and vital to analyze skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers and ascertain key skill development areas to promote overseas employment and remittance earnings.

1.3 Research Problem

A research problem identifies gaps in the existing knowledge that the researcher seeks to address, which may be practical, aiming to solve a real-world issue, or theoretical, aiming to expand existing knowledge (McCombes & George, 2022). According to Miles (2017),

⁴ Mr. Ruhul Amin is the Principal of Barisal Polytechnic Institute as of 2022.

the research problem defines what will be studied, offering a clear focus for the research and identifying the variables to be investigated. The problem statement provides the rationale for addressing the identified issue. Based on these theoretical foundations, the problem statement for this study, titled ‘Skill Gap Analysis of the Migrant Workers of Bangladesh’, is outlined below.

In Bangladesh, remittance inflows are the second-largest source of foreign currency, following the textile industry. In fact, if the cost of importing industrial goods is accounted for, the net income from remittances surpasses earnings from the apparel sector (Siddiqui, 2005, p. 75). Despite being a vital source of foreign currency, the remittance sector has long faced numerous challenges, including high migration fees especially for low-skilled jobs, low wages, lack of information on migration opportunities and risks, discrimination, exploitation, abuse, and inadequate protective services for workers (ILO, 2022). Moreover, external challenges, such as political instability in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, fluctuating oil prices, and the rise of automation and digitalization, have further compounded the difficulties in maximizing remittance inflows.

Automation and digitalization present particular challenges for Bangladesh, as the majority of its migrant workers are unskilled. In the era of Industry 4.0, technological advancements such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, 3D printing, and genetic engineering are rapidly transforming industries, shifting from manual labor to machine-based processes. Although automation and digitalization may address some labor gaps in sectors like manufacturing and blue-collar jobs, they are unlikely to meet the needs of skilled jobs, particularly in the service sector. Consequently, the demand for unskilled labor is expected to decrease, while there will be an increased demand for skilled workers, especially in service-related jobs. According to the DNI (2021), most Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are expected to face a shortfall of 2.5 million nurses and 400,000 doctors over the next decade, with many of these positions likely to be filled by workers from migration-sending countries such as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, etcetera. This growing demand presents opportunities for Bangladesh to send its skilled workforce, particularly to GCC countries, to address the shortage of skilled labor.

As global demand for skilled labor continues to rise, Bangladesh must urgently enhance its competitiveness by transforming its large unskilled workforce into a skilled one. To

achieve this transformation, Bangladesh must identify the skills required for employment, assess the skill deficiencies within its workforce, and prioritize areas for targeted skill development that align with the needs of overseas employers. While existing literature has explored the hardships faced by migrant workers, such as low wages and exploitation, there is a critical gap in understanding how skill mismatches directly affect wage outcomes and remittance performance (Rahman, 2017, p. 11). Moreover, the knowledge of skill requirements in the GCC countries is often outdated or fragmented, failing to align with the evolving demands of the international labor market. There is a growing need for specific competencies, including technical skills, language proficiency, and soft skills such as communication and cultural awareness, to meet employers' demands (Hamdan, 2025). Additionally, there is a disconnect between theoretical policy frameworks on skill development and their practical implementation. Short-term training programs in Bangladesh often fail to address the real-world needs of employers in the GCC region. Much of the existing research on labor migration remains qualitative, descriptive, or based on outdated data, with a lack of comprehensive empirical studies that integrate skill gaps, labor market demands, wage outcomes, and remittance flows within a unified framework (Rahman, 2017, p. 2).

This study aims to fill these gaps by assessing the essential competencies required for skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the GCC countries, identifying specific skill deficiencies among Bangladeshi migrant workers, and prioritizing sectors for targeted skill development. Using regression analysis, the study evaluates the impact of various skills on wage earnings. The findings provide actionable insights for enhancing Bangladesh's overseas employment strategy, improving worker readiness for skilled and semi-skilled jobs in the GCC region, and maximizing remittance inflows, ultimately contributing to Bangladesh's economic development.

1.4 Rationale of the Study

The rationale for this study arises from the urgent need to align Bangladesh's worker sending model with the evolving global demand for skilled workers, particularly in the GCC region. Bangladesh has long relied on its migrant workforce as a significant source of foreign exchange, with millions of workers contributing substantially through remittances. However, the current trend of sending unskilled labor limits wage potential and exposes workers to substandard working conditions. While migration provides vital economic support for many families, it has not fully translated into long-term

socioeconomic development due to the persistent reliance on low-skilled labor. Compared to peer labor-sending countries like India and the Philippines, Bangladesh lags behind in equipping its workforce with the skills required to secure higher wages and better job security abroad. These skill gaps not only hamper individual earning potential but also limit the broader economic benefits of migration. As Siddiqui & Farabi (2021) note, skill gaps restrict the capacity of migration to enhance both the workers' livelihoods and the national economy.

In response to these challenges, this study seeks to identify and prioritize the critical skills required for the international labor market, particularly within the context of the GCC countries. By focusing on skill development that aligns with the existing needs and competencies in the GCC, the study aims to facilitate strategic resource allocation for targeted training programs. The objective is to develop a practical framework that assesses skill readiness and its impact on wages and remittances. This approach will support more effective policymaking, ensuring that training initiatives are designed to enhance the earning capacity and job security of Bangladeshi migrant workforce. Ultimately, this study aims to increase the number of potential skilled and semi-skilled workers for overseas employment, and in doing so, to create substantial long-term socioeconomic development for Bangladesh.

This research holds significant value at both national and international levels. Bangladesh's overseas employment strategy is a critical driver of foreign exchange earnings, with over 16 million⁵ Bangladeshi workers having migrated to more than 160 countries from 1976 to 2023, contributing over USD 297 billion in remittances (Mirdha & Hasan, 2024); (BMET, 2024). These remittances play a vital role in improving household livelihoods, supporting education, healthcare, and rural development across the country (Alam, 2025). However, Bangladesh's over-reliance on low-skilled labor continues to result in lower wages and poor working conditions for many of its migrant workers. This not only diminishes the developmental impact of remittances but also exposes workers to higher risks of exploitation and early repatriation (Siddiqui & Farabi, 2021).

With the rise of Industry 4.0, characterized by automation, there has been a global surge in the demand for skilled labor, presenting both risks and opportunities. This is a risk for

⁵ Between 1976 and 2023, 16 million workers went abroad for employment. However, this does not mean that 16 million workers are currently working abroad, as BMET does not track the number of returnee migrants.

Bangladesh, as the majority of its workforce is unskilled and undereducated. However, it also presents an opportunity if Bangladesh can successfully transition its workforce from unskilled to skilled worker. A projected global shortage of over 85 million skilled workers by 2030 (DNI, 2021) highlights the urgency for Bangladesh to act swiftly and invest in upskilling its workforce to maintain its competitive edge. The GCC region continues to be the primary destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers, making it essential for Bangladesh to align its training efforts with the region's specific labor market demands. Doing so will improve wage prospects, job security, and enhance the overall impact of remittances.

By identifying skill requirements and skill gaps, this study reveals priority skill development areas for enhanced wages and increased remittances for Bangladesh. The ultimate outcome of the research is to increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers, thereby boosting their earning potential and job security, optimizing remittance inflows, and ensuring the sustainability of Bangladesh's migration and development policies. Therefore, the study is both timely and essential in guiding Bangladesh toward developing a more resilient, skilled, and globally competitive workforce.

1.5 Research Objectives

Wojcik (2025) states that research objectives articulate the specific goals a study aims to achieve. They decompose the overall research aim into actionable, focused tasks that guide the research process. By providing clear direction, objectives help maintain focus throughout the study, ensuring that every aspect contributes to addressing the overarching research question. Well-defined objectives also assist in determining the necessary data and inform decisions regarding the research design and methodology. Building on the identified research problem, which highlights the critical role of skill acquisition in enhancing employability, income growth, and empowerment, the objective of this study is to explore how the development of human capital influences these outcomes. Specifically, the research seeks to investigate the pathways through which skill development impacts individuals' economic and social mobility, providing a deeper understanding of the relationship between human capital and long-term empowerment. This exploration aims to inform strategies that can optimize skill-building initiatives for better career prospects and broader life opportunities. Broad and specific objectives of the research are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs:

1.5.1 **Broad Objective**

To identify the critical skill development priorities necessary for equipping a larger pool of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers, with the goal of maximizing remittance earnings from international worker migration.

1.5.2 **Specific Objectives**

- To systematically identify the specific skill sets most in demand by employers in the GCC countries for migrant workers.
- To critically assess the key skill deficiencies among Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC region.
- To prioritize the key skill development areas necessary for optimizing remittance inflows from Bangladeshi migrant workers

1.6 **Research Questions**

According to Wojcik (2025), research questions specify what the researcher seeks to investigate. They direct the inquiry by focusing on specific issues, phenomena, or relationships, providing a clear framework for the study. Typically phrased as questions, they often begin with words like how, why, what, or to what extent, and serve to define the scope and direction of the research. The research questions will serve as the foundation for data collection and analysis, ensuring that the study stays aligned with its objectives and provides valuable answers to the key issues raised by the research problem. To further refine the direction of this study, the research objectives are translated into specific research questions that will guide the investigation. These questions are designed to explore the core aspects of how human capital development influences employability, income growth, and empowerment. By addressing these questions, the study aims to uncover the mechanisms through which skill acquisition impacts economic and social mobility, while also providing insights into the broader implications for individual empowerment. Research questions for the study are appended below:

- What specific skill sets are most in demand by employers in the GCC countries for migrant workers, particularly those from Bangladesh?
- What are the key skill deficiencies among Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC region, from both the employers' and workers' perspectives?

- How can skill development programs for Bangladeshi migrant workers be prioritized to close the identified gaps, and what impact would these improvements have on remittance flows?

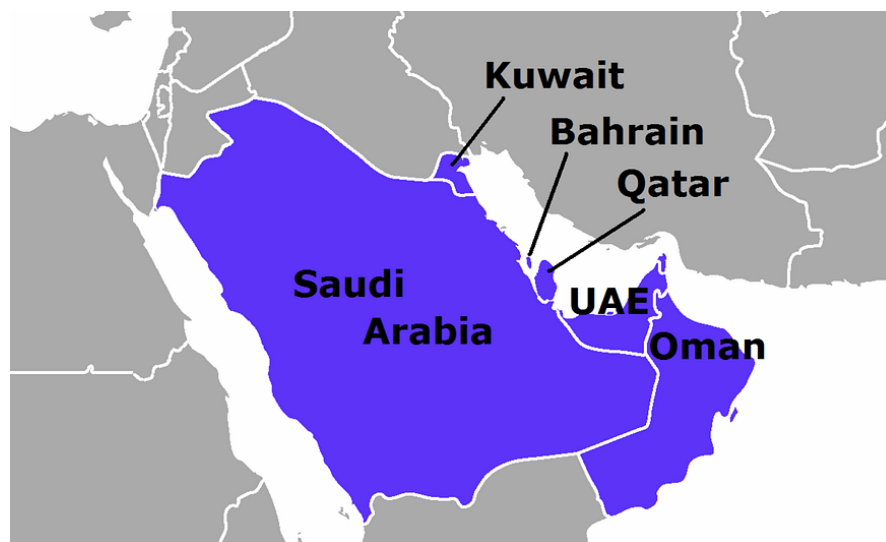
1.7 Scopes of the Study

The study aims to ascertain skills needed for overseas employment, identify the existing skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, and prioritize areas for skill development that can enhance remittance earnings. Specifically, the scope of this study includes:

1.7.1 Geographic Scope

The study focuses on six GCC countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These nations have been selected due to their cultural and structural similarities, as well as their significance as the leading destinations for Bangladeshi migrants. Together, the GCC countries accounted for 77.52% of Bangladeshi overseas workers between 1976 and 2022, highlighting their dominant role in migration flows, as reported by BMET (2025). Furthermore, they contribute significantly to Bangladesh's economy, GCC countries collectively account for 62.11% of the total remittance inflows, reinforcing their central role in supporting Bangladesh's economy (Bangladesh Bank, FY 2023-2024, 2025). Political Map of the GCC Countries is shown in *Figure-1*:

Figure 1: Political Map of the GCC Countries



Source: Cartalucci (2012)

1.7.2 Sectoral Scope

This study focuses on the service sector, which is the largest employment generating sector in both the global and GCC economies. According to the World Bank (2024), the service sector accounts for 63.16% of jobs in the GCC region, while globally, it provides 53.77% employment (The Global Economy, 2024). In the GCC countries, the service sector plays a crucial role in the economy, contributing 51.6% of the economy in the UAE, 40.9% in Kuwait, 53.2% in Saudi Arabia, 60.4% in Bahrain, 51.8% in Oman, and 49.5% in Qatar (The World Factbook, 2024). These figures highlight the significant impact of the service sector in the economic landscape of both the GCC and the global economy.

1.7.3 Skill Level Scope

The wage gap between Bangladeshi migrant workers and those from countries such as the Philippines and China is largely due to variations in skill levels. In 2023, Bangladeshi workers sent an average monthly remittance of \$203.33, significantly lower than \$564.10 sent by Filipino workers and \$532.71 sent by Chinese workers (Siddiqui, 2023). This disparity highlights the generally lower skill levels of Bangladeshi workers compared to their Filipino and Chinese counterparts. Although Bangladesh is the sixth largest source of migrant workers globally, it ranks only 8th in remittance inflows, indicating the negative impact of skill gaps within its workforce (The Business Standard, 2024). Had Bangladeshi workers possessed skill levels similar to those of workers from other manpower-exporting countries, Bangladesh would have ranked higher in remittance receipts, at least sixth largest remittance receiving country. This emphasizes the urgent need for Bangladesh to invest in skill development programs for its workers prior to their deployment abroad. In the light of the foregoing, this study specifically examines skilled workers in the GCC countries, as well as semi-skilled workers who can transition into skilled roles with proper training.

1.8 Operationalization of Key Terms

1.8.1 **Skill.** Skill is the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance. It is a developed aptitude or ability (merriam-webster, 2022).

Skills include the knowledge and technique acquired for doing any specific work, or the capability and ability to produce goods and services as per required standard of industrial and professional demand of national and international markets (NSDA, 2022-2027, p. 10).

Skill is the fundamental knowledge needed for learning, work, and life. Literacy and numeracy are foundational, essential or basic skills. Skills include a range of abilities that individuals need to live successfully in contemporary society; such as hard and soft skills, communication, problem-Solving, self-management, interpersonal skills, technology proficiency, etcetera (ILO, 2021).

However, after considering various perspectives on skills, this research adopts the definition provided by the ILO (2021) as the basis for its analysis:

'Skill is the fundamental knowledge needed for learning, work, and life. Literacy and numeracy are foundational, essential or basic skills. Skills include a range of abilities that individuals need to live successfully in contemporary society; such as hard and soft skills, communication, problem-Solving, self-management, interpersonal skills, technology proficiency, etcetera'.

1.8.2 Skill Levels. BMET has categorized migrant workers into four skill levels: professionals, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled/less skilled workers (BMET, 2025), (ADB, 2016):

The professionals are the doctors, engineers, teachers, accountants, computer operators, pharmacists, nurses, etcetera (BMET, 2025).

Mechanics, welders, electricians, plumbers, garment workers, certified care givers, etcetera are skilled. Skilled workers need to undergo vocational education and training (BMET, 2025). They need to acquire knowledge of specific skills that can be learned from school, workshops, and experience within the field.

Semi-skilled workers include farmers, gardeners, shop assistants, etcetera (BMET, 2025).

Cleaners, domestic helps, menial workers have been categorized as unskilled laborers (BMET, 2025).

1.8.3 Hard Skills. Hard skills are also known as technical skills (skill types, 2022). Hard skills are the basic knowledge and qualifications related to a particular job or profession. Examples of hard skills are education, technical skills, language skills, physical fitness, etcetera.

1.8.4 Soft Skills. Soft skills are the personal qualities of an individual which substantiates hard skills (skill types, 2022). Soft skills are additional qualities that help perform better in job, career, assignments, and work for enhanced productivity. Examples

of soft skills are communication skills, learning skills, leadership skills, manners and etiquette, etcetera

1.8.5 Skill Gap. Skill gap is the inconsistency between the skills an employer expects their employees to have, and actual skills employees possess (bamboohr, 2022). The mismatch between expected skills and possess skills makes it challenging for the organization to achieve their desired goal.

1.8.6 Migration. Migration is defined as departure of a citizen from his/her country for the purpose of employment in a trade or profession in any foreign country (Overseas Employment and Migrants Act , 2013).

1.8.7 Workers. Any person who is employed to do physical or mental work for wages, especially in order to earn a living as in a trade, industry, business, office, farm, ranch, etcetera is a worker (Yourdictionary, 2022).

1.8.8 Migrant Workers. According to UN General Assembly (GA) resolution, any person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national (GA resolution 45/158, 1990).

According to Overseas Employment and Migration Act-2013 (2013) Migrant workers are any citizen of Bangladesh who, for wages is in the planning process to migrate for work or is departing to any foreign country for work' or 'is employed in a trade or profession in any foreign country' or 'has returned to Bangladesh at the end of the tenure of employment or without having completed the tenure of employment in a trade or profession from a foreign country.

After considering multiple viewpoints on migrant workers, this research adopts the definition outlined in GA Resolution 45/158 (1990):

'Any person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national'.

1.8.9 Employer. Employer for the purpose of overseas employment means an overseas or Bangladeshi person or organization or entity who has hired the worker (Overseas Employment and Migrants Act , 2013).

1.8.10 Overseas Employment. Overseas employment means the employment of a Bangladeshi citizen in a foreign country outside the legal authority of Bangladesh (Overseas Employment and Migrants Act , 2013).

1.9 **Outline of the Thesis**

The thesis begins with Chapter I: Introduction, which presents the background of labor migration from Bangladesh, defines the research problem, and outlines the rationale for the study. It also specifies the research objectives and questions, and includes definitions of key terms to ensure conceptual clarity.

Chapter II: Literature Review provides a comprehensive overview of the historical context of international migration, key determinants, existing skill gaps, and the socio-economic implications of migration for Bangladesh. It also reviews relevant theoretical frameworks and highlights critical research gaps.

Chapter III: Research Methodology describes the study's philosophical foundations, including its ontological and epistemological positions. It outlines the methodological approach, data collection and analysis techniques, sampling strategy, and ethical considerations.

Chapter IV: An Overview of Migration from Bangladesh examines various migration channels, government initiatives on skill development, the influence of Saudi Vision 2030, and the utilization of remittances. This chapter concludes by identifying key challenges faced by migrant workers.

Chapter V: Findings and Data Analysis present the results from both qualitative and quantitative analyses, including thematic patterns, skill rankings, and regression analyses.

Chapter VI: Challenges in the path to migration discusses the main difficulties encountered by migrant workers in destination countries and the barriers faced by employers in hiring skilled Bangladeshi workers, concluding with practical recommendations for improvement.

Chapter VII: Discussion and Implications integrate findings through triangulation, analyzes the relationship between skills, employability, and salary outcomes, and offers a final prioritization of skills for development.

Lastly, Chapter VIII: Conclusions summarizes the key contributions of the study, outlines its limitations, and suggests avenues for future research.

1.10 **Chapter Conclusion**

Chapter I has introduced the fundamental issues surrounding the skill gap among Bangladeshi migrant workers and its implications for overseas employment, wage

disparities, and remittance earnings. It has outlined the economic importance of labor migration for Bangladesh and highlighted the persistent challenges stemming from the over-reliance on unskilled labor. Despite the significant remittance contributions made by Bangladeshi migrants, particularly in the GCC region, the lack of alignment between labor market demands and the skills of the migrant workforce continues to hinder both individual and national economic progress.

The background and rationale of the study emphasize the urgency of transforming Bangladesh's labor export strategy through targeted skill development that responds to evolving global market needs, especially amid the challenges and opportunities presented by the 4.0 IR. This transformation is particularly critical in the service sector within the six GCC countries, which dominate both the remittance inflow and the demand for migrant labor.

The research problem clearly identifies a gap in current knowledge and policy implementation concerning the skills required for improved labor market outcomes abroad. The study aims to bridge this gap through a mixed-methods approach, with specific focus on understanding the skill demands, assessing existing deficiencies, and prioritizing skill development for Bangladeshi workers. This is reflected in the defined research objectives and questions, which guide the overall inquiry.

Furthermore, key operational definitions have been provided to establish conceptual clarity around the study's core terms, such as skill, skill levels, hard and soft skills, skill gaps, migrant workers, and overseas employment, ensuring consistency in analysis and interpretation throughout the thesis.

The next chapter will present a comprehensive review of existing literature and theoretical frameworks that contextualize the current study within global discourses on labor migration, human capital development, remittances, and labor market dynamics. This will further solidify the study's foundation and illustrate how it builds upon and contributes to the existing body of knowledge.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter II: Literature Review

According to Cantero (2019), a literature review is a critical evaluation of the existing research on a specific topic. It synthesizes⁶ and analyzes published works in relation to the research questions and objectives. Rather than merely summarizing⁷ studies or listing findings, a literature review provides an in-depth assessment of key ideas, identifying similarities and differences between sources, and highlighting gaps or areas where further research is needed. This process helps readers understand the broader discourse on the topic, its development, and areas where future research can contribute to the field. In this study, the researcher conducted a comprehensive review of the skills needed and skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers deployed in the service sector in GCC countries, focusing on key skill development areas for Bangladesh. The overview was based on recent and relevant articles published in reputable journals. Key topics addressed include the skills required, skill gaps, and the challenges faced by both employers and workers in the GCC region. This critical review not only helped identify the research gap but also contributed to the development of the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study.

2.1 Historical Perspective of Migration

Migration has been an intrinsic aspect of human history, with evidence of human movement embedded in both genetic and cultural traits. Fisher (2014) argues that migration has always been central to human identity, beginning around 100,000 years ago with the development of complex languages, social structures, and technological innovations. Early human migration was largely influenced by environmental factors, such as climate change and the search for fertile land, leading Homo sapiens to expand beyond Africa between 60,000 to 70,000 years ago (Fisher, 2014). This migration eventually resulted in the widespread settlement of humans across Eurasia, Southeast Asia, and the Americas, facilitating the development of diverse cultures and societies.

Fisher (2014) also highlights the impact of climate change on migration patterns, with people moving to more fertile areas as regions became inhospitable. By 15,000 BCE, human bands had migrated across North America via the Beringia land bridge, marking the expansion of human populations worldwide. Over the centuries, migration continued to be shaped by factors such as climate, natural resources, and technological

⁶ *Synthesize means to re-organize, re-shuffle, or re-interpret evidence including results (Cantero, 2019).*

⁷ *Summarize means to recapitulate the important material of the source (Cantero, 2019).*

advancements (Fisher, 2014). The concept of Muhajir in Islam also reflects the cultural and religious dimensions of migration, where individuals or groups migrated for religious or socio-political reasons (Surah An-Nahl Verses 41, 2022).

Furthermore, migration has been instrumental in knowledge accumulation and the spread of religions. For example, during the medieval period, European universities sought to attract migrant students to foster intellectual growth (Fisher, 2014). Migration also played a key role in the colonization and globalization processes, with European powers sending settlers, merchants, and missionaries to colonize Africa, the Americas, and Asia from the 15th century onward (Fisher, 2014).

The transatlantic slave trade between the 16th and 19th centuries marked one of the most destructive migrations in history, with millions of Africans forcibly moved to the Americas (Fisher, 2014). Similarly, post-WWII migration was shaped by labor shortages, with programs like the Bracero Program in the U.S. and Gastarbeiter in Germany facilitating the migration of workers from Mexico and Turkey, respectively (Fisher, 2014).

2.2 Determinants of International Migration

Migration has been a fundamental characteristic of human history. Hatton and Williamson (1998, p. 4), citing Douglas Massey, argue that in the early stages of emigration, factors such as market penetration, network formation, and cumulative causation play a predominant role in influencing migration flows. However, as migration matures, wage differentials increasingly become the central determinant. Over time, with continued migration and economic development in the sending countries, international wage gaps begin to narrow, and improved access to capital, credit, and insurance reduces the motivation for outward migration. As the sending country urbanizes and develops, net migration tends to decline, and in some cases, the country may eventually transform into a net importer of immigrants.

Fisher (2014, p. 124) complements this perspective by noting that migration often arises from dissatisfaction with the current living conditions or aspirations for higher wages and better livelihoods. The globalized economic system, which links production and consumption across borders, has accelerated migration flows through mechanisms like ‘brain drain’ for skilled professionals and ‘muscle drain’ for manual laborers. Fisher also emphasizes that human migration has a deep historical continuity, spanning over the past

200,000 years. While the motives, such as access to natural resources, fertile land, mineral wealth, and improved socio-economic conditions, have remained consistent, contemporary migration displays unique patterns shaped by globalization and technological advancement.

Manning and Tiffany (2020, pp. 4-6) migration can take various forms, each shaped by different social, economic, or environmental factors. Home Community Migration refers to internal movements within a community, often driven by familial connections, such as marriage alliances between families. Colonization, on the other hand, involves groups leaving their homeland to establish new communities, typically mirroring their own cultural practices, without integrating into the languages or customs of the local populations. Historical examples of this include European settlers migrating to the Americas or Australasia. Whole Community Migration occurs when entire communities are forced to relocate due to external pressures such as natural disasters, famines, or evictions. In contrast, Cross Community Migration involves individuals or groups moving from one community to another with the goal of integration, often for economic or social benefits, either for themselves or for the host community. Each type of migration plays a significant role in shaping the movement of people and the dynamics of the societies they interact with.

2.3 Genesis of Migration from Bangladesh

According to Etzold & Mallick (2015), the history of migration in Bangladesh is deeply rooted in its past, with the mobility of Bengali populations within the Bengal delta region spanning several centuries. Contemporary labor migration can be traced back to the colonial era. Currently, around 0.5 million people migrate from Bangladesh annually to work abroad, significantly contributing to the national GDP (Etzold & Mallick, 2015). The migration trend intensified post-World War II, as the UK faced a labor shortage and began allowing foreign workers to enter the country. This led to the migration of a small but notable number of young Bangladeshi workers to the UK during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Following the independence of Bangladesh, the flow of migration to the UK continued. However, in 1973, the oil boom in the Middle Eastern countries and the corresponding rise in demand for inexpensive labor catalyzed a rapid surge in migration from Bangladesh to the Gulf region. The GCC countries, particularly the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, have become the most attractive destinations for Bangladeshi workers. Apart from the Gulf states, other significant destinations for Bangladeshi migrants include

Malaysia, the United States of America (USA), and the UK. In 2014, Singapore emerged as the third-largest destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers (Etzold & Mallick, 2015). Additionally, countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Mauritius have become notable destinations for Bangladeshi female workers, with many employed as domestic workers and cleaners.

2.4 Migration Destination Countries from Bangladesh

2.4.1 Top 10 Destination Countries from Bangladesh (1976 to 2022)

According to BMET (2025), Saudi Arabia remains the most preferred destination, attracting the highest number of migrants accounting 5.28 million, which accounts for 35.75% of the total. The UAE follows with around 2.5 million migrants, representing 16.95%. Oman stands third with 11.89%, welcoming over 1.75 million individuals. Malaysia and Singapore also attract considerable migration flows, comprising 7.50% and 5.99% respectively. Countries like Qatar (5.73%) and Kuwait (4.42%) also serve as notable migration hubs. On the other hand, Bahrain, Lebanon, and Jordan collectively make up a smaller portion of the total migration, contributing 2.78%, 1.82%, and 1.42% respectively. These figures indicate a strong regional migration trend towards GCC countries, primarily driven by labor market demands and economic opportunities.

2.4.2 Top 10 Destination Countries in 2024

According BMET (2025), in 2024, Saudi Arabia continued to be the leading destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers, receiving 628,564 workers, representing approximately 62.11% of the total migration. Malaysia followed with 93,632 workers, accounting for 9.25%, and Qatar attracted 74,422 workers, or 7.35% of the migration flow. Other GCC countries, including the UAE and Kuwait, also hosted significant numbers of migrants, with 47,166 (4.66%) and 33,031 (3.26%) workers, respectively. Migration to non-GCC countries such as Jordan (15,413), Lebanon (4,225), Oman (358), Libya (782), and Sudan (55) was notably lower, highlighting the concentration of Bangladeshi migration in the GCC region.

2.4.3 Region-wise Migration Destination between 1976 and 2022

According BMET (2025), the majority of migrants are heading toward GCC countries, which account for a staggering 77.52% of the total. This reflects the region's long-standing demand for labor across construction, domestic, and service sectors. In comparison, Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore receive 13.49% of migrants,

driven by opportunities in manufacturing and household work. A smaller segment, only 3.24%, migrates to other Middle Eastern countries like Lebanon and Jordan. This regional breakdown underscores how economic opportunities and labor demand in the GCC dominate migration trends, while Southeast Asia continues to serve as a secondary yet significant destination for South Asian migrant workers.

2.5 Top 10 Remittance-Sending Countries to Bangladesh in FY 2023–24

According to the latest report by Bangladesh Bank (2025), remittance inflows continue to play a crucial role in Bangladesh's economy, with significant contributions from migrant workers abroad. The top ten remittance-receiving countries for Bangladesh in 2024 include the USA, which emerged as the largest source, contributing approximately 17.4% of the total remittances. The UAE and Saudi Arabia remain key sources, accounting for 14.2% and 13.2%, respectively. Other notable contributors include the UK (9.9%), Malaysia (8.5%), and Kuwait (5.5%), reflecting the diversification of migration destinations. Additionally, Qatar and Singapore have become important sources, further broadening the geographical base of Bangladesh's remittance inflows.

2.5.1 Regional Breakdown of Remittance Inflows (FY 2023–24)

According to data from the Bangladesh Bank (2025), remittances from GCC countries constitute the largest share of Bangladesh's total remittance inflows, accounting for 62.11%. This highlights the pivotal role of the GCC region in sustaining the national economy. In comparison, Southeast Asian nations contribute 9.25% of the total remittances. Western countries including the USA and the UK alongside other developed economies, contribute a significant 17.4%. Additionally, remittance inflows from other regions, comprising various Asian and African countries, make up the remaining 3.2%. This geographic breakdown underscores the continued reliance on Middle Eastern labor markets while acknowledging the growing importance of diversified global sources.

2.6 Dimensions of Economic Sectors

According to Kenton & Murry (2022), the concept of an economic sector refers to a grouping of companies engaged in similar business activities, products, or services, such as the extraction of natural resources and agriculture. Dividing an economy into different sectors allows economists to analyze economic activity and understand whether an economy is expanding or contracting. While there are debates about the number of sectors within an economy, economists commonly recognize four economic sectors, each

contributing to the overall development and functioning of society. The Primary Sector is foundational, focusing on the extraction of natural resources and agricultural activities, including industries like mining, fishing, agriculture, and hunting. These sectors provide the raw materials essential for other economic activities (Kenton & Murry, 2022). Moving beyond raw materials, the Secondary Sector transforms these resources into finished goods through manufacturing, construction, and processing. Key industries in this sector include automobile production, textiles, chemical engineering, aerospace, and shipbuilding, all of which add value to raw materials and produce goods necessary for consumption and further industrial progress (Kenton & Murry, 2022). The Tertiary or Service Sector supports the economy by providing services rather than tangible goods, covering industries like retail, transportation, healthcare, banking, tourism, and legal services. This sector is vital for facilitating the exchange of goods and services, enabling smooth economic operations (Kenton & Murry, 2022). Finally, the Quaternary Sector revolves around knowledge-based activities, focusing on the use of information and technology to foster innovation and drive improvements in services. It includes research and development, education, consulting, and IT services, playing a crucial role in technological advancements and intellectual progress (Kenton & Murry, 2022). Each sector builds upon the others, contributing to the overall economic development and technological evolution.

2.6.1 Global Economic Share in the Service Sector

The service sector encompasses a broad range of services, from office cleaning to rock concerts to brain surgery. This sector plays a pivotal role in advanced economies, where it has become the largest and most significant sector of the global economy. According to Scott & Velasquez (2022), the service sector is integral to the functioning of economies around the world, providing essential services that support both businesses and consumers. Recent data from The Global Economy (2024) highlights the prominence of the service sector, noting that it accounted for 53.77% of the global economy in 2022. This signifies the growing importance of services in driving global economic activity.

2.6.2 Service Sector Contribution to the Economy in GCC Countries

According to the World Factbook (2024), the service sector plays a significant role in the economies of GCC countries, reflecting their transition toward more diversified economic structures. According to recent data published by World Factbook (2024), the contribution

of the service sector varies significantly across GCC nations, with the service sector becoming increasingly dominant in several countries. In the UAE, the service sector holds 51.6% of the economy, marking its central role in the country's economic structure. The industrial sector accounts for 47.38%, while the agricultural sector remains marginal at only 0.90%. In Kuwait, the service sector contributes 40.9%, with the industrial sector leading at 58.7%, and the agricultural sector comprising a negligible 0.4%. Similarly, Saudi Arabia shows a strong service sector contribution, with 53.2% of the economy engaged in services, while the industrial sector makes up 44.2%, and agriculture represents just 2.6%. In Bahrain, the service sector dominates, contributing 60.4% of the economy, while the industrial sector holds 39.3%, and agriculture remains minimal at 0.3%. Oman also exhibits a robust service sector, contributing 51.8% to the economy, with 46.4% in industrial activities and 1.8% in agriculture. Finally, in Qatar, the service sector contributes 49.5%, closely followed by the industrial sector at 50.3%, while the agricultural sector accounts for a mere 0.2%.

2.6.3 Global Employment Distribution in Economic Sectors

In 2021, the service sector accounted for 50.32% of global employment, while the combined total of the agricultural, industrial, and quaternary sectors employed 49.68% of the global workforce (Dyvik, 2024). According to Dyvik (2024), approximately 1.64 billion people were employed in the service sector globally, while the agricultural sector employed 866.3 million, and the industrial sector employed 753 million individuals. These figures demonstrate the growing dominance of the service sector in global employment, reflecting its increasing relevance in both developed and developing economies.

2.6.4 Service Sector Employment in GCC Countries between 1919 and 2021

The service sector serves as the primary source of employment across GCC countries, engaging an average of 63.16% of the workforce (World Bank, 2024). Among these nations, Saudi Arabia leads with 77% of its labor force employed in service-related industries, followed by Kuwait at 73% and the United Arab Emirates at 71%. Bahrain also shows a strong service-sector presence with 64% of its workforce engaged in such roles. In contrast, Oman and Qatar report relatively lower proportions, with 48% and 45% of their labor forces, respectively, employed in the service sector (World Bank, 2024).

This sectoral distribution reflects the broader economic diversification efforts within the region, particularly in the more service-oriented economies.

2.7 Dimensions of Skills

Scholars and writers have classified skills into various dimensions, and there is a range of perspectives on how skills can be categorized. These classifications include general skills, special skills, hard and soft skills, and others such as job skills, professional skills, organizational skills, management skills, and life skills (skill types, 2022). The following sections will discuss the different dimensions as described by various scholars:

2.7.1 General Skills. General skills are foundational abilities that are crucial across various job roles and essential in any workplace (skill types, 2022). According to Skill Types (2022), these include leadership, the ability to guide and inspire a team towards achieving common objectives; teamwork, which involves collaborating and cooperating effectively with others to reach shared goals; time management, the skill to efficiently organize and prioritize tasks to meet deadlines; and self-motivation, the drive to complete tasks independently without requiring external encouragement. These skills are universally valued as they enhance productivity, foster positive work environments, and contribute to individual and team success across diverse industries.

2.7.2 Special Skills. Special skills are more specific and tailored to particular roles or tasks (skill types, 2022). According to Skill Types (2022) special skills are more targeted and specific to particular roles or tasks, distinguishing them from general skills. Personal traits/attitudes are innate or developed qualities, such as patience and self-reliance, that are essential for handling specific tasks effectively. Transferable skills are versatile abilities that can be applied across a wide range of jobs and industries, such as time management, language proficiency, and problem-solving. These skills are often cultivated through education, internships, and volunteer experiences, making them adaptable to various work environments. Lastly, knowledge-based skills are specialized competencies required in specific fields like administration, management, and accounting. These skills are typically developed through formal education and hands-on work experience, enabling individuals to excel in their chosen professions. Together, these special skills ensure that individuals are well-equipped to succeed in their specific roles and contribute to specialized industries.

2.7.3 Hard and Soft Skills. Hard skills are also known as technical skills (skill types, 2022). Hard skills are the basic knowledge and qualifications related to a particular job or profession. Examples of hard skills are education, experience, physical fitness, professional technical skills, ICT skills, language proficiency, and knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants, etcetera. Soft skills are the personal qualities of an individual which substantiates hard skills (skill types, 2022). Soft skills are additional qualities that help perform better in job, career, assignments, and work for enhanced productivity. Examples of soft skills are communication skills, manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, team work, commitment, timeliness, trustworthiness, work without supervision, motivation, personal bearing, and adaptability to new technology

2.7.4 Miscellaneous Skills for Career and Personal Development. Various skills are integral to achieving success both professionally and personally. Job skills are specific to particular roles and are highly valued by employers as they directly impact job performance and efficiency (skill types, 2022). Professional skills, such as dedication, integrity, self-confidence, patience, and ethics, are fundamental across all careers, ensuring success in professional settings (skill types, 2022). Organizational skills are essential for managing tasks and resources within an organization, enabling individuals and teams to meet deadlines and prioritize effectively. Key examples include goal setting, project management, multi-tasking, and scheduling (skill types, 2022). Management skills enhance an individual's ability to oversee teams, resolve conflicts, and tackle problems. Skills like coaching, interviewing, and people management are critical for career development (skill types, 2022). Leadership skills are especially crucial in managerial roles, as they help individuals inspire and guide teams toward organizational goals. These skills include decision-making, delegation, and strategic thinking (skill types, 2022). Team building skills encourage cooperation and collaboration, fostering an environment where teams can achieve collective objectives through communication, flexibility, and mutual respect (cambridge, 2022). Analytical skills enable individuals to organize and interpret data, facilitating problem-solving and informed decision-making. This includes skills like data interpretation, reporting, and critical thinking (Duszynski, 2022). Personal skills, a component of emotional intelligence, are essential for managing stress, showing empathy, and maintaining effective communication, contributing to both personal and professional growth (skills youneed, 2022). Finally, life skills such as communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and resilience are crucial for navigating daily

challenges and maintaining overall well-being, ensuring individuals can manage life's demands effectively (Davis, 2022). These diverse skill sets are fundamental to thriving in both career and personal life.

2.8 Most In-Demand Skills for Overseas Employment in the GCC Countries

2.8.1 Top 10 Most In-Demand Hard Skills for Overseas Employment

In a survey conducted by Buffett (2022), employers and recruiters were asked to identify the most in-demand hard skills in the workforce. Respondents were allowed to choose multiple skills from a predefined list, and the results revealed that analytical skills ranked as the most sought-after hard skill, with 53% of respondents considering it crucial. This emphasis on analytical skills is particularly relevant in today's data-driven environment, where data and information play a pivotal role in shaping marketing strategies and decision-making processes. Following closely behind, 49% of respondents highlighted the importance of high-level Information Technology (IT) skills, while 47% emphasized the need for basic computer skills. Given the ongoing advancements in Industry 4.0, it is evident that IT and computer literacy are essential for maintaining competitiveness in the modern workplace. Other significant hard skills identified by respondents included customer service skills (44%), presentation skills (43%), team management (42%), and project management (39%). Additionally, 37% of employers expressed a preference for marketing skills, while writing skills were rated as important by 19% of respondents. Only 15% of employers identified graphic designing as one of the top ten most in-demand skills. These results underscore the broad range of hard skills valued by today's employers, with a clear emphasis on technological proficiency and interpersonal abilities.

2.8.2 Top 10 Most In-Demand Soft Skills for Overseas Employment

In a similar survey conducted by Buffett (2022), employers and recruiters were asked to identify the most in-demand soft skills for workers. The results revealed that teamwork is the most sought-after soft skill, with 57% of respondents considering it crucial. Communication skills followed closely behind, with 55% of employers highlighting their importance. The third most demanded soft skill was time management, with 46% of employers ranking it as essential. Other significant soft skills included problem-solving (45%), creativity (44%), leadership (40%), and organization (34%). Additionally, emotional intelligence was considered a key skill by 33% of respondents, while decision-making and stress management were highlighted by 28% and 15%, respectively. These

findings underscore the growing importance of interpersonal and cognitive skills in the modern workplace, reflecting the shift towards a more collaborative and adaptive workforce.

2.8.3 Core Competencies for Employability in the European Union

Wilson (2012) states that the European Commission identified key competencies essential for employability in a knowledge-based society, particularly in Europe. These competencies not only enhance personal fulfillment but also promote social inclusion, active citizenship, and employment opportunities. Among these essential skills are communication skills, which involve proficiency in both the mother tongue and foreign languages, enabling effective interaction across cultures. Mathematical competence refers to the ability to apply mathematical concepts and reasoning in various contexts. Competence in science and technology entails understanding and applying scientific principles and technological tools, which are vital in today's innovation-driven world. Digital competence emphasizes the skills required to use digital technologies efficiently and responsibly. The ability to learn to learn is crucial, as it enables individuals to acquire, process, and apply knowledge independently. Social and civic competence involves understanding social norms, civic duties, and engaging in democratic processes. An entrepreneurial spirit fosters innovation and initiative in business or workplace settings. Cultural awareness encourages understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, fostering global perspectives. Finally, the power of expression refers to the ability to articulate ideas clearly and effectively, both in writing and orally, which is indispensable for success in many fields. These competencies form a comprehensive foundation for individuals to thrive in both professional and personal domains.

2.8.4 Employers' Preference: Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills

To determine which skill sets are most valuable to employers and recruiters, Buffett (2022) conducted an in-depth study by interviewing and surveying over 200 recruiters and hiring managers. The study revealed that 61% of respondents believed soft skills are more important than hard skills when securing a job. A similar survey by LinkedIn found that 92% of employers and recruiters also prioritized soft skills over hard skills (Buffett, 2022). Another survey by the International Journal of Applied Management and Technology (Buffett, 2022) highlighted that soft skills are dominant factors across the global workforce. In fact, it is challenging to survive in business without them. When

interacting with colleagues, seniors, juniors, customers, and clients, the ability to effectively navigate the complexities of human behavior, psychology, and emotions is crucial. As a result, soft skills have become indispensable for being a competitive candidate in the era of Industry 4.0.

2.8.5 Shift in Employer Priorities: From CGPA to Soft Skills

Clark (2023), citing a survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) states that employers have long focused on relevant education and trade skills. However, in recent years, employers have shifted their focus from Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) to interpersonal skills, often referred to as ‘non-cognitive’ or ‘soft’ skills. Clark (2023), citing Derziel, further notes that employers are no longer only interested in candidates with the highest grades but are increasingly seeking individuals with strong character and excellent communication skills.

2.8.6 Promising Job Opportunities for Migrant Workers in the GCC Countries

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019, pp. 29-34), several job sectors in the GCC countries present promising employment opportunities, particularly for expatriate workers. The construction sector continues to be a major source of employment, with high demand for skilled labor. Jobs in catering and culinary services, including chefs, cooks, and waitstaff, are also prevalent due to the region's booming hospitality industry. Caregiving positions, especially for elderly and disabled individuals, are growing in demand as populations age. Carpentry workers are needed for both residential and commercial construction projects, while the retail sector seeks cashiers, salespersons, and other customer-facing roles. In healthcare, there is a consistent need for doctors, nurses, and medical assistants to support the growing healthcare infrastructure. Other sectors, such as domestic work, engineering, and education, also present employment opportunities, with roles ranging from housekeepers in the hospitality industry to teachers and security staff in schools. Masonry workers and logistics and manufacturing technicians are essential for maintaining infrastructure, while the real estate market provides opportunities in property management and sales. The tourism and hospitality industry continues to expand, offering roles in travel, accommodation, and related services. Additionally, the demand for technicians in electronics manufacturing and maintenance is increasing. These sectors collectively offer a wide range of job

opportunities, especially for migrant workers, supporting the diverse labor needs of the GCC countries.

2.9 Skill Gaps among Bangladeshi Workers

According to City & Guilds and IOM (2017, pp. 17.30,32), hard skill gaps include poor language abilities, physical unsuitability, lack of experience, and a low level of education, while soft skill gaps involve poor communication, insularity, behavioral issues, and untrustworthiness. These skill deficiencies significantly impact the employability and performance of Bangladeshi workers in international labor markets.

City & Guilds and IOM (2017, p. 14) identified in 2017 that about 1.3 million Bangladeshi workers were employed in Saudi Arabia, with 50% having completed 6-10 years of schooling, 30% completing 1-5 years, and only 10% holding secondary or vocational certificates. The remaining 10% had no formal education/never went to school.

Ali, et al., (2015) identify low skill levels, skill mismatches, and poor educational backgrounds as deficiencies among Bangladeshi workers.

According to The Business Standard (2022), only 3.65% of Bangladeshi workers in industrial sectors receive skills development training, with a notable skills gap of 30%. This gap is widening due to rapid technological and industrial advancements. The report also highlights that many educated youths in Bangladesh remain unemployed, while industries suffer from a shortage of skilled workers. Some key sectors, including agro-food, electronics, construction, light engineering, ICT, RMG, tourism, shipbuilding, leather, and nursing, have training rates below 1%.

According to The Business Standard (2022) the skills gap is particularly pronounced in senior managerial positions, especially in IT and industries requiring advanced skills. This gap affects overseas employment, with 46.5% of Bangladeshi workers remaining unskilled, a persistent issue since the 1970s. Addressing this gap through targeted training in high-demand skills could increase remittance earnings for the country. Chowdhury (The Business Standard, 2022) suggests that educated youths should receive service training in high-paying sectors to improve their employment prospects. Measures should be taken to identify the skills needed for the next decade and ensure that young people are appropriately trained before being sent abroad for work.

2.10 Consequences of Low Skill Levels

Siddique (2021) highlights that Bangladesh officially began sending migrant workers in 1976, with only 6,078 workers initially. Today, the country has become the sixth-largest source of international migrants, with approximately 16⁸ million workers abroad. Despite this significant migration, Bangladesh is primarily known for sending unskilled workers due to a lack of sufficient skilled labor training. While approximately 0.5 million people have been trained in various Technical Training Institutes (TTIs) under BMET in the past six years, 47% of Bangladeshi workers remain unskilled or under-skilled. This has led to lower wages and diminished remittance earnings, making Bangladesh's per worker remittance inflow one of the lowest globally (Siddiqui, 2021).

Etzold & Mallick (2015, p. 5) observe that the majority of Bangladeshi workers in the Gulf States are unskilled or low-skilled, which often leads them to face harsh working conditions and inhumane treatment at their destinations.

Ahmed & Omar (2018) note that most Bangladeshi migrant workers heading to Middle Eastern countries are unskilled or semi-skilled, and as a result, they are often placed in physically demanding and hazardous jobs that locals typically avoid.

Ali, et al., (2015) state labor market discrimination, harsh working environments, poor working and living conditions are the result of low skill level.

According to the United News of Bangladesh (UNB, 2022), the majority of Bangladeshi migrant workers are either semi-skilled or unskilled, which results in limited access to higher wages and reduced remittance inflows.

Most Bangladeshi workers accounting 81% are employed in low-skilled roles (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 15). These workers earn 25% less than other migrant workers and only one-third of their Saudi counterparts, with an average salary of 13,322 Riyals compared to 15,017 Riyals for other migrants and 38,125 Riyals for Saudi nationals. According to City & Guilds and IOM (2017, pp. 17.30,32), the skills gap among Bangladeshi workers is a key factor in the negative perceptions held by Saudi employers. These perceptions are largely driven by deficiencies in both hard and soft skills.

Employers in Saudi Arabia prioritize industrial experience, Saudi-recognized qualifications, and personal attributes such as physical fitness and communication skills

⁸ Between 1976 and 2023, 16 million workers went abroad for employment. However, this does not mean that 16 million workers are currently working abroad, as BMET does not track the number of returnee migrants (Mirdha & Hasan, 2024).

(City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, pp. 26-27). However, only 23% of construction sector employers believe that Bangladeshi Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) qualifications accurately verify workers' skills, while the remaining 77% have little or no confidence in these qualifications (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 31).

According to The Daily Star (2015), Bangladeshi migrant workers work longer hours in distant countries compared to migrants from other nations, but they earn significantly less due to a lack of essential skills. This skill deficiency results in a lack of a rational compensation package, a poorer future, and lower remittance inflows for Bangladesh. In contrast, skilled Filipino migrant workers earn higher compensation and send more remittance back home compared to their Bangladeshi counterparts.

The migration of women from Bangladesh has been increasing rapidly in recent years. Although the Bangladeshi government has taken notable steps to promote safe and dignified migration for women, female migrants continue to face numerous challenges in their host countries. According to the IOM (2019, p. 39), women working as housekeepers often endure both mental and physical harassment from employers. They are frequently paid less than their male counterparts and suffer from irregular salary payments. Additionally, these women face a lack of rest and recreational facilities, are subjected to long working hours, and are often forced to work in multiple households. Access to medical treatment is limited, and there is widespread non-compliance with the terms and conditions outlined in their employment contracts. Furthermore, many women become victims of corruption and various forms of harassment, making their migration experience highly vulnerable and challenging.

2.11 Financial Burdens and Exploitative Contract Practices

According to Etzold & Mallick (2015, p. 5), while migration offers potential for improved living standards, it also imposes significant financial burdens on workers. Migrant workers are required to bear the costs of visa processing, work permits, and travel expenses. These costs are often considerable and can create significant debt for workers before they even begin their employment. Most workers from Bangladesh, as well as from other South Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, are employed on temporary contracts. These contracts are often exploitative, with workers having little job security or formal rights. Ali, et al. (2015) state, recruitment agencies often charge high fees to migrant workers, adding to their financial burdens. These fees can include

expenses related to visa processing, travel, and other administrative costs, which are usually borne by the workers themselves.

The Kafala system⁹, a sponsorship-based labor system widely used in Gulf countries, is often criticized for its role in facilitating various forms of exploitation and abuse against migrant workers. This system has serious implications for workers' rights and welfare. Robinson (2021) highlights how the Kafala system legalizes human rights abuses, including racism, discrimination, low wages, and poor working conditions. The system creates a significant power imbalance between employers and migrant workers, making it difficult for workers to assert their rights or seek justice. Under the Kafala system, workers face severe restrictions on their freedom. They are often prohibited from joining trade unions or engaging in strikes. Additionally, they face barriers to leaving their jobs or returning to their home countries without the approval of their sponsors. Many migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, for example, face extreme exploitation, including unpaid wages, delayed salaries, long working hours, forced confinement, and even physical and sexual abuse (Nureldine, 2021).

Chowdhury (2022) highlights the exploitation faced by migrant workers through the example of Shefali, who arrived in Kuwait and found that her passport had been confiscated by her employers. Shefali was coerced into labor that she had not been informed about, enduring both physical and psychological abuse. After fleeing to the Bangladesh Embassy, she was able to recover her passport. However, her unpaid wages remained unaddressed. This case reflects a broader issue where migrant workers not only fear for their personal freedom but also face significant barriers in retrieving their owed wages.

The labor market in the Middle East is often referred to as a buyer's market¹⁰ due to the overwhelming supply of migrant workers eager for employment (Chowdhury, 2022). This market structure further perpetuates exploitation and poor working conditions. Despite the large number of Bangladeshi workers, barriers to skilled employment remain

⁹ *Migrants are subjected to 'Kafala' system in Saudi Arabia and all across the GCC countries though the system is being slowly phased out. Under the Kafala system, workers need to have a sponsor who is called as a 'kafeel'. Kafeel guarantees migrants' needs such as legal residence, entitlement to work, and relevant welfare needs, etcetera (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 22).*

¹⁰ *Buyer's market is a situation in which consumers of a goods / product has total control over market price as the supply surpasses demand (Chowdhury, 2022).*

significant, including regulatory issues, lack of training and qualifications, a willingness to accept low pay, and behavioral concerns (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 16).

According to Chowdhury (2022), commonly accepted terms for work in the Middle Eastern labor market include poor working conditions, labor mistreatment, cheap wages. These factors make it difficult for migrant workers to assert their rights and improve their working conditions.

Etzold & Mallick (2015, p. 7) highlight that Bangladeshi migrant workers mainly access the labor market through unskilled or low-skilled jobs, often trapped in low-paid positions under exploitative conditions. Decent work, which includes easy access to employment, fundamental rights, and higher income, has become a key issue on the political agenda of international organizations (Etzold & Mallick, 2015, pp. 7-8).

2.12 Causes of Skill Gaps

Siddique (2021, p. 25) highlights several limitations within Bangladesh's education system, particularly the lack of vocational training, which significantly hampers the country's ability to produce a skilled workforce for migration. The absence of adequate vocational education contributes to a growing skills gap among workers, leaving them ill-prepared to meet the demands of better employment opportunities abroad. Siddique (2021, p. 25) citing Rahman state that there is a high demand for vocational courses such as driving, plumbing, electrical work, refrigeration and air conditioning, and graphic design, both domestically and internationally. However, many rural residents remain unaware of the available technical training centers, leading to a situation where workers migrate without the necessary technical skills. Furthermore, Siddique (2021) emphasizes that technical training centers in Bangladesh are struggling to keep pace with rapid technological advancements. There is a critical need to strengthen the connection between technical training centers (TTCs) and employers to ensure that workers are equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge needed to meet the evolving demands of the global labor market.

2.13 Impact of Migration on the Socioeconomics of Bangladesh

According to Siddiqui (2005), migration, especially for overseas employment, plays a crucial role in Bangladesh's economic integration into the global financial system. Overseas employment is one of the most significant means through which Bangladesh participates in the global economy.

Short-term labor migration is the dominant form of migration from Bangladesh, with 80% of the total migration population migrating for work abroad (Siddiqui, 2005). This migration is voluntary and driven by the desire for improved living conditions and economic opportunities. Migration not only provides workers with income but also facilitates their personal development, as they explore their identities and potential in new environments. It plays an important role in alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life for migrant families (Siddiqui, 2005, pp. 1-2).

The economic impact of migration on Bangladesh extends beyond the remittances sent by migrant workers. Migration contributes to the creation of employment and economic growth in various sectors within Bangladesh. As migrant families use their earnings to invest in businesses and purchase goods, they contribute to the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This, in turn, leads to greater employment opportunities within local economies (Siddiqui, 2005, p. 11).

The increased purchasing power of migrant families supports local industries, from consumer goods to services. By investing in local businesses, migrants help stimulate demand, fostering economic activity and the growth of local enterprises. The remittances sent back to Bangladesh are essential in sustaining the livelihoods of families, helping reduce poverty, and supporting the economic stability of rural and urban areas alike (Siddiqui, 2005, p. 11).

2.14 Key Factors Driving the Prevalence of Low-Skilled Labor from South Asia

According to ADB and ILO (2016), several key factors contribute to the high prevalence of low-skilled labor from South Asia. One major factor is the region's relatively low wage levels, which make low-skilled labor more economically viable for employers. The abundance of a large labor force further fuels this trend, as does the general health and physical condition of workers, which is often deemed suitable for physically demanding, low-skilled jobs. Social networks and connections with other low-skilled workers also play a role in shaping employment opportunities, as do the recruiter catchment areas that primarily target such labor. Additionally, employer perceptions regarding attitudes and behavior, as well as prior experiences with workers of certain nationalities, influence hiring decisions. In this context, education and skill levels often play a subordinate role, further reinforcing the cycle of low-skilled employment in the region.

2.15 Suggestions to Enhance the Level of Skills for Migrant Workers

To address the existing gaps in skills development and overcome the challenges faced by migrant workers, various experts have proposed several strategies aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of skills training. Ali et al. (2015) suggest a range of actions to better equip prospective migrants with the skills necessary for successful overseas employment:

Ali et al. (2015) emphasize the critical role of the MOEWOE in spearheading initiatives to enhance the skill levels of prospective migrants. To improve the current situation, the government should take more robust and strategic steps to enhance the skill levels of individuals preparing for overseas employment, ensuring that they are adequately prepared to meet the demands of foreign labor markets.

To meet the growing demand for skilled workers abroad, MOEWOE could set up dedicated technical training institutes focused specifically on preparing workers for overseas employment. This initiative would ensure that the skills imparted align with the requirements of international employers.

One of the primary barriers to successful overseas employment for many Bangladeshi migrant workers is inadequate communication skills, particularly in languages spoken in the host countries. Ali et al. (2015) suggest that the government should place greater emphasis on enhancing communication skills among potential migrant workers.

In addition to improving the skills of prospective migrants, there is a need to expand the global reach of Bangladesh's labor force. Ali et al. (2015) suggest that Bangladesh government should take a proactive approach to explore and develop new labor markets globally. By identifying and tapping into emerging markets, Bangladesh can increase employment opportunities for its migrant workers and diversify the destinations for labor export.

It is essential for the training provided to prospective migrant workers to be tailored to the specific needs of employers in foreign markets. Ali et al. (2015) suggest, training programs should be developed in collaboration with international employers to ensure that the skills being taught are aligned with workplace requirements. This would increase the employability of migrant workers and enhance their ability to perform effectively in foreign workplaces.

Ali et al. (2015) argue that a comprehensive support system is crucial to help migrant workers succeed both during their training and throughout their employment abroad. A

holistic approach should include not only training but also soft loans, subsidies, and sponsorships to ease the financial burden of migration. By providing these forms of support, the government can help reduce the barriers to migration and ensure that prospective workers are adequately prepared for the challenges they will face abroad.

Ali et al. (2015) suggest that the government should collaborate with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs), financial institutions, and organizations like ILO to ease the migration process. By working together, these organizations can provide additional support, resources, and expertise, making it easier for migrant workers to prepare for and succeed in overseas employment.

Ali et al. (2015) suggest that raising awareness among the general public about the importance of skills development for migrant workers is essential for encouraging more people to seek training and pursue overseas employment. The government should use mass communication media to shape public awareness regarding the importance of skill development for prospective migrant workers. These campaigns can highlight the benefits of acquiring marketable skills and the opportunities available in the international job market.

Goh¹¹ (Wilson, 2012, p. 124) emphasizes that education and training are crucial for a nation's future success. Strong nations and communities will stand out by how well their people learn and adapt to change. He argues that learning should not stop at school or university, as much of the knowledge acquired will become obsolete shortly after education is completed. This obsolescence is particularly rapid in sectors such as IT. Therefore, education should focus on providing core knowledge, skills, and the ability to continuously learn throughout life, preparing individuals for an unpredictable future predict' (Wilson, 2012, p. 124).

The World Bank (Wilson, 2012)) highlights that technological advances are rapidly changing job profiles and skill requirements, offering opportunities for accelerated learning. This transformation underscores the need for workers to continuously adapt and acquire new skills in line with evolving technological demands.

2.16 Relevant Theories

¹¹ Goh is the then Prime Minister of Singapore in 1990

Vinz (2015) states that a theoretical framework defines key concepts, outlines their interrelationships, and anchors them within established theories derived from the literature. A well-constructed theoretical framework provides clear direction for the research, enabling the interpretation, explanation, and generalization of findings while demonstrating the relevance of the study. It is typically grounded in the problem statement, research questions, and an extensive review of existing literature. In the context of this study, focused on identifying skill needs, gaps, and priority areas for skill development in Bangladesh and their influence on remittance inflows, the theoretical framework serves as a foundation for analyzing key variables and guiding empirical inquiry. Several established theories, including Human Capital Theory, Signaling Theory, Push-Pull Theory, and the Capability Approach, offer valuable perspectives to conceptualize and interpret the dynamics between skills development and labor migration outcomes. These theories collectively provide a robust analytical lens for understanding how skill acquisition, labor market signaling, migration motivations, and individual agency shape the experiences and economic returns of Bangladeshi migrant workers

According to Ross (2024), in the 1960s, economists Gary Becker an economist at the University of Chicago and Jacob Mincer and Theodore Schultz pointed out that education and training are investments that could lead to added productivity. In broad terms, human capital refers to the economic value of a person's education, training, skills, and other experiences. Human capital is the intangible economic value of a worker's experience and skills. This includes factors like education, training, intelligence, skills, health, and other things employers value, such as loyalty and punctuality. The human capital theory posits that human beings can increase their productive capacity through greater education and skills training. Human capital is always owned by the employee, never the employer. Unlike structural capital equipment, a human employee can leave an organization. Most organizations take steps to support their most useful employees to prevent them from leaving for other firms. A person can improve their human capital by increasing their education level or learning new skills. Computer programming has become a popular avenue for human capital investments, as the internet reduces the costs and difficulties of learning programming techniques remotely. Bangladeshi potential expatriate workers can improve their human capital by investing in relevant sectors like education, technical skill, ICT, language and communication skill, learning manners and Etiquette and cultural, etcetera.

Spence (1981, p. 330) states that education or schooling is a signal which is partially sensitive to ability differences. Khatun, et al. (2022, p. 14) citing Riley state that signaling is an activity which is undertaken by an individual with a view to influencing the perceptions of others. According to Spence (1981, p. 321), to make a hiring decision employers observe education but not productivity directly as in most of the cases it is not possible to ascertain individual's overall productivity before deployment. People of a given level of education are offered with a job where their expected level of productivity is highest. They are offered with a salary equal to their expected level of productivity. Salaries at each education level correspond to the average productive capabilities of people in that education group. These capabilities are often reflected through indicators such as experience, communication skill, language proficiency, ICT skills, and other cognitive and job-specific technical skills. These indicators are denoted as signals and these signals are alterable by the individuals (Khatun, et al., 2022, p. 14). Employers observe signals such as education, experience, communication skill, language proficiency, and ICT skills before making a recruitment decision. In order to project oneself highly competent for a specific position, aspirants invest in education and training as there is reasonable assumption of sufficient return in terms of productivity and income (Spence, 1981, p. 321). Spence (1981, p. 325) argued that education is costly and it varies individual to individual. Investment in education is regarded as signaling cost. Other signaling costs include monetary cost and psychic cost (Spence, 1981, p. 320). Khatun, et al. (2022, pp. 14-15) citing Spence state that signaling costs such as education's costs are inversely proportional to the ability of acquiring education. Spence (1981, p. 334) argued that productivity is determined by the ease with which the individual acquires education. Employers' measured ability variables are often test scores, where tests are designed to predict educational performance. Therefore, Bangladeshi expatriate aspirants can invest their time and resource to enhance their relevant hard and soft skills.

According to Bahr (2024), Push-Pull Theory was developed by sociologist Everett S. Lee in the 1960s. Therefore, the theory is called as Lee's Push-Pull Theory. Through the theory, he explained why people migrate and how different factors influence their decisions of migration. In most of the cases, push factors include unfriendly circumstances like natural calamities, economic uncertainty, or harassment, while pull factors involve improved living environments or educational opportunities. The theory highlights that migration is not exclusively grounded on individual choice but influenced

by external environments. It offers an outline for understanding both voluntary migrations, where individuals choose to move for improved opportunities, and forced relocation, where individuals flee due to intimidating factors like violence. Lee's theory has been extensively applied in migration studies and policies to help formulate government policies on migration. Ullah (2012) states that economic theory proposes that immigration is rooted through a set of push and pull factors that are related to the source and destination country respectively. The key push factor is income or wage difference between the sending and receiving country. In case of Bangladesh, an important push factor for migration is the shortage of employment opportunities, low wages, and economic uncertainty. On the other hand, important pull factor is higher wages and better job opportunities in the GCC countries.

According to Conscious Management Institute (2020), Amartya Sen's¹² capability theory approach goes directly to the quality of life that people can actually achieve. This quality of life is analyzed in terms of the central concepts of functioning and capability. According to Sen, functioning is 'what a person actually achieves or does and is', while 'capability is the freedom or opportunity a person has to achieve different combinations of these functioning'. Skill development is crucial for overseas employment; directly aligns with Sen's capability approach, which emphasizes on expanding people's freedoms and capabilities to achieve well-being. By enhancing skills, individuals gain greater control over their lives and can choose better employment opportunities, leading to improved livelihoods and well-being.

2.17 Research Gap

The literature review for the current study draws from recent publications in reputable journals, which reveal several gaps in existing research. These gaps have served as the foundation for further investigation. Prior studies have largely focused on topics such as the impacts of migration (Engler, et al., 2020), (Siddiqui, 2005), (Islam, et al., 2013), (ADB & ILO, 2016), challenges faced by migrant workers (Etzold & Mallick, 2015), (Robinson, 2021), (Nureldine, 2021), (Chowdhury, 2022), the skill status of Bangladeshi workers (Siddiqui, 2021), (UNB, 2022), (Etzold & Mallick, 2015), (Ahmed & Omar, 2018), the relationship between skills, remittance, and working environments (Wilson,

¹² *Amartya Sen is an Indian economist who was awarded the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to welfare economics and social choice theory and for his interest in the problems of society's poorest members.*

2012), (The daily Star , 2015), (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014), (Siddiqui, 2021), causes of skill gaps (Etzold & Mallick, 2015), (Siddiqui, 2021), (Ahmed & Omar, 2018), (Bidisha, 2012), and migration destinations and remittance sources (BMET, 2025). However, there are limited number of studies addressing the skill gaps of Bangladeshi workers (Ali, et al., 2015), (The Business Standard, 2022), (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017), employers' skill requirements (Bell, 2021), (ADB & ILO, 2016), (Wilson, 2012), (Tulgan, 2023, pp. 7-8), and suggestions for improving skill levels (Siddiqui, 2021), (Ali, et al., 2015), (UNB, 2022), (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014).

Nevertheless, previous research has yet to examine the comparative impact of skills on wage earning, specifically identifying which skills affect income levels (Hasan, et al., 2019). Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate the key areas of skill development, assess priorities of skills needed and skill gaps, and analyze their impact on wage earnings; because remittance is the second largest source of foreign currency in Bangladesh, with migrant workers contributing USD 27 billion in 2024, representing approximately 5.3% of the country's GDP (Alam, 2025), (BMET, 2024).

While the existence of skill gaps among Bangladeshi migrant workers is widely acknowledged, there remains a lack of understanding regarding how these skill mismatches influence wage differentials and remittance flows. Studies such as Siddiqui (2005) note that most Bangladeshi migrant workers are deployed in low-skilled sectors, limiting their access to better-paying opportunities abroad. However, these discussions often remain descriptive and lack a solid analytical framework to explain how varying skill levels relative to employer expectations influence economic outcomes. The ILO (2016) emphasizes the role of skills in enhancing labor market performance but does not extend its analysis to country-specific models that capture the relationship between skill mismatches and income disparities among migrant populations. This reveals a significant gap in the literature, as no comprehensive model exists linking skill proficiency with wage outcomes for Bangladeshi migrant workers. Addressing this gap is crucial for informing both skill development policies and migration governance in Bangladesh.

In addition, although Bangladeshi labor migration to GCC countries is of growing importance, the existing knowledge on skill demands in these regions is outdated and fragmented. Most studies rely on anecdotal evidence or outdated data, failing to reflect the evolving nature of GCC labor markets. For instance, Rahman (2011) observed that much of the skill-related data used in Bangladeshi migration planning was based on

general assumptions rather than real-time labor market intelligence. Furthermore, the rapid digitalization and diversification of GCC economies, especially in sectors like logistics, hospitality, healthcare, and transportation, has altered the demand for technical and soft skills. The ILO (2020) highlights that South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, lack mechanisms to continuously map skill demand in host countries or align training programs accordingly. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive, cross-sectional assessment of current and emerging skill needs in the GCC region.

Although various theoretical frameworks and policy recommendations emphasize skill training for labor migration, the practical implementation of these strategies in Bangladesh remains weak and insufficiently aligned with market realities. Many migrant workers continue to migrate to GCC countries without receiving job-specific training. Siddiqui (2016) notes that much vocational training provided through the TVET system is irrelevant to actual employer needs abroad, and Bangladeshi certifications are often viewed with skepticism by Gulf employers due to quality inconsistencies and lack of standardization. The World Bank (2020) further highlights that many low-income migrants face barriers to accessing training, such as high costs, limited availability, and poor geographic coverage, which contributes to the skills mismatch. There is an urgent need for short-term adaptive training programs designed in collaboration with GCC employers to ensure job relevance, affordability, and global credibility. Bridging this gap is critical for enhancing employment outcomes and improving the long-term welfare of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Another significant gap exists in the methodologies of current literature on Bangladeshi labor migration, as most studies primarily use qualitative methods, descriptive narratives, or outdated secondary datasets. While these approaches have been useful for identifying migration patterns and policy concerns, they fail to address the complex relationships between skill gaps, employer expectations, wage outcomes, and remittance flows. Studies like those of Rahman (2017) and Siddiqui (2005) provide valuable qualitative insights but lack empirical frameworks capable of generating data-driven findings. Moreover, the ILO (2020) has noted that migration research in Bangladesh often lacks integrated datasets for systematic analysis. There is a need for methodologically rigorous research that integrates worker socio-economic profiles, training backgrounds, employer skill demands, and economic outcomes such as wages and remittances into a single analytical framework.

This approach would enhance the credibility of findings and provide policymakers with the evidence needed for more effective skills and migration governance.

Finally, an empirical gap exists in migration literature regarding firsthand data from Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly concerning their skill preparedness, job placement experiences, and post-migration economic outcomes. While macro-level reports from organizations like the World Bank and ILO provide valuable overviews of migration trends, they often rely on secondary data or employer narratives that overlook the lived experiences of workers. As Siddiqui (2016) points out, the voices of migrant workers are often missing from policy discussions, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of pre-departure training (PDT) and job-matching processes. Rahman (2011) also stresses that much of the empirical work in this area lacks depth, missing critical micro-level experiences that are necessary for evaluating the real impact of migration and skill development programs. Collecting firsthand empirical evidence is crucial to ensure that future interventions are not only evidence-based but also reflect the day-to-day experiences of migrants. Thus, gathering this data is essential for shaping policies that better address the needs, barriers, and aspirations of migrant workers.

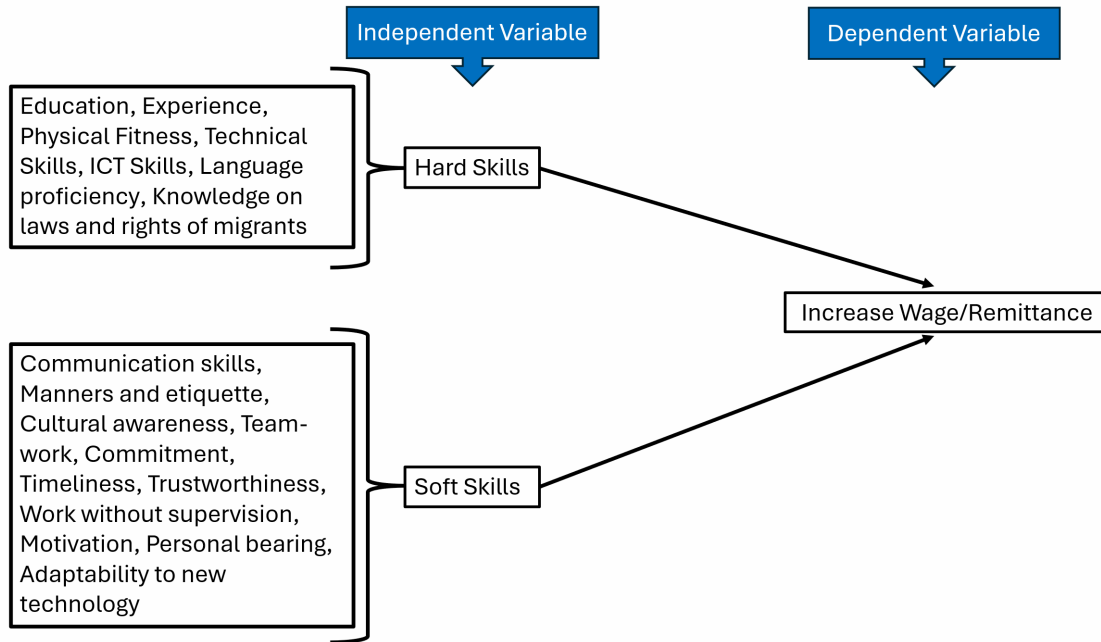
2.18 Conceptual Framework

As defined by Paperpal (2025), a conceptual framework in research serves as a visual or descriptive representation of the key variables, concepts, and their relationships within a study. It provides a theoretical foundation that directs the research by illustrating how these elements interact. This structured representation not only enhances clarity but also helps in identifying gaps in existing knowledge, shaping research questions, and organizing data analysis. A well-constructed framework contributes to the study's coherence and ensures that it remains focused throughout, ultimately strengthening the validity and reliability of the research by linking theoretical concepts with real-world observations. Furthermore, operational definitions clarify the meaning of each variable, ensuring consistency and mutual understanding. Collectively, these components enable the framework to provide clear guidance, steering the research process with purpose and direction.

Building on this understanding, a conceptual framework has been developed for the current study to explore the relationship between key skills and the economic outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region, focusing specifically on wages and

remittance inflows. The framework configures the relationship between dependent and independent variables. The independent variables in the framework include Hard Skills and Soft Skills. These represent the skills that directly influence a migrant worker's productivity and earning potential. Hard Skills include technical competencies, education, experience, physical fitness, ICT skills, and legal awareness. These skills are essential for workers to perform specific tasks efficiently and to meet the job requirements in various sectors. Soft Skills include interpersonal and personal attributes such as communication skills, manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, team-work, commitment, timeliness, trustworthiness, work without supervision, motivation, personal bearing, and adaptability to new technology. These skills are equally important, influencing how workers engage with their employers and colleagues, adapt to changing work environments, and manage tasks effectively. Wage/remittance has been considered as Dependent Variable, reflects the outcome of the interaction between hard and soft skills. An increase in these skills is hypothesized to enhance workers' job performance and productivity, which in turn is likely to lead to higher wages. This, in turn, is expected to generate higher remittance flows back to Bangladesh, a crucial source of foreign currency. The conceptual framework thus posits that the combination of improved hard and soft skills will enhance migrant workers' economic outcomes. The framework suggests that, by developing these skills, workers can improve their job performance and increase their earning potential, ultimately contributing to greater remittance inflows. The *Figure-2* illustrates the conceptual framework of the research. The conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding the critical link between skill development and the economic benefits of migrant workers. It highlights the role of both hard and soft skills in improving the economic contributions of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. By focusing on these variables, the framework guides the research process and sets the stage for analyzing how skill development can enhance both wage outcomes and remittance flows. Through this lens, the study explores the broader implications of skill enhancement for the economic well-being of migrant workers and Bangladesh:

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Research



Source: Constructed for the Study based on Review of Relevant Literature

2.19 Variables and Indicators

Building on the conceptual framework, which highlights the relationship between key skills and economic outcomes for Bangladeshi migrant workers, this study identifies the priority skill development areas that can enhance employability and increase remittance inflows. To achieve this, the study incorporates the following variables and associated indicators, as outlined in *Table-1*, which are directly aligned with the framework’s key components of hard skills, soft skills, and their impact on wages/remittance:

Table 1: Summary of Variables and Constructs

Variable Type	Constructs	Variables
Independent	Hard Skills	Education, Experience, Physical Fitness, Technical Skills, ICT Skills, Language, Legal Awareness
Independent	Soft Skills	Communication skills, manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, team-work, commitment, timeliness, trustworthiness, work without supervision, motivation, personal bearing, and adaptability to new technology.
Dependent	Wage/Remittance	Upsurge in foreign currency incomes transferred by migrant workers

Source: Constructed for the Study based on the Review of Relevant Literature

The following definitions (*Table-2*) outline the key variables that form the foundation of this study's conceptual framework, providing a clear understanding of each variable's role in the research:

Table 2: Definitions of Variables

Name of Variables	Definitions	Source
Education	Systematic process of learning to acquire knowledge	(Piseddu, 2022)
Work Experience	Practical knowledge or attained skill from observation or participation	(merriam-webster, 2023)
Physical Fitness	Ability of the body to work efficiently and perform daily living activities	(Corbin & Masurier, 2024)
Professional Technical Skills	Specialized knowledge and skills required to perform specific jobs, gained through technical or vocational training	(coursera, 2025)
ICT Skills	Proficiency in computer and digital communication. Basic ICT skills are relevant for the study	(Mellett, 2023)
Language Proficiency	Ability to communicate ideas and feelings using conventional signs, sounds, gestures, or marks	(gwhite, 2023)
Knowledge of Laws and Rights	Awareness of labor laws, rights, duties, and immigration procedures in destination countries	(ILO, 2007)
Communication Skills	Ability to communicate effectively with others through speaking or writing	(differencebetween.com, 2015)
Manners, Etiquette	Behaviors reflecting attitude and adherence to societal rules that foster positive interactions	(harappa, 2020)
Cultural Awareness	Understanding of the social norms, beliefs, and traits of racial, social, and religious groups	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Teamwork	Collaborative work done by a group of people where each member contributes to the group's efficiency	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Commitment	State of being obligated or emotionally impelled to fulfill an agreement or task	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Timeliness	Quality of being prepared or available on time	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Trustworthiness	Worthy of confidence or dependability	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Ability to Work Without Supervision	Ability to adjust to changes and work independently	(Shaikh, 2024)

Motivation	Reason or process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behavior	
Personal Bearing	How one presents oneself, including clothing, hairstyle, facial expression, posture, and skin tone	(vocabulary.com, 2024)
Adaptability to New Technology	Openness and flexibility to learn and use new tools and systems	(Pollard, et al., 2022)
Remittance	Financial transfers made by expatriate workers to Bangladesh	(Gibson, 2025)

Source: Illustration is Prepared based on the Sources as Mentioned Against Each Skill

2.20 Theoretical Framework of the Research

Building on the insights provided by the conceptual framework, which outlines the relationship between key variables, the theoretical framework further expands on the foundational theories that underpin this study, offering a deeper understanding of the concepts and guiding the interpretation of the research findings. Human capital, as defined by Ross (2024), refers to the intangible economic value derived from a worker's experience and skills. This encompasses education, training, intelligence, health, and other qualities that employers value, such as punctuality and loyalty. The human capital theory posits that individuals can enhance their productivity and economic value by investing in education and skill development. Importantly, human capital is owned by the employee, not the employer, and is portable, meaning that, unlike structural capital or physical assets, an employee can take their human capital with them when they leave an organization. Organizations recognize the importance of human capital and often make efforts to retain their most valuable employees, as losing skilled workers to competitors can be costly. Individuals can boost their human capital by pursuing higher education, gaining new skills, or acquiring specialized knowledge. For example, computer programming has become a popular field for human capital investment, as the internet offers easy access to learning resources at a lower cost.

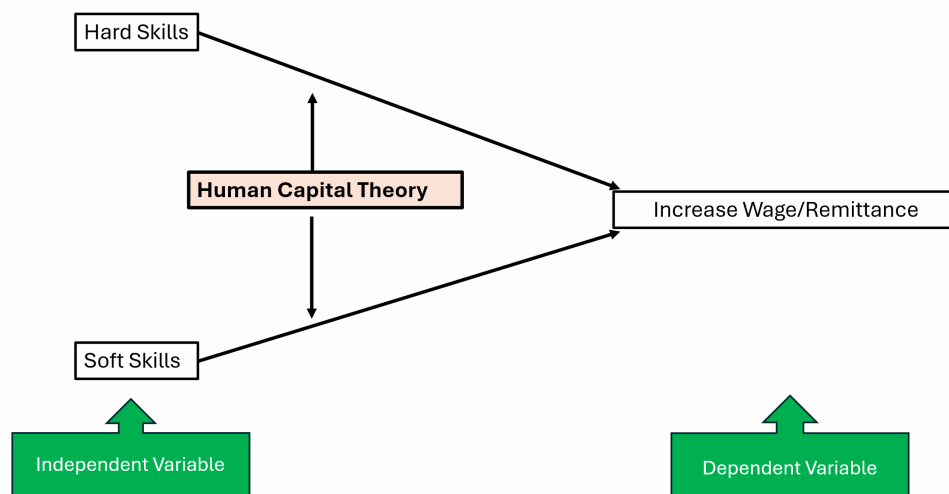
For Bangladeshi expatriate workers, improving human capital involves investments in sectors such as education, technical skills, ICT, language proficiency, communication, and cultural understanding. In line with the human capital theory, these investments can enhance the employability of potential migrant workers in global labor markets. As these workers acquire relevant hard and soft skills, their job prospects and earning potential improve, leading to higher remittance inflows to Bangladesh. By equipping prospective migrant workers with the necessary skills and knowledge, their capacity to secure better

opportunities abroad increases. This not only enhances their personal well-being but also enables them to contribute more significantly to the national economy through remittances.

For this research, Human capital theory serves as the foundational underpinning for this research, which aims to explore how the development of human capital among Bangladeshi migrant workers can lead to improved economic outcomes both for the individual workers and for the national economy. Ultimately, the development of human capital is a key driver of individual economic mobility and broader economic growth for the country.

In alignment with the human capital theory, which emphasizes the value of skills and knowledge as a driver of economic outcomes, the following theoretical framework illustrates how hard and soft skills contribute to the remittance inflows of Bangladeshi migrant workers. The diagram in *Figure-3* demonstrates how the development of human capital through both hard and soft skills enhances workers' productivity and earning potential, ultimately influencing remittance flows back to Bangladesh:

Figure 3: Theoretical Framework of the Research



Source: The Theoretical Framework of the Research has been Constructed in Alignment with the Conceptual Framework

2.21 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided an extensive review of the literature related to the skill development of Bangladeshi migrant workers, with a particular focus on those deployed in the service sector within the GCC countries. The literature review synthesized key studies addressing various dimensions of migration, skill gaps, and the economic outcomes linked to the migration of Bangladeshi workers. It critically evaluated the existing research, revealing both the opportunities and challenges faced by these workers, and identified substantial gaps in the current understanding, particularly in how skill development impacts wages and remittance flows. The historical perspective of migration established migration as a central component of human history, underscoring the complex factors that have historically driven human movement. In the context of Bangladesh, migration, especially to GCC countries, has been a significant driver of economic improvement, with remittances playing a pivotal role in the national economy. However, the study highlighted the persistent skill gaps that continue to limit the economic potential of Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly in terms of their earning capacities.

The review also discussed the various dimensions of skills needed for success in the global employment market. Hard skills, such as technical expertise, education, and ICT proficiency, were identified as essential for higher-paying job opportunities, while soft skills, including communication, cultural awareness, and adaptability, were equally critical for maintaining successful work relationships in foreign environments. Despite the growing demand for skilled labor in GCC countries, many Bangladeshi workers remain under-skilled, which has led to their relegation to low-wage jobs and exploitation in some cases. This skill deficiency has significantly constrained the wage levels and remittance contributions of Bangladeshi migrant workers, an issue that requires urgent attention. In response to these challenges, the review also underscored several suggestions for addressing the skill gaps. These include improving the quality and relevance of training programs, especially in TVET, strengthening the connection between training centers and employers in host countries, and enhancing soft skills training to improve workers' adaptability in diverse environments.

The human capital theory, which posits that individuals can enhance their productivity and economic value through education and skill development, serves as the foundational framework for this research. By applying this theory, the study aims to explore how investments in human capital, both in terms of hard and soft skills can increase the earning potential and job prospects of Bangladeshi migrant workers, thereby contributing to higher remittance inflows and economic development in Bangladesh. In summary, this chapter has established a comprehensive foundation for the study by examining the existing body of literature, identifying key gaps in knowledge, and framing the research within established theoretical perspectives. The insights gained here will contribute in identifying and prioritizing skills needed, skill gaps, and key skill development areas for Bangladesh.

The following chapter, Chapter III: Research Methodology, presents the research design and methods adopted in this study. It outlines the ontological and epistemological foundations, explains the mixed-methods approach used for data collection and analysis, details the sampling procedures, and describes the ethical considerations taken to ensure the integrity and reliability of the study.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

Chapter III: Research Methodology

Chapter III outlines the methodology, approach, and research philosophy used to examine the skill development needs of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries. Research philosophies serve as guiding principles that shape the way researchers approach a study and design their methodologies (Jansen, 2023). This research adopts a pragmatic research philosophy, particularly suited to addressing complex real-world issues. Pragmatism combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, emphasizing practical problem-solving and integrating both positivist and interpretivist perspectives.

In the qualitative phase, interpretivism is applied through KIIs to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of stakeholders. The quantitative phase employs a positivist approach to assess established skill frameworks using empirical data. This integrated

methodology facilitates a comprehensive understanding of factors such as remittance inflows, skill gaps, and development needs.

The research incorporates both inductive and deductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning evaluates existing frameworks, while inductive reasoning uncovers new themes and insights during qualitative data collection. This approach allows the researcher to refine or confirm theoretical frameworks while exploring novel, context-specific findings.

To ensure thorough data collection and analysis, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and qualitative interviews. The research adopts a cross-sectional time horizon, capturing data at a single point in time, effectively addressing the current skill gaps and development requirements of Bangladeshi expatriates in the GCC employment market.

Methodological triangulation is achieved using weighted scoring methods, SPSS, and Excel for quantitative analysis, and thematic analysis for qualitative data. This approach ensures reliable and valid findings, reflecting both objective measurements and subjective experiences.

3.2 Research Paradigm

McChesney (2017) explains that paradigms, methodologies, and methods are distinct but interconnected concepts, ranging from the most abstract (paradigms) to the most concrete (methods). Methods, such as random sampling, questionnaires, and thematic analysis, sit within methodologies. Methodologies, including experimental designs, mixed-methods, and survey research, in turn, are nested within paradigms, which are overarching frameworks for understanding the world. In social science, philosophical assumptions are grounded in various research paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). A research paradigm shapes the methodology and drives the research approach, with three key paradigms identified: interpretivism, positivism, and post-positivism (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Interpretivism seeks to understand specific contexts, assuming that reality is socially constructed (Maruatona, 2011). Post-positivism shares assumptions with positivism but introduces distinctions, often starting with a theory followed by data collection and analysis to determine whether the data supports or contradicts the theory (Maksimović & Evtimov, 2023). In contrast, positivism asserts that knowledge is limited to observable and quantifiable phenomena, aiming to verify or refute hypotheses through scientific methods and statistical analysis.

This research adopts a pragmatic philosophy, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pragmatism is ideal for studying the skill needs, gaps, and development areas of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries, combining empirical data with subjective experiences. It aligns with Saunders' Research Onion (2009), which advocates for methodologies that draw from diverse methods to understand complex phenomena. The pragmatic paradigm blends positivist and interpretivist perspectives: positivism focuses on objective measurements and statistical analysis, while interpretivism delves into subjective experiences. This combination allows the research to address both the objective assessment of skill gaps and the subjective perceptions of workers and employers. By integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative KIIs, the study offers a comprehensive analysis of expatriate workers' challenges.

The methodology follows a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both inductive and deductive reasoning. In the qualitative phase, inductive reasoning uncovers new insights emerging from KIIs, enabling the exploration of themes not initially anticipated. In the quantitative phase, deductive reasoning is used to test established theories through surveys and statistical analysis. This dual approach provides a thorough evaluation of existing skill frameworks while also investigating novel perspectives. In conclusion, the research adopts a pragmatic philosophy, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to examine the skill gaps, needs, and development areas of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries. Pragmatism prioritizes practical problem-solving, offering a well-rounded approach to understanding complex phenomena from both positivist and interpretivist viewpoints.

3.2 Ontology

This research adopts a relativist ontological perspective, as outlined in the Research Onion by Saunders et al. (2009). According to this framework, reality is not fixed or predetermined but is shaped by social contexts and individual experiences. The reality of skill gaps and development requirements among Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries is considered context-dependent. The perception and interpretation of skill deficiencies vary depending on the unique roles, experiences, and environments of different stakeholders, such as policymakers, employers, and workers. Skill gaps and training needs are not universal; they are influenced by factors such as institutional settings, cultural norms, and country-specific conditions.

From this relativist ontological perspective, it is essential to understand these distinctions within their specific contexts. Each individual or group interprets and responds to skill requirements based on their environment and experiences. This approach aligns with the mixed-methods design used in the study, allowing both qualitative and quantitative methods to capture the diverse and subjective realities of skill disparities. KIIs provide qualitative insights into individual and organizational perceptions, while survey data offers a generalized quantitative analysis across sectors and countries. By adopting this ontological stance, the study ensures a comprehensive understanding of varying skill deficits and development priorities in different contexts, considering the unique circumstances in which Bangladeshi expatriate workers operate.

3.3 Epistemology

This study follows a pragmatic epistemology, integrating both interpretivism and positivism to provide a comprehensive understanding of skill gaps and development needs. Pragmatism offers a flexible framework that combines both subjective and objective methods, aligning with the epistemological process of knowledge generation, as described by Saunders et al. (2009). The qualitative phase incorporates interpretivism, focusing on the subjective perspectives of employers and employees. Interpretivism emphasizes understanding the personal experiences that shape individuals' assessments of their skill needs and development challenges. Qualitative data from KIIs with employers, policymakers, and workers provide contextual insights into the real-world challenges faced by expatriate workers, offering a nuanced perspective that quantitative data alone cannot capture. In the quantitative phase, positivism is applied to assess the skill gaps and priorities of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries objectively. Statistical techniques such as regression analysis, Weighted Scoring Method, and descriptive statistics are used to quantify the severity of skill gaps, identify priority skills, and investigate correlations between skills and wage outcomes. By combining interpretivism and positivism, this study adheres to the pragmatic epistemology outlined by Saunders et al. (2009), which prioritizes practical problem-solving through subjective experiences and objective measurements. This mixed-methods approach ensures the research is not limited to statistical analysis but also reflects the lived experiences of workers and employers, leading to a more holistic understanding of skill gaps and development requirements.

3.4 Research Design

This study employs an exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach, integrating both inductive and deductive reasoning to comprehensively address the research questions (Figure-4):

Figure 4: Exploratory Sequential Mixed-Methods Approach



Source: Illustration has been Prepared for the Study

In the qualitative phase, the research employs inductive reasoning, consistent with the interpretivist epistemology described by Saunders et al. (2009). This approach explores new themes and insights emerging from the perspectives of employers and employees. KIIs are conducted with various stakeholders, including policymakers, employers, diplomats, and labor attaches, to gather rich, context-specific data. These interviews help uncover patterns and underlying causes of skill disparities that may not be evident through quantitative methods alone, offering a deeper understanding of the subjective experiences of those directly involved with the migrant labor force.

A pilot survey was conducted on both employers and workers to gather initial feedback. The responses were thoroughly reviewed to identify ambiguities, gaps, and areas needing improvement. Based on the pilot survey analysis, the questionnaire was revised to ensure clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness for the target groups. For the pilot survey, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 participants with relevant knowledge and experience. This small sample ensured diverse representation from both employers and workers. The pilot survey allowed for further refinement of the main survey tools, enhancing the overall reliability and validity of the data collection process.

Final survey was conducted following deductive reasoning within the positivist paradigm, as outlined by Saunders et al. (2009) in the Research Onion. This phase involves collecting empirical data to test and either confirm or refute established hypotheses, such as the impact of skill levels on wage earnings. Structured surveys are used to evaluate existing skill frameworks related to the needs of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries. Statistical techniques, including regression analysis and the Weighted Scoring Method, are employed to quantify key variables and assess skill gaps and priorities.

By combining deductive and inductive reasoning, the study integrates quantitative measurements with qualitative insights, providing a comprehensive understanding of skill gaps and development needs among Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries.

3.5 Sampling Process

3.5.1 Target Population

The survey population for employers includes both Bangladeshi and foreign nationals who employ, manage, or lead groups of workers in the service sector. These individuals were selected for their direct involvement in hiring and managing migrant workers, particularly from Bangladesh, in the GCC countries.

The survey population for workers consists of Bangladeshi expatriate workers employed in the service sector within the GCC countries.

The population for the KII includes employers, government officials, policymakers, trainers, recruiters, and academicians. These key informants were selected for their expertise and experience in areas such as migrant workers, skill development, recruitment practices, and policymaking, particularly in relation to Bangladeshi workers abroad.

3.5.2 Sampling Technique

For employers, a purposive sampling technique was used who possess relevant knowledge, expertise, and experience concerning the employment of Bangladeshi workers in the GCC countries. The selection criteria focused on employers who are actively engaged in sectors that employ migrant workers from Bangladesh, specifically in the service industry. This ensures that the sample includes employers who can provide valuable insights into the skill requirements, expectations, and challenges faced by Bangladeshi workers.

For workers, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select workers currently employed in the service sector within the GCC countries.

For KIIs also, a purposive sampling technique was used to identify key informants with specialized knowledge about the skill needs, skill gaps, and challenges faced by Bangladeshi migrant workers. These informants were selected from a range of stakeholders, including government officials, diplomats, labor attaches, labor recruiters, trainers, and policymakers, who could provide informed perspectives on the current state

of skill development, training opportunities, and potential strategies for enhancing the employability and remittance potential of Bangladeshi workers.

3.5.3 Sample Size Determination

Haque & Rahman (2025) highlight that reliable data on the exact percentage of Bangladeshi skilled workers is unavailable. This data gap is influenced by several factors, including varying perceptions and definitions of skilled work depending on the context. What qualifies as skilled worker may differ between Bangladesh and the destination countries, impacting migration statistics and the recording of workers as skilled. Between 1976 and 2023, approximately 11.6 million Bangladeshi workers migrated to the GCC countries, but this figure does not account for returnee migrants, as BMET does not maintain records on those who return (Amin, 2023). Additionally, there is no accurate count of employers in the GCC countries. As a result, the sample size for this study has been calculated based on an unknown population size. To determine the sample size when the population size is unknown, Cochran's formula (also known as the formula for infinite populations) is used, incorporating considerations for margin of error and confidence level (Nishat, 2024):

$$n = (Z^2 * p * q) / E^2$$

Where, n : is the required sample size, Z : is the z-score corresponding to the desired confidence level. For example, for a 95% confidence level, $Z = 1.96$. p : is the estimated proportion of the population, let us consider 0.5, as this yields the largest sample size. q : is $1 - p$, and E : is the desired margin of error (e.g., 0.05 for 5%).

$$\text{Therefore, } n = (1.96^2 * 0.5 * (1-0.5))/0.05^2$$

$$n = 384.16$$

In light of the above, a sample size of 385 was initially deemed statistically sufficient. However, to mitigate potential sampling error, the sample size was increased by approximately 6%, resulting in a final sample size of 408. This ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the skills required and existing skill gaps from worker perspectives.

The employer sample size was fixed at 100. According to Memon et al. (2020), research at the organizational level, particularly when involving top management (e.g., CEOs, HR managers), typically uses smaller sample sizes. Hence, a sample of 100 employers is statistically significant for this study. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of

skill gaps from employers' viewpoints, while maintaining efficiency in the sampling process.

For qualitative sampling, the study adopts 12 KIIs, which were determined based on the concept of data saturation, where no new insights emerge. The selected informants were chosen for their expertise to provide in-depth perspectives. As no new significant themes emerged after 12 interviews, this number was deemed sufficient for a rich and well-rounded analysis. The KIIs represent a diverse range of participants from various sectors, including government, private organizations, and academic institutions. Interviewees included representatives from prominent organizations such as Sawaed Al Enjaz for Recruitment (Saudi Arabia), Labor Welfare Wing (Saudi Arabia and UAE), Honeycomb Tech (Bangladesh, UAE, and Singapore based), and MOEWOE. Additional insights were provided by representatives from NSDA, Consulate General of Bangladesh stationed in Dubai, Chancellor of Washington University of Science and Technology (USA), and Saif Enterprise (UAE).

3.6 Data Collection Sources, Methods, and Instruments

3.6.1 Sources

Primary data was collected through surveys and KIIs; from a diverse range of participants, including employers, workers, government officials, policymakers, trainers, recruiters, and academicians. This variety provided comprehensive insights into the skill gaps and development needs within the sector.

Secondary data was sourced from research papers published in national and international journals, offering additional context and evidence. Migration and remittance-related data were also obtained from BMET.

3.6.2 Methods and Instruments

For qualitative data collection, the study used KIIs following an open-ended questionnaire (Annexure A). For quantitative data collection, survey methods were employed. In this regard, two separate semi-structured questionnaires were developed: one for workers (both Bangla and English as presented in Annexure B and C) and another for the employers (English as presented in Annexure D). The questionnaires were designed to gather comprehensive data on the skills needed, skill gaps, and other factors influencing employment and remittance inflows. After administering the surveys, the collected responses were thoroughly analyzed, and inferences were drawn based on the findings.

3.6.3 Data Analysis

The qualitative data from KIIs were analyzed using Braun & Clarke's (Caulfield, 2019) six-step method of Thematic Analysis. This method enabled the identification of key themes and patterns in the data related to skill needs, skill gaps, challenges, and measures to be taken for increased number of skilled and semiskilled workers for enhanced remittance. Initially, the qualitative data from the KIIs were manually reviewed and coded to identify preliminary themes and patterns. After the initial manual coding, data was imported into NVivo, which helped in organizing and managing the codes more efficiently.

Mean, mode, median, standard deviation were used to summarize and describe the key features of the data using both SPSS and Excell software.

SPSS and Excel software were used to test relationships between variables, such as the relationship between priority of skills and wage earnings.

The Three Steps Weighted Scoring Method was applied to assess the importance of various skills for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries. Worth mentioning, international organizations like UNDP, WHO, World Bank, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), etcetera use the model extensively

In Step 1, the scores were normalized using the min-max normalization formula to standardize the data and make it comparable across different skill sets. This ensured that all scores were adjusted to a common scale, allowing for an accurate assessment of skill gaps:

$$\text{Normalized Value} = \text{Value} - \text{Min Value} / \text{Max Value} - \text{Min Value}$$

Step 2 involved assigning weights to each skill based on insights derived from KII and thematic analysis. These weights reflect the relative importance of each skill in contributing to employment success in the GCC labor market, as well as the severity of existing skills gaps.

Finally, in Step 3, the weighted scores were calculated by applying the following formula:

$$\text{Weighted Score} = (\text{Normalized Score for Skills Needed} \times \text{Weight for Skills Needed}) + (\text{Normalized Score for Skills Gap} \times \text{Weight for Skills Gap})$$

This process allowed for a systematic evaluation of the skills and their potential impact on the employability of Bangladeshi migrant workers, providing valuable insights for improving skills development strategies. International organizations like UNDP, WHO, World Bank, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), etcetera use the model extensively.

3.7 Time Horizon

The study adopts a cross-sectional time horizon; a methodology widely used in quantitative research as described in Saunders et al.'s (2009) Research Onion framework. This approach is particularly effective for examining a specific phenomenon or issue within a defined timeframe, collecting data at a single point in time. The cross-sectional design offers a snapshot of the current skill gaps and development needs of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in GCC countries. By capturing data from participants at a particular moment, the study provides an up-to-date view of existing disparities in skill levels and training opportunities. This method is ideal for assessing skill shortages and developmental needs at the time of the research and offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting expatriate workers in the GCC region, including immediate challenges and skill development priorities. Furthermore, the cross-sectional approach allows for the identification of factors contributing to skill gaps and highlights areas in need of further development, facilitating the proposal of immediate solutions to address deficiencies and enhance worker training programs in the GCC.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

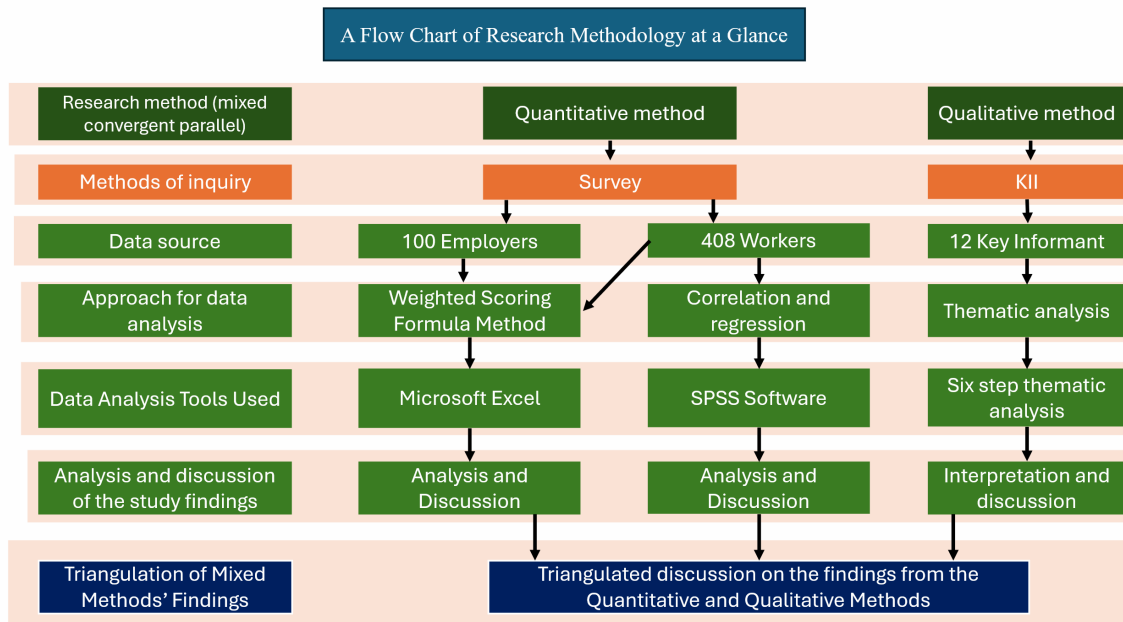
Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, methods, and data usage. Their voluntary consent was obtained before participation. Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and all data was securely stored and treated with confidentiality. The study ensured that no participants were exposed to any physical, psychological, or emotional harm. Participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Measures were implemented to guarantee that all collected and analyzed data were precise, dependable, and genuine, preventing any distortion or misrepresentation. All findings, regardless of their nature, were disclosed candidly without manipulating data to conform to preconceived conclusions. Involvement in the study was completely voluntary, devoid of any external pressure or incentives to sway participants' choices. The research was done with regard for cultural, social, and

regional diversity among participants, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity to local values. The research employed clear and culturally suitable language during participant interactions and in the presentation of findings.

3.9 Flow Chart of Research Methodology at a Glance

Figure-5 presents Flow Chart of Research Methodology at a Glance. This flow chart provides a concise overview of the research methodology employed in this study. It outlines the systematic steps taken from the formulation of the research problem through to data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Each stage of the methodology is represented in sequential order, highlighting the key processes and tools used to ensure the robustness and reliability of the research. This visual representation aids in understanding the structure and progression of the study, offering a clear roadmap for how the research objectives are achieved:

Figure 5: Flow Chart of Research Methodology at a Glance



Source: Illustration is Prepared for the Purpose of the Research

3.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter III outlines the methodological framework adopted to investigate the skill development needs of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries. The study is grounded in a pragmatic research philosophy, which integrates both positivist and interpretivist perspectives to address complex, real-world issues through mixed-methods research. This approach enables the study to capture both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of skill gaps and training needs.

A relativist ontological stance is adopted, recognizing that reality is shaped by social and contextual factors, while the epistemological approach aligns with pragmatism, combining objective measurements and subjective experiences to generate meaningful insights. The research follows an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, beginning with qualitative KIIs to explore contextual insights and followed by structured quantitative surveys to test hypotheses. KIIs utilize inductive reasoning to uncover emerging themes, while the surveys employ deductive reasoning to assess established frameworks, such as the impact of skill levels on wage outcomes.

A pilot survey was initially conducted with 30 participants to refine the questionnaire. The final data collection involved 408 survey participants, consisting of Bangladeshi workers employed in the service sector of GCC countries (385, as calculated using Cochran's formula, with adjustments for sampling error), 100 employers from the

relevant service sector in the GCC, and 12 KIIs selected through purposive sampling. Employer and worker samples were carefully chosen to ensure relevance, while KII participants included policymakers, government officials, employers, and academics. Primary data was collected via surveys and KIIs, while secondary data was obtained from scholarly sources and government databases such as BMET. Two separate questionnaires, one for workers (Bangla and English) and one for employers (English) were developed to capture perspectives on skills, gaps, and remittances.

Data analysis was carried out through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. For the qualitative part, Braun & Clarke's six-step Thematic Analysis was used to identify key patterns and insights, with the help of NVivo software to organize and manage the data effectively. On the quantitative side, SPSS and Excel were used to perform both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Additionally, a three-Step Weighted Scoring Method was applied to assess skill priorities, the method combined normalized survey responses with weightings drawn from the qualitative findings, ensuring a balanced and insightful evaluation of the most critical skills.

The study adopts a cross-sectional time horizon, capturing a snapshot of current conditions in the expatriate labor market. Ethical considerations were stringently followed, including informed consent, anonymity, and cultural sensitivity, ensuring voluntary participation and data integrity. Finally, a comprehensive flow chart visually represents the entire research methodology at a glance, summarizing the research process from philosophical grounding to data collection, analysis, and ethical compliance.

The methodological rigor and mixed-methods approach outlined in this chapter provide a robust foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of skill development among Bangladeshi expatriate workers; building on this, the following chapter offers a contextual overview of Bangladesh's labor migration trends, setting the stage for analyzing current skill gaps and remittance outcomes in the GCC region.

Chapter IV: An Overview of Workers' Migration from Bangladesh

Chapter IV: An Overview of Workers' Migration from Bangladesh

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of migration from Bangladesh, focusing on the official migration channels, the actions taken by the government to enhance skill development, and the impact of Saudi Vision 2030 on migration trends. It explores the role of key organizations like BMET and recruiting agencies in facilitating migration, highlighting the registration process and challenges related to assessing workers' skills. The chapter also examines the government's initiatives to improve workforce skills through targeted training programs and institutional support, with a focus on the NSDA's efforts. Furthermore, it discusses the evolving regulatory framework in Saudi Arabia, including efforts to reduce foreign worker dependency and upskill its own workforce. Lastly, the chapter addresses the future of migration, considering economic pressures, demographic changes, and the growing demand for foreign workers in service sectors, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges for Bangladesh's labor migration in the coming decades.

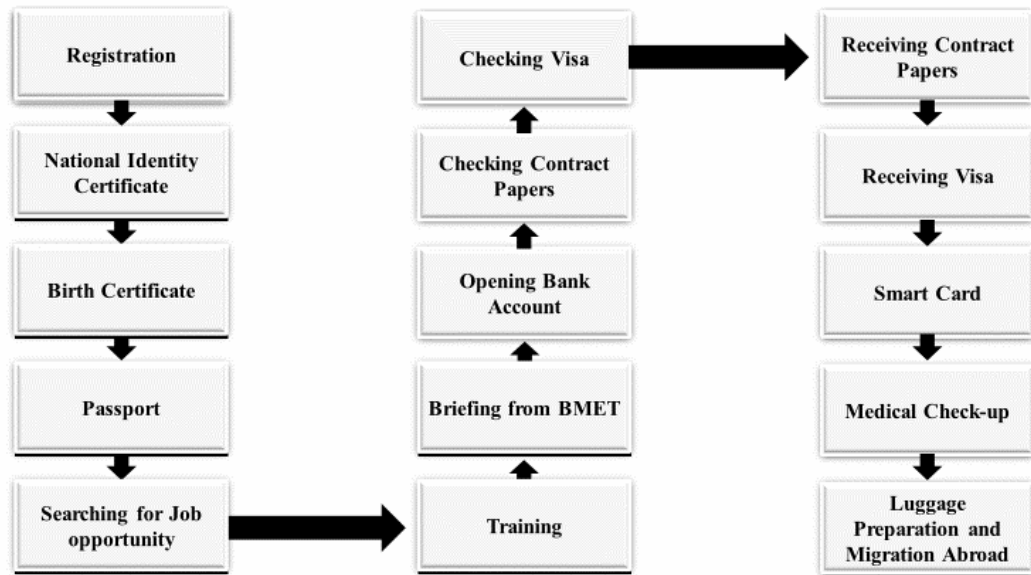
4.1 Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013

According to MOEWOE (2013), the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 was introduced by the Government of Bangladesh to create a structured and secure process for sending workers abroad. This law focuses on safeguarding the rights and well-being of Bangladeshi migrants at every stage of their journey—from preparation and departure to working overseas and eventually returning home. It clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of recruitment agencies, employers, and relevant authorities, promoting ethical hiring practices and greater transparency in the migration process. The Act also requires recruitment agents to be registered and licensed, sets out penalties for misconduct or fraud, and offers legal pathways for resolving disputes and securing compensation when needed. By embedding protection and oversight into the migration system, this legislation plays a vital role in ensuring that overseas employment contributes positively to both the individual migrant and the nation's economic development. Salient aspects of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 is illustrated in Annexure E.

4.2 Official Migration Channels from Bangladesh

The official migration process from Bangladesh is diagrammatically illustrated in *Figure-6*:

Figure 6: Official Migration Channel from Bangladesh



Source: Constructed based on the Information from BMET & ILO (2015, p. 8)

According to the BMET & ILO Annual Report (2015, p. 8), MOEWOE and its two subordinate organizations, BMET and the Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) are authorized to manage overseas employment. Bangladeshi recruiting agencies serve as the primary intermediaries between foreign employers and aspiring migrant workers, while local sub-agents often bridge the gap between these agencies and job seekers at the grassroots level.

Under all circumstances, BMET remains the sole government-authorized regulatory body overseeing the migration process. As shown in *Figure-6*, prospective migrant workers must first register in the BMET database through either District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMOs) or the offices of the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA). During registration, applicants are required to indicate their claimed skills and proficiencies.

Recruiting agencies, often in collaboration with foreign employers, organize interviews and skill assessments. In some cases, foreign employers personally conduct skill tests (BMET & ILO, 2015, p. 13). Candidates who fail to meet the required standards are rejected, while those who qualify are directed to undergo pre-departure training, typically facilitated by recruitment agency training centres. However, BMET & ILO (2015, p. 14) note that many trainers employed by these agencies are diploma engineers lacking hands-

on field experience. Alternatively, some agencies hire returnee migrant workers who are familiar with overseas work environments and technologies.

It is also observed that in some cases, recruiting agencies independently select candidates without the presence of foreign employers or representatives. Many of these selected workers are sent abroad without any formal training, leading to lower-than-promised wages and reduced job readiness. As indicated in *Figure-6*, after identifying demand from employers, recruiting agencies submit the required number of workers to BMET. BMET then nominates candidates from its database, and a selection board conducts formal skill assessments. The names of successful candidates are sent back to BMET, which informs the selected individuals via their mobile numbers. A finalized list of qualified candidates is then forwarded to the recruiting agency to initiate the remaining procedures.

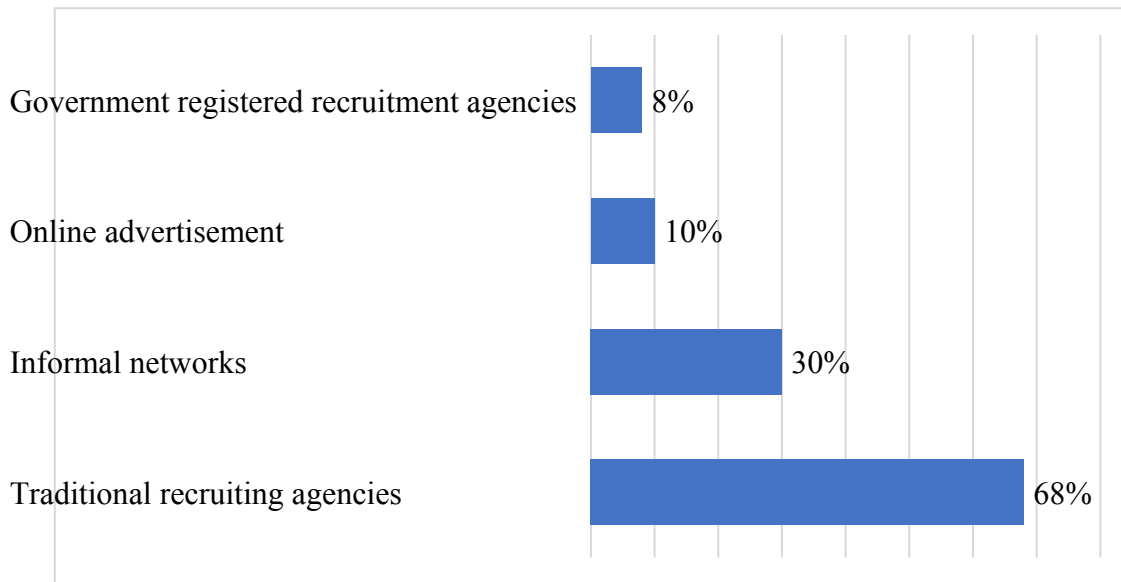
Subsequently, selected workers must complete several formalities, including the issuance of passports and birth certificates, undergoing training, applying for visas, and medical examinations. Upon completion of these steps, BMET issues a Smart Card to the candidates, signifying formal approval for overseas employment. When foreign employers initiate recruitment through agencies, they send demand letters specifying required skills and worker categories. Many Bangladeshi agencies maintain representatives in destination countries to directly receive these demands. Upon receiving such requests, the recruiting agencies must authenticate the documents with BMET. Once all governmental criteria are satisfied, the recruitment process begins in line with the employer's requirements.

However, several issues undermine the integrity of the system. BMET & ILO (2015, pp. 13-14) report that many workers overstate their skills during registration. The database allows individuals to enter up to seven occupational roles, often leading to inflated or inaccurate skill profiles that hinder effective candidate matching. Despite this, private recruiting agencies and BOESL continue to rely on the BMET database for shortlisting candidates. If no suitable applicants are found, recruiting agencies may publish job advertisements in media outlets, subject to BMET's approval.

4.2.1 The Recruitment Channels from Bangladesh

The recruitment channels from Bangladesh are portrayed in *Figure-7*:

Figure 7: The Recruitment Channels from Bangladesh



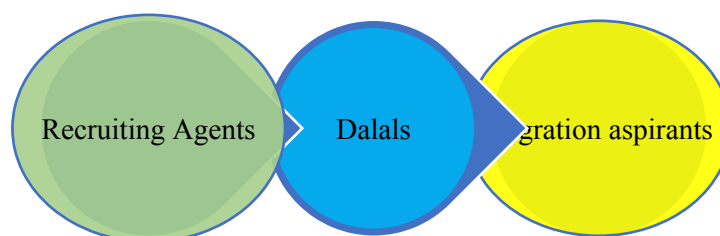
Source: City & Guilds and IOM (2017, pp. 25, 27)

According to a City & Guilds and IOM survey (2017, pp. 25, 27), the majority of Bangladeshi migrant workers are recruited through private recruitment agencies (68%). Other channels include informal networks (30%), online advertisements (10%), and government-registered agencies (only 8%). Many recruitment agencies and their intermediaries (locally known as Dallas) operate in rural areas, where formal agency offices are limited. These Dallas often impose additional service charges, pushing migrant workers into financial distress even before departure.

4.2.2 Connectivity between Candidates and the Recruiting Agencies

The connectivity between migrant candidates and recruiting agencies is further visualized in *Figure-8*. Research by BMET & ILO (2015, p. 11) reveals that although recruiting agencies are expected to maintain regional offices across Bangladesh, they often refrain from doing so to minimize costs. As a result, aspirant workers resort to local Dallas for assistance in paperwork, passports, medical tests, visa processing, and other documentation. These intermediaries rarely operate from formal offices and often remain untraceable in the event of fraud or exploitation. Consequently, MOEWOE strongly advises all prospective migrant workers to adhere strictly to formal and legal migration procedures:

Figure 8: Connectivity between Candidates and the Recruiting Agencies



Source: Constructed based on the Information of BMET & ILO (2015, p. 11)

4.2.3 Access to Migration Data and Welfare Services

Data and statistics on overseas employment, remittances, and women's participation in migration are available on the official BMET website. Similarly, welfare-related information and services for migrant workers and their families can be accessed through the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) website. Table-3 presents Key Information and Services from BMET and WEWB:

Table 3: Key Information and Services from BMET and WEWB

Source	Information / Services Provided
BMET	• Yearly migration trends
	• List of destination countries
	• Major districts of migration origin
	• Trends in women migration from Bangladesh
	• Remittance inflow
	• Migration data categorized by skill level (skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled, professional, etc.)
WEWB (Wage Earners' Welfare Board)	• Compensation for migrant worker deaths abroad
	• Financial assistance for burial services
	• Scholarship programs for children of migrant workers

Source: IOM (2019, p. 24)

4.3 Actions Taken by the Government of Bangladesh to Enhance Skill Development

National Action Plan for Skills Development in Bangladesh 2020-21 to 2024-25 is illustrated in Annexure F. The Government of Bangladesh has made significant strides in improving the skills of its workforce to better equip job seekers for both domestic and

international job markets. These efforts focus on providing vocational training and facilitating skills development that align with the evolving demands of the global economy. Below are the key actions taken by the government to enhance the skill levels of its workers.

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the government aimed to send 0.81 million workers abroad while providing skills development training to 0.52 million job seekers (UNB, 2022). Skills development training is being conducted through TTIs and marine technology institutions, under the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF), which ensures that the training is standardized and meets international quality standards (UNB, 2022). To improve the employability of workers abroad, foreign language training courses have been introduced in 43 Teachers Training Colleges, enhancing the workers' ability to communicate in foreign countries (UNB, 2022). The government has launched several digital platforms to improve transparency and worker management, including, employee connectivity reporting system, online grievance management system, and Recruiting Agencies Information Management System (RAIMS) (UNB, 2022).

According to Barakat & Ahmed (2014, p. xii), a wide range of organizations contribute to Human Resource Development (HRD), including ministries, government agencies, private sectors, and NGOs. These entities work collaboratively to extend the reach and impact of TVET. Skills trainers in Bangladesh fall under different categories, including (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014, p. xi):

- Public institutions
- Private institutions with government support
- Private commercial institutes without government support
- NGOs
- Industry-based training for employees and apprentices

NSDA, formerly known as the National Skills Development Council (NSDC), plays a pivotal role in shaping the country's TVET policy and ensuring its implementation. The NSDA aims to ensure that Bangladesh's workforce remains globally competitive by improving the quality and content of vocational education and training. Key Responsibilities include Policy Formulation and Implementation, Overseeing Reforms,

and Coordination and Monitoring skill development across the country (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014, p. xii):

BMET and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) are two key organizations that contribute to skill development in Bangladesh:

- BMET under the MOEWOE is the prime training provider for workers heading abroad. BMET offers technical training through its 38 TTCs across 45 trades, with an annual capacity to train 65,000 students (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014).
- The BTEB is responsible for regulating, supervising, and developing technical and vocational education in Bangladesh. It also awards diplomas to potential learners through its affiliated institutions, ensuring the training meets industry standards (Barkat & Ahmed, 2014, p. xii).

According to Barakat & Ahmed (2014, p. xii), to better align training programs with current and future industry needs, the government has introduced the Competency Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) system. The CBT&A system moves away from the traditional, theory-based approach and introduces a more flexible, hands-on system that focuses on practical skills. This new approach is designed to address the dynamic nature of industries and ensure that workers are better prepared for evolving job market demands. By focusing on competencies and industry-specific skills, the CBT&A system aims to make the workforce more adaptable to the ever-changing industrial requirements.

According to Barakat & Ahmed (2014, p. xiv), the government recognizes that there are gaps in skills training in Bangladesh, particularly when it comes to matching the skills imparted through training programs with the actual requirements of job vacancies. The 6th Five Year Plan identified the non-availability of trained workers as a major challenge for the country. There is also an inconsistency between the skills training provided and the skills required for available job vacancies.

Siddique (2021) citing Saleheen¹³ states that the government has outlined plans for expanding the network of training centers across the country. 40 training centers in 40 Upazillas, one marine technology institute in Chittagong, and 100 training centers are planned for 100 Upazillas aiming to provide more widespread access to vocational training and skill development across the country.

¹³ Mr. Saleheen is the Secretary of the MOEWOE as of 2021.

4.4 Migration and Skill Level Distribution of Bangladeshi Workers (1976-2019): Trends and Implications

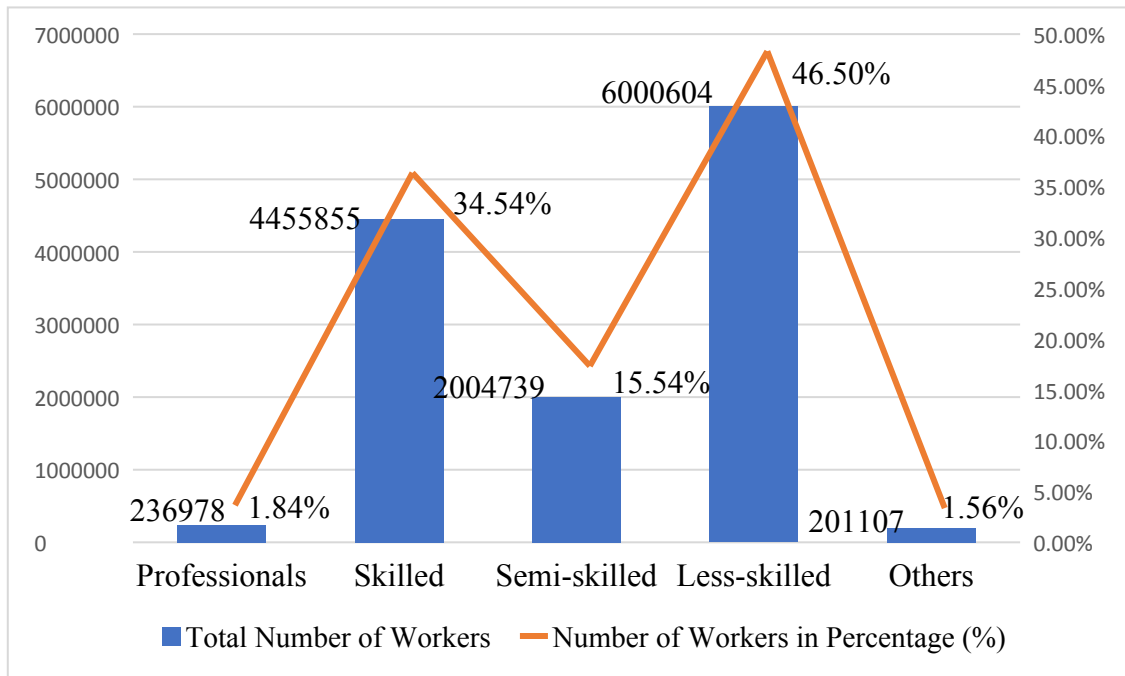
Figure-9 illustrates the distribution of Bangladeshi migrant workers by skill level from 1976 to 2019. As shown in the figure, a mere 1.84% of the total workforce consists of professionals, while 34.54% fall under the skilled category. Semi-skilled workers make up 15.54%, and 46.5% are classified as unskilled or less-skilled. The remaining 1.56% are categorized as miscellaneous, which could include workers in specialized or non-technical roles. This distribution presents a concerning picture, as only a small proportion of the migrant workforce is employed in higher-paying, professional or skilled labor positions.

The disparity in earnings between professional and skilled workers versus unskilled or semi-skilled workers is stark. Skilled and professional workers can earn several times more than their less-skilled counterparts, which directly impacts both their quality of life abroad and their potential to contribute to the national economy through remittances (KII-1). However, despite the significant number of workers migrating, the annual growth rate of remittances to Bangladesh has not kept pace with the increase in the number of migrant workers. This suggests a structural issue within the labor migration process.

A key reason for this inconsistency is that, in recent years, Bangladesh has sent a greater proportion of unskilled and less-skilled workers compared to previous years (Siddiqui, 2021, pp. 10-11). Many of these workers, while essential in sectors such as construction, domestic work, and manual labor, contribute significantly less to remittance growth due to their lower earnings. This shift in the skill composition of Bangladeshi migrants has resulted in a slower increase in remittance inflows, despite the rising number of migrants.

As a consequence, while the total number of migrant workers has been increasing, the inflow of remittances has not seen a proportional rise. This is a critical issue because remittances are a major source of foreign exchange for Bangladesh, and their growth is essential for the country's economic stability:

Figure 9: Migration and Skill Level Distribution of Bangladeshi Workers (1976-2019)



Source: BMET Statistics (2023)

4.5 GCC Vision 2030 and Migrant Worker Regulations: Implications for Foreign Workforce and Skills Development

According to City & Guilds and IOM (2017, p. 24), most of the GCC countries are now-a-days preparing and implementing their visions to be self-reliant in regard to professional and skilled manpower. In doing so, some of the GCC countries have prepared their vision-2030 or so. The vision amply clarifies, GCC countries would like to educate and train their own citizens to reduce unemployment and ensure active participation of their citizens in national development. GCC countries are also to some extent blamed for unhealthy practice in regard to kafala system, labor law, human rights, etcetera. Vision-2030 also tries to ensure rights and obligation of the foreign workers:

4.5.1 Saudi Vision 2030: Economic Diversification and Workforce Development Strategies

In the following paragraphs, Saudi Vision 2030, along with its regulatory framework and visa procedures, has been discussed as a case study. Due to time and space constraints, Saudi Arabia is chosen as the example for the discussion based on several key reasons. First, Saudi Arabia is the largest GCC country, and most of the other GCC nations share

similar cultural, traditional, and linguistic traits. Second, analyzing Saudi Vision 2030 provides valuable insights into the visions of other GCC countries, as many of them follow comparable economic and social strategies. Lastly, most GCC countries implement similar policies concerning the management of foreign workers, making Saudi Arabia a representative example for understanding broader regional trends and strategies.

Saudi Vision 2030 outlines a long-term plan to diversify the national economy, focusing on key areas such as city infrastructure development, increased tourism, and the creation of renewable energy sources (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 24). As part of this vision, the Saudi Arabian government is introducing measures aimed at developing a more skilled domestic workforce. These include the preparation of the Saudi Skills Standard (SSS) to oversee high-quality TVET for Saudi nationals, the construction of new institutes equipped with state-of-the-art technology, and the introduction of National Occupation Skills Standards (NOSS) to ensure the relevance and quality of skills training programs. As the government encourages its citizens to pursue skills training and skilled jobs, the demand for foreign workers in skilled sectors is expected to gradually decline. Furthermore, the implementation of minimum skill standards for migrant workers may reduce the inflow of unskilled labor into Saudi Arabia, as the focus shifts towards building a highly skilled national workforce.

4.5.2 Regulatory Framework for Migrant Workers in Saudi Arabia: Key Provisions under the ILO Fairway Project

ILO under 'Fairway Project' published a report about the regulatory framework for governing migrant workers in the Saudi Arabia. Salient aspects of the regulatory framework are appended as follows (Project, 2019):

- It is illegal to charge recruitment fees to workers
- It is prohibited for employers to confiscate migrant workers' passports
- A written employment contract in Arabic is considered the official version in case of dispute
- 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week is the working hour
- One day per week on Friday is for rest
- Overtime to be paid at a 150% rate of the basic hourly wage

- Wages must be paid monthly

4.5.3 Migrant Worker Rights and Visa Process in Saudi Arabia: Key Steps and Legal Protections

Workers basic human rights have been addressed in the regulatory issues. If workers are aware about the salient aspects of the regulatory issue, they will be able to sue in case of any infringement. Therefore, salient aspects should be taught during the pre-deployment training. Salient aspects of the process are appended as follows (ShieldGeo, 2022):

- The employer must first register with the Ministry of Interior who will open an immigration file.
- The employer then lodges a work visa application with the Ministry of Labor.
- The Ministry of Labor will advise the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when the application is approved.
- The actual Work Visa is issued by the relevant Saudi embassy under the instruction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- After the embassy issues the work or employment visa, the individual can travel to Saudi Arabia.
- On arrival an application must be filed with the Ministry of Labor for the Iqama or residency permit.
- After the Iqama is issued, an application is lodged with the Ministry of Interior for an exit/re-entry Permit which allows the employee to travel in and out of Saudi Arabia whilst they have a valid Work Permit and Iqama.

Work permit process as elaborated above amply clarifies the process, thus making it easier for the migrants to comprehend about the progress of their Iqama.

4.6 Economic Drivers and Migration Trends: Opportunities and Challenges for Bangladesh and Destination Countries

Despite social and political tension, destination countries will reap economic benefits from migrants that will outweigh the fiscal cost (DNI, 2021). Origin countries like Bangladesh will continue to desire sending more workers to alleviate unemployment problem and increased remittance.

The ageing population in developed countries are increasing rapidly, vis-à-vis, working population in destination countries are decreasing significantly (DNI, 2021). Thus, demand for foreign workforce is likely to spur. Automation and digitalization will fill some labor gaps specially in the field of manufacturing and some blue color jobs, but it is likely to be ineffective for service sector professional and high skill jobs. The GCC countries are also in need of care givers, nursing, and high skilled doctors. DNI (2021) report suggests that majority of the OECD countries will need foreign workers to care their elderly citizens. In next decade, OECD countries will face a shortfall of 2.5 million nurses and 4,00,000 doctors which will be filled up mostly by the migration origin countries. The need for nurses, caregivers, and doctors will create worldwide shortage of skilled population. Developing countries like Bangladesh will have increased opportunities to send its skilled population throughout the world including GCC countries.

DNI (2021) citing UN report states that by 2040, world's population is likely to increase by 1.4 billion. Rapid growth of population mostly in the developing countries is likely to outpace job creation, thus, there will be strain on social safety network¹⁴. As a result, potential workers will look for job elsewhere primarily in the developed countries.

Bangladesh is also likely to experience increase of 8.4 million population between 2023 and 2028 (statista, 2024). Increased population will outpace job creation and exert additional strain on social safety networks. Thus, there will be increased need for sending more workers in developed countries including GCC countries.

DNI (2021) citing Economist Intelligence Unit and academic research argues that by the next decade, GDP per capita of many developing countries including Bangladesh is likely to range between 4,000 USD and 10,000 USD. Economic development and increased buying power will enable a greater number of potential workers to migrate to more developed countries. ADB & ILO (2016, p. 3) report reveals that, migration needs additional expenditure; present trends indicate that majority workers hail from somewhat solvent families capable to bear high recruitment fees. Though migration in Bangladesh is induced by poverty, but poor people are not more beneficiary of migration than the upper income groups. The associate high cost of migration makes overseas employment

¹⁴ *Social safety network includes employment, housing, education, and health care.*

affordable to mostly solvent families. Increased per capita income will encourage added families to send their children abroad (DNI, 2021).

In the next two decades, rapid urbanization is likely to strain additional pressure on Government social safety networks available in cities and towns (DNI, 2021). Thus, Governments is likely to encourage and offer additional incentives for migration to lessen the pressure. Besides, cities and towns offer increased information and connection with outside world. Thus, a greater number of youngsters from Bangladesh will be able to migrate.

The southern Bangladesh specially the coastal districts are highly vulnerable to sea water rise resulting shrinking livable, cultivable, and herding lands. Increased presence of salty water degrades farming, fishing, and herding and potentially spurs migration initially to cities and towns and subsequently to the developed countries including GCC countries.

4.7 Impacts of Migration in Socio-economy of Bangladesh

Migration is vital for development and economic emancipation of the Bangladesh (Sarker & Islam, 2018). Migration establishes political and economic relationship between sending and receiving countries and help establish innumerable small and medium enterprises at local level. Siddiqui (2005, p. iii) states, overseas employment is one of the means through which Bangladesh is integrated into the international financial system. Migration contributes to the creation of employment in Bangladesh. Siddique (2005, p. 11) states, migrant families use a portion of their earning for generating income and employment. The increased capacity of migrant families to buy consumer goods substantially contribute sustainment of small and medium enterprise in Bangladesh. A good number of skills training centers, recruiting agencies, airlines, travel agencies, and regulating bodies have been formed creating jobs for people from all works of life (Siddiqui, 2005, p. 11). Islam et al. (2013, pp. 9-16) revealed following impacts as a result of migration from Bangladesh:

- Remittance has a positive impact in literacy rate which contribute in social development. Study found that, migrants families spend more money for better education and maintain a good health.
- Cultural transmission happens through international migration. Language, artifacts, and many material objects are the sources of cultural transmission.

- International migration positively contributes in reduction of violence, create job opportunities, social stability, and higher earning (ADB & ILO, 2016, p. 2). According to Bangladesh Police statistics, dacoity reduced to 656 cases in 2010 from 758 cases in 2001 and robbery cases reduced to 1059 in 2010 from 1265 cases in 2001 as a result of overseas employment. (Islam, et al., 2013).
- Migrants contribute in economic activities through investment in small commercial activities like hospitals, religion centers, roads, schools, etcetera.
- ADB & ILO (2016, p. 2) report reveals, migration flow is positively correlated with GDP in Bangladesh that contributes in poverty reduction at micro level. Monthly income of remittance receiving family increased by 82%, consumption increased by 38%, and savings increased by 107% than households not receiving remittance (ADB & ILO, 2016, p. 4).
- Migration also contributes in upgradation in social status. Islam et al. (2013) state, non-migrant populations are influenced by the migrant populations and value them with high regard.
- The entire process of migration is educative, it helps in formation of norms, values, and beliefs.
- When migrant populations go to different modern countries, they learn internationally accepted rules of behavior (Islam, et al., 2013).
- Migration helps in women empowerment. Study found that 87.5% of the wives of the migrants participate in family decision making process (Islam, et al., 2013, p. 13).

4.8 Remittance Utilization Patterns in Bangladesh

Remittance utilization pattern is shown in the *Table-4*. The expenditure patterns of remittances in Bangladesh reveal a clear prioritization of basic needs, housing, and debt repayment. A substantial 20.45% of remittances are allocated to food and clothing, highlighting the essential role of remittances in supporting daily household consumption. Additionally, 15.02% is directed toward home construction, while 11.24% is spent on agricultural land purchases, indicating a strong desire to improve living conditions and invest in long-term assets. Social obligations, such as social ceremonies (9.07%), sending family members abroad (7.19%), and donations to relatives (0.94%), are also significant

uses of remittances, demonstrating the cultural expectation for migrants to contribute to family and community life. On the financial side, a considerable portion of remittances accounting 10.55% goes toward repaying loans taken for migration purposes, reflecting the high costs associated with migrating abroad. While investment (4.76%) and savings (3.07%) account for a smaller share, they point to a growing interest in securing future financial stability. However, the relatively low spending on insurance (0.33%) and community development activities (0.09%) suggests limited engagement in risk management and collective investment:

Table 4: Remittance Utilization Patterns in Bangladesh (Descending Order)

Purpose	Percentage (%)
Food and clothing	20.45%
Home construction	15.02%
Agricultural land purchase	11.24%
Loan repayment for migration purpose	10.55%
Social ceremonies	9.07%
Sending family members abroad	7.19%
Investment	4.76%
Loan repayment	3.47%
Medical purpose	3.22%
Savings	3.07%
Child education	2.74%
Release of mortgage land	2.24%
Mortgage of loan	1.99%
Homestead land purchase	0.96%
Donation to relatives	0.94%
Send relatives for pilgrimage	0.92%
Furniture	0.69%
Others	1.05%
Insurance	0.33%
Community development activities	0.09%

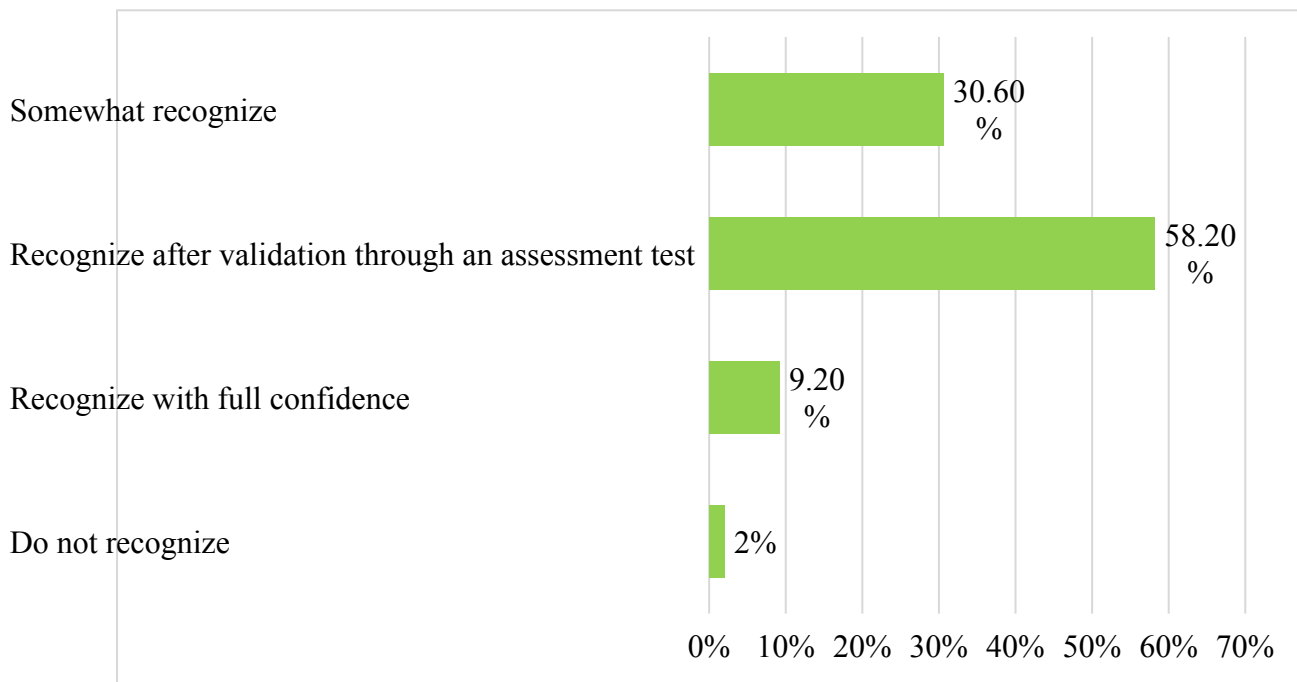
Source: Islam (2024, p. 9)

Overall, the data underscores the crucial role remittances play in sustaining household welfare but also reveals that their potential for broader economic development and long-term wealth accumulation remains underexploited. This may be due to financial constraints, migration-related debt, and limited opportunities for investment.

4.9 Employers' Perception about Bangladeshi Skills Certificate

City & Guilds and IOM (2017, p. 31) conducted a survey in Saudi Arabia on the employers¹⁵. The employers were asked 'how much confidence you have on Bangladeshi skills certificates.' The reply of the employers is quite frustrating. 36% employers perceive that certificate earned from Bangladesh is 'not at all' accurate, 8% perceive that the certificate is 'slightly accurate', 33% perceive that the certificate is 'somewhat accurate', 10% perceive the certificate as 'fairly accurate', and only 13% perceive that the certificate earned from Bangladesh is 'very much accurate'. During the survey of this research, service sector employers were asked 'while making a hiring decision, how much do you recognize Bangladeshi skill certificates?' The survey result is shown in the *Figure-10*:

Figure 10: Service Sector Employers' Perception about Bangladeshi Skill Certificate



¹⁵ The survey was conducted on the employers in construction sector in Saudi Arabia. Views of the employers of Saudi Arabia is considered as valid for all GCC countries due to commonality of culture and similarity of working population from Bangladesh.

Source: The Illustration is based on the Survey of the Study

The majority of the respondents totaling 58.2% said that they recognize Bangladeshi skill certificate only after validation through an assessment test, followed by 30.6% opined that they do somewhat recognize Bangladeshi skill certificate, while 9.2% employers said that they recognize Bangladeshi certificate with full confidence. Only 2% respondents said that they do not recognize Bangladeshi skill certificate:

4.10 Plights of Bangladeshi Migrants

Mainstream Bangladeshi workers lodge in congested and unsanitary camps situated far from city centers (Zahin, 2023). In such living condition, essential utility services are mostly lacking, exacerbating the risk of diseases of transmission, with limited access to medical assistance, and disease transmits rapidly among the close-knit community. Human Rights Watch-2023 describes labors condition in the Gulf states as ‘modern-day slavery’ (Zahin, 2023).

Female workers endure widespread abuse from their employers, ranging from mistreatment to physical violence to sexual exploitation. Mistreatment is so severe that it compels many to escape their captors (Zahin, 2023). According to Zahin (2023), the trauma they experience have a long-lasting mental repercussion, sometimes leading to years of sufferings, even suicide.

In the GCC countries, labors not only receive a fraction of their premised wage but also portion of that deducted by the recruiting agencies (Zahin, 2023). Robinson (2022) states, racism exists in case of black skinned and South Asian workers, workers’ salaries depend on the countries of origin despite having professional degree, they are often relegate to low-income and less-skill jobs while workers of their own racial or ethnic groups arrive (Robinson, 2022).

Talukdar (2022) states that migrants face following challenges in different stages of migration:

- Fraudulent acts by the recruiting agencies.
- Illegal and prolonged process of migration.
- Lack of information on migration opportunities and risks.

Zahin (2023) states that Bangladeshi migrants are primarily deployed as construction labor in the GCC countries. Majority of the construction workers face following severe condition (Zahin, 2023):

- Endure grueling non-stop work environment.
- Toil for hours without breaks, knowing that any slacking off will result in punishment.
- Persistent labor combined with extreme weather conditions often lead to:
 - Heat strokes
 - Brain strokes
 - Heart attacks and even death

4.11 Causes of the Plight

4.11.1 Absence of Ratification of International Laws and Conventions

Bangladeshi workers face serious challenges to enjoy their rights and welfare in the destination countries. ADB & ILO (2016, p. 6) citing Siddique (2005) report that while there are multiple ILO and the UN Convention for protection of migrants' rights and welfares, most of the manpower receiving countries have not yet ratified those international laws. The absence of ratification itself is an indication of poor working environment. The laws for protection of migrants' rights that have been enacted in Bangladesh, are also in limbo. Migration is beset with discrimination, exploitation and abuses. Workers without skill and poor educational background and women those who work as domestic aid are predominantly vulnerable.

4.11.2 High Recruitment Cost

The illegal visa trading and Iqama¹⁶ fee in the destination country increases migration cost from Bangladesh. Besides, 60% of the cost from Bangladesh is accounted for mediators those who act as facilitators, 18% for helpers, and another 10% money is spent as agency fees (ADB & ILO, 2016, p. 6). Ranjan (2023) citing World Bank states that Bangladeshi workers' pay the highest recruitment cost globally. On the other hand, Nepali workers' pay lowest to bear recruitment cost with the 'free visa, free ticket policy'¹⁷.

¹⁶ *Iqama is a legal work permit that allows foreign nationals to live and work in the Saudi Arabia.*

Ranjan (2023) citing BBS report on ‘Cost of Migration Survey-Bangladesh 2020’ states that a Bangladeshi migrant spends on average 471,000 BDT or 5381 USD to migrate. In 2021, 6,17,209 migrants went abroad and they have remitted 22.1 billion USD. That means, approximately 3.3 billion USD or 14% of the total remittance was spent to incur recruitment debt. Indian migrants spent 9% of total remittance earnings to incur the cost of migration and Nepal spends only 3.6% of the total remittance to incur migration cost. *Table-5* shows Migration Cost Incurred and Remittance Earnings from South Asian Countries:

Table 5: Migration Cost Incurred and Remittance Earnings from South Asian Countries

	Bangladesh (2021)	India (2019)	Nepal (2021)
Migration cost per individual	5,381 USD	3,000 USD	1,290 USD
Total number of workers went abroad	6,17,209 persons	25,43,577 persons	2,40,000 persons
Remittance received by the country	22.1 billion USD	83.1 billion USD	9.2 billion USD
Total cost incurred to pay recruitment debt	3.3 billion USD	7.6 billion USD	0.3 billion USD
Percentage of total earnings incurred for migration	14%	9%	3.6%

Source: Ranjan (2023), (Statista, 2024)

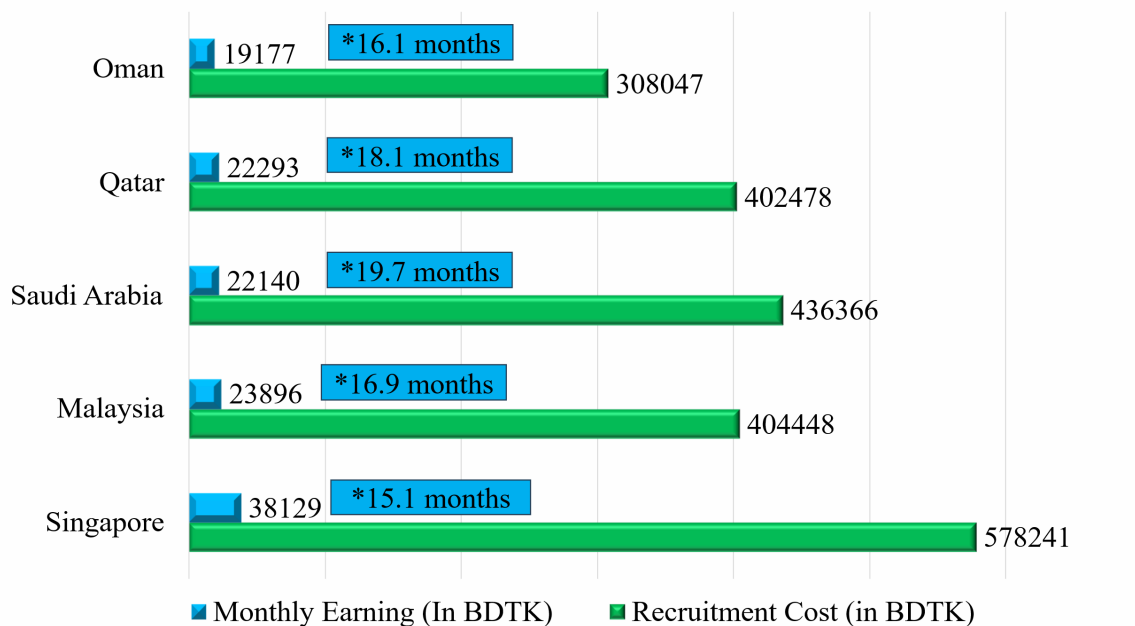
4.11.4 Too Long Time Taken to Realize the Money Spent on Migration

The total recruitment cost, monthly wages, and the time required for Bangladeshi migrant workers to recover the money spent on migration are detailed in *Figure-11*. According to Siddiqui (2022), on average, Bangladeshi workers need to work for approximately 17 months to repay the debt incurred during the recruitment process. This figure varies depending on the destination country. For example, Bangladeshi migrants in Oman require 16.1 months to recover their migration expenses, while those in Qatar take 18.1 months. Migrants in Saudi Arabia face an even longer repayment period of 19.7 months, indicating the higher recruitment costs associated with migration to this country. In Malaysia, workers typically take 16.9 months, and in Singapore, the repayment period is the shortest at 15.1 months. These figures highlight the financial burden placed on

¹⁷ In July 2015, the Nepali Government introduced a policy to obligate employers from seven manpower receiving countries, i.e., Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman to bear the cost of visa processing and air tickets to hire workers from Nepal (Pandey, 2023).

migrant workers, as they are required to endure long periods of low earnings before they can begin to save or remit money back home. This delay in recouping migration costs often leaves workers financially vulnerable, particularly in the early years of their overseas employment, impacting their ability to support their families or invest in their future:

Figure 11: Time Required by Bangladeshi Migrants to Realize Money Spent for Recruitment



Source: Siddiqui (2022) citing BBS (Cost of Migration Survey)

4.11.5 Lack of Legal Protection Due to Kafala System

The Kafala system is used in the GCC countries. The system is also in vogue in Jordan and Lebanon. According to the kafala system, a relationship is built between the workers and the local sponsor who is called the Kafeel. Robinson (2022) states, though Bahrain and Qatar claim to have abolished the system, but practically the reforms are poorly enforced. Under the system, the sponsor supposes to cover employees travel expense and provide housing. The system falls within the jurisdiction of the host countries ministry of interior instead of ministry of law, thus employees are devoid of protection by labor law. The Kafala system exposes employees to various vulnerabilities, as highlighted by

Robinson (2022). Migrant workers under this system often face exploitation and are denied the right to sue in labor disputes. The employer holds exclusive power to renew or terminate the worker’s visa, further restricting their autonomy. Employers also commonly confiscate passports, visas, and phones and confine domestic workers to their homes, leaving them without freedom of movement. Non-domestic workers frequently live in overcrowded dorms, which heightens their risk of contracting illnesses. Additionally, workers have limited opportunities to redress grievances, and employers' permission is required to transfer or end employment. Furthermore, leaving the workplace without permission is considered an offense, which can result in legal proceedings, imprisonment, or even deportation. These conditions create a highly exploitative environment where workers have minimal rights and protections.

However, according to the host countries, Kafala system provides some sorts of protection to the migrants. *Table-6* shows protection to workers under the kafala system:

Table 6: Protection to Workers Under kafala System

Names of Countries	Right to Union	Privilege to Change or End Job	Right to Leave the Country	Minimum Wage	Labor Law Implies to Domestic Workers	Standard Contract for all workers
Saudi Arabia	No	After 1 year (2 years for domestic workers)	Yes*	No	No	Yes
UAE	Yes	In some case	Yes	No	In some case	Yes
Qatar	In some case*	Yes	In most cases	Yes	No	No
Kuwait	In some case*	After 3 years*	Yes	Yes	No	No
Oman	Yes	After 2 years	Yes	No	No	Yes
Bahrain	Yes	After 1 year*	Yes	No	In some case	No

*Source: Robinson (2022) citing ILO and US State Department (*Excluding domestic workers)*

4.12 Chapter Conclusions

The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of migration from Bangladesh, exploring its complexities and examining the key players involved in the migration process. The official migration channels through BMET, recruiting agencies, and subagents are central to facilitating migration, though challenges remain in ensuring the accuracy of worker skills and addressing the financial burdens faced by aspirant migrants. The informal networks, where many migrants are recruited through brokers or Dalals, further complicate the process, highlighting the need for better regulation and transparency in the recruitment system.

The government of Bangladesh has made notable progress in enhancing skill development through various vocational training programs, with institutions like BMET and NSDA playing pivotal roles in improving workforce skills. Initiatives such as the NTVQF and the introduction of foreign language training demonstrate the government's commitment to equipping workers with skills that align with international job market demands. However, there are still gaps in matching the skills developed through these programs with the actual needs of the labor market, which is a challenge that requires continued reform.

Saudi Vision 2030 and its focus on upskilling the local workforce has the potential to reshape migration patterns, as it aims to reduce dependency on foreign labor and invest in the development of Saudi nationals' skills. While the vision emphasizes the rights and welfare of migrant workers, its implementation may reduce opportunities for unskilled labor migration to Saudi Arabia. The migration landscape is likely to evolve, with increased demand for skilled workers in sectors such as healthcare and technology, which will create new opportunities for countries like Bangladesh to send a skilled workforce abroad.

Looking to the future, migration is expected to increase, driven by demographic changes, economic pressures, and the need for foreign workers in various sectors. The global demand for skilled professionals, especially in developed countries with aging populations, will provide Bangladesh with opportunities to send skilled workers, particularly in healthcare and other high-skill sectors. However, challenges such as the high cost of migration, discriminatory practices, exploitation under systems like Kafala, and the vulnerability of migrants, especially women, must be addressed to ensure that the benefits of migration are fully realized for both the migrants and their home country.

The socioeconomic impact of migration on Bangladesh is significant, with remittances playing a vital role in enhancing household welfare, supporting small and medium enterprises, and contributing to social stability. However, the migration process is often accompanied by exploitation and abuse, especially in the GCC countries. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from both the government of Bangladesh and the receiving countries to improve migrant worker conditions and ensure their rights are protected.

In conclusion, while migration remains a key driver of economic development for Bangladesh, the evolving trends, regulatory frameworks, and socio-economic challenges require ongoing adaptation. Ensuring that migration benefits both the workers and the country as a whole will require continued efforts to enhance skills, address exploitation, and improve the governance of the migration process.

Building upon the contextual understanding of Bangladesh's migration landscape and the challenges within official and informal recruitment systems, the next chapter presents the empirical findings and data analysis, offering deeper insights into the skill gaps, employment outcomes, and remittance patterns of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries.

Chapter V: Findings and Data Analysis

Chapter V: Findings and Data Analysis

5.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

This study applies Braun and Clarke’s six-step Thematic Analysis approach (Caulfield, 2019) to explore critical skill development priorities for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries. The analysis aimed to uncover key themes related to skill needs, existing gaps, and priority areas for intervention to enhance productivity and maximize remittance inflows. Initially, qualitative data from KIIs were manually reviewed and coded to identify emerging patterns. The coded data was then imported into NVivo software, which facilitated efficient organization, management, and deeper analysis of the themes using its advanced query and visualization tools. Thematic analysis focused on three core objectives, identifying skill sets most in demand by employers in the GCC region, assessing major skill deficiencies among Bangladeshi expatriate workers, and prioritizing skill development areas essential for improving employability and boosting remittance earnings. These insights, derived from interviews with stakeholders such as employers, government officials, labor experts, and academicians, form a critical component of the study’s mixed-method approach. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the data, *Table-7* outlines an overview of the key informants involved in this study, whose insights were integral to identifying the critical skill development priorities for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries. Dialogue Between Researcher and Key Informants is illustrated in **Annexure G**:

Table 7: Key Informants Overview

Code Number	Organization's Name	Type of Organization	Residence	Interviewee Role
KI-1	Sawaed Al Enjaz for	Saudi Recruitment	Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)	Chairman, responsible for manpower recruitment from

	Recruitment	Agency		multiple countries including Bangladesh
KI-2	Labor Welfare Wing	Government Office	Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)	First Secretary, Labor Welfare Wing
KI-3	Honeycomb Tech	Industrial Engineering	Bangladesh, UAE, Singapore	Chairman, provides mechanical engineering solutions to industries in Bangladesh, UAE, and Singapore
KI-4	Consul General's Office, Labor Welfare Wing	Government Office	UAE (Dubai)	Counsellor, Labor Welfare Wing
KI-5	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment (MOEWOE)	Government Organization	Bangladesh	Director General, BMET, responsible for overseeing migration and expatriates' welfare
KI-6	Consulate General of Bangladesh	Government Office	UAE (Dubai)	Consul General, Dubai and Northern Emirates
KI-7	Manpower Supplying Company	Private Company	Saudi Arabia	Proprietor, Manpower supplier for various events in Saudi Arabia
KI-8	National Skill Development Authority (NSDA)	Government Organization	Bangladesh (Dhaka)	Executive Chairman of NSDA, Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh
KI-9	National Skill Development Authority (NSDA)	Government Organization	Bangladesh	Ex Executive Chairman of NSDA, Senior Secretary to the Government
KI-10	Washington University of Science and Technology	Academic Institution	USA (Virginia)	Chairman & Chancellor of Washington University
KI-11	Embassy of Bangladesh	Government Office	Oman (Muscat)	Counselor (Labor)
KI-12	Saif Enterprise	Garments Business	Dubai, UAE	Proprietor of Saif Enterprise

Source: Illustration is Prepared for the Study

5.2 Six Step Thematic Analysis

According to Caulfield (2019), Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative research method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes

within a set of data. In the context of this research, thematic analysis was employed to explore the critical skill development priorities necessary for equipping Bangladeshi migrant workers with the competencies required to maximize remittance inflows from international labor migration. The data for this analysis was collected through interviews with key informants, including experts from MOEWOE, manpower suppliers, training center representatives, and other relevant stakeholders in the labor migration sector. These interviews provided valuable insights into the specific skill sets in demand by employers in GCC countries, the key deficiencies in the skills of Bangladeshi workers, and the areas that need focused attention for skill development.

Through the process of thematic analysis, this report identifies three major themes, firstly; the skill sets that employers in the GCC countries most seek, secondly; the significant skill gaps observed among Bangladeshi expatriate workers, and thirdly; the key areas for skill development that should be prioritized to enhance the employability of Bangladeshi workers and optimize remittance inflows. By analyzing these themes, the study offers recommendations on how Bangladesh can address these skill gaps and better equip its workforce to meet international labor market demands. This thematic analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist in the realm of skill development for Bangladeshi migrant workers, ultimately helping to maximize their economic contributions through remittances. Themes and subthemes identified during thematic analysis are appended below:

5.2.1 Theme 1: Skills in Demand by Employers in the GCC Countries

Employers in the GCC region prioritize a variety of hard skills (technical skills) and soft skills (personal traits and abilities), and these skills play a key role in workers' employability and earning potential. Sub themes identified are as follows:

- **Technical Skills.** *"Employers in GCC countries look for hands-on expertise in service-oriented fields such as healthcare, hospitality, and ICT" (KI-1)."* Employers also look for technical expertise in service sectors such as electrical work, plumbing, masonry, healthcare (including nursing and caregiving), and ICT trades (such as technicians and software developers) (KI-2, KI-5, KI-7). Skill level employment requires a minimum level of education, basic ICT skill, and relevant work experience (KI-1, KI-7).

- **Language Proficiency.** Employers look for English proficiency, especially for front desk roles. "*English is essential for communication across most industries*" (KI-2). Arabic is also considered a valuable asset for day-to-day tasks and communication in the workplace (KI-5, KI-7).
- **Soft Skills.** "*Cultural awareness, professionalism, and communication skills are crucial for skill level jobs in service sector*" (KI-2). Employers highly value soft skills such as communication, cultural awareness, ability to work without supervision, manners and etiquette, etcetera (KI-5, KI-7). The ability to adapt quickly (adaptability) to new work environments and technologies is also highly sought after skill (KI-7).

5.2.2 Theme 2: Key Skill Deficiencies Among Bangladeshi Expatriate Workers

Despite the demand for skilled workers, Bangladeshi migrant workers face significant skill deficiencies that hinder their ability to secure better-paying jobs in the GCC region:

- **Practical Skill Gaps.** "*Many workers from Bangladesh hold certificates but lack practical experience and technical know-how*" (KI-3, KI-5). While workers may receive certifications, these are often not internationally recognized or fail to meet the practical requirements of employers. This issue is particularly evident in technical trades.
- **Language Barriers.** "*Many Bangladeshi workers are unable to communicate effectively in English or Arabic, which severely limits their job prospects*" (KI-1, KI-7). Language proficiency and poor academic background remain a significant barrier to employment, especially in front desk jobs or customer-facing or supervisory roles.
- **Cultural and Soft Skill Deficiencies.** "*Bangladeshi workers lack awareness of the local culture, which affects their integration into the workplace and their interpersonal relationships*" (KI-2, KI6). Employers report that many workers also lack essential soft skills such as professionalism, time management, and teamwork (KI-7, KI-8).
- **Certification Issues.** "*Many workers from Bangladesh hold certificates that are either non-recognized or falsified*" (KI-1). Lack of reliable certification makes it

difficult for employers to trust the skills of the workers, further limiting their employability in skill level jobs.

- **Legal Issues:** *"Many Bangladeshi workers are unaware of their legal rights and protections, both in Bangladesh and the host GCC countries"* (KI-6, KI-11). This lack of knowledge leaves workers vulnerable to exploitation, unfair labor practices, and disputes, making it difficult for them to navigate legal challenges and secure fair treatment in the workplace.

5.2.3 Theme 3: Key Skill Development Areas for Optimizing Remittance Inflows

In order to enhance the remittance potential of Bangladeshi migrant workers, there is a clear need to focus on key areas of skill development:

- **Vocational and Technical Education.** *"There is a critical need to upgrade the training curriculum to align with international standards and the demands of the GCC labor market"* (KI-3, KI-5). The current training system in Bangladesh is outdated and fails to provide the hands-on experience in relevant profession. *"The introduction of a national certification system for skills, aligned with international standards, would make Bangladeshi workers more competitive"* (KI-2, KI-8).
- **Language Training.** *"Improving level of education and proficiency in English and Arabic languages are the priorities for effective communication in the GCC countries"* (KI-4, KI-6). Many informants emphasized the need for integration of language courses into the pre-deployment training (PDT).
- **Soft Skills Development.** *"Developing soft skills such as professionalism, manners and etiquette, cultural sensitivity, and communication are just as important as technical skills for ensuring success in the GCC countries"* (KI-2, KI-6, KI-7). These skills enhance workers' ability to adapt to new environments and contribute positively to workplace culture.
- **Certifications and Accreditation.** *"Bangladesh needs to create a standardized certification system that is recognized by employers in the GCC region"* (KI-5, KI-9). Training centers should be accredited to ensure that the skills imparted are consistent with international job market requirements.
- **Knowledge on Laws and Rights of the Migrants.** *"It is crucial for migrant workers to be educated about their legal rights and protections, both in*

Bangladesh and the host countries. Knowledge about labor laws, contracts, and dispute resolution mechanisms can help workers avoid exploitation and improve their overall work experience" (KI-6, KI-11). This training should be an integral part of the PDT to ensure workers are fully informed and can advocate for themselves in foreign workplaces.

5.4 Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive Statistics of Employers

To gain insights into the skills preferred by employers, those that enhance employment opportunities, and those that may hinder productivity due to their absence, a survey was conducted among 100 employers in the GCC countries. All participants were from different categories of service sector. The survey employed a purposive sampling technique, ensuring a targeted selection of respondents. The questionnaire consisted of 20 semi-structured questions, designed to capture a broad range of relevant data. The interviews were conducted through various means, including in-person meetings, telephone calls, electronic interviews, and email correspondence, ensuring comprehensive data collection. Descriptive statistics about the employers were gathered through questions addressing key details such as age, official capacity, sector of operation, number of employees, place of residence, nationality, and more. The collected data was analyzed using Excel and SPSS statistical tools, providing a clear understanding of the employers' perspectives. The survey results are discussed in the following sections.

5.4.1 **Employers' Background.** Employers' background is shown in the *Table-8*:

Table 8: Employers' Background

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hotel	10	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Shopping mall	12	12.0	12.0	22.0
	Transportation	5	5.0	5.0	27.0
	Health Care	9	9.0	9.0	36.0
	Education	1	1.0	1.0	37.0
	IT	5	5.0	5.0	42.0
	Repair and Maintenance	5	5.0	5.0	47.0
	Manpower Business	14	14.0	14.0	61.0
	Security	17	17.0	17.0	78.0
	Administration	11	11.0	11.0	89.0
	Others	9	9.0	9.0	98.0
	Real State	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

The survey respondents are involved in the businesses like hotel, restaurant, shopping mall, transportation, health care, education, repair and maintenance, manpower business, security, and administration, etcetera. The survey revealed the distribution of employers across various sectors in the service industry. The largest group of employers, 17%, is involved in the security sector, followed by 14% in the manpower business. Other notable sectors include shopping malls with 12%, administration with 11%, and hotels with 10%. Smaller proportions of employers' work in healthcare (9%), other sectors (9%), and repair and maintenance (5%). Equal representation is observed in the transportation and IT sectors, both at 5%, while real estate has the smallest representation, with only 2% of employers involved. Lastly, the education sector had the least participation, with just 1% of respondents. This variety of sectors highlights the broad range of industries that employers are engaged in within the service sector across the GCC countries:

5.4.2 Employers' Appointments. The survey respondents hold key positions within their respective companies, organizations, or businesses. Most are directly involved with employees, serving as supervisors or managers. *Table-9* presents the distribution of respondents by their job titles. As shown, the largest group consists of 23 managers, followed by 20 supervisors, 15 proprietors, 13 directors, and 9 managing directors. Additionally, 6 respondents serve as senior officials, while the remaining 14 employers hold various other positions within their organizations:

Table 9: Employers' Appointments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Proprietor	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Managing Director	9	9.0	9.0	24.0
	Director	13	13.0	13.0	37.0
	Manager	23	23.0	23.0	60.0
	Supervisor	20	20.0	20.0	80.0
	Senior Official	6	6.0	6.0	86.0
	Others	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

5.4.3 Employers' Age Groups. Employers' age group is shown in the *Table-10*. The age distribution of the employer survey respondents reveals a broad representation across different age groups. The majority of respondents fall within the 41–50 years age bracket,

accounting for 42 individuals, or 42% of the total sample. This is followed by 24 respondents (24%) aged 31–40 years, and 26 respondents (26%) who are above 50 years. The smallest group comprises 8 respondents (8%) who are below 30 years of age. This distribution suggests that most employers or individuals in managerial roles in the service sector are middle-aged, with a notable concentration between 41 and 50 years. The relatively lower representation of younger respondents (under 30) may reflect the tendency for managerial and supervisory positions to be held by more experienced individuals:

Table 10: Employers’ Age Groups and Frequency Distribution

Age Group	Number of Respondents
Below 30 years	8
31–40 years	24
41–50 years	42
Above 50 years	26
Total	100

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

5.4.4 Employers’ Residence. The respondents' places of residence and their frequency distribution are presented in *Table-11*:

Table 11: Employers’ Residence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Valid	Saudi Arabia	28	28.0	28.0	28.0
	UAE	38	38.0	38.0	66.0
	Oman	4	4.0	4.0	70.0
	Qatar	1	1.0	1.0	71.0
	Kuwait	25	25.0	25.0	96.0
	Bahrain	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

The employer survey was conducted across the GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain. As indicated, the highest number of respondents accounting 38 employers reside in the UAE, followed by 28 employers in Saudi Arabia, and 25 employers in Kuwait. Additionally, 4 employers each are based in Oman and Bahrain, while 1 employer resides in Qatar.

5.4.5 Employers’ Nationalities. *Table-12* presents the nationalities of the employers along with their frequency distribution. As shown, the largest group comprises 37

Bangladeshi employers, followed by 18 Emirati employers. both Saudi and Kuwaiti nationals account for 13 employers each. The remaining respondents include 5 Indians, 4 Egyptians, 3 Sri Lankans, 2 Pakistanis, 2 Omanis, and one employer each from Bahrain, Hong Kong, and Germany:

Table 12: Nationalities of the Employers'

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Valid	Saudi Arabia	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
	UAE	18	18.0	18.0	31.0
	Oman	2	2.0	2.0	33.0
	Kuwait	13	13.0	13.0	46.0
	Bahrain	1	1.0	1.0	47.0
	Bangladesh	37	37.0	37.0	84.0
	India	5	5.0	5.0	89.0
	Pakistan	2	2.0	2.0	91.0
	Sri Lanka	3	3.0	3.0	94.0
	Hong Kong	1	1.0	1.0	95.0
	German	1	1.0	1.0	96.0
	Egypt	4	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total		100	100.0	100.0

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

5.4.6 Nationality and Residence Cross Tabulation. *Table-13* shows the nationality and residence cross-tabulation. Among 28 respondents in Saudi Arabia, 13 are Saudi, 13 are Bangladeshi, and 2 are Sri Lankan. In the UAE, of 38 respondents, 18 are Emirati, 8 are Bangladeshi, 4 are Indian, 2 are Pakistani, 1 each is Sri Lankan and German, and 4 are Egyptian. In Oman, 2 are Bangladeshi and 2 are Omani. One Bangladeshi respondent participated from Qatar. In Kuwait, 25 respondents include 13 Kuwaitis, 11 Bangladeshis, and 1 Indian. Four respondents from Bahrain consist of 1 Bahraini, 2 Bangladeshis, and 1 from Hong Kong:

Table 13: Nationality and Present Residence Cross Tabulation

		Saudi Arabia	UAE	Oman	Qatar	Kuwait	Bahrain	
Nationality	Saudi Arabia	13	0	0	0	0	0	13
	UAE	0	18	0	0	0	0	18
	Oman	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
	Kuwait	0	0	0	0	13	0	13
	Bahrain	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Bangladesh	13	8	2	1	11	2	37
	India	0	4	0	0	1	0	5

	Pakistan	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Sri Lanka	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
	Hong Kong	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	German	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Egypt	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Total		28	38	4	1	25	4	100

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

5.4.7 **Number of Workers Working Under the Employers’.** Table-14 shows the frequency distribution of the number of workers employed under different employers:

Table 14: Number of Workers Working under the Respondents’

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20	7	7.0	7.1	7.1
	21 to 50	6	6.0	6.1	13.3
	51 to 100	21	21.0	21.4	34.7
	101 to 200	31	31.0	31.6	66.3
	Above 201	33	33.0	33.7	100.0
	Total	98	98.0	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.0		
Total		100	100.0		

Source: Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Employer Survey Data

As shown in the Table -14, each survey respondent holds a position as either a proprietor, supervisor, or manager, and is responsible for overseeing a group of employees. These employers directly supervise the activities of their workers and are either directly or indirectly involved in the recruitment process. Employers were asked about the number of employees working under their supervision, with a pre-coded question offering five options: below 20, 21 to 50, 51 to 100, 101 to 200, and 201 and above. According to the data presented in Table-17, 33 employers supervise more than 201 workers, while 31 supervise between 101 and 200 workers. Additionally, 21 employers manage between 51 and 100 workers. A smaller group, seven employers, supervise fewer than 20 workers, and six employers are responsible for supervising between 21 and 50 workers. This distribution highlights the varying levels of responsibility among the employers in the survey.

5.5 Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive Statistics of Workers

In order to comprehend about the existing state of Bangladeshi expatriate workers in the GCC countries, a survey was conducted on 408 workers employed in the service sector in the GCC countries. The purposive sample survey method was used during the survey.

There were 28 semi-structured questions in the questionnaire. The interview was conducted using all available means i.e., in personal interview, telephone interview, interview using electronic means, email, etcetera. Interview results were analyzed using excel and SPSS statistical tools. Details of the survey on workers are illustrated in subsequent paragraphs.

5.5.1 Workers' Age Groups. The age group of the survey population is shown in *Table-15*:

Table 15: Workers' Age Groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20 years	4	1.0	1.0	1.0
	21 to 30 years	103	25.2	25.3	26.3
	31 to 40 years	168	41.2	41.3	67.6
	41 to 50 years	111	27.2	27.3	94.8
	Above 50 years	21	5.1	5.2	100.0
	Total	407	99.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.2		
Total		408	100.0		

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

Majority of the survey respondents accounting 168 workers belong to the age group between 31 and 40. The second largest group accounting 111 workers are in the age group between 41 and 50 years of age. Among others, 103 respondents are in the age group between 21 and 30, 21 respondents are above 50 years old, and only four respondents are below 20 years of age.

5.5.2 Residence of the Workers'. The survey respondents were residing in various GCC countries during the survey. The highest number of respondents totaling 117 workers were living in the UAE followed by 109 workers were living in Oman. Among others, 96 respondents were living in Saudi Arabia, 44 are in Kuwait, 34 are in Qatar, and only six respondents were living in Bahrain during the survey. Residence of the survey population is shown in the *Table-16*:

Table 16: Residence of the Workers'

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Saudi Arabia	96	23.5	23.6	23.6
	UAE	117	28.7	28.8	52.5
	Qatar	34	8.3	8.4	60.8

	Kuwait	44	10.8	10.8	71.7
	Oman	109	26.7	26.8	98.5
	Bahrain	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	406	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.5		
Total		408	100.0		

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

5.5.3 **Length of Service of the Workers'**. Table-17 shows length of service of the workers:

Table 17: Length of Service of the Workers'

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 5 years	116	28.4	28.5	28.5
	6 to 10 years	125	30.6	30.7	59.2
	11 to 15 years	101	24.8	24.8	84.0
	16 to 20 years	31	7.6	7.6	91.6
	Above 20 years	34	8.3	8.4	100.0
	Total	407	99.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.2		
Total		408	100.0		

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

The sample population represent people from a wide variety of experience on the basis of their length of service. The highest number of respondents totaling 125 are between six and ten years of service, 116 are below five years of service, 101 respondents are between 11 and 15 years of service, 34 respondents are above 20 years of service, and 31 respondents are between 16 and 20 years of service.

5.5.4 **Occupation of the Workers'**. Table-18 shows occupations of the workers:

Table 18: Occupation of the Workers'

Category	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Business	20	4.9	5.0	5.0
Mason/plumber/electrician/painter/carpenter/welder	44	10.8	11.0	16.0
Computer operator/office assistant/cashier	28	6.9	7.0	23.0
Domestic helper/housekeeping/cook	16	3.9	4.0	27.0
Driver/delivery person	65	15.9	16.3	43.3
Foreman/supervisor/store keeper/sales executive	18	4.4	4.5	47.8
Free lancer/unemployed	10	2.5	2.5	50.2

Helper/loader/janitor	139	34.1	34.8	85.0
Interpreter/religious worker	4	1.0	1.0	86.0
Manager/superintendent	7	1.7	1.8	87.8
Technician/mechanics/operator/tailor	28	6.9	7.0	94.8
Salesperson/security service	14	3.4	3.5	98.3
Media	1	0.2	0.3	98.5
Engineer/IT specialist/teacher	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	400	98.0	100.0	
Missing (System)	8	2.0		
Grand Total	408	100.0		

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

The survey population are engaged in a wide variety of occupations in the service sector. The highest number of survey population totaling 139 are employed as helper or loader or cleaner. The second highest number of populations totaling 65 are employed as driver or delivery-person. 44 respondents are employed as mason or plumber or electrician or painter or welder, 28 respondents are employed as technician or mechanics or operator or tailor, another 28 respondents are employed as computer operator or office assistant or cashier, 20 respondents have their own business, 18 respondents are employed as foremen or supervisor or store keeper or sales executive, 16 respondents are employed as domestic helper or housekeeping or cook, 14 respondents are employed as salesperson or security person, 10 respondents are freelancer, seven are manger or superintend, six respondents are engineer or IT specialists or teacher, four are interpreter or religious worker, and one respondent is involved in media.

5.5.5 Monthly Salary Structure of the Workers’. The distribution of monthly salary among the respondents is summarized in *Table-19*. A substantial portion of respondents, 38.2% (n=156), earn between 21,000 to 40,000 BDT, representing the largest income group in the sample. The next largest group, 27.2% (n=111), reported earnings between 41,000 to 80,000 BDT, approximately 14.5% (n=59) of respondents earn below 20,000 BDT, indicating a significant low-income subgroup. Higher income brackets, including 81,000 to 100,000 BDT, and above 100,000 BDT, constitute 9.3% (n=38) and 10.8% (n=44) of the sample, respectively. These findings reflect the economic diversity of the study population and provide important context for understanding the factors influencing earnings:

Table 19: Monthly Salary Structure of the Workers' (In BDT)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Below 20 thousand	59	14.5	14.5	14.5
	21 to 40 thousand	156	38.2	38.2	52.7
	41 to 80 thousand	111	27.2	27.2	79.9
	81 to 1 lac	38	9.3	9.3	89.2
	above 1 lac	44	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	408	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

5.5.6 Educational Qualification of the Respondent Workers. The educational qualifications of the 408 respondents are presented in *Table-20*. The data reveal that a small proportion, 2.5% (n = 10), reported never attending school, the largest group, 36.5% (n = 149), completed education from Grade I to VIII, representing the majority with primary to lower secondary education. Those who attained the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) constitute 24.0% (n = 98) of the respondents. A further 13.5% (n = 55) have education at the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level, and finally, a significant minority, 23.5% (n = 96), have education levels above HSC, indicating some respondents have completed tertiary or higher education. These educational patterns provide important context for analyzing the influence of education on socioeconomic outcomes, such as monthly salary, and help to understand the human capital characteristics of the sample:

Table 20: Educational Qualification of the Respondent Workers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never went to school	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	I to VIII	149	36.5	36.5	39.0
	IX and X	98	24.0	24.0	63.0
	SSC	55	13.5	13.5	76.5
	HSC and above	96	23.5	23.5	100.0
	Total	408	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

5.5.7 English Language Proficiency in Writing and Speaking. English (Writing) and English (Speaking) Proficiency of the Workers is shown in the *Table-21*:

Table 21: English (Writing) and English (Speaking) Proficiency of the Workers

English Proficiency Level	Writing Frequency	Writing Percent	Speaking Frequency	Speaking Percent
Not at all	136	33.3%	177	43.4%
Not workable	61	15.0%	62	15.2%
Somewhat workable	54	13.2%	50	12.3%
Workable	114	27.9%	81	19.9%
Good knowledge	43	10.5%	36	8.8%
Total	408	100.0%	406	99.5%

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

As shown in the *Table-21*, 33.3% (136 people) reported no writing skills at all, 42.9% (61 + 54 = 115 people) fall into the low to moderate proficiency (Not workable + Somewhat workable), 27.9% (114 people) are comfortable using English in writing, and only 10.5% (43 people) reported good knowledge of English writing. An even higher 43.4% (177 people) reported no speaking ability at all. Conversely, a combined 27.5% (62 + 50 = 112 people) fall into the low to moderate speaking range, only 28.7% (81 + 36 = 117 people) feel confident in their English-speaking skills (either Workable or Good knowledge). As a whole, writing proficiency is relatively limited, with less than 40% reporting functional or strong writing skills. On the other hand, speaking proficiency is generally weaker than writing, with fewer people able to communicate verbally in English:

5.5.8 Technical Training Background of the Respondents. The distribution of technical training (whether under taken technical training or not) among the 408 respondents is shown in *Table-22*:

Table 22: Technical Training Background of Respondents

Training Type	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
I did not undertake any training	65	15.9	15.9	15.9
I have undertaken on the job training only	147	36.0	36.0	52.0
Took partial training after reaching destination	95	23.3	23.3	75.2

Took partial training in Bangladesh before departure	50	12.3	12.3	87.5
Undertook full-fledged training	51	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	408	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

A minority of respondents, 15.9% (n = 65), reported that they did not undertake any form of training, the largest group, 36.0% (n = 147), received on-the-job training only, suggesting practical skill acquisition through work experience, a notable proportion, 23.3% (n = 95), underwent partial training after reaching their destination, indicating some post-migration skill development. Respondents who received partial training before departure accounted for 12.3% (n = 50). Finally, 12.5% (n = 51) completed full-fledged training prior to or during their migration process. Cumulatively, over half of the respondents (52.0%) received some form of practical or on-the-job training, whether partial or full, either before or after migration. The presence of substantial on-the-job and post-arrival training underscores the importance of continuous skill acquisition beyond formal education.

5.5.9 Pre-Departure Knowledge and Self Skill Assessment of Migrant Workers.

Table-23 summarizes respondents' self-assessed levels of knowledge and preparedness across six key domains: experience, cultural awareness, laws and rights, manners and etiquettes, and ICT skills. It offers a comparative snapshot of gaps in essential areas of readiness for migration and employment abroad:

Table 23: Pre-Departure Knowledge and Self Skills Assessment of Migrant Workers

Knowledge/Skill Area	Knew Nothing	Not Workable	Somewhat Workable	Workable	Confident	Total (n)
Work Experience	64 (15.7%)	131 (32.1%)	91 (22.3%)	66 (16.2%)	56 (13.7%)	408
Cultural Knowledge	135 (33.1%)	100 (24.5%)	89 (21.8%)	71 (17.4%)	13 (3.2%)	408
Laws & Rights	125 (30.6%)	109 (26.7%)	89 (21.8%)	57 (14.0%)	27 (6.6%)	407
Manners & Etiquettes	118 (28.9%)	127 (31.1%)	82 (20.1%)	63 (15.4%)	16 (3.9%)	406
ICT Skills	170 (41.7%)	76 (18.6%)	86 (21.1%)	55 (13.5%)	19 (4.7%)	406

Source: The Illustration is Derived from the Worker Survey Conducted for this Study

Over 47.8% had no usable experience or only theoretical knowledge. A more encouraging 29.9% reported workable or good knowledge. This indicates a relatively better preparedness in work-related exposure compared to other domains.

A concerning 57.6% had either no knowledge or unworkable understanding of local culture, only 20.6% felt confident or at least workable. This reflects a major gap in cross-cultural competence, which hinders integration.

A high 57.5% had little to no practical understanding of their rights, just 20.6% (84 people) felt confident or adequately informed. This indicates a critical vulnerability to exploitation or legal issues.

60.3% lacked practical knowledge in this area, only 19.4% had functional or confident understanding. This suggests a social integration challenge in host countries due to a lack of soft skills.

The weakest domain, with 41.7% knowing nothing and 60.6% lacking usable skills. Just 18.2% had any workable or confident level. The data suggests digital illiteracy is a major issue; critical in today's tech-enabled work environments.

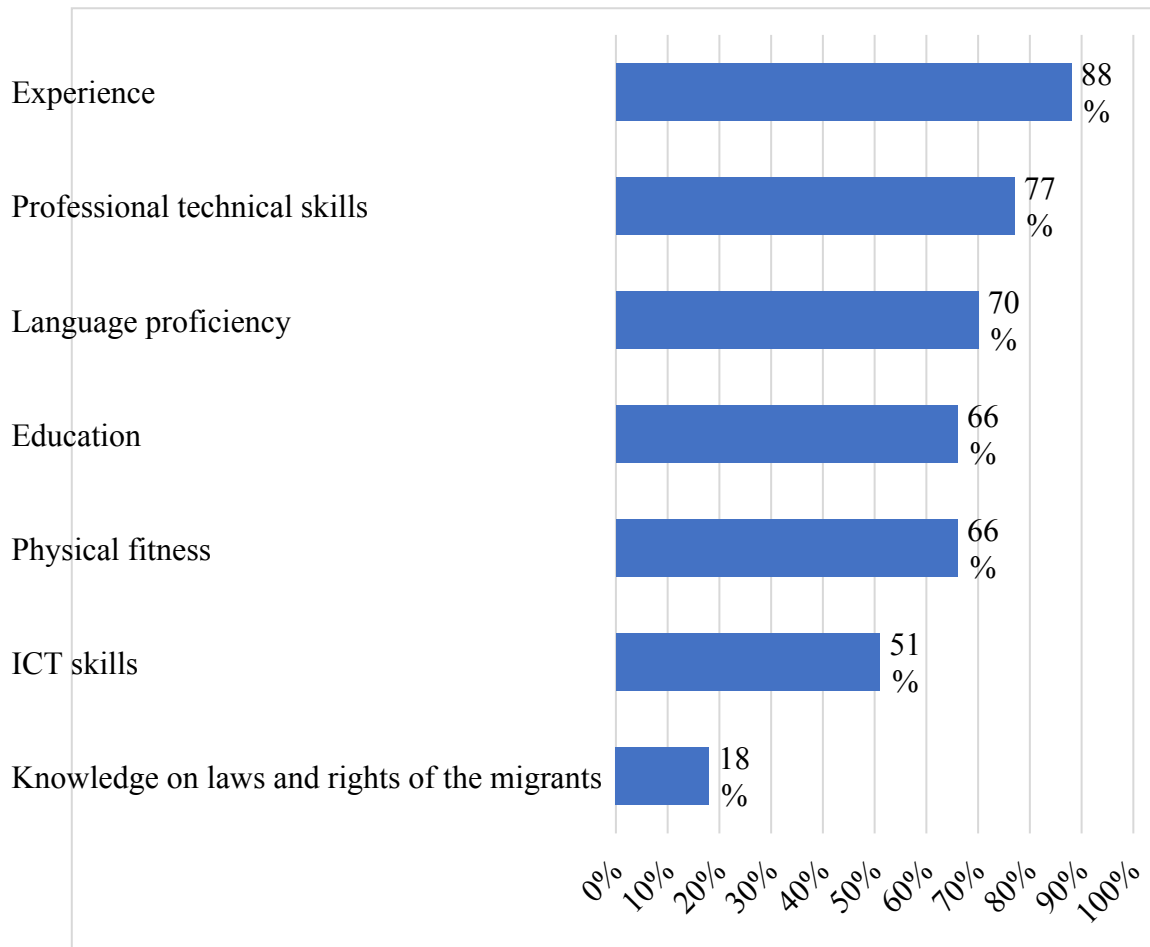
5.6 Skills Needed for Employment and Composite Ranking of Skills Needed

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the skills required for employment in the GCC countries, a three-dimensional analysis was conducted by collecting insights from both employers and workers. Employers were surveyed to identify the skills they prefer for employment and the skill gaps that hinder productivity within the workforce. Meanwhile, workers were asked to share their perspectives on the skills they believe contribute to better employment opportunities in foreign labor markets, with a particular focus on the GCC countries. This approach provided a well-rounded view of the skill dynamics from both sides of the labor market.

5.6.1 Employers' Preferred Hard Skills

During the survey, employers were asked, 'What qualities of workers are most desirable?' Respondents were provided with 18 pre-coded factors to choose from and were allowed to select multiple options, as well as suggest any additional factors not listed in the questionnaire. *Figure-12* illustrates the respondents' opinions on the preferred hard skills for employment:

Figure 12: Employers' Preferred Hard Skills



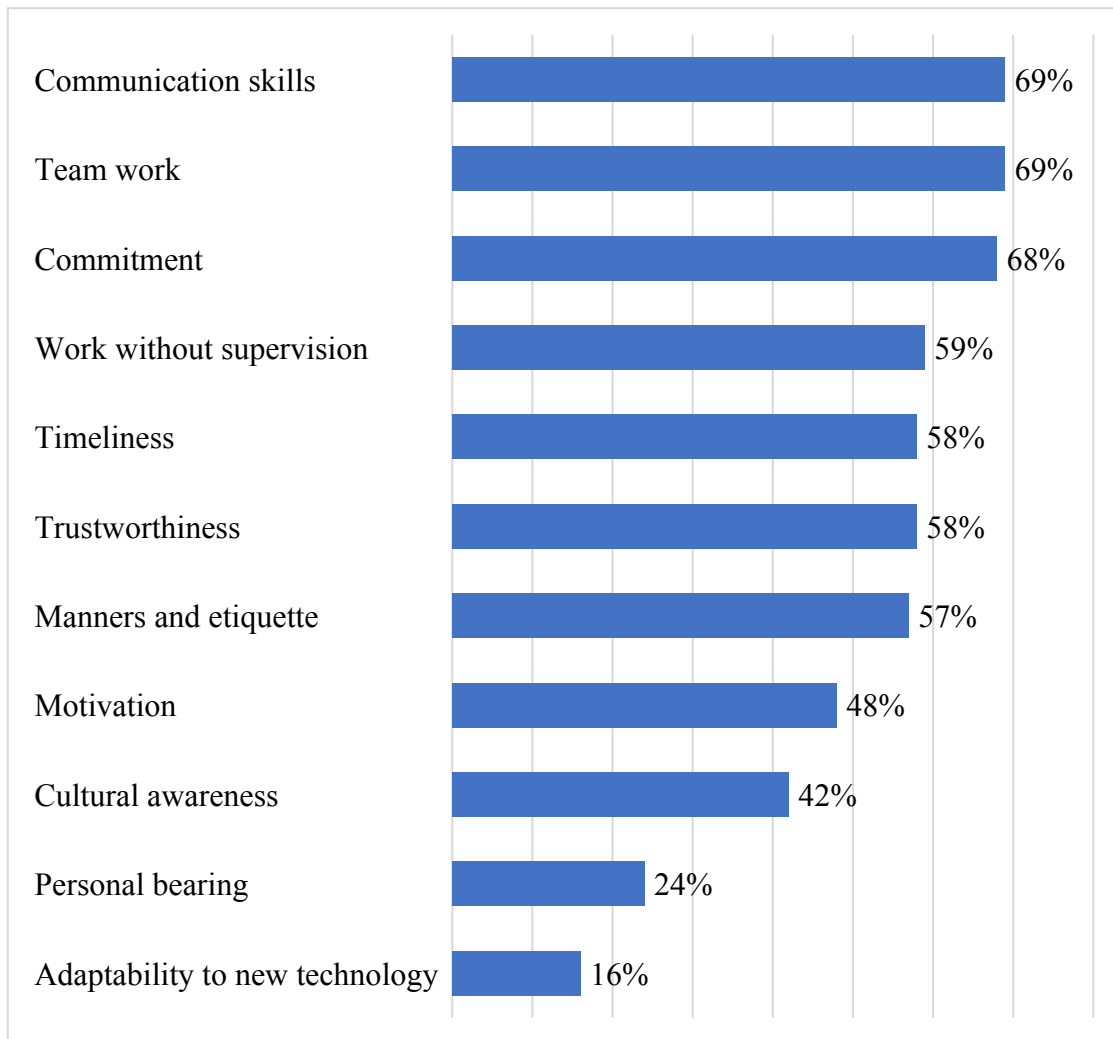
Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

According to the survey, work experience is considered the most desirable quality by 88% of employers. Professional skills closely follow, with 77% of employers prioritizing them. Language proficiency is important to 70% of employers, while 66% value physical fitness. Additionally, 51% of employers seek ICT skills, and 18% place importance on knowledge of the basic laws of the employing country:

5.6.2 Employers' Preferred Soft Skills

Eleven soft skills were presented to the respondents, allowing them to select their preferred soft skills. Respondents could choose multiple options, and the survey results are illustrated in *Figure-13*:

Figure 13: Employers' Preferred Soft Skills



Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

The majority of employers, representing 69% of respondents, consider communication skills to be the most important soft skill. Close behind, 69% also prioritize teamwork. Commitment is the preferred soft skill for 68% of employers, while 59% value the ability to work independently. Timeliness and trustworthiness are equally important to 58% of employers, as are manners and etiquette, favored by 57%. Additionally, 48% of employers prioritize motivation, 42% emphasize cultural awareness, 24% value personal bearing, and 16% consider adaptability to new technology a key soft skill.

5.6.3 Additional Points Raised by the Employers

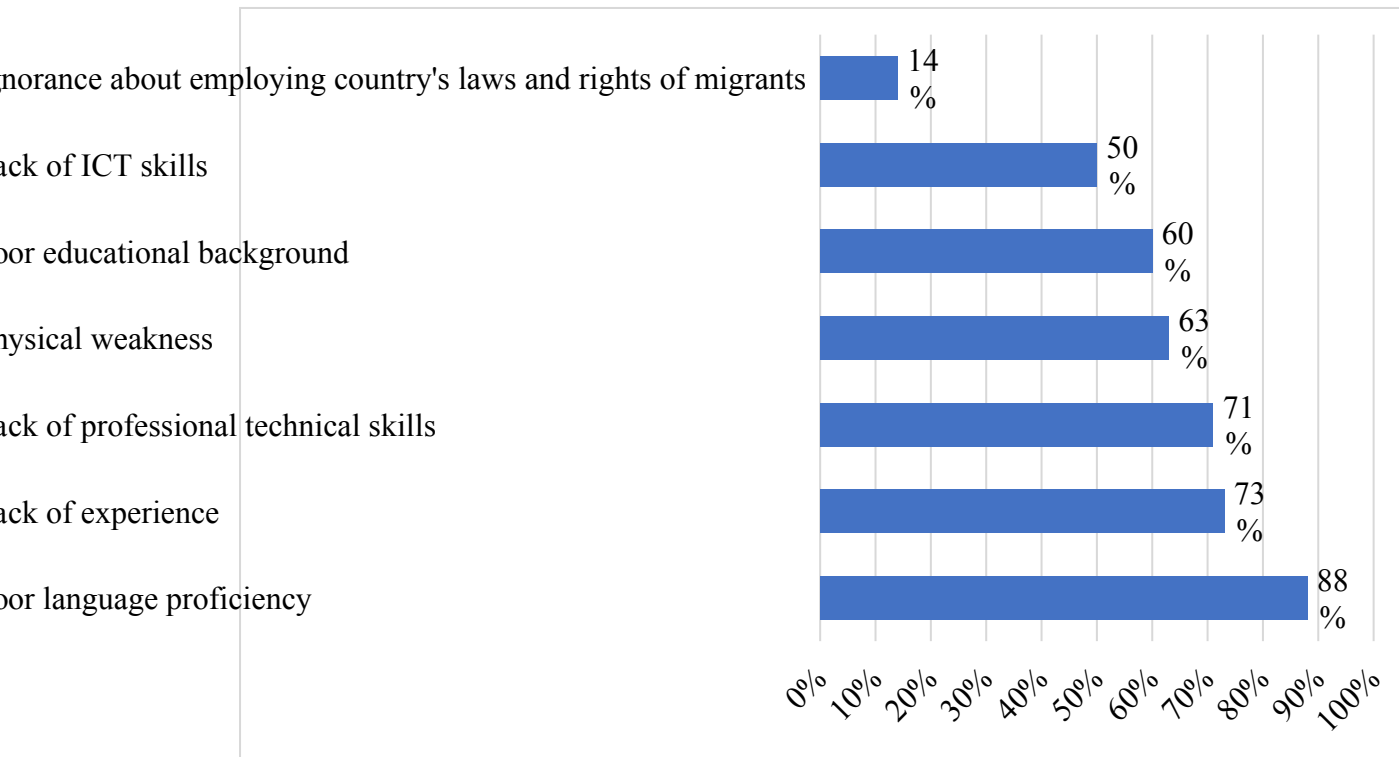
During the survey, employers were informed that, they could add any additional factors if not listed in the pre-coded list. Following are the additional preferred skills raised by the employers:

- Ability to maintain good relation with the employer and the customers
- Multilingual
- Problem solving skills
- Honesty
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Presentability

5.6.4 Lack of Hard Skills that Reduce Productivity

Employers were asked, "What are the drawbacks of workers that reduce productivity?" They were provided with a list of 18 hard and soft skills to choose from, with the option to select more than one. To understand employers' views on the lack of skills that hinder productivity, seven pre-coded hard skills were included in the survey. Employers could select multiple skills from the list. *Figure-14* illustrates the lack of hard skills that reduce productivity. The majority of employers, accounting for 88%, believe that a lack of language proficiency reduces productivity. Following this, 73% of employers cite a lack of experience as a productivity hindrance, while 71% attribute reduced productivity to insufficient professional technical skills. Additionally, 63% of employers point to physical weakness, 60% to a poor educational background, and 50% to a lack of ICT skills as factors that negatively impact productivity. Finally, 14% of employers believe that ignorance of the employing country's laws and migrant rights contributes to decreased productivity:

Figure 14: Lack of Hard Skills that Reduce Productivity

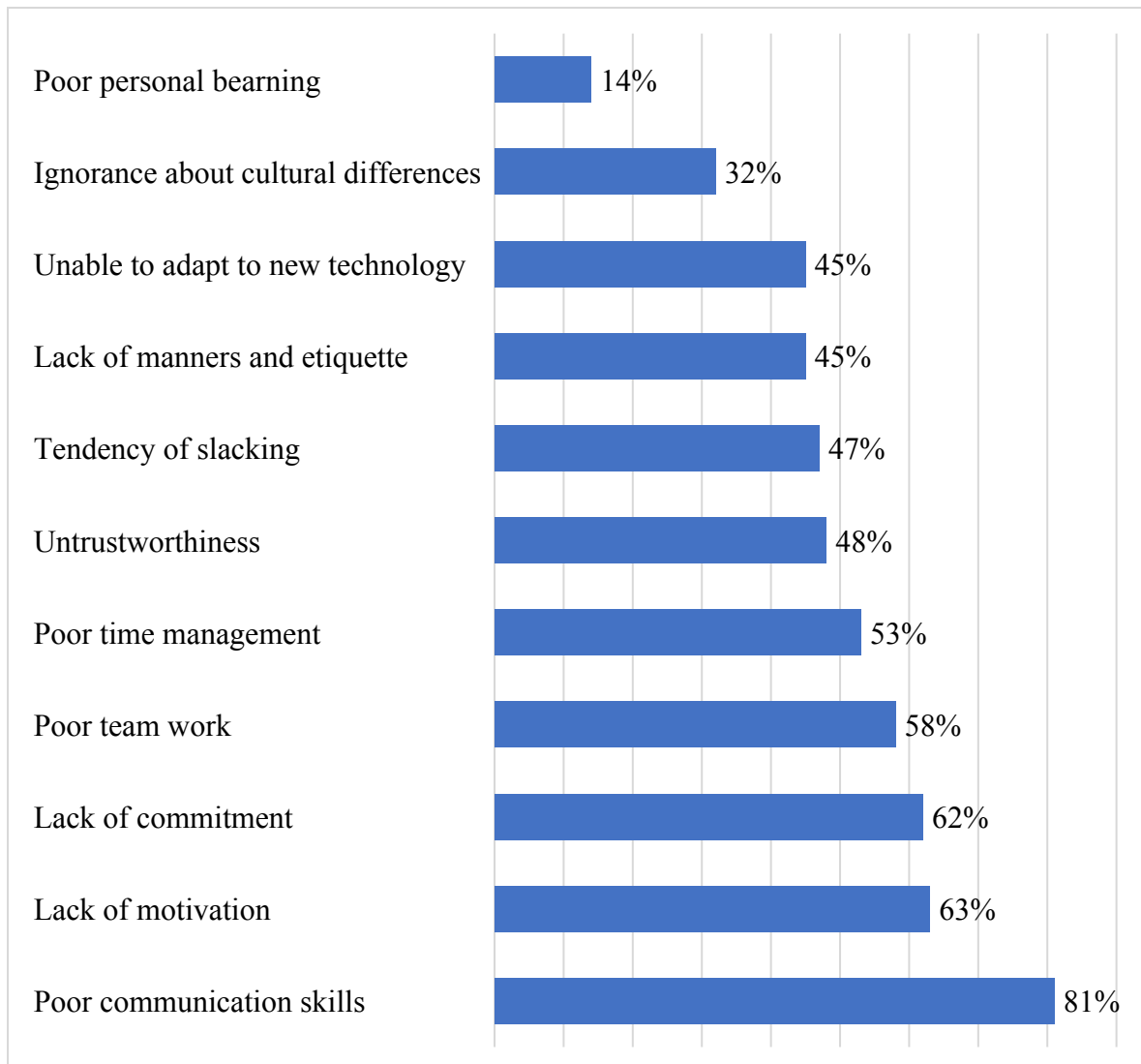


Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

5.6.5 Lack of Soft Skills that Reduce Productivity

To ascertain employers' opinion on lack of soft skills that reduce productivity, there were eleven pre-coded soft skills to pick. Employers could choose more than one from the list. *Figure-15* illustrates lack of soft skills that reduce productivity. The majority of employers, accounting for 81% of respondents, believe that poor communication skills reduce productivity. Following closely, 63% of employers attribute a lack of motivation to decreased productivity. Additionally, 62% of employers cite a lack of commitment, while 58% point to poor teamwork as significant factors. Poor time management is identified by 53% of employers, and 48% view untrustworthiness as a productivity obstacle. Other factors include a tendency to slack (47%), poor manners and etiquette (45%), an inability to adapt to new technology (45%), ignorance about cultural differences (32%), and poor personal bearing, which 14% of employers believe impacts productivity:

Figure 15: Lack of Soft Skills that Reduce Productivity



Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

5.6.6 Additional Points Raised by the Employers on Lack of Skills that Reduce Productivity

Employers raised following points as lack of skills that reduce productivity:

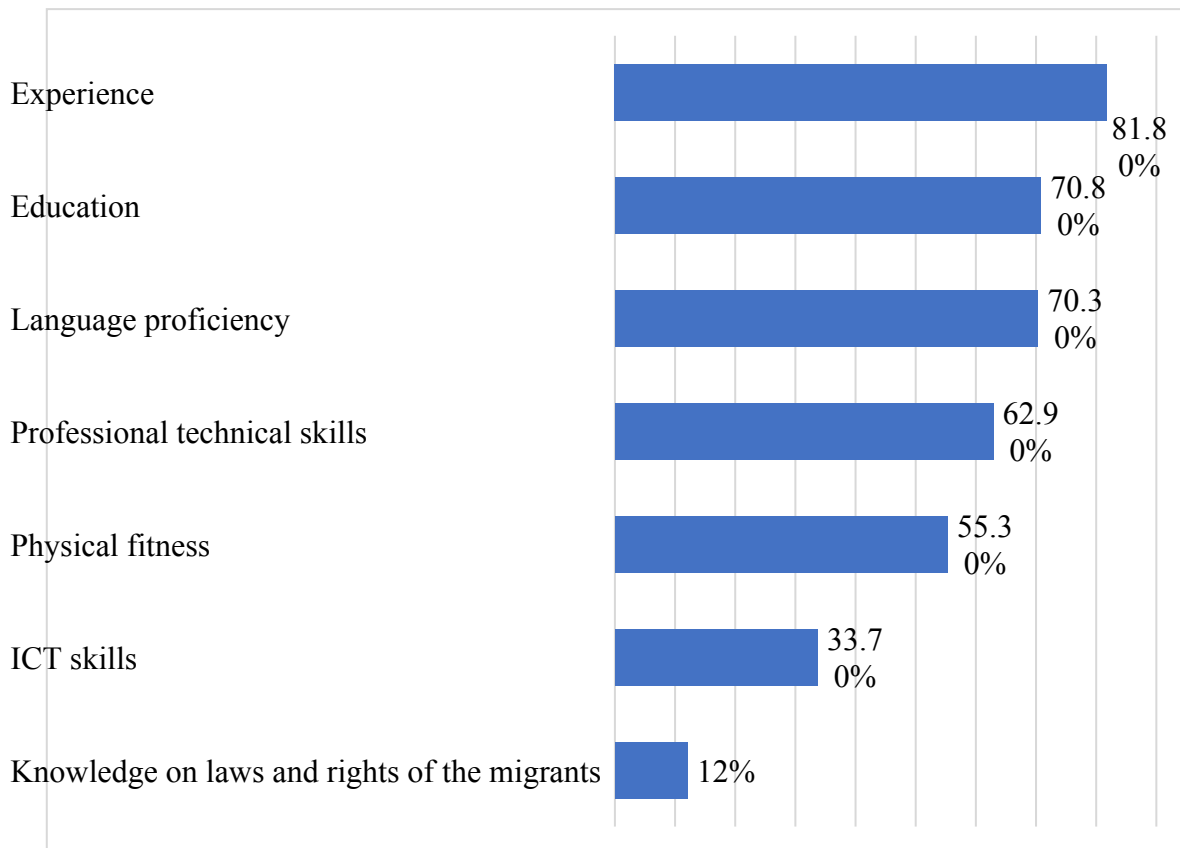
- Lack of concern for the employer (lack of ownership)
- Poor employee - employer relationship
- Inattentiveness of the workers
- Lack of loyalty to the organization

- Negative attitude of the employees
- Laziness of the workers
- Carelessness of the workers

5.6.7 Hard Skills that Contribute Better Employment Opportunities

Workers deployed in the GCC countries were surveyed to identify which skills they believe offer better employment opportunities. The question was framed in the context of their experiences after spending several years working in these countries. A list of 18 skills was provided, and respondents were allowed to select more than one skill. *Figure-16* illustrates hard skills that contribute better employment opportunities in the GCC countries:

Figure 16: Hard Skills that Contribute better Employment Opportunities



Source: Illustration is Based on Worker Responses Collected During the Study

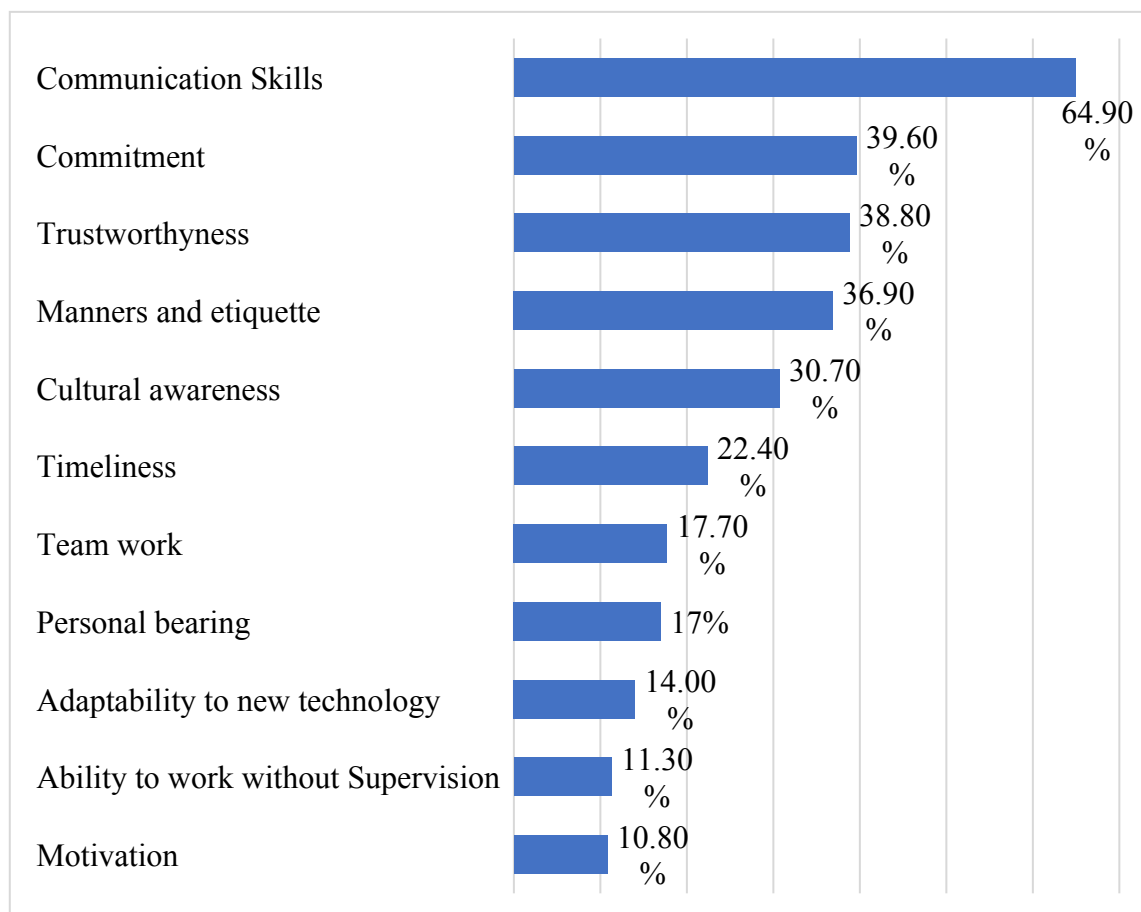
The majority of workers, accounting for 81.8%, believe that experience offers better employment opportunities. Coming in second, 70.8% of workers think that education contributes to better job prospects. Additionally, 70.3% of workers believe that

language proficiency plays a key role in securing employment. 62.9% attribute professional technical skills to better employment opportunities, while 55.3% cite physical fitness. 33.7% of workers believe ICT skills contribute to better job prospects, and 12% think knowledge of the laws and rights of migrants is a factor in improving employment opportunities.

5.6.8 Soft Skills that Contribute Employment Opportunities

Figure-17 illustrates soft skills that contribute better employment opportunities in the GCC countries:

Figure 17: Soft Skills that Contribute Employment Opportunities



Source: Illustration is Based on Worker Responses Collected During the Study

The majority of respondents, accounting for 64.9%, believe that communication skills offer better employment opportunities. Following closely, 39.6% of workers feel that commitment to work contributes to better job prospects. Trustworthiness is identified by 38.8% of respondents as an important factor in securing employment. Additionally, 36.9% believe that manners and etiquette play a role in improving employment

opportunities, while 30.7% emphasize the importance of cultural awareness. Timeliness is seen as a contributing factor by 22.4%, and 17.7% highlight the ability to work as part of a team. Personal bearing is considered important by 17%, while 14% believe adaptability to new technology enhances employment prospects. Lastly, 11.3% of workers think that the ability to work without supervision is key, and 10.8% believe motivation contributes to better job opportunities.

5.7 Composite Ranking of Hard Skills Needed Based on Employers' Preferred Skills, Lack of Skills that Reduce Productivity, and Skills that Contribute Better Employment Opportunities

Table-24 presents the Composite Ranking of Hard Skills Needed to evaluate the relative importance of various hard skills in enhancing the employability and workplace effectiveness of Bangladeshi migrant workers. This statistical ranking is based on the average of three key indicators:

- The contribution of each skill to employment opportunities
- Employers' preference for each skill
- The extent to which the absence of each skill negatively impacts productivity

The composite average is calculated by combining these indicators to determine the relative importance of each skill in the context of enhancing workers' employment prospects and productivity:

Table 24: Composite Ranking of Hard Skills Needed (Descending Order)

Rank	Skill	Employers' Preference (%)	Lack Reduces Productivity (%)	Contribution to Employment (%)	Composite Average (%)
1	Experience	88	73	81.80	80.93
2	Language Proficiency	70	88	70.30	76.10
3	Professional Technical Skills	77	71	62.90	70.30
4	Education	66	60	70.80	65.60
5	Physical Fitness	66	63	55.30	61.43
6	ICT Skills	51	50	32.40	44.47
7	Knowledge on Laws and Rights	18	14	12.00	14.67

Source: Compiled from Primary Data Collected and Analyzed During the Research Study

From the *Table – 24*, Experience emerges as the most critical skill, with high employer preference, a strong contribution to employment, and a significant impact on productivity when lacking. Language Proficiency follows closely, with employers valuing it highly, though its absence severely affects productivity. Professional Technical Skills and Education are also highly ranked, contributing significantly to employment opportunities and being preferred by employers, though less impactful than experience and language. Physical Fitness and ICT Skills hold moderate rankings, with physical fitness being more important for employment, while ICT skills are less preferred and contribute less to employment. Knowledge on Laws and Rights ranks lowest, showing minimal contribution to employment and low preference from employers.

This ranking highlights the need for targeted skills development in areas like experience, language, and technical expertise to improve Bangladeshi migrant workers' chances of securing better employment and reducing productivity losses.

5.8 Composite Ranking of Soft Skills Needed Based on Employers' Preferred Skills, Lack of Skills that Reduce Productivity, and Skills that Contribute Better Employment Opportunities

Table-25 presents the Composite Ranking of Soft Skills Needed. Similar to hard skills, the composite ranking of soft skills has been determined by compiling data on Employers' Preferred Skills, Lack of Skills that Reduce Productivity, and Skills that Contribute to Better Employment Opportunities:

Table 25: Composite Ranking of Soft Skills Needed (Descending Order)

Rank	Skill	Contribution to Employment (%)	Employers' Preference (%)	Lack Reduces Productivity (%)	Composite Average (%)
1	Communication Skills	64.90	69	81	71.63
2	Commitment	39.60	68	62	56.53
3	Team Work	17.70	69	58	48.90
4	Trustworthiness	38.80	58	48	48.27
5	Manners and Etiquette	36.90	57	45	46.30

6	Timeliness	22.40	58	53	44.47
7	Motivation	10.80	48	63	40.60
8	Ability to Work Without Supervision	11.30	59	47	39.10
9	Cultural Awareness	30.70	42	32	34.90
10	Adaptability to New Technology	14.00	16	45	25.00
11	Personal Bearing	17.00	24	14	18.33

Source: Compiled from Primary Data Collected and Analyzed During the Research Study

The ranking clearly indicates that communication skills top the list, with a composite score of 71.63%. This finding underscores the critical role that effective interpersonal communication plays in job acquisition, task execution, and employer satisfaction. In multilingual and multicultural workplaces, especially within the GCC, communication is often the key determinant of job retention and upward mobility. Commitment (56.53%) and team work (48.90%) also emerge as highly valued attributes, reflecting employers' strong preference for dependable workers who can collaborate efficiently. Notably, trustworthiness and manners and etiquette score closely, revealing their significance in fostering trust and workplace harmony. Skills such as timeliness, motivation, and ability to work without supervision appear in the mid-tier, highlighting their supporting role in job performance. Conversely, personal bearing, adaptability to new technology, and cultural awareness rank lower, suggesting either limited recognition of their value or underdeveloped awareness among workers and employers. These insights have direct implications for training curricula and policy formulation. Priority should be given to communication, commitment, team work, and trustworthiness in soft skills development programs. This evidence-based approach ensures alignment between workforce competencies and employer expectations, thereby enhancing job placement and remittance potential.

5.9 Skill Gaps among Bangladeshi Workers and Composite Ranking of Skill Gaps

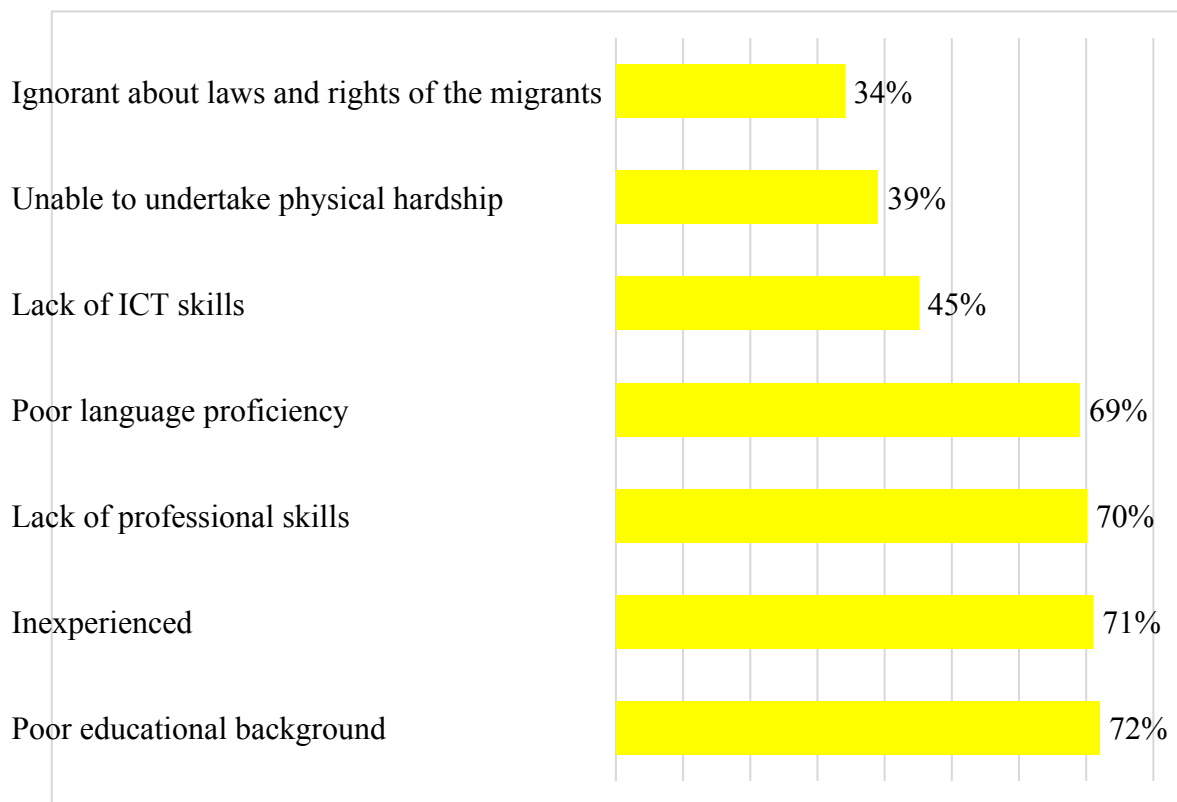
To ascertain skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, 100 employers and 408 workers were asked 'what are the skills gap among Bangladeshi worker?' They were given 18 hard and soft skills gaps to pick; they could choose more than one skill gaps.

Respondents could add any additional skills gap that were not listed under the pre-coded questionnaire. Survey results have been demonstrated in the succeeding paragraphs.

5.9.1 Employers’ Perspectives of Hard Skill Gaps

Figure-18 illustrates the hard skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, as identified by employers:

Figure 18: Employers’ Perspectives of Hard Skill Gaps



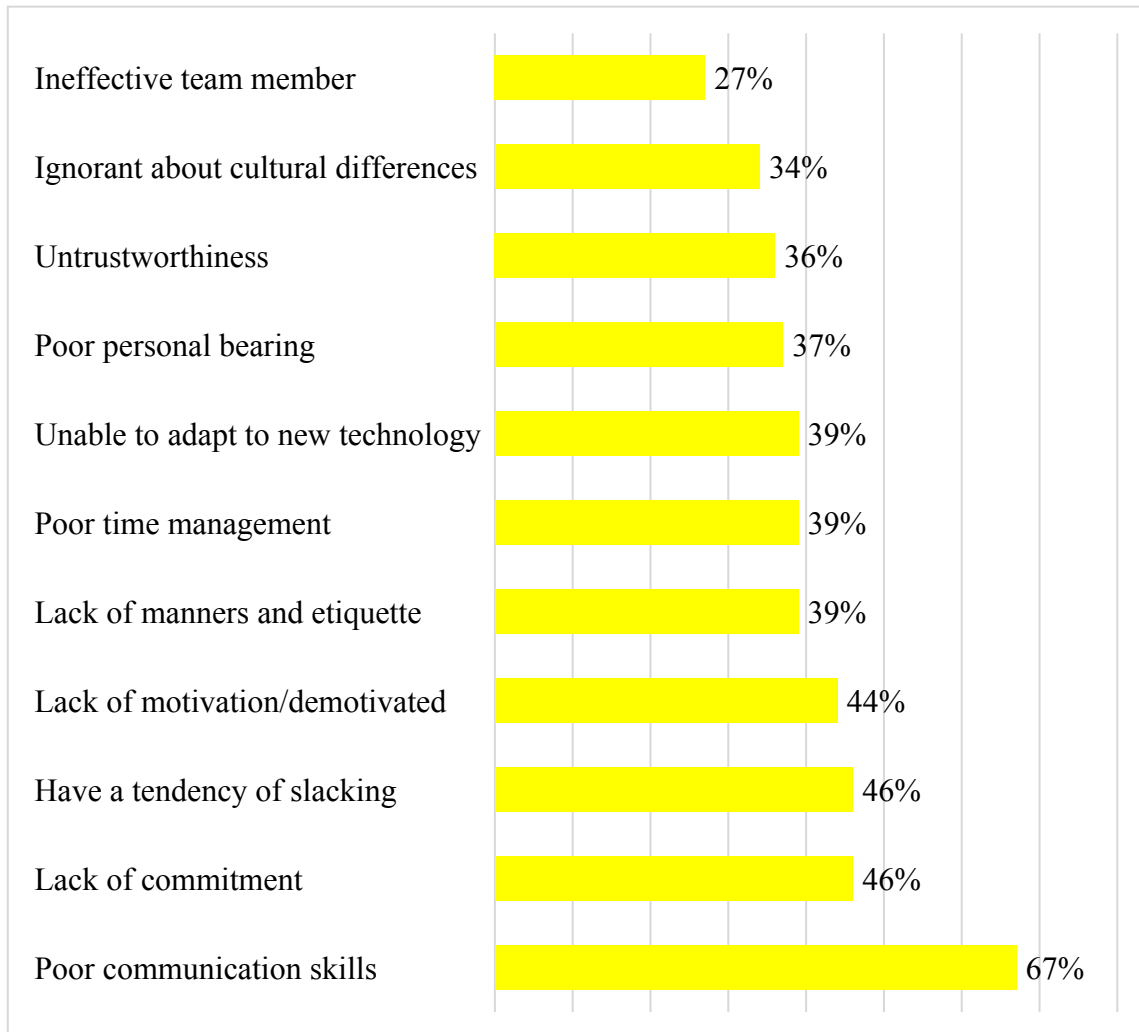
Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

According to the survey, the most significant skill gap is a poor educational background, cited by 72% of the respondents. The second most common skill gap is a lack of experience, noted by 71% of employers. The third gap is the absence of professional technical skills, acknowledged by 70% of employers. Additionally, 69% of employers pointed to poor language proficiency, while 45% highlighted a lack of ICT skills. Other gaps included the inability to undertake physical hardship (39%) and a lack of awareness regarding cultural differences (34%) among Bangladeshi workers.

5.9.2 Employers’ Perspectives of Soft Skill Gaps

Figure-19 illustrates soft skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers as perceived by employers:

Figure 19: Employers' Perspectives of Soft Skill Gaps



Source: Illustration is Based on Employer Responses Collected During the Study

The most significant gap identified is in communication skills, with 67% of employers highlighting poor communication as a major issue. The second most commonly noted gap is a lack of commitment, reported by 46% of respondents. Similarly, 46% of employers observed a tendency among Bangladeshi workers to slack off, while 44% pointed to a lack of motivation. Other notable concerns include poor manners and etiquette, poor time management, and difficulty adapting to new technology, each cited by 39% of employers. Additionally, 37% reported issues with poor personal bearing, 36% indicated untrustworthiness, 34% noted ignorance of cultural differences, and 27% expressed that Bangladeshi workers often struggle with teamwork.

5.9.3 Additional Points Raised by the Employers'

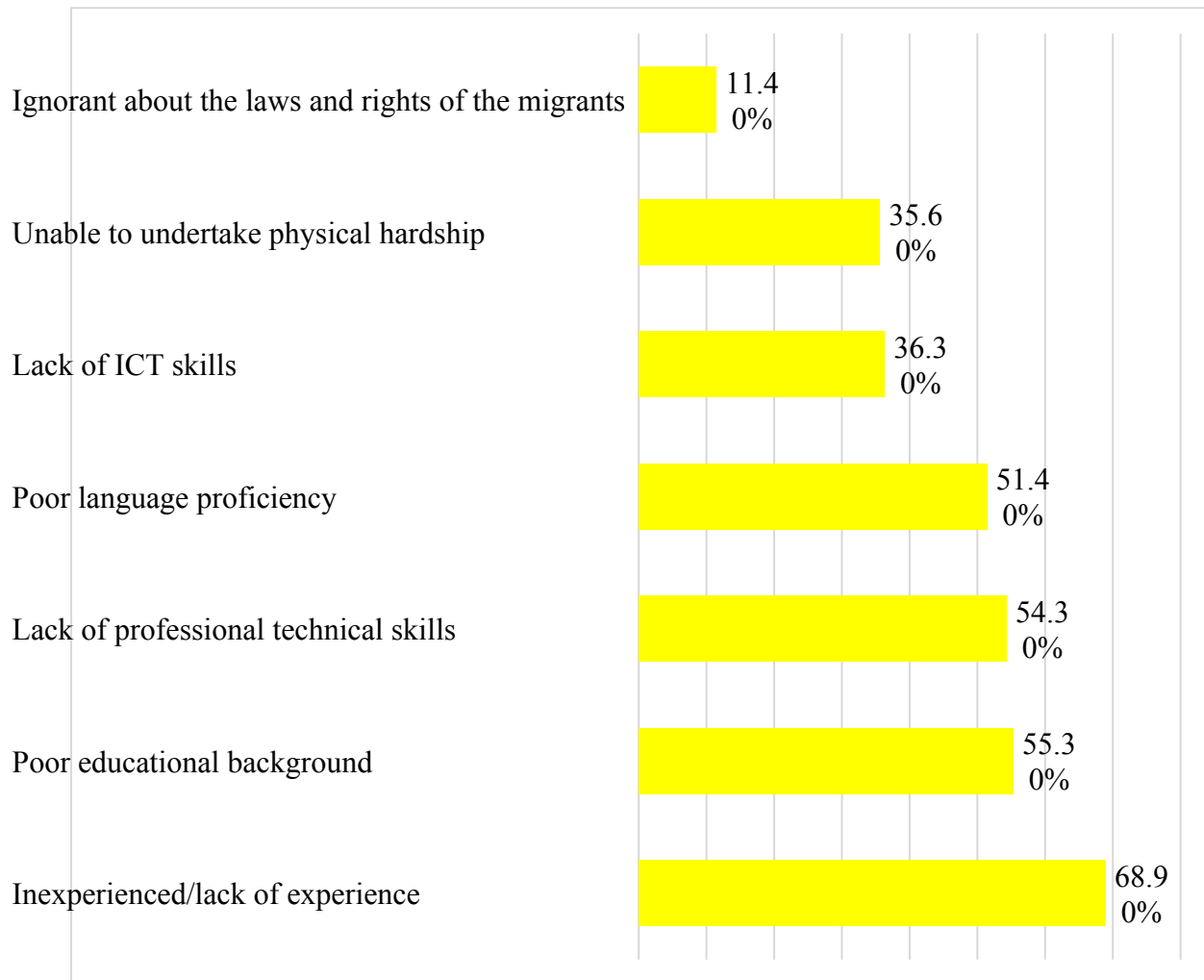
Employers raised following additional skills gap among Bangladeshi workers:

- Bangladeshi workers can't be trusted
- Bangladeshi workers lack credibility
- Bangladeshi workers are mostly sensitive (emotional)
- Ignorant about the cultural and behavioral sensitivity
- Impatient
- Lazy

5.9.4 Workers' Perspectives of Hard Skill Gaps

Figure-20 illustrates the hard skill gaps among Bangladeshi migrant workers from their own perspectives. A significant portion of the respondents, accounting for 68.9%, identified lack of experience as the most pressing skill gap, reflecting the challenge of limited practical exposure in various fields. The second major skill gap, noted by 55.3% of the workers, is attributed to a poor educational background, which limits workers' ability to meet the skill demands of employers, particularly in specialized sectors. Additionally, 54.3% of workers cited lack of professional technical skills as a critical gap, indicating the need for targeted training programs to enhance their qualifications in fields like hospitality, healthcare, and ICT. Moreover, 51.4% of workers acknowledged that poor language proficiency—especially in English and Arabic—further hinders their ability to communicate effectively and perform well in their roles. 35.6% pointed to poor health conditions or an inability to endure physical hardships as a significant barrier to meeting the physical demands of jobs abroad. Another 33.8% emphasized the lack of ICT skills, which are increasingly important in many sectors but remain underdeveloped among a large portion of the workforce. Finally, 11% of workers noted that ignorance about the laws and rights of migrants is a key gap, exposing workers to potential exploitation and violations of their rights in foreign countries. These findings highlight critical areas that need urgent attention to enhance the skill set of Bangladeshi migrant workers, ultimately improving their employability, job performance, and protection in the GCC countries. Addressing these skill gaps will also help in maximizing their contribution to the national economy through higher remittance inflows:

Figure 20: Workers' Perspectives of Hard Skill Gaps

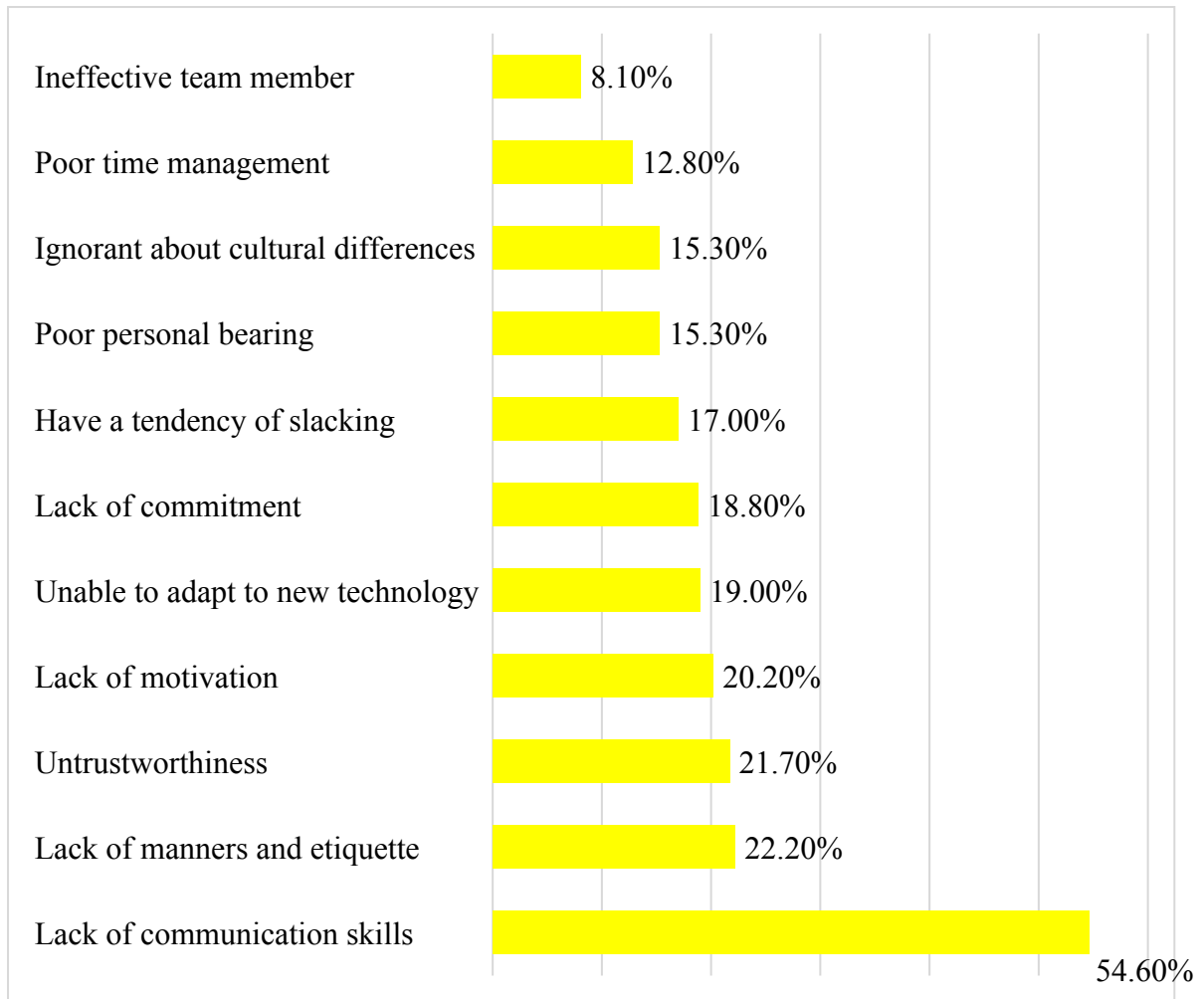


Source: Illustration is Based on Worker Responses Collected During the Study

5.9.5 Workers' Perspectives of Soft Skill Gaps

Figure-21 shows soft skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers from workers' perspective. Majority of the workers accounting 54.6% respondents opined that lack of communication skills is a skill gap among Bangladeshi workers. The second greatest skill gaps are manners and etiquette opined by 22.2% workers. 20.2% workers opined for lack motivation, 21.7% opined for untrustworthiness, 19% opined for unable to adapt to new technology, 18.8% opined for lack of commitment, 17% opined for tendency of slacking, 15.3% opined for ignorance about cultural difference, 15% opined for poor personal bearing, 12.8% opined for poor time management, and 8.1% workers believe that Bangladeshi workers are ineffective team member:

Figure 21 Workers' Perspectives of Soft Skills Gaps



Source: Illustration is Based on Worker Responses Collected During the Study

5.10 Composite Ranking of Hard Skill Gaps based on Employers and Workers Responses

The *Table-26* presents a comparative analysis of perceived skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers from the perspectives of both employers and workers, along with a composite average of the two opinions. At the top of the list is the lack of experience, which is identified as the most significant skill gap, with 71% of employers and 68.9% of workers acknowledging it, resulting in a composite average of 69.95%. Following closely is the issue of a poor educational background, reported by 72% of employers but only 55.3% of workers, producing a composite average of 63.65%:

Table 26: Composite Ranking of Hard Skill Gaps (Descending Order)

Rank	Skill Gap	Employers' Opinion (%)	Workers' Opinion (%)	Composite Average (%)
1	Lack of Experience	71.0	68.9	69.95
2	Poor Educational	72.0	55.3	63.65

	Background			
3	Lack of Professional Technical Skills	70.0	54.0	62.00
4	Poor Language Proficiency	69.0	51.4	60.20
5	Lack of ICT Skills	45.0	36.3	40.65
6	Unable to Undertake Physical Hardship	39.0	36.5	37.75
7	Ignorance About Laws and Rights of Migrants	34.0	11.4	22.70

Source: Compiled from Primary Data Collected and Analyzed During the Research Study

The third most cited gap is a lack of professional technical skills, recognized by 70% of employers and 54% of workers, with a composite average of 62%. Poor language proficiency ranks fourth, with 69% of employers and 51.4% of workers highlighting it, averaging 60.2%.

Lower on the list are skills related to information and communication technology (ICT skills) with a composite average of 40.65%, and the inability to undertake physical hardship, averaging 37.75%. The least recognized skill gap is ignorance about laws and rights of migrants, noted by 34% of employers but only 11.4% of workers, with a composite average of 22.7%.

Overall, the table highlights a broad consensus between employers and workers on major skill gaps, particularly experience, education, and technical skills, while gaps related to legal awareness are less commonly recognized.

5.11 Composite Ranking of Soft Skill Gaps based on Employers and Workers Responses

Table-27 summarizes the perceived soft skills gaps among Bangladeshi workers, comparing the views of employers and workers, along with a composite average of their opinions:

Table 27: Composite Ranking of Soft Skills Gaps (Descending Order)

Rank	Skill Gap	Employers' Opinion (%)	Workers' Opinion (%)	Composite Average (%)
1	Lack of Communication Skills	67.0	54.6	60.80

2	Lack of Commitment	46.0	18.8	32.40
3	Lack of Motivation	44.0	20.2	32.10
4	Tendency of Slacking	46.0	17.0	31.50
5	Lack of Manners and Etiquette	39.0	22.2	30.60
6	Untrustworthiness	36.0	21.7	28.85
7	Unable to Adapt to New Technology	39.0	19.0	29.00
8	Poor Personal Bearing	37.0	15.3	26.15
9	Poor Time Management	39.0	12.8	25.90
10	Ignorant About Cultural Differences	34.0	15.3	24.65
11	Ineffective Team Member	27.0	8.1	17.55

Source: Compiled from Primary Data Collected and Analyzed During the Research Study

The above ranking clearly shows that lack of communication skills is the most significant soft skill deficiency, with a composite score of 60.80%, suggesting the need for urgent and targeted intervention in this area. Other critical yet moderately ranked gaps include commitment, motivation, slacking tendencies, and etiquette, all of which impact discipline and professionalism at the workplace. Lower-ranked issues such as teamwork, cultural awareness, and personal bearing may appear less severe but still warrant attention for comprehensive soft skills development, particularly for jobs in multicultural and collaborative environments abroad. This prioritized list should guide the formulation of soft skill development programs under pre-departure and in-country training schemes.

5.12 Priority of Hard Skills for Skill Development

After identifying the composite ranking of skills needed and skill gaps, the next step is to prioritize skill development areas. The findings ensure the effective allocation of resources, focusing on increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers, which in turn will contribute to enhancing remittance inflows. To determine the priority of skills, we apply the Weighted Scoring Method (Villaumbrosia, 2025), chosen for its simplicity, flexibility, and transparency in prioritizing factors based on their relative importance. The Weighted Scoring Method is particularly effective when:

- A manageable number of factors need to be compared.
- Predefined rankings for both the skills required and the existing skills gaps are available.

- A clear and transparent methodology is needed to establish priorities, balancing both subjective and objective considerations.

The Weighted Scoring Method consists of three steps, with the step-by-step calculations explained in the following paragraphs:

5.12.1 Step 1. Normalize the Scores. In order to effectively combine the composite rankings for skills needed and skills gaps, it is essential to first normalize the scores to bring them onto a common scale. This normalization process allows for the comparison of different variables that may have varying scales, ensuring that no single variable disproportionately influences the results. The min-max normalization method is applied here, which rescales the values of the data to a fixed range between 0 and 1. The formula used for min-max normalization is:

$$\text{Normalized Value} = \frac{\text{Value} - \text{Min Value}}{\text{Max Value} - \text{Min Value}}$$

Normalization Table for the Composite Scores for Skills Needed and Skill Gaps is shown in the *Table-28*:

Table 28: Normalization Table for the Composite Scores for Skills Needed and Skill Gaps

Skill	Composite Average (Needed)	Normalized Score (Needed)	Composite Average (Gap)	Normalized Score (Gap)
Experience	80.93	1.00	69.95	0.77
Language Proficiency	76.10	0.89	60.20	0.57
Professional Technical Skills	70.30	0.82	62.00	0.60
Education	65.60	0.75	63.65	0.63
Physical Fitness	61.43	0.72	37.75	0.22
ICT Skills	44.47	0.40	40.65	0.27
Knowledge of Laws and Rights	14.67	0.00	22.70	0.00

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

5.12.2 Step 2. Assign Weights Based on Importance. The weights assigned to each skill are based on insights from KII and thematic analysis, reflecting their relative importance for employment success in the GCC countries and the severity of skills gaps. Skills that are critical for employability, such as experience, language proficiency, and professional technical skills, were assigned higher weights to reflect their immediate need and significant gaps in the workforce. Meanwhile, skills like knowledge of laws and

rights and physical fitness, while important, were given lower weights, as they were deemed less critical in terms of both their impact on employment and the extent of their gaps. Assigned Weights Based on Importance is shown in the *Table-29*:

Table 29: Assigned Weights Based on Importance

Skill	Weight for Skills Needed	Weight for Skills Gap
Experience	0.25	0.25
Language Proficiency	0.20	0.20
Professional Technical Skills	0.15	0.10
Education	0.10	0.10
Physical Fitness	0.05	0.05
ICT Skills	0.10	0.15
Knowledge of Laws and Rights	0.05	0.05

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

5.12.3 Step 3. Calculate Weighted Scores. Now, the study calculates the weighted scores for each skill by multiplying the normalized scores for skills needed and skills gaps by their respective weights. Calculation for Weighted Scores is shown in the *Table-30*. Formula for Weighted Score is shown as follows:

$$\text{Weighted Score} = (\text{Normalized Score for Skills Needed} \times \text{Weight for Skills Needed}) + (\text{Normalized Score for Skills Gap} \times \text{Weight for Skills Gap})$$

Table 30: Calculation for Weighted Scores for Hard Skills

Skill	Normalized Score (Needed)	Weight for Skills Needed	Normalized Score (Gap)	Weight for Skills Gap	Weighted Score
Experience	1.00	0.25	0.77	0.25	$(1.00 \times 0.25) + (0.77 \times 0.25) = 0.885$
Language Proficiency	0.89	0.20	0.57	0.20	$(0.89 \times 0.20) + (0.57 \times 0.20) = 0.73$
Professional Technical Skills	0.82	0.15	0.60	0.10	$(0.82 \times 0.15) + (0.60 \times 0.10) = 0.71$
Education	0.75	0.10	0.63	0.10	$(0.75 \times 0.10) + (0.63 \times 0.10) = 0.69$
Physical Fitness	0.72	0.05	0.22	0.05	$(0.72 \times 0.05) + (0.22 \times 0.05) = 0.47$

ICT Skills	0.40	0.10	0.27	0.15	$(0.40 \times 0.10) + (0.27 \times 0.15) = 0.335$
Knowledge of Laws and Rights	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05	$(0.00 \times 0.05) + (0.00 \times 0.05) = 0.00$

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

As shown in the *Table – 30*, the skills required for workers in the GCC countries are prioritized based on both their importance and the gap that needs to be addressed. Experience (0.885) emerges as the highest priority, indicating that it is the most critical skill required, with the largest gap needing attention. Language proficiency (0.73) follows closely as the second priority, showing a significant gap and high importance for effective communication in the workplace. Professional technical skills (0.71) and education (0.69) are the third and fourth priorities, respectively, as they are essential for performing job-specific tasks and meeting minimum educational standards. Physical fitness (0.47) ranks fifth, especially important for physically demanding roles, though not as urgent as other skills. ICT skills (0.335) come in sixth, with a lower priority, suggesting that while important, the gap in this area is not as pressing as others. Finally, knowledge of laws and rights (0.00) ranks seventh, indicating the lowest priority both in terms of importance and the gap that needs to be addressed.

5.13 Priority of Soft Skills for Skill Development

To determine the overall ranking of soft skills based on the weighted scores from both the Composite Ranking of Soft Skills and the Composite Ranking of Soft Skill Gaps, Weighted Scoring Method has been used. This involves combining the importance of each skill for employment and the severity of the skill gap to calculate an overall weighted score for each skill.

5.13.1 Step 1: Normalize the Scores. Normalization Table for the Composite Scores for Skills Needed and Skill Gaps is shown in the *Table-31*:

Table 31: Normalization Table for the Composite Scores for Skills Needed and Skill Gaps

Skill	Composite Average (Needed)	Normalized Score (Needed)	Composite Average (Gap)	Normalized Score (Gap)
Communication Skills	71.63	1.00	60.80	0.86

Commitment	56.53	0.61	32.40	0.00
Team Work	48.90	0.39	31.50	0.00
Trustworthiness	48.27	0.38	28.85	0.00
Manners and Etiquette	46.30	0.32	30.60	0.00
Timeliness	44.47	0.29	29.00	0.00
Motivation	40.60	0.20	32.10	0.00
Ability to Work Without Supervision	39.10	0.18	31.50	0.00
Cultural Awareness	34.90	0.00	24.65	0.00
Adaptability to New Technology	25.00	0.00	29.00	0.00
Personal Bearing	18.33	0.00	26.15	0.00

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

5.13.2 Step 2: Assign Weights Based on Importance. From the KII and thematic analysis, weights have been assigned to each soft skill and its corresponding gap, based on their importance as shown in the *Table-32*:

Table 32: Assign Weights Based on Importance

Skill	Weight for Skills Needed	Weight for Skills Gap
Communication Skills	0.30	0.30
Commitment	0.15	0.10
Team Work	0.10	0.05
Trustworthiness	0.10	0.05
Manners and Etiquette	0.25	0.25
Timeliness	0.05	0.05
Motivation	0.05	0.05
Ability to Work Without Supervision	0.05	0.05
Cultural Awareness	0.25	0.25
Adaptability to New Technology	0.05	0.05
Personal Bearing	0.05	0.05

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

5.13.3 Step 3: Calculate Weighted Scores. Now, the study calculates the weighted scores for each skill by multiplying the normalized scores for skills needed and skills gaps by their respective weights. Calculation for Weighted Scores is shown in the *Table-33*:

Table 33: Calculation for Weighted Scores for Soft Skills

Rank	Skill	Normalized Score (Needed)	Weight for Skills Needed	Normalized Score (Gap)	Weight for Skills Gap	Weighted Score
1st	Communication Skills	1.00	0.30	0.86	0.30	0.93
2nd	Commitment	0.61	0.15	0.00	0.10	0.09
3rd	Manners and Etiquette	0.32	0.25	0.00	0.25	0.08
4th	Team Work	0.39	0.10	0.00	0.05	0.04
5th	Trustworthiness	0.38	0.10	0.00	0.05	0.04
6th	Timeliness	0.29	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.01
7th	Motivation	0.20	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.01
8th	Ability to Work Without Supervision	0.18	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.01
9th	Cultural Awareness	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.25	0.00
10th	Adaptability to New Technology	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.00
11th	Personal Bearing	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05	0.00

Source: The Illustration is Prepared for the Research

As shown in the *Table – 33*, the ranking of soft skills highlights the varying importance and gap in the workforce. Communication skill (0.93) is ranked first, with the highest weighted score, indicating their critical role in the workplace. Commitment (0.09) follows as the second priority, reflecting its significant importance and moderate gap. Manners and etiquette (0.08) are ranked third, underlining their relevance for employability and professional interactions. Teamwork and trustworthiness (0.04) share the fourth position, both being essential for workplace dynamics, albeit with slightly lower weighted scores. Other skills such as timeliness, motivation, the ability to work without supervision, cultural awareness, adaptability to new technology, and personal bearing all have lower weighted scores, placing them lower in the ranking of priorities, but still contributing to overall employability and workplace effectiveness.

5.14 Correlation Analysis between Wage Earning and Key Priority Skills

The primary objective of this research is to identify and prioritize the key skills that significantly influence wage earnings, employability, and overall economic outcomes for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. To achieve this, the study adopts an Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Approach, beginning with a qualitative phase

using Thematic Analysis to explore and identify the most critical skills for employment success. This is followed by the application of a Priority Score Formula (weighted scoring) to rank these skills based on their relative importance and existing gaps. In the final quantitative phase, Regression Analysis is conducted to empirically test the relationship between the prioritized skills and monthly wage earnings, thereby providing evidence on how these skills contribute to the earning potential of migrant workers.

To maintain analytical focus and manageability, the study concentrates on nine skills identified through KIIs and thematic analysis. These skills are language proficiency, professional technical skills, work experience, communication skills, manners and etiquette, ICT literacy, cultural awareness, knowledge on legal rights, and educational qualifications. These skills have been consistently highlighted by KII respondents as the most influential factors affecting wage outcomes. They are considered essential for securing better-paying jobs in the GCC region, with respondents emphasizing their critical role in enhancing workers' employability and career advancement opportunities.

Building on this focus, the research adopts a structured and phased methodology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the skill-wage nexus. This approach not only explores the identified skills in depth but also supports evidence-based recommendations for improving the economic outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Gulf region.

The study follows a systematic analytical process consisting of the following steps:

- **Reliability Testing.** Ensures the robustness and internal consistency of the collected data before proceeding to advanced analyses.
- **Sample Adequacy Test.** Assesses whether the sample size is appropriate for statistical techniques such as factor analysis.
- **Correlation Analysis.** Examines the strength and direction of the relationship between skill importance and monthly wage earnings.
- **Regression Analysis.** Quantifies the extent to which the prioritized skills influence monthly wage earnings, providing empirical validation of their economic impact.

5.15 Reliability Test

Reliability statistics is shown in *Table-34*. The reliability analysis of the scale comprising 10 items yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.944. This indicates excellent internal consistency among the items (Jain & Chetty, 2019), meaning the items measure the same

underlying construct very reliably. Typically, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.9 is considered excellent, suggesting that the scale is highly reliable for the study. This strong reliability supports the use of this scale in further analysis, ensuring that the measurement of the construct is consistent and dependable:

Table 34: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.944	10

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

5.13 Sample Adequacy Test

According to Jain & Chetty (2019), the Sample Adequacy Test is conducted to assess whether the data collected for a particular analysis is sufficient and representative for drawing valid conclusions. KMO and Bartlett's Test is widely used to check if the data is suitable for performing the analysis by assessing how well each variable correlates with the others. *Table-35* presents KMO and Bartlett's Test:

Table 35: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.911
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3862.764
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

As shown in the *Table-35*, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.911, which is considered excellent (values above 0.9 indicate superb sampling adequacy). This means that the sample size is adequate and the data are suitable for factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is significant (Chi-square = 3862.764, df = 45, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. This suggests that the variables are sufficiently correlated for factor analysis to be appropriate.

5.14 Pearson Correlation Analysis of Independent Variables with Monthly Wage Earning

To assess the strength and direction of linear relationships between monthly wage earning and the selected independent variables, a Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted using SPSS. This statistical method is suitable for measuring the degree of association

between two continuous variables, where the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1 (Jain & Chetty, 2019). A value closer to +1 indicates a strong positive linear relationship, while a value closer to -1 signifies a strong negative linear relationship. SPSS computes this coefficient by analyzing the covariance between variables and standardizing it by their standard deviations. The results of the analysis, along with their interpretations, are summarized in *Table-36*:

Table 36: Pearson Correlation and its Explanation

Predictor Variable	Pearson Correlation with Monthly Salary (r)	Explanation
Technical Training	0.924	This very strong positive correlation indicates that higher technical training is closely associated with higher monthly earnings. It suggests that vocational or job-specific skills greatly enhance income potential.
Experience	0.782	A strong positive relationship showing that more work experience significantly contributes to higher salary levels. Experience likely increases competence and value in the labor market.
English (Speaking)	0.666	A moderate to strong positive correlation suggesting that better English-speaking skills are linked with increased earnings, reflecting the importance of communication skills.
English (Writing)	0.650	Similar to speaking skills, strong English writing ability is also positively related to higher income, indicating literacy skills add value to employment.
Educational Qualification	0.619	A moderate positive correlation showing that formal education positively impacts salary, although not as strongly as technical training or experience.
Manners and Etiquette	0.587	This moderate positive correlation implies that knowledge of social manners and workplace etiquette is associated with better earnings, reflecting the importance of social skills in career advancement.
ICT Skill	0.581	A moderate positive association indicating that digital literacy and information communication technology skills contribute to higher monthly salaries.
Culture	0.565	This moderate correlation suggests that cultural awareness and understanding influence income positively, possibly by aiding integration and social adaptability.
Knowledge on Laws and	0.497	A moderate positive relationship showing that knowledge on laws and rights of migrants also relates

Rights of Migrants		to better salary, highlighting the value of legal awareness in employment contexts.
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Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

The Pearson correlation analysis reveals that all selected predictor variables exhibit positive associations with monthly wage earnings, indicating their collective importance in influencing the income levels of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. Among these, technical training and work experience show the strongest correlations, underscoring the critical role of practical skills and on-the-job learning in enhancing wage potential. Language proficiency (both spoken and written), educational qualifications, and ICT skills also demonstrate moderate to strong positive correlations, emphasizing the need for communication, literacy, and digital competency in the modern labor market. Additionally, soft skills such as manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, and legal knowledge, while showing relatively lower correlations, still contribute meaningfully to wage outcomes. These findings provide empirical support for skill-based policy interventions aimed at improving the economic well-being of migrant workers.

5.15 Multiple Regression Analysis between Wage Earning and Key Priority Skills

According to Jain & Chetty (2019), regression analysis is employed to investigate the relationships between the independent variables and dependent variable. While Pearson's correlation analysis provided initial insights into the linear associations, regression analysis enables us to understand the strength, direction, and predictive capacity of each independent variable while controlling for the effects of others. By conducting a regression analysis, this study aims to quantify the effect of each factor, determine which variables have the greatest predictive power, and assess potential interactions between them.

5.15.1 The Multiple Regression Model Summary

The Multiple Regression Model Summary is shown in the *Table-37*. The multiple regression model includes the predictors such as ICT skill, experience, educational qualification, knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants, cultural awareness, English (Writing), technical training, English (Speaking), manners and etiquette to predict monthly wage earning:

Table 37: The Multiple Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.940 ^a	.883	.880	.402
a. Predictors: (Constant), ICT skill, experience, educational qualification, knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants, cultural awareness, English (Writing), technical training, English (Speaking), manners and etiquette				

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

R = 0.940 is the multiple correlation coefficient, indicating a very strong positive correlation between the observed salaries and the salaries predicted by the model (Jain & Chetty, 2019).

R Square = 0.883 means that 88.3% of the variance in monthly salary is explained by the combined influence of these predictor variables (Jain & Chetty, 2019). The result shows that the model fits the data well.

Adjusted R Square = 0.880 indicates that even after adjusting for the number of variables, the model explains 88.0% of the variance, confirming the robustness of the model.

Standard Error of the Estimate = 0.402 is the average distance that the observed salaries fall from the regression line (i.e., the model's predicted values). A relatively low standard error suggests the predictions are quite close to the actual values.

The regression model shows a very strong predictive ability for monthly salary based on the included skills and qualifications of respondents. Approximately 88% of the variation in monthly income can be explained by a combination of technical training, experience, language proficiency, ICT skills, cultural knowledge, legal awareness, and social manners. This underscores the importance of a multifaceted skill set in determining income levels among the studied population.

5.15.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

According to Jain & Chetty (2019), Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to examine whether there are statistically significant differences in monthly wage earning across different categories of the independent variables. While regression analysis provides insights into the relationship between continuous predictors and wage earning, ANOVA is particularly useful for assessing the impact of categorical variables on the dependent

variable. The key objective of employing ANOVA is to evaluate how variations in wage earning can be attributed to differences in groups defined by specific categories, such as educational qualifications, technical training, or knowledge of cultural factors. By dividing the independent variables into discrete groups (e.g., low, medium, and high education levels or categories of ICT skill), ANOVA allows for testing whether the mean wage earning differs significantly across these groups. This helps to identify the factors that influence wage outcomes in a more nuanced way.

The results of the ANOVA will provide insights into which categorical variables (or levels within variables) have a meaningful effect on monthly wage earning, while controlling for the other factors. If significant differences are found, post-hoc tests will be conducted to further explore which specific groups differ from each other. The findings will thus contribute to understanding the role of categorical factors in shaping wage disparities and help inform the broader analysis in the study. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is shown in the *Table-38*:

Table 38: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Table

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	479.335	9	53.259	329.653	.000 ^b
	Residual	63.494	393	.162		
	Total	542.829	402			
a. Dependent Variable: Monthly wage earning						
b. Predictors: (Constant), ICT skill, experience, educational qualification, knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants, culture, English (Writing), technical training, English (Speaking), manners and etiquette						

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

The ANOVA tests whether the regression model as a whole is statistically significant in predicting the dependent variable, which in this case is monthly wage earning. Regression Sum of Squares = 479.335 represents the variation in the dependent variable explained by the regression model. Residual Sum of Squares = 63.494 is the variation in the dependent variable that is not explained by the model (error or residuals). Total Sum of Squares = 542.829 is the total variation in monthly salary scores.

Degrees of Freedom (df):

- Regression df = 9 (number of predictors)
- Residual df = 393 (sample size minus number of predictors minus 1)
- Total df = 402

Mean Square (MS):

- Regression MS = 53.259 (Regression SS divided by Regression df)
- Residual MS = 0.162 (Residual SS divided by Residual df)

F-value = 329.653 indicates, tests if at least one of the predictors significantly explains variance in monthly salary. A very high F-value indicates the model fits significantly better than a model with no predictors.

Significance (Sig.) = .000 indicates, p-value is less than 0.01, indicating the overall regression model is highly statistically significant. This means there is a less than 0.01% chance that the relationship observed is due to random variation, confirming that the predictors collectively explain a significant amount of variance in monthly salary.

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant (F (9, 393) = 329.653, $p < 0.01$), meaning the combined set of skills, qualifications, and attributes reliably predict the monthly salary of respondents. This indicates that the model is a good fit and that the predictors together have a strong explanatory power regarding income levels.

5.15.3 Coefficient

The Coefficient Matrix summarizes the results of the multiple regression analysis, showing the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable; monthly wage earnings. It includes both unstandardized and standardized coefficients, along with standard errors, t-values, and significance levels (p-values) for each predictor. *Table-39* presents the Coefficient Matrix derived from the regression model:

Table 39: Coefficient Matrix

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.070	.062		1.126	.261

educational qualification	.035	.026	.037	1.322	.187
technical training	.643	.027	.684	23.399	.000
experience	.203	.024	.224	8.409	.000
English (Writing)	.009	.027	.011	.338	.736
English (Speaking)	.044	.028	.054	1.578	.115
culture	.033	.028	.034	1.165	.245
laws and rights of migrants	-.012	.031	-.013	-.400	.690
Manner and etiquettes	-.035	.041	-.035	-.854	.394
ICT skill	.028	.028	.030	1.015	.311

a. Dependent Variable: 7. Monthly salary/earning in Bangladeshi taka (BDT) (Please tick as appropriate):

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

The table represents the results of a multiple regression analysis where the dependent variable is the monthly salary/earnings in Bangladeshi Taka (BDT), and the independent variables are various factors such as educational qualification, technical training, experience, and others. Below is a thorough explanation of the coefficients, their significance, and the interpretation of t-values, which will help to understand the relationship between these independent variables and the dependent variable (salary).

- Constant.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.070: This is the value of the monthly salary when all the independent variables are zero. In practical terms, this means that if a person has no educational qualification, technical training, experience, or any of the other factors, their expected salary is 0.070 BDT (this is mainly a baseline value, and it isn't practically meaningful). Standard Error = 0.062: The standard error measures how precise the coefficient estimate is. A larger standard error relative to the coefficient suggests less precision. $t = 1.126$: the t-value is used to test whether the coefficient is significantly different from zero. A t-value around 1.126 suggests that the constant is not statistically significant, as it is less than the threshold of 2. $p = 0.261$: since $p > 0.05$, the constant (intercept) is not statistically significant, indicating that it doesn't significantly contribute to the model.
- Educational Qualification.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.035: for each unit increase in educational qualification, the salary is expected to increase by 0.035 BDT. However, this is a very small increase, and the relationship between educational qualification and salary is weak. Standard Error = 0.026: the standard error suggests how accurately the coefficient is estimated. In this case, it's relatively small compared to the coefficient. $t = 1.322$: this t-value is low,

indicating that educational qualification does not have a strong relationship with salary. $p = 0.187$: since $p > 0.05$, educational qualification is not statistically significant in predicting monthly salary. The data suggests that educational qualification does not significantly affect salary in this context.

- **Technical Training.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.643: a unit increase in technical training results in an increase of 0.643 BDT in salary. This is a large effect, indicating that technical training is a major predictor of salary. Standard Error = 0.027: the standard error is quite small, which means the coefficient for technical training is estimated with high precision. $t = 23.399$: a very high t-value indicates that technical training is highly significant in predicting salary. The high value strongly suggests that this variable has a significant impact on salary. $p = 0.000$: since $p < 0.05$, technical training is statistically significant. This means that technical training plays a critical role in determining the salary.
- **Experience.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.203: for each unit increase in experience, the salary is expected to increase by 0.203 BDT. This shows that experience is positively correlated with salary. Standard Error = 0.024: the standard error is small, indicating that the estimate for experience is fairly precise. $t = 8.409$: the high t-value of 8.409 suggests that experience has a statistically significant relationship with salary. $p = 0.000$: since $p < 0.05$, experience is statistically significant in predicting salary. More experienced workers are likely to earn higher salaries.
- **English (Writing).** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.009: Each unit increase in English (Writing) skills results in a very small increase of 0.009 BDT in salary. Standard Error = 0.027: the standard error is relatively high compared to the coefficient, indicating that the estimate may not be very precise. $t = 0.338$: a t-value of 0.338 is quite low, suggesting that English writing skills do not significantly contribute to salary. $p = 0.736$: since $p > 0.05$, English (Writing) is not statistically significant. This means that, in this model, English writing skills do not have a meaningful effect on salary.
- **English (Speaking).** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.044: each unit increase in English (Speaking) skills results in an increase of 0.044 BDT in salary. Standard Error = 0.028: the standard error is relatively small, indicating moderate precision in the estimate. $t = 1.578$: this t-value is moderate, but it is not large

enough to be considered significant. $p = 0.115$: since $p > 0.05$, English speaking skills are not statistically significant. The data suggests that English speaking skills do not significantly affect salary in this model.

- **Culture.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.033: for each unit increase in cultural awareness, salary is expected to increase by 0.033 BDT. Standard Error = 0.028: the standard error is small, suggesting some level of precision. $t = 1.165$: this t-value is low, indicating that cultural awareness is not strongly related to salary. $p = 0.245$: since $p > 0.05$, cultural awareness is not statistically significant. This suggests that cultural awareness does not significantly impact salary.
- **Laws and Rights of Migrants.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = -0.012: an increase in knowledge of laws and rights of migrants is associated with a small decrease in salary by 0.012 BDT. Standard Error = 0.031: the standard error is quite large compared to the coefficient, indicating less precision. $t = -0.400$: a t-value of -0.400 is very low, showing that knowledge of laws and rights is not significantly related to salary. $p = 0.690$: since $p > 0.05$, knowledge of laws and rights is not statistically significant in predicting salary. This variable does not affect salary meaningfully.
- **Manner and Etiquettes.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = -0.035: for each unit increase in manner and etiquettes, the salary is expected to decrease by 0.035 BDT. This is a very weak and negative relationship. Standard Error = 0.041: the standard error is fairly large, suggesting that the estimate is not very precise. $t = -0.854$: a t-value of -0.854 is quite low, suggesting that manner and etiquettes do not significantly influence salary. $p = 0.394$: since $p > 0.05$, manner and etiquettes are not statistically significant. The data suggests that manner and etiquettes do not meaningfully affect salary.
- **ICT Skills.** Unstandardized Coefficient (B) = 0.028: for each unit increase in ICT skills, salary is expected to increase by 0.028 BDT. Standard Error = 0.028: the standard error is moderate, indicating some precision. $t = 1.015$: a t-value of 1.015 is low, indicating that ICT skills do not significantly contribute to salary. $p = 0.311$: since $p > 0.05$, ICT skills are not statistically significant. ICT skills do not have a significant effect on salary.

5.15.4 Summary of Findings from Multiple Regression Analysis

The multiple regression analysis identified technical training and work experience as the most significant predictors of monthly wage earnings, supported by their high t-values and statistically significant p-values ($p < 0.05$). These results highlight the critical role of job-specific competencies and practical experience in shaping income levels for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. In contrast, other variables; such as educational qualification, English proficiency (writing and speaking), cultural awareness, legal knowledge, manners and etiquette, and ICT skills did not show statistically significant associations with monthly earnings in the model, as indicated by their low t-values and higher p-values ($p > 0.05$). However, since the main aim of this research is to assess the individual impact of each skill on wage earnings, the use of multiple regression alone proves insufficient. Its design emphasizes the collective influence of predictors while controlling for others, which may mask the distinct contribution of each skill. Therefore, a more targeted approach is required to fulfill the research objective.

5.16 Simple Linear Regression Analysis

To gain clearer insights into how each individual skill affects monthly wage earnings, simple linear regression was employed. Unlike multiple regression, this method examines the direct relationship between a single independent variable and the dependent variable, without the influence of other predictors. Each skill was analyzed separately to determine its unique contribution to wage outcomes. This approach provides a more focused evaluation of the predictive power of each skill and aligns more closely with the study's objective. The outcomes of these separate analyses have been consolidated into a summary matrix, presented in *Table-40*, allowing for straightforward comparison and interpretation of the influence each skill exerts on earnings:

Table 40: Simple Linear Regression Predicting Monthly Salary

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	B (Unstand Coeff.)	Beta (Stand Coeff.)	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Technical training	.924	.854	.854	.870	.924	48.550	.000	Very strong positive predictor of salary.
Experience	.782	.611	.610	.715	.782	25.301	.000	Strong positive relationship with salary.
English (Speaking)	.666	.444	.443	.545	.666	17.966	.000	Moderate positive

								predictor.
English (Writing)	.650	.423	.421	.525	.650	17.235	.000	Moderate positive predictor.
Educational qualification	.619	.383	.382	.588	.619	15.887	.000	Significant positive relationship.
Manner and etiquettes	.587	.344	.343	.587	.587	14.569	.000	Moderate positive predictor of salary.
ICT skill	.581	.338	.336	.540	.581	14.355	.000	Moderate positive predictor of salary.
Culture	.565	.319	.318	.551	.565	13.804	.000	Moderate positive relationship with salary.
Laws and rights of migrants	.497	.247	.246	.467	.497	11.539	.000	Moderate positive predictor but weaker than others

Source: Computed Using SPSS Software Based on Survey Data

The table presents the results of simple linear regression analyses conducted to evaluate the relationship between each independent variable (predictor) and the dependent variable, which is monthly salary. Here is a detailed interpretation of the findings for each predictor:

- Technical Training.** $R^2 = 0.854$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.854$: technical training explains 85.4% of the variance in monthly salary, making it a very strong predictor. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.924: the standardized coefficient indicates that technical training has a very strong positive relationship with salary. As the level of technical training increases, monthly salary is expected to increase significantly. t-value = 48.550 and p-value = 0.000: the extremely high t-value and the statistically significant p-value (< 0.05) confirm that the effect of technical training on salary is highly significant.
- Experience.** $R^2 = 0.611$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.610$: experience explains 61.1% of the variation in salary, indicating a strong positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.782: experience has a strong positive effect on salary, meaning that with more experience, the salary tends to increase. t-value = 25.301 and p-

value = 0.000: the high t-value and very low p-value show that experience is a statistically significant predictor of salary.

- **English (Speaking).** $R^2 = 0.444$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.443$: English speaking ability explains 44.4% of the variance in salary, indicating a moderate positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.666: the positive standardized coefficient suggests that better speaking skills are associated with a higher salary. t-value = 17.966 and p-value = 0.000: the t-value and p-value indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between English speaking skills and salary.
- **English (Writing).** $R^2 = 0.423$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.421$: writing skills account for 42.3% of the variation in salary, demonstrating a moderate positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.650: this suggests that stronger writing skills contribute positively to salary increases. t-value = 17.235 and p-value = 0.000: the relationship between English writing skills and salary is statistically significant, with a very low p-value.
- **Educational Qualification.** $R^2 = 0.383$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.382$: educational qualification explains 38.3% of the variation in salary, indicating a significant positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.619: higher educational qualification is positively correlated with salary, although its impact is not as strong as technical training or experience. t-value = 15.887 and p-value = 0.000: the results are statistically significant, indicating that educational qualifications play a crucial role in determining salary.
- **Manners and Etiquette.** $R^2 = 0.344$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.343$: manners and etiquette explain 34.4% of the variance in salary, indicating a moderate positive predictor. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.587: good manners and etiquette contribute positively to salary, though to a lesser extent compared to technical skills or experience. t-value = 14.569 and p-value = 0.000: the relationship is statistically significant, showing the importance of manners and etiquette in salary determination.
- **ICT Skill.** $R^2 = 0.338$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.336$: ICT skills explain 33.8% of the variance in salary, indicating a moderate positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.581: higher ICT skills are associated with higher salary, although the relationship is slightly weaker than that of other predictors. t-value = 14.355

and p-value = 0.000: this is a statistically significant relationship, emphasizing the value of ICT skills for salary.

- **Cultural Awareness.** $R^2 = 0.319$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.318$: cultural awareness explains 31.9% of the variance in salary, indicating a moderate positive relationship. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.565: the positive coefficient shows that cultural awareness is important in determining salary, though its effect is slightly weaker than technical training and experience. t-value = 13.804 and p-value = 0.000: the relationship is statistically significant, reinforcing the importance of cultural awareness in salary determination.
- **Laws and Rights of Migrants.** $R^2 = 0.247$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.246$: knowledge of laws and rights of migrants explains 24.7% of the variance in salary, which is the weakest relationship among the predictors listed. Beta (Standardized Coefficient) = 0.497: while still a moderate positive predictor, the impact of knowledge about laws and rights is weaker compared to other variables. t-value = 11.539 and p-value = 0.000: the relationship is statistically significant, although the effect size is smaller than for other predictors.

5.16.1 Summary of Findings from Simple Linear Regression

The most significant predictors of salary are Technical Training and Experience, both of which have very strong positive relationships with salary, explaining over 85% and 61% of the variance, respectively. English (speaking and writing), educational qualification, and manners and etiquette also show a significant positive relationship with salary, though their impact is somewhat weaker. ICT Skill, cultural awareness, and knowledge of laws and rights of migrants all demonstrate moderate positive relationships with salary, but these factors have relatively lower explanatory power compared to the top predictors. All predictors are statistically significant, as indicated by their low p-values (<0.05). Overall, technical training and experience stand out as the most influential factors in determining monthly salary, while knowledge of laws and rights of migrants, though still important, has a more limited effect.

5.17 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented an integrated analysis of the skill landscape affecting the employability and wage outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries. Drawing on both qualitative insights from KIIs and quantitative evidence from a large-

scale survey, the study identified critical hard and soft skills that significantly influence employment opportunities and income levels abroad. Thematic analysis of qualitative data revealed recurring themes around the importance of experience, technical proficiency, language ability, and communication as core employability drivers. Employers consistently emphasized the need for workers who are not only technically competent but also disciplined, committed, and able to communicate effectively in multicultural environments. Quantitative analysis complemented and reinforced these insights. Reliability and validity tests confirmed the robustness of the dataset, while Pearson correlation and regression models quantified the impact of individual skills on monthly earnings. Notably, technical training showed the strongest positive correlation with income ($r = 0.924$), followed by experience, English proficiency, and manners and etiquette. The regression model further confirmed that technical training and experience were the most significant predictors of wage outcomes, accounting for 88.3% of the variance in salary levels ($R^2 = 0.883$). Through triangulation, a strong convergence was observed between stakeholder perceptions and empirical evidence, particularly in areas such as experience, language proficiency, and communication skills. This intersection validates the priority ranking of skills derived through composite scoring and weighted analysis. The use of the Weighted Scoring Method allowed for the systematic prioritization of skill development areas, highlighting experience, language proficiency, technical training, and education as top hard skill priorities. Similarly, among soft skills, communication, commitment, and manners and etiquette emerged as high-priority areas for intervention. The chapter concludes that addressing these identified skill gaps through targeted training programs, both pre-departure and in-country, is essential for enhancing the employability, job retention, and income potential of Bangladeshi migrant workers. The findings serve as an evidence-based foundation for policymakers and training institutions to realign curricula, allocate resources effectively, and strategically design interventions that are attuned to both employer expectations and labor market realities in the GCC.

While the previous chapter identified key skill priorities and their impact on migrant workers' employability and earnings, the following chapter delves into the practical challenges that hinder skill development and effective deployment, and offers targeted suggestions to overcome these barriers and optimize migration outcomes.

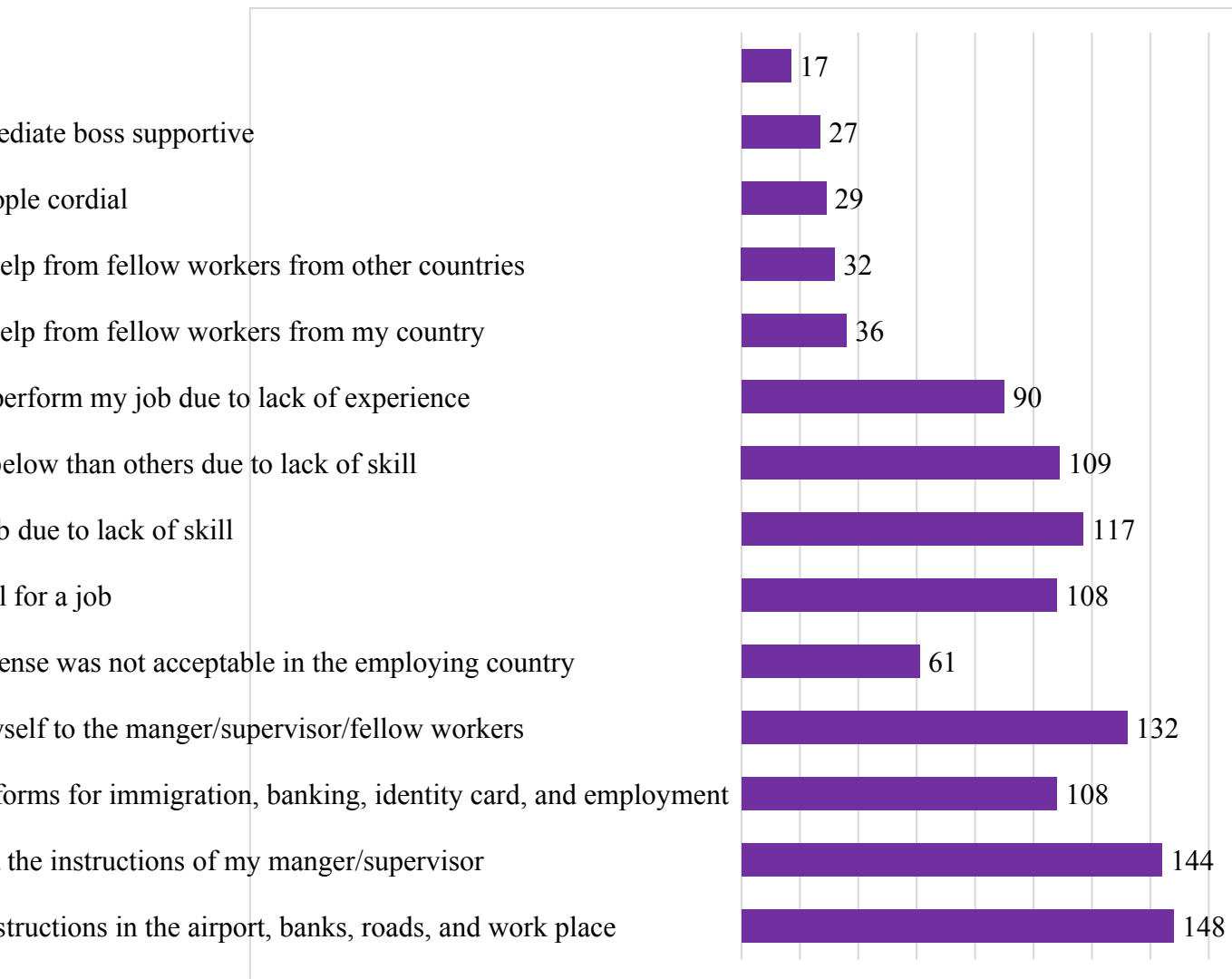
Chapter VI: Challenges and Suggestions

Chapter VI: Challenges in the Path to Migration

6.1 Challenges Faced by the Workers After Landing in the Destination Country

During the survey, migrant workers were asked the question: “*What difficulties did you face after arriving in the destination country?*” They were presented with a list of common challenges and allowed to select multiple responses based on their experiences. This approach enabled respondents to express hardships they encountered upon arrival. The challenges faced by workers after landing in the destination country are illustrated in *Figure 22*:

Figure 22: Challenges Faced by the Workers After Landing in the Destination Country



Source: The Illustration is based on the Survey of the Study

As shown in the *Figure-22*, a majority of the respondents (148 workers) reported that they were unable to read instructions in key public and professional settings such as airports, banks, roads, and workplaces. Similarly, 144 workers stated they could not understand directions from their managers or supervisors, while 132 workers said they were unable to express themselves to managers, supervisors, or colleagues due to limited language proficiency.

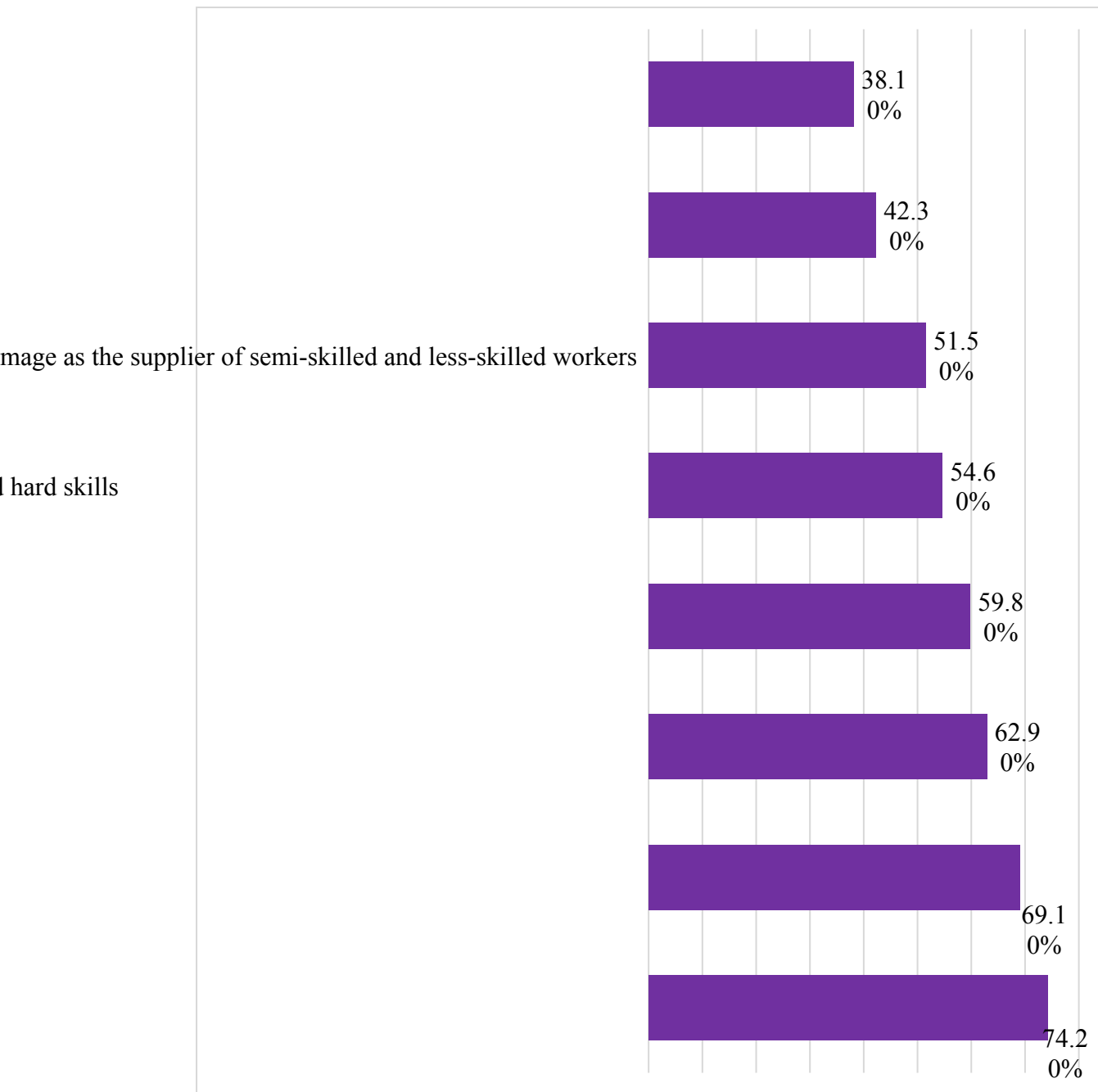
Regarding job readiness, 117 workers indicated they were unable to secure employment due to a lack of skills. Additionally, 109 workers felt they were paid significantly less than others for the same work due to their limited skill set. A total of 108 respondents acknowledged that they had no job-related skills, and another 108 mentioned difficulties in filling out essential forms for immigration, banking, identity cards, and employment.

Experience was another concern: 90 workers struggled to perform their duties due to inexperience. Furthermore, 61 workers reported that their skill certifications were not recognized in the host country. Social and workplace support was also lacking for many, 36 respondents said they received no help from coworkers, 29 felt that local people were not welcoming, 27 found their immediate supervisors unsupportive, and 17 experienced cultural shock.

6.2 Challenges Faced by the Employers to Recruit Skilled and Semiskilled Workers from Bangladesh

The challenges faced by employers are presented in *Figure-23*. During the survey, employers were asked: “*What challenges do you face while recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?*” They were provided with a list of potential issues and allowed to select multiple responses based on their experience. This allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the barriers employers encounter in the recruitment process. The identified challenges are discussed in detail in the subsequent paragraphs:

Figure 23: Challenges Faced by the Employers to Recruit Manpower from Bangladesh



Source: Illustration is based on the Survey Conducted for the Study

Each of the key challenges are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs:

6.2.1 Low Number of Applicants with Required Skills. Majority of the respondents accounting 74.2% employers said that low number of qualified applicants for skill and semi-skill jobs is a challenge to recruit workers from Bangladesh. The statement commensurate with the opinions of the experts. Siddique (2023) citing Rashid¹⁸ states

¹⁸ Syeda Rozana Rashid is a migration expert and a professor of the Department of International Relations of Dhaka University, Bangladesh.

that Bangladesh could not yet produce enough skilled manpower to meet the need of the international job market. Though Bangladesh has established TTCs in every district but those are yet to be capable to produce quality workforce to meet the need of the 4.0IR, said Momen¹⁹ (Siddiqui, 2023).

6.2.2 Lack of Experienced Manpower. The second greatest challenge employers face is ‘non-availability of experienced manpower’ in Bangladesh. 69.1% respondents stated that certified skilled workers lack sufficient experience. The statement substantiates the previous opinions of the employers and workers; lack of experience has been ascertained as the second greatest skills gap and greatest skills gap by the employers (81.8%) and workers (69%) respectively.

6.2.3 Bangladeshi Skill Certificates are not Accepted in the GCC Countries. 62.9% employers feel that non-accreditation of Bangladeshi technical and vocational institutes with employing countries is a challenge to recruit skilled and semiskilled workers from Bangladesh. Alam²⁰ (The Daily Star, 2021) states that Bangladeshi workers earn lower wages in the GCC countries compared to other manpower sending countries like India, Sri Lanka, and Philippines. To address the issue, the Government has recently taken a decision to provide skill training for migrant workers in accordance with NTVQF. However, such training will not resolve the issue as many GCC countries do not accept Bangladeshi skill certificates (The Daily Star, 2021). Therefore, efforts to be taken to ensure Bangladeshi vocational and TTCs are accredited with the employers.

6.2.4 Certified Skilled Manpower Often Fail in Skill Assessment Test. The fourth greatest challenge for recruitment from Bangladesh is ‘*certified skilled manpower often fails in assessment test*’ which has been opined by 59.8% respondents. Occasionally, employers recruit certified skilled and semiskilled workers for different sectors. Experience shows that after reaching in the destination country, majority of these workers fail in the proficiency test. Thus, they cannot be given the skill job and wage as promised. Under such circumstances, workers have two options; either come back at own expense or undertake low grade labor job, said KI-1. The entire process of selection, migration, in-house assessment test, etcetera take away valuable time,

¹⁹ Mr. AK Abdul Momen is the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh between 2019 and 2023.

²⁰ Mr. Mir Khairul Alam is the Additional Director General of BMET as on February 20, 2021.

energy, and money, thus discourage employer to recruit skill level workers from Bangladesh.

6.2.5 Lack of Relevant Soft Skill in the Workers. The fifth challenge faced by the employers is ‘lack of relevant soft skills in the workers’ as opined by 54.6% employers. Employers are not interested to hire skilled manpower from Bangladesh due to lack of relevant soft skills in the workers. Goldshteyn (2023) states that while hard skills like technical and specialized skills are essential for employment, it is not enough to guarantee professional success without soft skills. Now-a-days, employers prioritize soft skills over hard skills in hiring decision, recognizing these skills as essential for building strong team, providing brilliant customer service, etcetera.

6.2.6 Negative Image of Bangladeshi Workers. Majority of the employers are not interested to hire skilled manpower from Bangladesh as the country has already earned bad image as the supplier of labors and less-skilled workers. 51.5% respondents categorized negative image as the sixth greatest challenge for hiring skilled and semiskilled workers. Besides, majority of the Bangladeshi workers go abroad making huge loan debt with interest. Therefore, many workers are bound to indulge in extra money-making illegal activities such as hawkery, car cleaning, etcetera (KI-1). Such attitudes give an impression that workers are more interested in their secondary job without dedication and diligence to their primary role. Consequently, majority of the employers are not interested to hire Bangladeshi workers, instead they look for Filipino workers, said experts during interview.

6.2.7 Regulatory and Legislative Issues. The seventh greatest challenge is the ‘*regulatory and legislative issues*’ as opined by 42.3% employers. Initiatives such as Tawteen²¹, Nafis Scheme²², Nitaqat²³, and Saudi Vision-2030 are promulgated to encourage more national citizens to work and help reduce unemployment (expat.com, 2022). Besides, some of the countries are encouraging their own citizens to work in the

²¹ *Tawteen is a national program for Emiratization which is an initiative by MHRE to enable the UAE nationals to take up jobs in the private sectors. (bayut.com, 2023)*

²² *The Nafis scheme covers a wide range of financial incentives for the Emirati populations to drive work opportunities for both young and experienced Emiratis in the private sector. The UAE aims to increase the number of Emirati beneficiaries from 75,000 to 170,000 in the next 05 years under the scheme (Salim, 2022).*

²³ *Nitaqat has been launched in Saudi Arabia to boost private sectors to employ Saudi nationals with a view to decreasing Saudi unemployment and increasing participation of Saudi nationals in the workforce. (Hammad & Mehdar, 2022).*

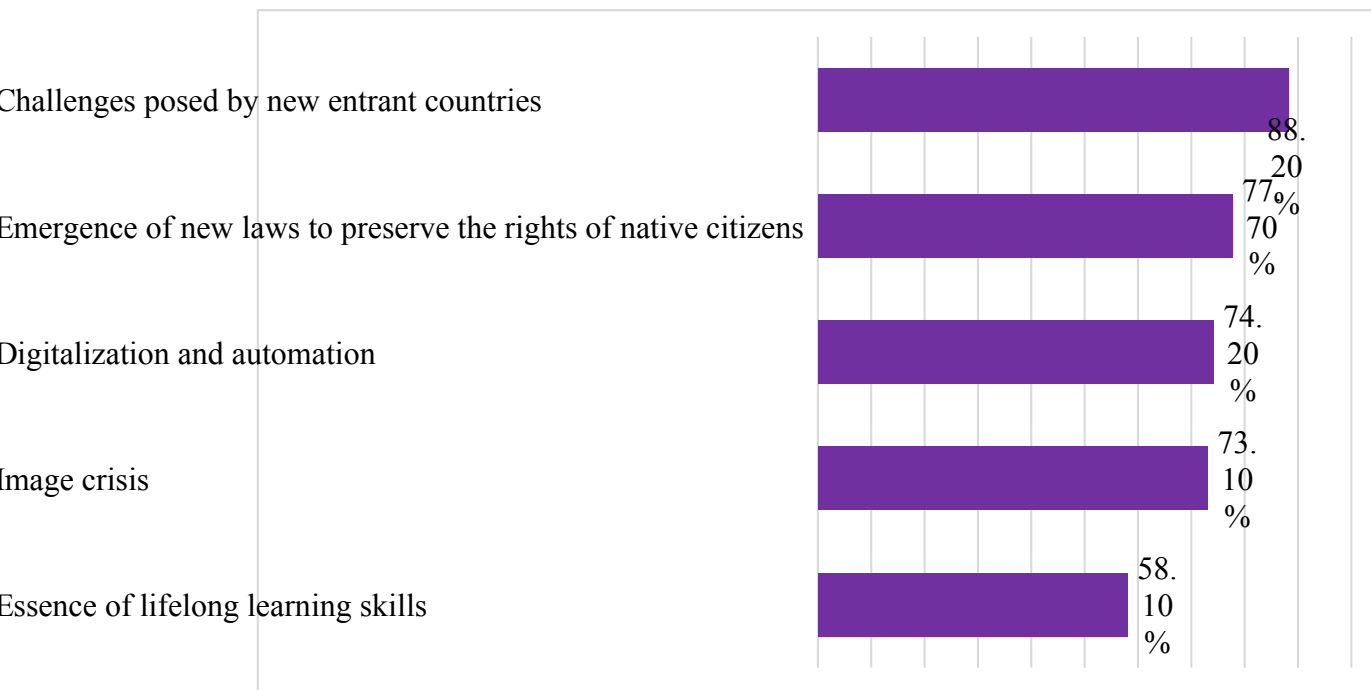
specific sectors like clothing, banking, gold markets, telecommunication, etcetera, thus opportunities for foreign workers are slowly shrinking (expat.com, 2022).

6.2.8 Quota Restriction. Quota restriction has been identified as the eighth most significant challenge for employers, with 38.1% of survey respondents highlighting it as a key concern. Many GCC countries follow quota systems to regulate and balance the presence of foreign workers. These quotas are typically designed to ensure that no single nationality dominates certain sectors, thereby promoting diversity and preventing over-reliance on workers from any particular country. While these quotas help in maintaining balance, they also pose challenges for both employers and workers. For employers, quota restrictions can limit their ability to hire the specific skills they need, especially if the available workforce from certain countries is insufficient or underqualified. This can lead to skill mismatches or create delays in filling vacancies. For workers, quota restrictions can reduce the number of job opportunities available, particularly for those from countries facing stricter limitations. Moreover, workers may face increased competition for positions, making it harder to secure employment in certain GCC countries, especially in high-demand sectors like hospitality, construction, and healthcare. Thus, while quota systems serve an important purpose in regulating foreign labor, they also introduce complexities that both employers and workers must navigate to ensure a smooth flow of skilled labor across the region.

6.3 Challenges on the Path to Migration

During the survey, employers were asked: *“What types of challenges Bangladeshi workers are likely to face in the future?”* They were presented with a list of potential challenges and allowed to select more than one challenge based on their perspectives. Most of the respondents identified ‘challenge posed by the new entrant countries’ as the greatest impediments on the path to migration. Other challenges are, emergence of laws favoring native populations, the rise of automation and digitalization, image crisis, and the growing need for lifelong and life-wide learning skills. Challenges on the path of migration is illustrated in *Figure 24*:

Figure 24: Challenges on the Path of Migration



Source: Illustration is based on the survey conducted for the study

Challenges on the path of migration are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs:

6.3.1 Challenges Posed by New Entrant Countries. Majority of the respondents accounting 88.2% employers opined that participation of the new entrant countries is a challenge for Bangladesh. The workers of Bangladesh will have to compete with the workers of Nepal, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda, and many more. Already Bangladesh is competing with the major manpower origin countries like Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan. In most of the cases, workers of the competing countries have earned accolades and established strong footholds that facilitate smooth flow of next generation migrants. Conversely, Bangladesh is considered as the catchment area for labors and less-skilled workers. New entrants like Kenya, Uganda, etcetera established technical and vocational training centers in accordance with international standard to produce skilled manpower (KI-1). From South Asia, Nepal is the newest participant (Kaphle, 2014) in the trend that quickly established its credibility as a good source of workers of all types. Bangladesh can face the challenge by improving its educational, vocational, and technical training system aligning with 4.0 IR.

6.3.2 Emergence of New Laws to Preserve the Rights of the Native Population. 77.7% employers believe that emergence of new laws to preserve the rights of the native population is a challenge for Bangladesh. Engler, et al. (2020) state that in

recent years migration has become the prime focus in political debates. While there are few politicians carry positive impression about migration, others carry misconception and concerns about migration. Some argue, migration is a burden on economies. A group of politicians and policy makers in some destination countries are fomenting a sense of ultranationalism and cultural preference for maintaining ethnic, religious, and cultural homogeneity of their society (DNI, 2021). They try to form a strong nationalistic fervor and oppose immigration despite need for a large influx of migrants to keep their economic wheel rolling. In future, these politician in connivance with nationalist Government officials may advocate or enact policies to curb migration. Reduced immigration and unemployment in the destination countries would hurt migration origin countries, especially the poor people those who rely on remittance send back home by the workers. Emergence of new laws to preserve rights of the native population are discussed in subsequent paragraphs:

- **Emiratization²⁴.** According to the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MHRE), corporates are to employ at least one Emirati national for every 50 workers, 02 nationals for every 51-100 workers, and 03 nationals for every 101-150 workers (Ford, et al., 2022). Emiratization requirement is shown in the *Table-41*:

Table 41: Emiratization Requirements

Number of Skilled workers	Minimum Number of Emiratis
Up to 50 skilled workers	One national
Between 51 and 100 skilled workers	02 nationals
Between 101 and 150 skilled workers	03 nationals
Above 151 workers	One national for every 50 workers or less than 50

Source: (Ford, et al., 2022)

- **Saudization and Saudi Vision-2030.** Saudization has direct impact on foreign workers as certain trades and specialties are limited to only Saudi nationals. For example, dentistry jobs are kept for only Saudis commencing from March 2020 and the national petroleum and gas company supposed to

²⁴ 'Emiratization' or 'we the UAE 2031' is a national policy that aims to increase Emirati employment in the private sector. The strategy aims to double the GDP from \$405.6 bn to \$816.7 bn in the next decade (Garcia, 2023).

achieve 90% of Saudization by 2020 (expat.com, 2022). To implement the national policy, the designated Saudi authorities carry out sudden inspection to check whether the policy being followed or not by the corporates. If any company is identified violating the policy, they are liable to be fined and punished. In accordance with Saudization and Saudi vision 2030, feminization has also been declared to promote female participation in the work place. Feminization in Saudi Arabia facilitates Saudi females to be employed in retail sectors that trades female products such as clothing, make-up, accessories, etcetera or deliver services for female (expat.com, 2022). Besides, certain jobs are kept only for Saudi citizens where foreigners are not permitted. A list of jobs reserved for Saudi citizens are enumerated below (expat.com, 2022):

- All clothing retailers (women, men, children).
 - Banking (tellers, in-branch support).
 - Gold markets.
 - Telecommunication (offices, storefronts).
 - Home furnishings (sellers).
 - Auto shops & spare parts (desk officers).
 - Office supplies.
 - Electronics.
 - Medical equipment.
 - Building materials.
 - Watches and clocks.
 - Optic stores.
 - Pastry shops.
 - Carpets.
 - Entertainment.
- **Qatar National Vision-2030.** One of the visions of ‘Qatar Vision-2030’ delineates ‘the size and the quality of the expatriate labor force and the selected path of development’ (GSDP, 2008). Within the stipulated timeframe, Qatar would like to see a right size high skilled foreign workforce who will enjoy cultural rights, housing, and public service needs keeping in view the potential negative impact on national identity.

6.3.3 Digitalization and Automation. 74.2% employers believe that digitalization and automation is a challenge for Bangladesh. Hussain (2023) states, GCC countries are rapidly embracing digitalization and automation in the entire spectrum of supply chain to remain relevant in the era of 4.0 IR. The technological evolution is vivid in the entire spectrum of the business and management. Therefore, companies are now placing a greater emphasis on hiring a diverse workforce, including women, expatriates, and individuals with disabilities. Besides managing business and customer digitally, organizations are increasingly using applicant tracking systems for recruitment as well. Online circulation of job opportunities, digital shortlisting, virtual interviews, final assessments, all are maintained digitally from the beginning to the end. This move in the direction of digitalization not only saves time and resources but also allows for a more efficient and impartial evaluation of candidates. Therefore, job seekers need to acclimatize to these changes; so that they are aware about the job opportunities, know their jobs, and able to showcasing their digital talents. Digitalization and automation skills are needed for both employees and employers. While employees need to have a very high standard of ICT skills, employers also need to upskill themselves to acclimatize with the modern business, management, and recruitment skills.

6.3.4 Image Crisis. An ongoing challenge for Bangladeshi migrant workers is the image crisis they face in international labor markets. A significant 73.1% of employers acknowledge this issue, indicating that the perception of workers' attitudes and behavior from Bangladesh often creates barriers to employment. According to ADB & ILO (2016, p. 5), the reputation of workers from different countries—especially regarding their attitudes, behavior, and work ethic—plays a crucial role in shaping hiring decisions for skilled, semi-skilled, and low-skilled manpower. In this context, education, skill level, and occupation before migration are often secondary considerations, with employers prioritizing how workers are perceived. During the survey on 100 employers, majority respondents said that Filipino workers are most preferred for jobs in the service sector, primarily due to their positive reputation for professionalism and communication skills. Indian and Pakistani workers were favored for engineering jobs, reflecting their strong presence in the sector and technical expertise. In the medical field, particularly for doctors, Egyptian workers are the preferred choice, owing to their reputation for high-quality medical training and

practice. In case of Bangladesh, image crisis is a critical challenge which has been shaped by previous experiences, workers' behavior and attitudes, media portrayal, and stereotypes, regardless of their skills or qualifications. To overcome this, Bangladesh needs to work on enhancing the global image of its workers by promoting professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and ethical behavior through training and strategic international engagement. Such efforts would not only improve the attractiveness of Bangladeshi workers but also help them compete effectively in the global labor market.

6.3.5 Lifelong Learning Skills. Service sector workers must continuously adapt to rapidly evolving technological developments. As industries rapidly embrace new technologies and innovations, workers are required to upgrade their skills to remain competitive. During survey, 58.1% respondents reported that the lack of lifelong learning skills is a significant challenge. This gap highlights the need for a culture of continuous learning, where workers are not only trained for their immediate job requirements but also equipped with the mindset and tools to pursue learning throughout their careers. The absence of lifelong learning skills limits workers' ability to adapt to changing demands, particularly in sectors like hospitality, healthcare, and ICT, where technological advancements are frequent and impactful. Hence, training and education system in Bangladesh should encourage students to inculcate the habit of lifelong learning.

6.4 Employers' Suggestions for Increased Number of Skilled and Semiskilled Workers

During the survey, employers were asked '*what are your suggestions for increased number of skilled and semiskilled workers from Bangladesh?*' Respondents were provided with a list of options to choose; they could choose more than one options. Employers' Suggestions for increased number of skilled and semiskilled workers are shown in the *Table-42*:

Table 42: Employers' Suggestions for Increased Number of Skilled and Semiskilled Workers

Effort/Recommendation	% of Employers in Agreement
Sensitize more students to undertake technical and vocational training courses	81%
Bangladeshi TTCs should offer need-based trade training courses	78%

Bangladesh should send educated workers abroad as education is the epitome of all skills	74%
Emphasis should be given on spoken English language	73%
Bangladesh should strive to gain accreditation of its TTCs with employers	71%
TTCs should maintain international standards; upgradation linked to accreditation	65%
Efforts should be taken to train on spoken language	62%
Diplomatic efforts to convince employers to hire more skilled and semiskilled workers from Bangladesh	57%
Incorporate relevant soft and hard skills lessons in the Bangladeshi education system	52%

Source: Compiled Based on Employer Survey Findings

Above suggestions are discussed in the following paragraphs:

Most employers emphasize the need for strengthening TVET in Bangladesh to enhance the skills of the workforce destined for overseas employment. A significant majority (81%) advocate for increased efforts to encourage more students to enroll in technical and vocational courses. Closely following, 78% of employers recommend that Bangladeshi TTCs should tailor their programs to meet specific industry needs. Education is viewed as foundational, with 74% agreeing that sending educated workers abroad is crucial since education is the underpinning skill of all other skills.

Language proficiency, particularly spoken English, is considered vital, with 73% of employers highlighting its importance and 62% urging more focused training in this area. Accreditation of TTCs by employers is another priority, with 71% supporting efforts to achieve recognized standards that assure the quality of training. Upgrading TTCs to international standards is linked to accreditation and endorsed by 65% of employers, underscoring the importance of quality improvements.

Additionally, 57% of employers suggest diplomatic initiatives to persuade foreign employers to hire more skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers. Finally, just over half (52%) believe that Bangladesh's education system should integrate relevant soft and hard skills into the curriculum to keep the workforce competitive in the international job market. Overall, above views highlight a comprehensive approach to skill development, combining education, language training, quality assurance, and policy advocacy.

6.5 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC countries, as well as the difficulties encountered by employers in recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh. The findings from the survey highlighted several issues impacting both workers and employers, shaping the current landscape of labor migration. For workers, language barriers, lack of job-related skills, and inadequate soft skills were identified as some of the most significant challenges upon arriving in the GCC countries. The survey results clearly demonstrated that many workers faced difficulties in understanding instructions, communicating with colleagues, and filling out essential forms, which hindered their ability to integrate and perform efficiently in the workplace. Additionally, a lack of relevant work experience and recognition of their skill certifications further complicated their chances of securing higher-paying jobs.

From the perspective of employers, the challenges primarily revolved around the low number of qualified and experienced applicants from Bangladesh, along with issues such as the non-recognition of Bangladeshi skill certificates and the failure of certified workers to pass skill assessments in the destination countries. Employers also noted the lack of relevant soft skills among Bangladeshi workers, such as communication and professionalism, which impacted their employability and performance on the job. Furthermore, the negative image of Bangladeshi workers and regulatory changes in the GCC countries posed additional hurdles in the recruitment process.

Looking ahead, the survey identified several potential challenges for Bangladesh in the migration process, including competition from new entrant countries, the emergence of laws to protect native populations, and the rise of digitalization and automation. The increasing preference for skilled workers and the demand for lifelong learning skills will require Bangladesh to adapt its training programs to stay competitive in the global labor market. Employers also provided several suggestions for improving the skillset of Bangladeshi workers, with an emphasis on strengthening technical and vocational training, improving language proficiency, and enhancing the accreditation of training centers. The survey revealed a strong consensus among employers on the need to focus on both hard and soft skills development to increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers available for international employment.

In conclusion, this chapter underscores the critical need for comprehensive reforms in Bangladesh's education and training systems. By addressing the skill gaps identified,

improving the recognition of qualifications, and enhancing soft skills training, Bangladesh can increase its workforce's competitiveness in the GCC labor market. Collaboration between the government, training institutions, and employers will be key to preparing workers for the evolving demands of the international job market and ensuring that Bangladesh continues to be a valuable source of skilled labor for the GCC countries.

Building on the identified challenges and employers' recommendations, the next chapter critically discusses the broader implications of the findings in light of existing theories, policy frameworks, and labor market trends, offering strategic insights for enhancing the global competitiveness of Bangladeshi migrant workers.

Chapter VII: Discussion and Implications

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7.1 Triangulation

As defined by Bhandari (2022), triangulation is a methodological approach that integrates multiple data sources, methods, or perspectives to enhance the credibility

and validity of research findings. In this study, triangulation is employed to develop a comprehensive understanding of the key skills influencing employability and wage outcomes for Bangladeshi migrant workers in GCC countries. To achieve this, the study synthesizes qualitative insights from KIIs, quantitative results from Pearson correlation, and findings from both multiple and simple linear regression analyses. These are further supported by weighted scores, derived from normalized values of skill importance and skill gaps, which reflect the relative significance of each skill in relation to salary outcomes. For instance, technical training and work experience not only show high statistical significance in regression models but also rank highest in weighted scores, confirming their pivotal role in determining wages. Meanwhile, language proficiency and soft skills such as manners and etiquette, though assigned moderate weights, still demonstrate meaningful influence; particularly in enhancing employability and workplace integration. The integration of these diverse analytical approaches provides a triangulated perspective, highlighting both the strengths and deficiencies within the current skill set of Bangladeshi workers. These findings offer actionable insights for policymakers, training institutions, and migrant support agencies. By targeting the most impactful skill areas, particularly in technical, experiential, and communicative competencies, Bangladesh can enhance the global competitiveness of its labor force, strengthen employability, and increase remittance inflows through better wage prospects in the GCC region.

7.2 Factors Influencing Wage Earning: Data Triangulation

Table- 43 presents data triangulation highlighting factors influencing wage earnings derived through different tools. The matrix integrates thematic insights, Pearson correlations, and regression coefficients, providing a holistic understanding of how each skill influences wage levels. To provide a more robust ranking, the study includes both Multiple Regression Coefficients and Simple Linear Regression Coefficients. This comprehensive approach offers a more accurate representation of priority skills, even in cases where certain variables are statistically insignificant in the multiple regression model:

Table 43: Skills Influencing Wage Earning: Thematic, Regression, and Correlation Insights

Skill	Thematic Analysis	Weighted Score	Pearson Correlation	Multiple Regression	Simple Linear	Interpretation
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				Coefficients	Regression Coefficients	
Technical Training	High demand	0.71	0.924	B = 0.643, Beta = 0.684, p = 0.000	B = 0.870, Beta = 0.924, R ² = 0.853	Very strong positive predictor of salary
Experience	Increases competence, leading to higher income	0.885	0.782	B = 0.203, Beta = 0.224, p = 0.000	B = 0.715, Beta = 0.782, R ² = 0.611	Strong positive relationship with salary
English (Speaking)	Employers prioritize English proficiency	0.93	0.666	B = 0.044, Beta = 0.054, p = 0.115	B = 0.545, Beta = 0.666, R ² = 0.444	Moderate positive predictor of salary
English (Writing)	Key in customer-facing roles	0.73	0.650	B = 0.009, Beta = 0.011, p = 0.736	B = 0.525, Beta = 0.650, R ² = 0.422	Moderate positive predictor of salary
Educational Qualification	Valuable	0.69	0.619	B = 0.035, Beta = 0.037, p = 0.187	B = 0.588, Beta = 0.619, R ² = 0.383	Significant positive relationship with salary
Manners and Etiquette	Workplace etiquette is crucial	0.08	0.587	B = -0.035, Beta = -0.035, p = 0.394	B = 0.587, Beta = 0.587, R ² = 0.344	Moderate positive predictor of salary
ICT Skill	Digital literacy contributing to salary growth	0.335	0.581	B = 0.028, Beta = 0.030, p = 0.311	B = 0.540, Beta = 0.581, R ² = 0.338	Moderate positive predictor of salary
Culture	Aids integration and adaptability	0.00	0.565	B = 0.033, Beta = 0.034, p = 0.245	B = 0.551, Beta = 0.565, R ² = 0.319	Moderate positive relationship with salary
Knowledge on Legal Affairs	Helps workers avoid exploitation	0.00	0.497	B = -0.012, Beta = -0.013, p = 0.690	B = 0.467, Beta = 0.497, R ² = 0.247	Moderate positive predictor

Source: Illustration is the Outcome of the Study

The table above synthesizes Pearson correlations, Multiple Regression Coefficients, and Simple Linear Regression Coefficients for key skills.

Below is the detailed interpretation of the findings:

7.2.1 Technical Training. Technical training is highly demanded in the GCC region, making it a central factor in employability and earnings. The Pearson correlation of

0.924 indicates a very strong positive relationship with salary. The regression analysis further reinforces this with a Beta of 0.684 ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that technical training significantly contributes to salary predictions, even when controlling for other factors. This skill alone explains 85.4% of the variance in salary, emphasizing its importance in determining wage outcomes. As such, technical training should be prioritized for improving employability and earning potential.

7.2.2 Experience. Experience is another crucial predictor of salary. The Pearson correlation of 0.782 reflects a strong positive relationship with salary. In multiple regression, experience continues to have a significant impact on salary (Beta = 0.224, $p < 0.05$). This skill explains 61.1% of salary variance, making it the second most important factor influencing wage levels after technical training. Experience increases competence and job performance, which translates to higher income.

7.2.3 English-Speaking (Communication Proficiency). English speaking proficiency is valued by employers, especially for customer-facing roles. The Pearson correlation of 0.666 indicates a moderate positive association with salary. However, the Beta coefficient (0.054, $p = 0.115$) is statistically insignificant, suggesting that while English speaking is an important skill, its direct effect on salary is modest when other factors are considered. Despite this, English-speaking ability remains a useful skill, explaining 44.4% of salary variance in the simple linear regression.

7.2.4 English-Writing (Language Proficiency). Written communication is also important, particularly in customer support and administrative roles. The Pearson correlation of 0.650 shows a moderate positive relationship with salary. However, the regression coefficient (Beta = 0.011, $p = 0.736$) is insignificant, implying that English writing skills have a limited direct impact on salary. Still, it explains 42.2% of the variance in salary, indicating its role in higher-paying positions that require administrative or support functions.

7.2.5 Educational Qualification. Educational qualifications provide foundational knowledge and enhance employability. The Pearson correlation of 0.619 shows a moderate positive relationship with salary. The regression coefficient (Beta = 0.037, $p = 0.368$) is not statistically significant, suggesting a minor contribution to earnings when other factors are controlled. Nevertheless, it still explains 38.3% of salary variance, indicating that higher education is linked with increased salary potential.

7.2.6 Manners and Etiquette. While the Pearson correlation of 0.587 indicates a moderate positive relationship with salary, the negative Beta value (-0.035, $p = 0.394$) suggests that once other factors are accounted for, the influence of this skill on salary is insignificant. The simple regression model explains 34.4% of the salary variance, but this is likely spurious, as the influence of Manners and Etiquette is overshadowed by more significant factors like technical skills and experience. Therefore, while this skill is important for professional integration, its direct impact on salary is minimal when controlling for other variables.

7.2.7 ICT Skills. The Pearson correlation of 0.581 shows a moderate positive relationship with salary. However, the low Beta (0.030, $p = 0.311$) indicates that once other variables are considered, ICT skills do not have a significant impact on salary. Despite this, ICT skills still explain 33.8% of salary variance in the simple regression, indicating their relevance in roles that require digital literacy.

7.2.8 Cultural Awareness. The moderate Pearson correlation of 0.565 with salary suggests that cultural awareness is beneficial for integrating into diverse work environments. However, the low and statistically insignificant Beta coefficient (0.034, $p = 0.620$) suggests that cultural awareness does not have a strong direct effect on salary when controlling for other factors. While important for workplace integration, its influence on wage outcomes is indirect.

7.2.9 Knowledge of Legal Affairs. The Pearson correlation of 0.497 suggests a moderate relationship with salary, but the negative Beta (-0.013, $p = 0.690$) suggests that knowledge of legal affairs does not significantly affect salary outcomes. This skill is crucial for ensuring worker protection and avoiding exploitation, but its direct contribution to higher wages is minimal.

7.3 Final Ranking of Skills Based on Beta Coefficients (Multiple Regression)

While Simple Linear Regression offers useful insights into the effect of each skill on salary, it fails to capture the complexity of real-world scenarios where multiple variables interact. Simple Linear Regression estimates the strength of the relationship between one predictor and the outcome (salary) without adjusting for the influence of other variables. Although the R-squared value in Simple Linear Regression indicates how much variance in salary is explained by a single skill, it does not account for the

combined or interacting effects of other predictors. This oversimplification can lead to misleading conclusions in multifactorial contexts like labor market analysis.

In contrast, Multiple Regression offers a more robust and reliable framework by accounting for the simultaneous influence of all relevant variables. This method adjusts for potential confounding effects and quantifies each skill’s unique contribution to salary. The standardized Beta coefficient from Multiple Regression is particularly useful for comparing the relative importance of different predictors, as it expresses the strength of association on a common scale.

For instance, while Experience exhibits a strong Pearson correlation with salary ($r = 0.782$), its standardized Beta coefficient is 0.224, indicating that, although it has a significant relationship with salary, its effect is more modest when other factors are controlled. In contrast, English Speaking shows a moderate correlation ($r = 0.666$), but its Beta value of 0.054 is lower and statistically insignificant, suggesting that its actual impact on salary is relatively weak in a multivariate model. Given these findings, the study prioritizes Beta coefficients derived from Multiple Regression over results from simple linear regression analysis, as the former provides a more statistically valid measure of each skill’s actual influence on wage outcomes. This approach ensures a more accurate ranking of skills based on their true impact, accounting for the interrelationships between variables. To ensure a comprehensive and evidence-based prioritization framework, all measurable skills, regardless of their statistical significance, are included in the final ranking. This inclusive approach provides policymakers and training institutions with a clear guide for targeting skill development initiatives. The results highlight that technical training and experience are the most significant predictors of salary, followed by language and digital skills. In contrast, soft skills and contextual knowledge, such as manners or legal awareness, show a more limited direct impact on wage outcomes. The Final Empirical Ranking of Skills based on Beta coefficients from Multiple Regression Analysis is shown in *Table-44*:

Table 44: Final Empirical Ranking of Skills Based on Beta Coefficients from Multiple Regression Analysis

Rank	Skill	Beta (MR)	Pearson r	Interpretation
1	Technical Training	0.684	0.924	Strongest predictor of salary

2	Experience	0.224	0.782	Significant, moderate effect
3	English Speaking	0.054	0.666	Modest effect, not statistically significant
4	Educational Qualification	0.037	0.619	Weak but higher than other low-impact skills
5	Culture	0.034	0.565	Weak impact, lower than education
6	ICT Skill	0.030	0.581	Very weak but positive
7	English Writing	0.011	0.650	Minimal direct effect
8	Knowledge of Legal Affairs	-0.013	0.497	Negative, not significant
9	Manners and Etiquette	-0.035	0.587	Negative, not significant

Source: Illustration of the Researcher for the Purpose of the Study

7.4 Analysis of Critical Skill Development Areas and Ways Forward

Analysis of critical skill development areas and ways forward are illustrated in **Annexure H**.

7.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations are made to enhance the wage outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. These recommendations target policy reforms, training institutions, and migrant support agencies, with the goal of equipping workers with the skills that will maximize their potential and boost remittance inflows.

- Enhance Focus on Technical Training.** The findings of this study indicate that Technical Training has the strongest correlation with salary outcomes, as shown by both the Pearson correlation (0.924) and the Beta coefficient (0.684). Technical skills are in high demand across various sectors in the GCC, and investments in vocational and technical education can significantly improve migrant workers' employability and income. To address this need, the government and training institutions should prioritize the development and expansion of technical training programs, particularly in sectors like health, care giving, machinery operation, and information technology. Public-private partnerships should be fostered to ensure that training programs align with market demands, preparing workers for both current industry needs and future trends.

- **Emphasize on Work Experience.** Experience is another critical factor influencing salary outcomes, with a strong Pearson correlation (0.782) and moderate Beta value (0.224) highlighting its significance. More experienced workers typically command higher salaries due to their increased competence and efficiency. Policies should focus on facilitating the accumulation of work experience, such as through temporary employment or apprenticeship programs before workers migrate. Training initiatives should also ensure that migrant workers gain hands-on experience in specialized roles, increasing their chances of securing higher-paying positions in the GCC.
- **Strengthen English Language Proficiency.** English-speaking proficiency remains crucial for many employers, especially in front desk customer-facing and supervisory roles. To address this need, pre-departure training programs should incorporate English language courses, focusing on both speaking and writing skills. Language training should emphasize workplace-specific communication, such as customer service and professional writing, to enhance workers' effectiveness in the workplace. Digital platforms and mobile apps could also be leveraged to provide language training to workers at various stages of their careers.
- **Boost the Development of Soft Skills.** Soft skills, such as Manners and Etiquette and Cultural Awareness, are important for integrating into diverse work environments and enhancing employability. While these skills have a more indirect effect on salary compared to technical skills and experience, they are essential for long-term career success. Cultural competence and soft skills training should be integrated into both pre-departure and on-the-job training programs. Employers in the GCC could partner with training providers to offer cultural orientation programs, ensuring that migrant workers understand and navigate workplace dynamics in multicultural environments. Workplace etiquette should also be part of the training curriculum to ensure that workers are well-prepared for professional interactions.
- **Improve Educational Qualifications and Support Lifelong Learning.** Education is the bedrock of all skills. Educated person can quickly adapt to any skills. Therefore, efforts should be taken to rise the level of education of potential workers. Additionally, lifelong learning should be incentivized,

providing workers with opportunities to upskill or reskill throughout their careers. Scholarships, flexible study options, and recognition of non-formal learning can all contribute to workers' educational advancement.

- **Develop ICT and Digital Literacy Programs.** As the world increasingly embraces digital technologies, ICT skills have become essential in the modern labor market, especially in sectors where digital tools and software are integrated into work processes. Migrant workers should be provided with access to ICT training focused on digital tools and software relevant to their industry. Collaboration with technology companies can help develop low-cost or free training resources that enable workers to develop the necessary digital skills for emerging roles in tech-driven sectors.
- **Educate on Laws and Rights of Migrants.** Knowledge of Legal Affairs is crucial for protecting migrant workers from exploitation and ensuring they understand their rights. Pre-departure training programs should include comprehensive modules on workers' rights, employment contracts, and the legal frameworks of host countries. Bangladeshi diplomatic missions in the GCC region should also actively disseminate information about workers' legal rights and provide accessible resources for those seeking legal assistance.
- **Policy Recommendations for Government and Industry.** The findings highlight the need for a coordinated effort between the Bangladeshi government, employers in the GCC, and training institutions to ensure the long-term success of these recommendations. To achieve this, national skill development policies should align with the labor market demands of the GCC region, incentivize training institutions to offer programs that specifically address the skill needs of migrant workers, especially in technical and soft skills, and foster bilateral cooperation between Bangladesh and GCC countries. This collaboration will help ensure fair labor practices and facilitate the integration of Bangladeshi workers into higher-skilled, better-paying job roles.

7.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provided an integrated discussion of the empirical findings and their practical implications for enhancing the employability and wage prospects of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. Through a robust triangulation approach, the study synthesized qualitative insights from KIIs, quantitative evidence

from correlation and regression analyses, and weighted scores derived from skill demand and gap assessments. This comprehensive framework allowed for a nuanced understanding of how different skills influence salary outcomes in a competitive international labor market.

The analysis revealed that technical training and work experience are the most critical determinants of higher wages, as evidenced by their strong Pearson correlations, high Beta coefficients in the multiple regression model, and consistent thematic validation. These findings suggest that policy and training interventions should prioritize these areas to maximize the economic returns of labor migration.

Language proficiency, particularly in spoken English and ICT skills, while statistically weaker in multivariate analysis, still play a meaningful role in workplace communication and performance, especially in service-oriented roles. Similarly, educational qualifications contribute to wage outcomes but are less influential than practical and technical competencies. On the other hand, soft skills, including manners, etiquette, cultural awareness, and knowledge of legal affairs, though not directly associated with higher wages, are important for professional integration, worker protection, and long-term success in host countries.

The final ranking of skills based on Beta coefficients offers policymakers and training institutions a data-driven prioritization tool. It highlights where resources should be allocated to improve training curricula, align with GCC labor market demands, and enhance the global competitiveness of the Bangladeshi workforce.

In sum, this chapter underscores the importance of a multidimensional skill development strategy, one that balances technical expertise, experience, communication abilities, and soft skills to elevate the earning potential and socio-economic impact of migrant workers abroad. The recommendations presented provide a roadmap for reform in skill development policies and programs, calling for greater coordination between the government, private sector, and international stakeholders. The following chapter concludes the study by summarizing key findings and outlining directions for future research and policy intervention.

In conclusion, this chapter highlights the critical role of technical training, work experience, and English proficiency in shaping the salary outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. The findings emphasize the need for strategic

investments in these key skill areas to improve employability, earning potential, and overall competitiveness. By addressing skill gaps, Bangladesh can not only enhance its position in the global labor market but also boost remittance inflows and improve the socio-economic conditions of its migrant workforce. The chapter also offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, training institutions, and migrant support agencies to implement targeted interventions, ensuring that workers are equipped to succeed in the highly competitive labor markets of the GCC. Ultimately, prioritizing skill development will be essential in building a stronger, more resilient labor force that drives sustainable economic growth for Bangladesh.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion and Future Research Directions

Chapter VIII: Conclusion and Future Research Directions

8.1 Conclusions

Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated countries in the world, faces significant challenges with high levels of unemployment and underemployment, which places strain on its social safety networks and HDI. To mitigate these challenges, Bangladesh began sending workers abroad for employment in the 1970s. Today, overseas employment has become the second-largest source of foreign currency, after the apparel industry.

However, despite its importance, overseas employment is fraught with numerous challenges, including 3D jobs, human rights violations, abuse, and exploitation. The death of 46,000 workers by 2023 reflects the harsh working and living conditions in the Middle Eastern countries (Amaders Somai, 2023). Additionally, the per capita monthly income of Bangladeshi workers remains significantly lower than that of workers from other labor-exporting countries, such as India, China, and the Philippines. A major contributing factor to these low wages and challenging working conditions is the lack of job-relevant skills among Bangladeshi workers. The majority are employed in unskilled or low-skilled positions, which limits their income potential.

If the trend of sending unskilled or semi-skilled workers continues, Bangladesh will not only see lower remittance earnings compared to its peers, but it will also risk losing employment opportunities in the global labor market, particularly as Industry 4.0 accelerates. As automation and digitalization gradually replace manual labor, the demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers is rising, especially in the service sector, creating new opportunities that Bangladesh may miss out, if its workforce remains unskilled.

Keeping in view future employment scenario, Bangladesh has taken steps to address its skills deficit by focusing on workforce development. The creation of the MOEWOE and the NSDA are notable efforts in this direction. However, there remains a pressing need to identify the skills required for overseas employment, assess the skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, and prioritize skill development areas to transform the country's unskilled labor force into a skilled workforce, capable of securing better opportunities and boosting remittance inflows.

This study focuses on skilled and semi-skilled workers in the service sector within the GCC countries, grounded in Human Capital Theory. An exploratory sequential mixed-methods approach, integrating both inductive and deductive reasoning, was employed to comprehensively address the research questions. The research followed a relativist ontological position and pragmatic epistemology. A purposive sampling technique was used, comprising two separate samples: 408 workers and 100 employers for the survey, and 12 KIIs with subject matter experts. The study thoroughly analyzed key destination countries, major remittance sources, overseas employment procedures, and challenges faced by both Bangladeshi workers and employers recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh.

Qualitative analysis was conducted using Braun and Clarke's six-step Thematic Analysis approach, identifying key themes such as the skills in demand by employers in GCC countries, skill deficiencies among Bangladeshi workers, and priority skill development areas for optimizing remittance inflows. Thematic analysis revealed the need for enhanced vocational and technical education, prioritized language training, development of soft skills, standardized certifications, education on workers' rights, and addressing practical skill gaps.

Surveys conducted with employers and workers identified the key skills required for employment, skill gaps, and priority areas for resource allocation in Bangladesh, using a three-step weighted scoring method. The results highlighted that experience and communication skills are the most critical competencies for employers in GCC countries. Conversely, the greatest skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers in the GCC region are lack of experience and insufficient communication skills. Based on these findings, experience, language proficiency, and communication skills were identified as the top priorities for skill development, aiming to enhance overseas employment opportunities and increase remittance earnings.

Building on these insights, the study employed a structured, phased methodology to further explore the skill-wage nexus. Reliability testing, sample adequacy testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were conducted. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.944, indicating excellent scale reliability. The KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.911, confirming the sample size's adequacy and the suitability of the data for factor analysis.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed positive associations between all selected predictor variables and monthly wage earnings, underscoring their collective importance in influencing the income levels of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. Among these, technical training ($r = 0.924$) and work experience ($r = 0.782$) showed the strongest correlations, highlighting the critical role of practical skills and on-the-job learning in enhancing wage potential.

The multiple regression model included predictors such as ICT skills, experience, educational qualification, knowledge of migrant workers' rights, cultural awareness, English writing proficiency, technical training, English-speaking ability, and manners and etiquette. The model's R value of 0.940 indicates a very strong positive correlation

between the observed and predicted salaries, while the R Square value of 0.883 means that 88.3% of the variance in monthly salary is explained by these predictors.

Triangulating qualitative insights from KIIs, quantitative results from Pearson correlation, and regression analyses enhanced the credibility and validity of the research findings. The analysis provided a robust ranking of skill development areas, with technical training emerging as the highest predictor of salary (Beta = 0.684, Pearson $r = 0.924$), followed by work experience (Beta = 0.224, Pearson $r = 0.782$). Other key skill development areas include English-speaking proficiency, educational qualifications, cultural awareness, ICT skills, English writing, knowledge of legal affairs, and manners and etiquette.

Based on these findings, the study makes several key recommendations targeting policy reforms, training institutions, and migrant support agencies, with the ultimate goal of equipping workers with the skills necessary to maximize their potential and increase remittance inflows. Finally, the study highlights the urgent need for Bangladesh to invest in skills development to adapt to the evolving demands of the global employment market, particularly in GCC countries. By equipping workers with the right skills, Bangladesh can enhance its workforce's earning potential, increase remittance inflows, and create a more sustainable migration policy in the era of Industry 4.0.

8.2 Contributions of the Research

The research successfully addresses several critical gaps in the existing literature on Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly regarding the skills required for international labor migration and how these skills influence wage earnings and remittance inflows. Below is a detailed explanation of how the research contributing to bridging these research gaps:

There is a lack of a comprehensive model linking skill proficiency levels with wage outcomes and remittance flows for Bangladeshi migrant workers. Most existing studies focus on general skill gaps without fully explaining the relationship between skills and income disparities. The research develops a framework that connects key skills (technical, soft skills, language proficiency) with wage outcomes. Through multiple regression analysis, the research quantified the impact of various skills, such as experience, technical training, language proficiency, and soft skills, on wage levels, offering a detailed, empirical model that links skill adequacy with economic outcomes in the GCC countries.

Existing research on skill demand in the GCC countries is often outdated, fragmented, and lacks real-time labor market intelligence. Moreover, there is no up-to-date comprehensive assessment of skill needs in GCC countries, especially service sector. The study used current data from KIIs, employer surveys, and migrant worker perspectives to provide an updated, cross-sectional assessment of the skills required by employers in the GCC countries. This research fills the gap by examining both technical and soft skills in real-time and their relevance in the evolving employment market.

Despite the theoretical importance of skills training programs, practical implementation in Bangladesh has been ineffective. Many workers migrate without the necessary skills, limiting their employability and earnings. Vocational training remains disconnected from actual market needs. The thesis addresses this practical knowledge gap by identifying the most critical skills that need to be prioritized in training programs. By analyzing the skill gaps through priority score rankings and thematic analysis, the research provides actionable insights into how Bangladesh's vocational training programs can be tailored to meet the demands of employers in the GCC. Furthermore, recommendations for improving training content and experience-based learning ensure that training aligns better with market realities.

Most studies on Bangladeshi migration focus on qualitative narratives and or secondary data, failing to integrate quantitative methods that would allow for data-driven decision-making regarding skills and migration policies. The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods through the use of thematic analysis (qualitative) and regression model (quantitative). This integration of mixed method offers a robust, empirical understanding of the relationship between skills and economic outcomes. By analyzing priority skills and their impact on wages and remittances, the research contributes to the methodological development in the field of labor migration studies, offering a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis.

There is a lack of firsthand, worker-level data on how specific skills (such as language proficiency or technical expertise) contribute to the economic outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly wage outcomes and remittance behavior. By conducting 12 KIIs with experts and 408 worker surveys, the research gathers firsthand empirical data on the skills that influence wage outcomes and remittance inflows. The findings of this research directly capture the lived experiences of migrant workers, highlighting real challenges such as communication barriers and lack of technical expertise in foreign labor

markets. This empirical contribution enriches the migration literature by focusing on worker-level data and providing evidence-based recommendations for skills development.

This research provides clear recommendations to policy-makers and training institutions in Bangladesh. By highlighting the priority skills that significantly affect wage outcomes, the study offers practical insights for the MOEWOE and NSDA to revise and update skill development programs. The priority skills identified in the study can serve as a foundation for creating targeted training programs that increase the employability of workers and ultimately boost remittance inflows to Bangladesh.

The research contributes to the broader migration studies field by offering quantitative evidence on the relationship between skills and wage earnings in the context of Bangladeshi migrant workers. This study not only provides insights for Bangladesh's migration policy but also offers a replicable methodology for analyzing skills gaps and their economic impact in other labor-exporting countries in South Asia.

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Human Capital Theory, which posits that investing in skills and education directly boosts an individual's productivity and earning potential. In the context of this research, it becomes evident that the skills acquired by Bangladeshi migrant workers, particularly in technical training, language proficiency, and work experience, play a crucial role in improving their wages and remittance contributions. Essentially, when workers invest in enhancing their capabilities, whether through vocational training or mastering key languages, they become more valuable to employers, leading to better job opportunities and, ultimately, higher earnings. This theory underscores the importance of skill development as a pathway to economic advancement, not only for the workers themselves but also for their families and the country through increased remittances.

8.3 Limitations of the Research

While this research offers valuable insights into the skill development needs of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region, it is important to acknowledge some limitations that may have influenced the data collection process and the overall findings. Due to logistical constraints, not all survey respondents, including both employers and workers, were contacted directly. Some were instead approached through intermediaries such as friends, relatives, or colleagues. This may have inadvertently introduced biases, as

intermediaries could have influenced how questions were asked or how responses were interpreted, potentially affecting the reliability of the data.

Additionally, many migrant workers surveyed had lower levels of education, which created difficulties in comprehending certain technical, conceptual, or quantitative questions in the survey. This limited understanding may have resulted in misinterpretations, skipped questions, or inaccurate responses, which could impact the depth and reliability of the data collected. As a result, while the findings provide valuable insights, they may not fully reflect the experiences and perspectives of all migrant workers, particularly those with lower education levels. This could limit the generalizability of the results, especially in relation to specific demographic groups.

8.4 Future Research Directions

This study primarily focused on the skills needed for employability and wage outcomes of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC region. While the research has provided valuable insights into how skill development influences employment and remittance flows, several areas remain unexplored, offering rich opportunities for future research:

One potential direction for further exploration is examining the long-term impact of skill development on workers' career progression, job security, and overall quality of life. While this study focuses on wage outcomes, future research could track workers over time to see how skill investments lead to sustained employment benefits and life improvements, including social mobility and family well-being.

Another valuable avenue for future research would be conducting comparative studies across different host countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, and South Korea. These regions may present different labor market dynamics, skill demands, and remittance patterns, offering insights into how skills influence wage outcomes across varying employment environments.

Gender differences in skill development and employment outcomes are also crucial areas for future investigation. Future research could examine the unique challenges faced by female migrant workers in the GCC, including how skill development influences their job opportunities, wage outcomes, gender-based disparities, and job satisfaction.

Finally, future research could delve deeper into the economic impact of remittances at the household level. While this study explored wages and remittances from the worker's perspective, further investigation could examine how remittances are allocated within

households, whether for education, healthcare, entrepreneurship, or other economic activities, and their role in poverty alleviation, family development, and overall economic stability in Bangladesh.

By addressing these unexplored areas, future research can build upon the findings of this study to provide deeper insights and contribute further to policy development, academic knowledge, and the well-being of migrant workers.

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Annexure A: KII Checklist

Bangladesh is one of the most populous countries in the world, with a population of approximately 168 million, representing about 2.11% of the global population. The unemployment rate in Bangladesh stands at around 5.23%, which rises to nearly 24% when underemployment is taken into account. This large segment of the unemployed and underemployed population places a serious strain on the country's basic resources and human development indicators. As a result, since the 1960s, a significant number of Bangladeshis have opted to migrate abroad for employment. Remittances from migrant workers have become a crucial source of foreign exchange for the country. However, this sector has long faced numerous challenges. As the global labor market rapidly transitions from traditional, transactional, and reactive human resource management (HRM) to ICT-driven systems, unskilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers are increasingly at risk of job displacement.

Moreover, unskilled and semi-skilled workers tend to receive significantly lower compensation packages compared to their skilled counterparts. For instance, while over 9.5 million Bangladeshi migrants remit approximately USD 22 billion annually, around

6.01 million Filipino migrants, who are predominantly skilled, remit over USD 34.91 billion. This comparison underscores the economic advantage of having a skilled migrant workforce. Given these circumstances, it is imperative for Bangladesh to develop a strategy to upskill its potential migrant workforce to meet future labor market demands and to enhance remittance flows. The country must identify the skills required for high-demand, skilled jobs and ensure that its human resources are adequately trained.

In light of the above, as part of my PhD research, I am undertaking a study to explore the skill requirements for high-demand jobs, identify the existing skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers, and propose actionable strategies to bridge these gaps. You are, therefore, kindly requested to contribute your valuable insights by responding to the attached questionnaire, which is designed to identify skill gaps and suggest appropriate measures for skill enhancement.

1. Name:
2. Appointment:
3. Organization:
4. Country of residence:
5. Date of interview:
6. Mode of interview:
7. Cell number:
8. Email ID:

Checklist:

9. Statistics indicate that the majority of Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the underlying reasons for this trend?
10. What opportunities are available for Bangladeshi workers to access skilled and semi-skilled employment abroad, particularly in GCC countries?
11. What are the major challenges faced by Bangladeshi workers in GCC countries?
12. Which skills are most in demand by employers in GCC countries?
13. What are the main skill gaps or limitations among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

14. Which language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, particularly in the service sector?
15. What challenges do employers face when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?
16. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers employed abroad?
17. Which priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that can enhance national remittance earnings?
18. Which occupations offer better employment prospects for Bangladeshi migrant workers in the near future?
19. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and what are the reasons behind their success?
20. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?
21. What is the general perception of Bangladeshi workers among employers in your country?
22. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country actively engage with potential employers? If yes, in what ways?

Checklist as per Grouping and Target Respondents:

1. Current Status and Challenges of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers:

Question Number	Question	Target Respondents
1A	Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?	Employers, Government Officials, Labor Welfare Wing, Academics
1B	What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?	Labor Welfare Officials, Employers
1C	Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?	Employers, Recruitment Agencies
1D	What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?	Employers, Recruitment Agencies, BMET Officials

2. Opportunities and Future Employment Prospects:

Question	Question	Target Respondent(s)
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n Number	Question	Target Respondents
2A	What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?	Employers, Industry Experts, Labor Attachés
2B	Which occupations have better employment prospects in the future for Bangladeshi migrants?	Employers, Labor Market Experts, Training Institutions

3. Employers' Expectations and Skill Needs (*Needed*)

Question Number	Question	Target Respondents
3A	Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?	Employers, Sector-Specific Experts, Chambers of Commerce
3B	What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?	Employers, Language Trainers, Vocational Training Centers

4. Skill Gaps and Limitations (*Gaps*)

Question Number	Question	Target Respondents
4A	What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?	Employers, Training Providers
4B	What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?	Employers, Recruitment Agencies

5. Institutional Recognition and Engagement

Question Number	Question	Target Respondents
5A	Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?	Employers, Accreditation Bodies, Labor Attachés
5B	Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?	Embassy Officials, Labor Welfare Wing, Employers

6. Recommendations and Policy Priorities (*Priority*)

Question Number	Question	Target Respondents
6A	What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?	All Stakeholders: Employers, Policy Makers, Trainers
6B	What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national	Employers, Policy Makers, BMET, NSDA

remittance earnings?	
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Annexure B: জরিপঃ প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশী

জনাব.....

আপনি জানেন যে, বাংলাদেশ পৃথিবীর সবচেয়ে ঘনবসতিপূর্ণ দেশ যেখানে ৫.৩% জনসংখ্যা বেকার। তাই কাজের জন্য মানুষ ১৯৭০ এর দশক থেকে বিদেশে অভিবাসন শুরু করে এবং বর্তমানে ৯.৫ মিলিয়ন এর বেশি প্রবাসী ২২ বিলিয়ন মার্কিন ডলারের বেশি বাংলাদেশে প্রেরণ করেছে যা জিডিপির ৫.৮%। অন্যদিকে মাত্র ৫.৪ মিলিয়ন ফিলিপিনের অভিবাসী ৩৪ বিলিয়ন এর বেশি মার্কিন ডলার নিজ দেশে প্রেরণ করছে, যা সম্ভব হয়েছে দক্ষ জনশক্তির মাধ্যমে। বাংলাদেশী অধিকাংশ অভিবাসী অদক্ষ কিংবা কম দক্ষ। বাংলাদেশ কর্মীরা যদি দক্ষতা অর্জন করে বিদেশে যেত তাহলে বাংলাদেশ আরো অনেক বেশী বৈদেশিক মুদ্রা অর্জন করতে পারতো। এমতাবস্থায়, পিএইচডি গবেষনার অংশ হিসাবে বাংলাদেশী প্রবাসীদের দক্ষতার ঘাটতিসমূহ চিহ্নিত করার প্রয়োজনে আপনার মতামত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।

উপরোক্ত বর্ননার প্রেক্ষিতে আপনাকে নিম্নলিখিত সমীক্ষায় (Survey) অংশগ্রহনের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

আপনার সহযোগীতার জন্য ধন্যবাদ।

- ১। আপনার নামঃ _____
- ২। বর্তমানে যে দেশে আছেন সে দেশের নামঃ
- ক। সৌদি আরব
- খ। সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরাত
- গ। কাতার
- ঘ। কুয়েত
- ঙ। ওমান
- চ। বাহরাইন
- ৩। আপনার বয়স (টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। ২০ বছরের কম
- খ। ২১ হতে ৩০ বছর
- গ। ৩১ হতে ৪০ বছর
- ঘ। ৪১ হতে ৫০ বছর
- ঙ। ৫০ বছরের উপরে
- ৪। আপনার চাকুরীর বয়স (টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। ০৫ বছরের কম
- খ। ০৬ হতে ১০ বছর
- গ। ১১ হতে ১৫ বছর
- ঘ। ১৬ হতে ২০ বছর
- ঙ। ২০ বছরের উপরে
- ৫। আপনার শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। কখনো স্কুলে যাইনি
- খ। প্রথম হতে ৫ম শ্রেণী
- গ। ৬ষ্ঠ হতে ১০ম শ্রেণী
- ঘ। এসএসসি
- ঙ। এইচএসসি এবং তদুর্ধ্ব
- ৬। আপনার বর্তমান পেশার নাম লিখুন (আপনি কি করেন):
- ক। ব্যবসা
- খ। রাজমিস্ত্রি/প্লাম্বার/ইলেকট্রিশিয়ান/রং মিস্ত্রি/কাঠমিস্ত্রি/ওয়েল্ডার

- গ। কম্পিউটার অপারেটর/অফিস সহকারী/ক্যাশিয়ার
- ঘ। গৃহকর্মী/হাউজকিপিং/রাঁধুনি
- ঙ। ড্রাইভার/ডেলিভারি কর্মী
- চ। ফোরম্যান/সুপারভাইজার/স্টোর কিপার/সেলস এক্সিকিউটিভ
- ছ। ফ্রিগ্যান্সার/বেকার
- জ। সহকারী/লোডার/ঝাড়ুদার
- ঝ। দোভাষী/ধর্মীয় কর্মী
- ঞ। ম্যানেজার/সুপারিনটেনডেন্ট
- ট। টেকনিশিয়ান/মেকানিক/অপারেটর/দর্জি
- ঠ। বিক্রয়কর্মী/নিরাপত্তাকর্মী
- ড। প্রকৌশলী/আইটি কর্মী/শিক্ষক/সাংবাদিক
- ৭। বাংলাদেশী টাকায় প্রতি মাসে আপনার আয় কত? (টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। ২০ হাজার টাকার কম
- খ। ২১ হতে ৪০ হাজার টাকা
- গ। ৪১ হতে ৮০ হাজার টাকা
- ঘ। ৮১ হাজার হতে ১ লক্ষ টাকা
- ঙ। ১ লক্ষ টাকার উপরে
- ৮। বাংলাদেশ ছাড়ার পূর্বে আপনি কি কোনো কারিগরী/প্রযুক্তিগত প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছেন?
(টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। আমি কোনও প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করিনি
- খ। আমি শুধু ‘অন দ্যা জব ট্রেনিং’ বা কাজের সময় প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছি
- গ। গন্তব্যে পৌঁছানোর পর আমি আংশিক প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছি
- ঘ। প্রস্থান করার আগে আমি আংশিক প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছি
- ঙ। আমি পূর্ণাঙ্গ প্রশিক্ষণ পেয়েছি
- ৯। বাংলাদেশ ছাড়ার পূর্বে আপনার কি কারিগরি দক্ষতার সনদ ছিল? (টিক চিহ্ন দিন):
- ক। হ্যাঁ
- খ। না
- ১০। আপনি যদি কারিগরী/প্রযুক্তিগত প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়ে বিদেশ গিয়ে থাকেন, তাহলে উক্ত প্রশিক্ষণ কি আপনার বর্তমান পেশায় সাহায্য করছে? (অনুগ্রহ করে যথাস্থানে টিক দিন) :

- ক। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ আমার পেশার সাথে সম্পর্কিত নয়।
- খ। প্রশিক্ষণটি আমার পেশার সাথে সম্পর্কিত হলেও তা আমার কোনো কাজে আসছে না।
- গ। প্রশিক্ষণ আমাকে পেশায় কিছুটা সাহায্য করেছে।
- ঘ। প্রশিক্ষণ আমাকে পেশায় অনেক সাহায্য করেছে।
- ঙ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়।

১১। আপনি যদি দক্ষতার প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়ে থাকেন তবে কেন আপনি আপনার দক্ষতার সাথে মিল আছে এমন একটি কাজ করছেন না? (অনুগ্রহ করে যথাস্থানে টিক দিন। আপনি একাধিক টিক দিতে পারেন):

- ক। আমার প্রয়োজনীয় অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল না।
- খ। আমার সনদ নিয়োগকর্তা কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত নয়।
- গ। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ ইনস্টিটিউট নিয়োগকর্তা কর্তৃক স্বীকৃত নয়।
- ঘ। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ অপর্যাপ্ত ছিল।
- ঙ। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ অনুপযুক্ত ছিল।
- চ। কাজে যোগদানের সময় আমার দক্ষতার সাথে সংগতিপূর্ণ কাজের শূন্যপদ ছিল না।
- ছ। আমি দক্ষতা মূল্যায়ন পরীক্ষায় ফেল করেছি।
- জ। আমি আমার দক্ষতার সাথে সামঞ্জস্য রেখে একটি দক্ষতার চাকরি খুঁজিনি।
- ঝ। আমার কাজ আমার প্রশিক্ষণ/অভিজ্ঞতার সাথে সম্পর্কিত।

১২। আপনি কেন কারিগরি দক্ষতা অর্জনের জন্য প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করেননি? (অনুগ্রহ করে যথাস্থানে টিক দিন। আপনি একাধিক টিক দিতে পারেন):

- ক। আমি কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ সম্পর্কে কখনও শুনিনি।
- খ। দেশ ছাড়ার আগে আমি দক্ষতার প্রয়োজন সম্পর্কে সচেতন ছিলাম না।
- গ। আমি দক্ষতার গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে সচেতন ছিলাম না।
- ঘ। দক্ষতার সুবিধা সম্পর্কে আমি সচেতন ছিলাম না।
- ঙ। প্রশিক্ষণের জন্য আমার আর্থিক সংগতি ছিল না।
- চ। কারিগরি প্রশিক্ষণ সময়সাপেক্ষ।
- ছ। বাংলাদেশে আমার বাসস্থানের আশেপাশে কোনো প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র ছিল না।
- জ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়।

১৩। বর্তমান পেশা সম্পর্কে আপনার কতটা অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল? (অনুগ্রহ করে যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):

- ক। বর্তমান পেশা সম্পর্কে আমি পূর্বে কিছুই জানতাম না।
খ। বর্তমান পেশার উপর আমার কিছুটা ধারণা ছিল তবে কার্যকরী নয়।
গ। আমার কিছুটা কার্যকরী জ্ঞান ছিল।
ঘ। আমার কার্যকরী জ্ঞান ছিল।
ঙ। আমার পেশা সম্পর্কে ভালো জ্ঞান ছিল।

১৪। বাংলাদেশ ছাড়ার পূর্বে আপনার ভাষার দক্ষতার অবস্থা কেমন ছিল? (উপযুক্ত স্থানে টিক দিন):

ভাষা	কিছুই জানতাম না	কিছু জানতাম কিন্তু কাজ করার মত নয়	কিছুটা কাজ করার মত জ্ঞান ছিল	কাজ করার মত জ্ঞান ছিল	আত্মবিশ্বাসী ছিলাম
ইংরেজী (পড়া)					
ইংরেজী (লেখা)					
ইংরেজী (বোঝা)					
ইংরেজী (কথা বলা)					
আরবি (পড়া)					
আরবি (লেখা)					
আরবি (বোঝা)					
আরবি (কথা বলা)					

১৫। বাংলাদেশ ছাড়ার পূর্বে আপনি কি কোনো ভাষার প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়েছেন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):

- ক। হ্যাঁ
খ। না

১৬। যদি ভাষার প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়ে থাকেন, তাহলে কোন ভাষার উপর প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়েছেন:

- ক। ইংরেজী
খ। আরবি
গ। কোরিয়ান

১৭। যদি আপনি কোনো ভাষা কোর্স করেননি, তাহলে ভাষা কোর্স না করার কারণগুলি কী কী? (যথাযথ স্থানে টিক চিহ্ন দিন। একাধিক কারণ টিক দিতে পারেন):

- ক। ভাষার দক্ষতার প্রয়োজনীয়তা সম্পর্কে আমি সচেতন ছিলাম না।
খ। ভাষা দক্ষতার সুবিধা সম্পর্কে আমি সচেতন ছিলাম না।

- গ। আমার চাকরির জন্য ভাষার দক্ষতার প্রয়োজন নেই।
 ঘ। আমার আর্থিক অবস্থা ভালো ছিল না।
 ঙ। ভাষা প্রশিক্ষণ সময়সাপেক্ষ।
 চ। আমার বাসস্থানের কাছাকাছি কোন ভাষা প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র ছিল না।
 ছ। আমার ভাষার দক্ষতা ভালো ছিল।
 ঙ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়।

১৮। বাংলাদেশ ত্যাগ করার পূর্বে কর্মসংস্থানের দেশটির নিম্নলিখিত দিক সম্পর্কে আপনি কতটা জানতেন? (অনুগ্রহ করে যথাস্থানে টিক দিন)

	কিছুই জানতাম না	কিছু জানতাম কিন্তু কাজ করার মত নয়	কিছুটা কাজ করার মত জ্ঞান ছিল	কাজ করার মত জ্ঞান ছিল	আত্মবিশ্বাস সী ছিলাম
কর্মসংস্থান দেশের সংস্কৃতি					
কর্মসংস্থান দেশের আইন এবং নিয়মকানুন					
কর্মসংস্থান দেশের ধর্মীয় দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী					
নিজস্ব অধিকার এবং কর্তব্য					
কর্মসংস্থান দেশের আচার ও শিষ্টাচার					
কম্পিউটার দক্ষতা					
আইটি দক্ষতা					

১৯। গন্তব্য দেশে অবতরণের পরে আপনি কী কী অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন। আপনি একাধিক টিক দিতে পারেন):

- ক। আমি বিমানবন্দর, ব্যাংক, রাস্তা এবং কর্মসূহলের বিভিন্ন নির্দেশাবলী পড়তে পারিনি।
 খ। কর্মসূহলে আমার ম্যানেজার/সুপারভাইজারের নির্দেশ বুঝতে পারিনি।
 গ। আমি অভিবাসন, ব্যাংকিং, পরিচয়পত্র এবং কর্মসূহলের প্রয়োজনীয় ফর্ম পূরণ করতে পারিনি।
 ঘ। ভাষার দক্ষতার অভাবে আমি ম্যানেজার/সুপারভাইজার/সহকর্মীদের কাজে নিজেকে প্রকাশ করতে পারিনি।
 ঙ। আমার লাইসেন্স/সনদ নিয়োগকারী দেশে গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।

- চ। চাকরির জন্য আমার কোনো দক্ষতা ছিল না।
- ছ। দক্ষতার অভাবে ভালো চাকরি পাইনি।
- জ। দক্ষতার অভাবে আমার বেতন অন্যদের তুলনায় কম ছিল।
- ঝ। অভিজ্ঞতার অভাবে আমি আমার কাজ সম্পাদন করতে অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হয়েছি।
- ঞ। আমি আমার দেশের সহকর্মীদের কাছ থেকে কোনো সাহায্য পাইনি।
- ট। আমি অন্য দেশের সহকর্মীদের কাছ থেকে কোনো সাহায্য পাইনি।
- ঠ। স্থানীয় লোকজনকে সৌহার্দ্যপূর্ণ পেলাম না।
- ড। আমি আমার উর্ধতন কর্মকর্তার সহায়তা পাইনি।
- ঢ। আমি কোন সমস্যার সম্মুখীন হইনি।
- ২০। আপনি যদি গন্তব্য দেশে কোনো দক্ষতা/প্রযুক্তিগত প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করে থাকেন, তবে সেই প্রশিক্ষণ/কোর্সের নাম কী ছিল?
- ক। ড্রাইভিং
- খ। আরবি টাইপিং
- গ। কম্পিউটার
- ২১। আপনি যদি বিদেশে দক্ষতার প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়ে থাকেন, তাহলে বাংলাদেশে প্রশিক্ষণ গ্রহণ করেননি কেন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):
- ক। বাংলাদেশী দক্ষতা সার্টিফিকেট/লাইসেন্স গন্তব্য দেশে গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
- খ। গন্তব্য দেশে আসার আগে দক্ষতার গুরুত্ব বুঝতে পারিনি।
- গ। বাংলাদেশে এ বিষয়ে কোনো প্রশিক্ষণের সুবিধা নেই।
- ঘ। বাংলাদেশে প্রশিক্ষণ নিয়েছি তবুও এ দেশের নিয়মানুযায়ী নতুন করে প্রশিক্ষণ নিতে হয়েছে।
- ঙ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়।
- ২২। আপনি কি দক্ষতা মূল্যায়ন পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করেছেন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):
- ক। হ্যাঁ
- খ। না
- ২৩। আপনি যদি দক্ষতা মূল্যায়ন পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করে থাকেন তবে আপনি কোথায় পরীক্ষা দিয়েছেন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):
- ক। বাংলাদেশে

- খ। যে দেশে আপনি কাজ করেন
- গ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়
- ২৪। আপনি কি দক্ষতা মূল্যায়ন পরীক্ষায় পাশ করেছেন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):
- ক। হ্যাঁ
- খ। না
- গ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়
- ২৫। দক্ষতা মূল্যায়ন পরীক্ষায় অকৃতকার্য হওয়ার কারণ কি কি? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন):
- ক। পরীক্ষায় যে প্রশ্নগুলো এসেছিল সে বিষয়ে আমাকে প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হয়নি।
- খ। আমি প্রশ্নের তাত্ত্বিক দিক জানতাম কিন্তু আমার ব্যবহারিক জ্ঞান ছিল না।
- গ। আমার ব্যবহারিক অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল কিন্তু আমি তাত্ত্বিক পাঠ জানতাম না।
- ঘ। ব্যবহারিক ও তাত্ত্বিক কোন অংশেই আমার অভিজ্ঞতা ছিল না।
- ঙ। বিদেশী ভাষা বুঝতে অসুবিধা হয়েছিল।
- চ। পরীক্ষায় ব্যবহৃত যন্ত্র আমি পূর্বে ব্যবহার করিনি।
- ছ। আমার অভিজ্ঞতার অভাব ছিল।
- জ। কম্পিউটার ব্যবহার করতে পারতাম না।
- ঝ। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ অপর্যাপ্ত ছিল।
- ঞ। আমার প্রশিক্ষণ অনুপযুক্ত ছিল।
- ট। ইন্টারনেট এর উপর আমার দক্ষতা ছিল না।
- ঠ। প্রয়োজ্য নয়।
- ২৬। আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে একজন প্রবাসী কর্মীর কি কি গুণাবলী থাকা প্রয়োজন? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন। আপনি একাধিক টিক দিতে পারেন) :
- ক। শিক্ষা
- খ। অভিজ্ঞতা
- গ। শারীরিক সক্ষমতা
- ঘ। প্রেরণা
- ঙ। পেশাগত কারিগরি দক্ষতা
- চ। ভদ্রতা ও শিষ্টাচার
- ছ। সাংস্কৃতিক সচেতনতা

- জ। দলের সঙ্গে কাজ করার দক্ষতা
- ঝ। অঙ্গীকারবদ্ধতা
- ঞ। সময়ানুবর্তিতা
- ট। বিশ্বাসযোগ্যতা
- ঠ। নতুন প্রযুক্তি গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা
- ড। নিজে থেকে কাজ করার দক্ষতা
- ঢ। অভিবাসীদের অধিকারের আইন সম্পর্কে জ্ঞান
- ণ। তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি (আইসিটি) দক্ষতা
- ত। আরবি ভাষার নিম্নলিখিত দিকগুলোঃ
- (১) আরবী পড়তে পারা
- (২) আরবী বুঝতে পারা
- (৩) আরবী বলতে পারা
- (৪) আরবী লিখতে পারা
- থা। ইংরেজী ভাষার নিম্নলিখিত দিকগুলোঃ
- (১) ইংরেজী পড়তে পারা
- (২) ইংরেজী বুঝতে পারা
- (৩) ইংরেজী বলতে পারা
- (৪) ইংরেজী লিখতে পারা
- দ। ব্যক্তিগত আচরণ ও শালীনতা

২৭। আপনার অভিজ্ঞতার আলোকে বাংলাদেশী অভিবাসীদের কি কি দক্ষতার ঘাটতি রয়েছে? (যথাস্থানে টিক দিন। আপনি একাধিক টিক দিতে পারেন):

- ক। দুর্বল ভাষাগত দক্ষতা
- খ। দুর্বল শিক্ষা
- গ। অভাব অভিজ্ঞতার
- ঘ। শারীরিক দুর্বলতা
- ঙ। দুর্বল যোগাযোগ দক্ষতা
- চ। পেশাগত প্রযুক্তিগত দক্ষতার অভাব
- ছ। ভদ্রতা ও শিষ্টাচারের অভাব
- জ। দলগত কাজের দুর্বলতা

- বা। অঙ্গীকারহীনতা
- ঞ। সময় ব্যবস্থাপনার দুর্বলতা
- ট। অবিশ্বাস্যতা
- ঠ। অলসতার প্রবণতা
- ড। তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি (আইসিটি) দক্ষতার অভাব
- ঢ। দুর্বল বাহ্যিক চেহারা
- ণ। প্রেরণার অভাব
- ত। নতুন প্রযুক্তিতে খাপ খাওয়াতে অক্ষমতা
- থ। সাংস্কৃতিক পার্থক্যের বিষয়ে অজ্ঞানতা
- দ। শ্রমিকদের আইন ও অধিকার সম্পর্কে অজ্ঞানতা
- ২৮। অনুগ্রহ করে উল্লেখ করুন কোন কোন দেশ থেকে সর্বাধিক কর্মী নিয়োগ করা হয়?
- ক। নিম্নস্তরের কাজের জন্য:
- (১) বাংলাদেশ
 - (২) পাকিস্তান
 - (৩) ভারত
 - (৪) নেপাল
 - (৫) শ্রীলঙ্কা
- খ। মধ্যম স্তরের কাজের জন্য:
- (১) ফিলিপাইন
 - (২) ভারত
 - (৩) বাংলাদেশ
 - (৪) পাকিস্তান
 - (৫) শ্রীলঙ্কা
 - (৬) মিশর
 - (৭) নেপাল
 - (৮) চীন
- গ। ব্যবস্থাপক/তত্ত্বাবধায়ক স্তরের জন্য:
- (১) ভারত
 - (২) আরব দেশসমূহ

(৩) পশ্চিমা দেশসমূহ

(৪) ফিলিপাইন

(৫) নেপাল

(৬) শ্রীলঙ্কা

আপনার অংশগ্রহণ করার জন্য ধন্যবাদ।

Annexure C: Survey Questionnaire for the Workers

Dear Mr.....,

As you are aware, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world where 5.3% of its population are unemployed. Hence, people started migration for work since the 1970s and presently over 9.5 million Bangladeshis remit above 22 billion USD accounting for 5.8% of the GDP. Nonetheless, there are scopes for enhanced remittance earning if one takes the example of the Philippines. Only 5.4 million Filipinos remit above 34 billion USD by exploiting tremendous potentials of its skilled Human Resource.

Remittance being the most important sources of foreign currency, Bangladesh is likely to face challenges due to 4.0 Industrial revolution as most of her workers are semi-skilled and less-skilled. Therefore, an effort has been taken to analyze the skill gaps of Bangladeshi migrant workers to suggest measures for increased number of skilled workers as my PhD research.

You are requested to give your valuable inputs in the questionnaire as stated below:

1. Your name:
2. Country of your present residence:
 - a. KSA
 - b. UAE
 - c. Qatar
 - d. Kuwait
 - e. Oman
 - f. Bahrain
3. Your age (Please tick as appropriate):
 - a. Below 20 years
 - b. 21 to 30 years
 - c. 31 to 40 years
 - d. 41 to 50 years
 - e. Above 50 years
4. Length of your service (Please tick as appropriate):
 - a. Below 5 years
 - b. 6 to 10 years
 - c. 11 to 15 years
 - d. 16 to 20 years
 - e. Above 20 years
5. Your educational qualification (Please tick as appropriate):

- a. Never went to school
 - b. Class I to VIII
 - c. Class IX to X
 - d. SSC
 - e. HSC and above
6. Please write the name of your occupation/profession:
- a. Business
 - b. Masson/plumber/electrician/painter/carpenter/welder
 - c. Computer operator/office assistant/cashier
 - d. Domestic helper/housekeeping/cook
 - h. Driver/delivery person
 - j. Foreman/supervisor/store keeper/sales executive
 - k. Free lancer/unemployed
 - l. Helper/loader/Janitor
 - m. Interpreter/religious worker
 - n. Manager/superintendent
 - q. Technician/mechanics/operator/tailor
 - r. Salesperson/security
 - w. Engineer/IT/teacher/journalist
7. Monthly salary/earning in Bangladeshi taka (BDT) (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Below 20 thousand taka
 - b. 21 to 40 thousand taka
 - c. 41 to 80 thousand taka
 - d. 81 thousand to one lac
 - e. Above one lac taka
8. Did you undertake any technical training? (Please tick as appropriate):

- a. I did not undertake any training
 - b. I have undergone only ‘on the job training’
 - c. I received partial training after reaching in the destination
 - d. I received partial training before departure
 - e. I received full-fledged training
9. Did you have a skill qualification certificate before leaving Bangladesh? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Yes
 - b. No
10. If you have undergone vocational/technical training, how is your training helping you in your present profession? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. My training is not related to my profession.
 - b. Though the training is related to my profession, but it is not helping me in any way.
 - c. My training is somewhat helping me in my profession.
 - d. Training is helping me a lot in my profession.
 - e. Not applicable.
11. If you have undergone skill training, why aren't you doing a job matching your skill? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one):
- a. I did not have required experience.
 - b. My certificate is not accepted by the employer.
 - c. My training institute is not accredited with the employer.
 - d. My training was insufficient.
 - e. My training was inappropriate.
 - f. My skill did not match with the available vacancy.
 - g. I failed in the skill assessment test.
 - h. I did not look for a skill job in consonance with my skill.

i. My job is related to my training/experience.

12. If you have not undertaken any training, what are the reasons for not undertaking any vocational/technical training? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one):

- a. I never heard about vocational/technical training.
- b. I was not aware of any skill requirement before leaving the country.
- c. I was not aware about the importance to have a skill.
- d. I was not aware about the benefits of the skill.
- e. I did not have financial support to undergo training.
- f. Vocational/technical training is time consuming.
- g. There was no training center near-by my residence.
- h. Not applicable.

13. How much experience did you have on your present profession before employment? (Please tick as appropriate):

- a. Knew nothing about my present profession.
- b. I had somewhat knowledge on my profession but not workable.
- c. I had somewhat workable knowledge.
- d. I had workable knowledge.
- e. I had good knowledge on my profession.

14. What was the state of your language proficiency before leaving Bangladesh? Please tick in the appropriate box):

	Not at all	Not workable	Somehow workable	Workable	Confident
English (Reading)					
English (Writing)					
English (Understanding)					
English					

(Speaking)					
Arabic (Reading)					
Arabic (Writing)					
Arabic (Understanding)					
Arabic (Speaking)					

15. Did you undertake any language training before leaving Bangladesh? (Please tick as appropriate):

- a. Yes
- b. No

16. If you have undertaken any language courses, please write the name of the languages:

- a. English
- b. Arabic
- c. Korean

17. If you have not undertaken language course, what are the reasons for not undertaking any language courses? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one):

- a. I was not aware about the need of the language proficiency.
- b. I was not aware about the benefits of the language proficiency.
- c. My job does not need to have language proficiency.
- d. My financial condition did not support me to undertake a language course.
- e. Language training is time consuming.
- f. There was no language training center near-by my residential area.
- g. My English language proficiency was somewhat workable.
- h. Not applicable.

18. How much did you know on following aspects before leaving Bangladesh? (Please tick in the appropriate box):

	Knew nothing	Knew something but	Somewhat workable	Workable	Confident
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		not workable	knowledge		
Employing country's culture					
Employing country's basic laws and rules					
Employing country's religious sensitivity					
Knowledge on laws and rights of migrants					
Manners and etiquette					
Computer skill					
ICT skill					

19. What are the difficulties you faced after landing in the destination country?
(Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one):

- a. I could not read the instructions in the airport, banks, roads, and work place.
- b. I could not understand the instructions of my manger/supervisor in the work place.
- c. I could not fill up the forms for immigration, banking, identity card, and employment.
- d. I could not express myself to the manger/supervisor/fellow workers due to lack of language proficiency.
- e. My skill certificate/license was not acceptable in the employing country.
- f. I did not have any skill for a job.
- g. I did not get a good job due to lack of skill.
- h. My salary was much below than others due to lack of skill.
- i. I faced difficulties to perform my job due to lack of experience.
- j. I did not receive any help from fellow workers from my country.
- k. I did not receive any help from fellow workers from other countries.
- l. I did not find local people cordial.
- m. I did not find my immediate boss supportive.

- n. I had a cultural shock.
 - o. I did not face any problem.
20. If you have undergone skill/technical training in the destination country, what is the name of the training/course?
- a. Driving
 - b. Arabic typing
 - c. Computer
21. If you have undertaken skill training/course in abroad, why didn't you do the same skill training in Bangladesh? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Bangladeshi skill certificate/license is not acceptable in the destination country.
 - b. I did not realize the importance of skill before coming to the destination country.
 - c. There are no training facilities on the subject in Bangladesh.
 - d. Though I have undertaken skill training in Bangladesh, I did the same training in the destination country.
 - d. Not applicable.
22. Did you appear in skill assessment test? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Yes
 - b. No
23. If you have appeared in the skill assessment test, in which location did you appear? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. In Bangladesh
 - b. In the employing country
 - c. Not applicable
24. If you have appeared in the skill assessment test, did you qualify?
- a. Yes

- b. No
 - c. Not applicable
25. If failed in the skill assessment test, why did you fail? (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. I was not trained on the questions that came in the test.
 - b. I knew theoretical aspects of the questions but I did not have practical training.
 - c. I had practical experience but I did not know theoretical lessons.
 - d. I neither had practical training nor theoretical lessons.
 - e. Language barrier.
 - f. I never used the equipment that was given in the test.
 - g. I lacked in experience.
 - h. I could not use the computer.
 - i. My training was insufficient.
 - j. My training was inappropriate.
 - k. I had lacking in IT skill.
 - l. Not applicable.
26. Based on your experience, what are the qualities needed for a foreign worker? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):
- a. Education
 - b. Experience
 - c. Physical fitness
 - d. Motivation
 - e. Professional technical skill
 - f. Manners and etiquette
 - g. Cultural awareness
 - h. Ability to work as a team

- i. Commitment
- j. Timeliness
- k. Trustworthiness
- l. Adoptability to new technology.
- m. Work without supervision
- n. Knowledge on laws in rights of migrants
- o. ICT skill
- p. Following aspects of Arabic language:
 - (1) Reading
 - (2) Understanding
 - (3) Speaking
 - (4) Writing
- q. Following aspects of English language:
 - (1) Reading
 - (2) Understanding
 - (3) Speaking
 - (4) Writing
- r. Personal bearing

27. Based on your experience, what are the drawbacks of the Bangladeshi workers? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Poor language proficiency
- b. Poor education
- c. Lack of experience
- d. Physical weakness
- e. Poor communication skill
- f. Lack of professional technical skill

- g. Lack of manners and etiquette
- h. Poor team work
- i. Lack of commitment
- j. Poor time management
- k. Untrustworthiness
- l. Tendency of slacking
- m. Lack of ICT skill
- n. Poor appearance
- o. Lack of motivation
- p. Unable to adapt to new technology
- q. Unaware about cultural differences
- r. Unaware about laws and rights of migrants

28. Please mention the names of the countries from where maximum works are recruited?

- a. For low level work:
 - (1) Bangladesh
 - (2) Pakistan
 - (3) India
 - (4) Nepal
 - (5) Sri Lanka
- b. For midlevel work:
 - (1) Philippines
 - (2) India
 - (3) Bangladesh
 - (4) Pakistan
 - (5) Sri Lanka

(6) Egypt

(7) Nepal

(8) China

c. Manger/supervisor level:

(1) India

(2) Arabian

(3) Western countries

(4) Philippines

(5) Nepal

(6) Sri Lanka

Thank you for your participation

Annexure D: Survey Questionnaire for Employers

Dear employers,

As you are aware, Bangladesh is the most densely populated country in the world where 5.3% of its population are unemployed. Hence, people started migration for work since the 1970s and presently over 9.5 million Bangladeshis remit above 22 billion USD

accounting for 5.8% of the GDP. Nonetheless, there are scopes for enhanced remittance earning if one takes the example of the Philippines. Only 5.4 million Filipinos remit above 34 billion USD by exploiting tremendous potentials of its skilled Human Resource. Remittance being the most important sources of foreign currency, Bangladesh is likely to face challenges due to 4.0 Industrial revolution as most of her workers are semi-skilled and less-skilled. Therefore, an effort has been taken to analyze the skill gaps of Bangladeshi migrant workers to suggest measures for increased number of skilled workers as my PhD research.

You are requested to give your valuable inputs in the questionnaire as stated below:

1. Your name:
2. Your email id:
3. Your nationality:
4. Country of your present residence:
5. Age (Please tick as appropriate):
 - a. Below 30 years
 - b. 31 to 40 years
 - c. 41 to 50 years
 - d. Above 50 years
6. Your official capacity (Please tick as appropriate):
 - a. Proprietor
 - b. Managing Director
 - c. Director
 - d. Manager
 - e. Supervisor
 - f. Recruiter
 - g. Senior official
 - h. Manpower supplier
 - i. Others

7. Sector of your work (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Hotel
 - b. Restaurant
 - c. Market/Shop
 - d. Transportation
 - e. Health care service
 - f. Education
 - g. Information technology
 - h. Repair and maintenance
 - i. Garments
 - j. Manpower business
 - k. Security
 - l. Administration
 - m. Others (please mention the name of your work sector):
8. Number of employees in your company/organization (Please tick as appropriate):
- a. Below 20
 - b. 21 to 50
 - c. 51 to 100
 - d. 101 to 200
 - e. Above 201
9. In your experience, what types of jobs Bangladeshi works do in the service sector?
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
10. What are the points you consider while making a hiring decision? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Education qualification
- b. Experience
- c. Physical fitness
- d. Communication skill
- e. Professional technical skill
- f. Language proficiency
- g. Manners and etiquette
- h. Cultural awareness
- i. ICT skill
- j. Personal bearing
- k. Adaptability to new technology
- l. Trust worthiness
- m. Commitment
- n. Timeliness
- o. Work without supervision
- p. Team work
- q. Motivation
- r. Knowledge on laws to rights of migrants

11. What are the drawbacks of the workers that reduce productivity? ((Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points well):

- a. Poor language proficiency
- b. Poor education
- c. Lack of experience
- d. Physical weakness
- e. Poor communication skill
- f. Lack of professional technical skill

- g. Lack of manners and etiquette
- h. Poor team work
- i. Lack of commitment
- j. Poor time management
- k. Untrustworthiness
- l. Tendency of slacking
- m. Lack of ICT skill
- n. Poor appearance
- o. Lack of motivation
- p. Unable to adapt to new technology
- q. Unaware about cultural differences
- r. Unaware about laws and rights of migrants

12. What qualities of the workers are most desirable by the employers? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Education qualification
- b. Experience
- c. Physical fitness
- d. Communication skill
- e. Professional technical skill
- f. Language proficiency
- g. Manners and etiquette
- h. Cultural awareness
- i. ICT skill
- j. Personal bearing
- k. Adaptability to new technology
- l. Trust worthiness

- m. Commitment
- n. Timeliness
- o. Work without supervision
- p. Team work
- q. Motivation
- r. Knowledge on laws to rights of migrants

13. What are the drawbacks of the Bangladeshi workers you have discovered while administering them? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Poor language proficiency
- b. Poor education
- c. Lack of experience
- d. Physical weakness
- e. Poor communication skill
- f. Lack of professional technical skill
- g. Lack of manners and etiquette
- h. Poor team work
- i. Lack of commitment
- j. Poor time management
- k. Untrustworthiness
- l. Tendency of slacking
- m. Lack of ICT skill
- n. Poor appearance
- o. Lack of motivation
- p. Unable to adapt to new technology
- q. Unaware about cultural differences
- r. Unaware about laws and rights of migrants

14. What are the challenges Bangladeshi workers are likely to face in future? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Need to compete with the workers of new entrant countries like Nepal, Vietnam, Kenya, Uganda, etcetera.
- b. Emergence of new technology will replace man with machine, therefore workers without skills will lose jobs.
- c. Emergence of automation and digitalization will offer jobs only to the workers having IT skills.
- d. Frequent progression of technology will require a habit of lifelong learning, hence workers without lifelong learning skill will lose jobs.
- e. Formulation of new laws to reserve jobs for native citizens will toughen foreigners' recruitment.
- f.

15. How much salary do you offer for entry level workers of the following countries (please mention the name of the trade/job):

Name of the trade/job	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan	Sri-Lanka	Philippines

16. What are the difficulties you face while recruiting Bangladeshi skilled workers? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Low number of applicants with the required skills.
- b. Bangladeshi skill certificates are not accepted in the GCC countries.
- c. Certified skilled manpower often fails in assessment test.
- d. Certified skilled manpower lacks required experience.

- e. Employers are not interested in hiring skilled manpower from Bangladesh due to lack of relevant soft and hard skills.
- f. Quota limit for hiring manpower from sending countries.
- g. Bangladesh has already fulfilled its quota for skill jobs.
- h. Employers are not interested in hiring skilled manpower from Bangladesh as it has already earned a bad image as the supplier of semi-skilled and less-skilled workers.
- i. Regulatory/legislative issues bar hiring skilled manpower from Bangladesh.

17. What are your suggestions to increase the number of skilled workers from Bangladesh? (Please tick as appropriate. You may tick more than one. You may add additional points as well):

- a. Encourage education for potential candidates.
- b. Encourage vocational/technical training.
- c. Institutes should offer need-based trade training courses.
- d. Institutes should maintain international standard.
- e. Government should take steps for accreditation of Bangladeshi vocational/technical training institutes.
- f. Encourage to learn spoken English language.
- g. Encourage to learn spoken Arabic language.
- h. Relevant hard and soft skills should be incorporated in the education and training syllabus at the primary level.
- i. Diplomatic efforts to be taken for formulation of policies to facilitate recruitment of skilled workers from Bangladesh.

18. While making a hiring decision, how much do you take cognizance of Bangladeshi skill certificates? (Please tick as appropriate):

- a. Recognize with full confidence.
- d. Recognize after validation through an assessment test.

- b. Somewhat recognize.
 - c. Do not recognize.
19. Workers of which countries do you like most as per following levels?
- a. Low level workers:
 - b. Mid-level employees:
 - c. Manager-level:
20. Which skills have better prospects in future?

Thank you for your participation

Annexure E: Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013

Relevant Extracts of Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013

'An Act to promote opportunities for overseas employment and to establish a safe and fair system of migration, to ensure rights and welfare of migrant workers and members of their families, to enact a new law by repealing the Emigration Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. XXIX of 1982), and for making provisions in conformity with the

International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and the Members of Their Families 1990 and other international labor and human rights conventions and treaties ratified by the People's Republic of Bangladesh WHEREAS it is expedient and necessary to promote opportunities for overseas employment and establish a safe and fair system of labor migration, to ensure rights and welfare of migrant workers and members of their families, to enact a new law by repealing the Emigration Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. XXIX of 1982), and for making provisions in conformity with the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and the Members of Their Families 1990 and other international labor and human rights conventions and treaties ratified by the People's Republic of Bangladesh; it is, THEREFORE, enacted as follows' (MoEWOE, 2013):

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

1. Short Title and Commencement.

- a. This Act will be called the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013.
- b. It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.

- a. "migration" means the departure of a citizen from Bangladesh for the purpose of employment in a trade or profession in any foreign country.
- b. "migrant" means any citizen of Bangladesh who has migrated to a foreign country for the purpose of overseas employment in any work or profession and is staying in that country.
- c. "migrant worker" or "worker" means any citizen of Bangladesh who, for wages, 'is in the planning process to migrate for work or is departing to any foreign country for work' or 'is employed in a trade or profession in any foreign country' or 'has returned to Bangladesh at the end of the tenure of employment or without having completed the tenure of employment in a trade or profession from a foreign country.'
- d. "employer", for the purpose of overseas employment, means an overseas or Bangladeshi person or organization/entity who has hired the worker.

- e. “overseas employment” means the employment of a Bangladeshi citizen in a foreign country outside the legal authority of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER II

Sending Workers Overseas, Migration, and Such Others

3. Authority to Send Workers for Overseas Employment.

- a. The control of all activities relating to the recruitment and emigration of workers from Bangladesh for the purpose of overseas employment shall be vested in the Government or its delegated authorities.
- b. Under this Act, the Bureau, any other organization or entity established by the Government, and a recruitment agent may conduct recruitment related activities.

4. Migration.

- a. No citizen shall migrate or cause others to migrate for overseas employment except in accordance with the provisions of this Act.
- b. For migration of a citizen, in addition to the clearance issued under the Section 20, following documents shall be required:
- (1) Evidence of recruitment for overseas employment by a person, organization or an entity authorized by the Government under an Agreement concluded with any country, or by a recruitment agent with appropriate visa.
 - (2) Letter of appointment in for an overseas job or a work permit, or a no objection certificate issued by any authorities of the country of employment and an appropriate visa.

5. Non-application of this Act in Case of Departure of Certain Persons. This Act shall not be applicable for the departure of following category of persons:

- a. A person employed in the service of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh or of a local authority, who, with permission from the competent authorities, is going overseas for performing an official duty or for the purposes of education or training, or for employment with an international or multilateral organization.
- b. A student, a trainee, or a tourist.

- c. A person emigrating at self-initiative for employment in a foreign government or international or multilateral organization.
 - d. A person emigrating to a foreign country for the purpose of medical treatment and care, or for religious, business or investment purposes.
 - e. A dependent of any Bangladeshi citizen employed overseas or lawfully staying overseas.
 - f. A person who initially emigrated for education and later accepted employment in a foreign country.
 - g. A person emigrating for a purpose which is not in conflict with the purposes of this Act.
6. **Application of the Principle of Equality.** XXX
7. **Place of Departure.** The departure for overseas employment will be from the port or place as may be specified by the Government by notification in the official Gazette.
8. **Restrictions Relating to Migration.**
- a. If the Government is satisfied that the migration of Bangladeshi citizens to a particular country shall be against the public or state interest or that their health and safety may be jeopardized in that country, the state may, by order, restrict the migration to that country.
 - b. The Government may, in the public interest or for preservation of human resources, temporarily restrict migration of a citizen or a category of citizens.

CHAPTER III

Recruitment Agents, License, and such others

9. **License.** No person shall operate any activity relating to recruitment unless issued a license under this Act.
10. **Eligibility for license.** XXX
11. **Duration and renewal of license.** XXX
12. **Suspension and cancellation of license.** XXX
13. **Revocation of license.** XXX

14. **Branch offices.** XXX
15. **Duties of the recruitment agent.** XXX
16. **Classification of recruitment agents.** XXX
17. **Transfer of license, the change of address, and such others.** XXX
18. **Forfeiture of surety, and such others.**

CHAPTER IV

Registration of Migrant Workers, Migration Clearance, and such others

19. **Registration of Migrant Workers and Protection of their Interests.**

a. A person planning to migrate under the provisions of this Act or all migrant workers shall be registered with the Bureau and concerned trade and profession recorded, and the Bureau shall preserve full information of the workers registered in the manner prescribed and, if necessary, shall enter that information into a register.

b. If a migrant is not registered, the worker shall be allowed to register and have concerned trade and profession recorded at any time in Bangladesh or with the Bangladesh Mission in the country where the worker is employed.

c. The Bureau, any other organization or company established by the government, and the recruitment agents shall recruit workers openly and by means of computerized database on a random basis from amongst workers registered according to their trade or profession under subsection provided that qualified workers are not available in the database, workers may be recruited through open advertisements in the newspapers with prior approval of the Government or of the authorities with delegated authority, and in such a case, the advertisement shall include a declaration to the effect that a fee or money in any form shall not be charged before and unless the worker has been recruited.

d. The Bureau shall discharge the responsibility of protecting the interests of workers employed overseas, and the duties and functions relating thereto, and the means of monitoring thereof shall be prescribed by the Rules.

20. **Migration Clearance.** Subject to the fulfilment of all official requirements related to migration, the Bureau shall stamp the passport of every person registered under

the Section 19 with a seal bearing the registration number, and shall issue a migration clearance electronic card bearing the thumb impression and necessary information concerning migration including biometric details of the concerned migrant worker.

21. **Cost of Migration.** The Government may, by an Order, prescribe the ceiling of the cost of migration to be charged for the purpose of recruitment and overseas employment.

CHAPTER V

Employment Contract

22. **Employment contract.**

a. The recruitment agent shall cause to be concluded an employment contract between the recruited worker and the employer, in which stipulations concerning the worker's wages, accommodation facilities, duration of employment, compensation amount in the event of death or injury, cost of emigration to and return from the foreign country, and so on shall be stated.

b. For the purpose of the contract mentioned in the Subsection, the recruitment agent shall be deemed to be a representative of the overseas employer, and as regards liabilities arising from the contract, the said recruitment agent and the employer shall be liable jointly and severally.

c. The recruitment agent shall submit a copy of the contract concluded under the Subsection to the Bureau and to the Bangladesh Mission in the concerned foreign country.

d. In case workers being sent overseas by the Bureau or any organization, entity or company established by the Government, the Bureau or the organization, entity or the company established by the Government shall arrange for the conclusion of a employment contract between the employer and the worker and shall submit a copy thereof to the Bangladesh Mission the concerned foreign country.

CHAPTER VI

Labor Welfare Wing and Agreements on Migration

23. **Labor Welfare Wing.** If it is deemed necessary to establish a Labor Welfare Wing in any country for the purpose of expanding reach into the labor market thereto or for protecting the rights of migrant workers, the Government may establish a Labor Welfare Wing in the Bangladesh Mission in the concerned foreign country, and the Wing shall perform duties as have been specified in this Act and the Rules thereof.

24. **Duties of Labor Welfare Wing.** XXX

25. **Bilateral Agreement on Migration.** The Government may conclude memorandum of understanding or an agreement with another country with a view to increase opportunities of migration by the Bangladeshi citizens for overseas employment, improving management of labor migration, repatriation and reintegration of the migrant workers in the home country, and to ensure welfare and the rights of migrant workers including the members of their families.

CHAPTER VII

Rights of Migrant Workers

26. **Right to Information.** Migrant workers shall have the right to be informed about the migration process, employment contract or the terms and conditions of the work overseas, and the right to know about their rights as per the law before his departure.

27. **Legal Aid.** Migrant workers and the persons who have become victims of fraud in the name of migration shall have the right to reasonable legal aid.

28. **Right to File Civil Suit.** Without prejudice to the right to seek a criminal prosecution for any offence under this Act, a migrant worker, if affected by violation of any provision of this Act or of the employment contract, may file a civil suit for compensation.

29. **Right to Return Home.** A migrant worker, especially a worker detained or stranded, or otherwise is in situation of distress overseas, shall have the right to return to Bangladesh and to receive necessary assistance from the Bangladesh Mission in the concerned foreign country.

30. **Financial and Other Welfare Programs.** XXX

CHAPTER VIII

Offences, Penalties, and Trial

31. **Penalties for sending migrant workers overseas in unlawful manner, and for charging unlawful amounts of fees, and such others.** XXX
32. **Penalty for publishing unauthorized advertisements.** XXX
33. **Penalty for using unlawful means for collecting demand note, visa or work-permit for overseas employment, or for trading in such documents.** XXX
- 34 – 41. XXX

CHAPTER IX

Miscellaneous

42. **Inspection.**
43. **Recovery of money appropriated through illegal charges.**
- a. If a sum of money has been appropriated in violation of provisions of this Act, the Government, following an investigation, as may be necessary, and by order in writing, may recover the said money from the concerned person, or may file a suit for compensation for the purpose of recovery.
- b. The money recovered or collected under subsection may be given to the aggrieved person.
44. **Delegation of power and appointment of agents.** XXX

Annexure F: National Action Plan for Skills Development in Bangladesh 2020-21 to 2024-25

To achieve efficiency and effectiveness in national skills development, National Action Plan has been formulated for the duration between 2020-21 and 2024-25. As per national action plan, 58 agencies shall provide skills training in 17 sectors to the potential

candidates. 1.72 million candidates shall be trained per year, total 8.6 million candidates will be training during the entire duration between 2021 and 2025 (NSDA, 2020). Following 06 sectors have been identified as the potential sectors for training (NSDA, 2020):

- Fresh skilling.
- Upskilling.
- Re-skilling.
- Entrepreneurship.
- Apprenticeship.
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

1. The action plan is based on the following broad principles (NSDA, 2020):

- Developing a demand-driven skills ecosystem.
- Adopt an evidence-based approach through research and development.
- Outline a flexible and responsive training facility.
- Enhancing industry engagement in skills training.
- Improving governance of an effective and results-focused skills system.
- Strategies for promoting skills development in the country.
- Developing an overarching nationally recognized NSQF and quality assurance mechanisms or skills training.
- Expanding competency-based training and assessments throughout the country.
- Improving access and outreach to all sections of society.

2. **Structure of the National Action Plan.** Broad structure of the National Action Plan 2021-2025 is summarized as follows (NSDA, 2020):

- Chapter-I discusses on brief overview of the overall policy framework.
- Chapter- II describes current skilling ecosystem of Bangladesh. It gives an in-depth insight on the key stakeholders of skills training and the contribution of government and non-government agencies to skills development over the 5 years.

- Chapter-III presents an overview of the National Action Plan activities and description of the sections as identified in the NSDP 2021 against which the activities are mapped.
 - Chapter-IV contains the timebound work plan of NSDA showing year-wise activities.
 - Chapter-V covers the indicators of implementation of the National Action Plan with the year wise targets set by the implementing agencies.
 - Chapter-VI discusses about the training plan of all agencies.
3. **Focus of the National Action Plan 2021-2025.** The National Action Plan is inclusive, performance-based, and forward-looking aligned with and contributing to the country's long-term goals and visions as follows (NSDA, 2020):

- SDGs
- Second Perspective Plan (2021-41)
- Vision 2030
- Vision 2041
- Delta Plan 2100
- NSDA Act 2018
- NSDA Rules 2020
- National Skills Development Policy (draft 2021)

Annexure G: Dialogue Between Researcher and Key Informants: Questions and Responses

KI-1

Name of the Organization: Sawaed Al Enjaz for Recruitment

Type of Organization: Saudi Recruitment Agency

Country: Saudi Arabia (Jeddah)

Date of Interview: November 2022

Interviewee Role: Chairman, responsible for manpower recruitment from multiple countries including Bangladesh

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A.

The primary reason for higher number of skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh is, Bangladeshi authorities specially recruiting agencies are more interested to send labors and low skilled workers.

Employers are also interested to bring in unskilled workers as Bangladeshi workers can be employed with lowest remuneration which is not possible in case of Pilipino, Pakistan or Indian workers.

If some employers are interested to hire high paid skilled workers from Bangladesh, they often fail due to lack of experienced and skilled workers from Bangladesh.

Most importantly, Bangladeshi skilled certificates are not recognized in Saudi Arabia. If employers hire skilled workers from Bangladesh, later it is found that, appointed workers are not really skilled, either their certificate is fake or they do not have any skill. Employers often suffer, if they hire skilled workers from Bangladesh. But conveniently, skilled workers can be hired from Filipins, India, Sri Lanka, and even from Pakistan.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. If workers are uneducated and unskilled, it is a problem for both employers and employees. The way employers face difficulties, similarly, Bangladeshi workers also face tremendous problems due to lack of education, poor language proficiency and communication skill. Often, they fail to comprehend the instructions resulting to poor work performance.

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Filipino workers command better reputation followed by Sri Lankan and Indian workers. Employer need to pay almost three times more for a Filipino worker, even then, employers prefer Filipino workers, because their output is much more than Bangladeshi workers. Filipino workers do not need to undergo orientation training, they can be employer from next day on arrival, whereas Bangladeshi workers take longer times to acclimatize themselves with the Saudi way of life.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. Bangladeshi workers are compared with the workers of Kenya and Uganda. However, now-a-days African countries are also sending skilled population and their standard is gradually improving. Kenya has already established institute for house maids namely 'House Maid Institute'. Other African countries are also continually enlightening their workers thorough institutionalized technical and vocational training which is not seen in case of Bangladesh. Thus, perhaps, in near future, African workers will surpass Bangladeshis. Bangladesh will have to face challenges from new entrant countries like Nepal, Laos, Vietnam, and some other African countries. Automation and digitalization are challenge for Bangladesh as most of its workers are uneducated and unaware about latest technology. Nepali workers are better communicator; they are doing better than Bangladeshis.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. Bangladesh can send trained drivers and house maids. There is huge demand for house maids, if they are trained. If Bangladesh continue to send unskilled and illiterate house maids, perhaps, in near future those will be captured by African countries like Somalia and Kenya. There are demands for skilled workers in the field of health care like nursing, age care, physiotherapists, teachers, doctors, engineers, etcetera. Plumber, electrician, pipe fitters, rod binders, etcetera profession also have high demand in the job market. The opportunities are available in the sectors like hotel business, shopping mall, transportation, health care, care giving, education, ICT, repair and maintenance, manpower business, security, clerical job, etcetera.

Finally, if Bangladesh desires, it can send all categories of workers like professionals, skilled, semiskilled, and less skilled workers.

Question Number 2B. Which occupations have better employment prospects in the future for Bangladeshi migrants?

Answer to Question Number 2B. Trades like welder, mason, electrician, plumber, carpenter, mechanics, driver, nurse, health care sector, and house keeper have huge demand in the GCC countries.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. Interested workers should have at least one trade training from a recognized TTC. The foremost quality employers' look for is experience in the relevant field. They should be a good communicator for a skill job like receptionist or a sells person in the shopping mall. Skilled people will be paid more, so, employers want them to be self-sufficient, thus they need to have good command over English language, should have minimum essential education and physical fitness. Now-a-days, nothing can be done without a computer or a tab. Skilled worker in the service sector should know about computer or ICT. Bangladeshi people are often found violating Saudi laws; thus, they should have idea about Saudi laws.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. English is widely spoken; however, Hindi and Urdu are also spoken language in most of the middle Eastern countries. Better to know some bit of Arabic for survival in the Arabian countries.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. If someone is educated, he/she can be imparted with any sorts of skills through language training, cultural training, training on a specific field like driving, etcetera. Unfortunately, low level of education is a brand of Bangladeshi workers. Bangladeshi workers' productivity is less than workers of other countries. Thus, they are less preferred for sensitive jobs like front desk job. The quality of work done by Bangladeshi workers are far below the expected standard specially while compared with the workers of the Philippines. Language is the most important barrier for the Bangladeshi migrants. They are also poor in communication skill. Bangladeshi migrants are generally employed for toiling hard work. On average 80% of them can survive the

hardship, remaining 20% are generally weak and unhealthy. Basically, they are physically unsuitable, thus go back after few months. Bangladeshi migrants generally do not have any idea about Saudi way of life. They need to be taught every aspect of social life, laws, rules, regulations, etcetera, whereas, company does not need not to spend time for acclimatizing. It would be better, if they could learn cultural and religious sensitivity from home during pre-deployment training. Though some workers come with skills certificate, but many of them cannot display required performance due to lack of experience and professional technical skills. Now-a-days, most of the skill and semi skill jobs need ICT skill and employees need to be adaptive to new technology which is absent among Bangladeshi workers. In Saudi Arab, workers need to know about laws of the land and rights of the migrants for a peaceful and healthy living which is mostly absent. Trustworthiness, motivation, commitment, timeliness, etcetera are desirable from a semiskilled or skilled worker which is seldom found among Bangladeshi workers. Most of them are unaware about accepted manners and etiquette. Skilled and semiskilled people are paid more, so employers do not want to monitor their work. Unfortunately, Bangladeshi workers have a tendency of slacking and they are often found ineffective in a team work. It presumed that, they come from very poor background, so they face difficulties to adapt to new technologies. Most of the Bangladeshi guys cannot be employed as waiter or sales person or receptionist, as their personal bearing and demeanor is poorly projected.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. Employers generally do not get enough trustworthy skilled people. If someone come as doctor or as an engineer, in most of the cases, it is found that they know nothing about their profession. Therefore, Bangladeshi certificates are not acceptable in the GCC countries. Lack of experience, low number of skilled applicants, lack of soft or transferable skills, failure in skill assessments test, and prevailing negative image of Bangladeshi workers are challenges for employing skilled or semiskilled workers. Since last few years, regulatory and legislative issues and quota restrictions are also becoming major challenges in the path to employment of skilled and or semiskilled workers in Saudi Arabia.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. Certificate from Bangladesh is only accepted after practical test. If someone qualifies in practical test, his/her certificate is accepted otherwise those are not. In all cases experience and technical know-how is more important than certificate.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. Yes, they are in contact with us. We solve many problems through discussions. Nonetheless, diplomatic missions have scopes for enhanced cooperation and coordination with the employers.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Mr. Saad said that, ‘if I am asked to say only one point, I would rather say that Bangladesh must send its workers with at least one trade training course. I do not know what they teach in Pre Deployment Training (PDT), anyway, I am sure, it is not effective. The syllabus needs to be updated in line with the requirements in the GCC countries. I have learned that potential workers are given some Arabic language training, I am sure those are not also effective. The language training course either English or Arabic should be effective’. Bangladeshi workers are unaware about Saudi way of life, culture, and religious sensitivity. Potential workers should be taught about Saudi culture, tradition, history, religion, and manners and etiquette. ‘You should incorporate essential aspects of life skills especially soft skills in your education system’. Finally, ‘Bangladesh should emphasize on technical training courses, and everyone should be given minimum basic education before landing in a foreign country’.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. ‘Already I said about it. First priority should be on education followed by technical training, language training, ICT training, and lesson laws and rights of the migrants, and cultural awareness. Competent body, could be Government officials should motivate them to be committed, trustworthy, and should be encouraged to work without supervision. Also please tell them to maintain good hygiene and sanitation and take care of their personal bearing’.

KI-2

Designation: First Secretary

Office: Labor Welfare Wing, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Interview Date: November 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Problems of sending skilled manpower exist at both the ends, i.e., Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arab does not have any agenda to employ Bangladeshi workers and Bangladeshi authority is not serious to send skilled manpower abroad, as primary objective of the MOEWOE is to send maximum number of people. The KSA employers' want low paid unskilled labors for dirty, dangerous, and demeaning (3D) jobs which migrants from other countries and local Saudis are unwilling to do. There are complimentary interests from both employers and recruiters. Employers' want low paid workers and senders want to send maximum number of people. Since beginning of sending manpower in 1970s, Bangladesh's approach towards sending manpower abroad is faulty. Initially the approach was to send as much labors/workers as possible. The system of sending labors has been institutionalized but the system of sending skilled manpower has not yet been systemized. Therefore, it is very difficult to break the supply/demand chain and resort to sending skilled manpower abroad. In case of female workers, it has become a tradition to send mostly domestic workers. Considering it to be an opportunity, Bangladesh is availing the scope to send its unskilled and uneducated female workers as domestic aids. No other countries are now-a-days interested to send their female as domestic workers, as they suffer most in the form of exploitation.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. In 2022 until November, around 0.6 million Bangladeshi went abroad. Among them, around 0.5 million went to the KSA which is a serious concern and might be exploited by the KSA any time in near future. One of the prime causes of so many migrations to the KSA is that, the work permit for unskilled labors and workers in the KSA is not as tough as other manpower destination countries. Over the years, a strong syndicate has been developed mostly in the GCC countries for

recruitment from Bangladesh. The KSA authority does not have any obligations to inquire whether the persons arriving in the KSA are skilled or unskilled or there are job vacancies or not. After receipt of the visas, once the migrants arrive in the KSA, they find that their 'kafel' does not have enough job vacancies. Presently above 3.5 lac Bangladeshi unskilled workers are unemployed in the KSA who are undergoing a measurable life. Those jobless often fall prey of law enforcers due to involvement in extra earning activities such as cleaning cars, hawking, unregistered laboring, etcetera. Besides, frequently workers become Kafel-less/sponsor-less due to closure of their recruiters, thus, become illegal and susceptible to apprehension.

Due to lack of education, Bangladeshi workers can't communicate properly and face difficulties in every activity, hence prone to exploitation. The standard of Bangladeshi migrants is so below that many of them even unaware of the consequence of signing in a blank paper. 'In 2022, the Labor Welfare Wing in Jeddah, KSA had to handle an incident where one of the Bangladeshi migrants fell in a road accident. After reaching to the hospital, the defaulter somehow managed to get a signature of the victim in the blank paper which he later used for his defense for not paying the compensation. Such incidents are at rampant in the Saudi Arab', said Mr. Arif.

Most of the Bangladeshi migrants are unable to fill-up the essential documents in the commercial bank/financial institutions. Therefore, they are reluctant to go to the bank to send money following proper channel. Instead, they send money following 'hundi' channel which is unauthorized, thus Bangladesh is devoid of essential foreign currency.

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Almost all the countries' migrants perform better than Bangladeshi migrants. They look fit and perform professionally. Even lower-class labors of Philippines perform their job with dedication, sincerity, and professionally. However, Egyptian doctors are doing better in medical/health care service, engineers of India and Pakistan are doing better, and nurses of Philippines, Thailand, and Sri-Lankan are doing better than others.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. As the days go by, the opportunities of sending skilled population are shrinking gradually. ‘Saudization vision-2030’ encourages Saudi citizens to be healthy, educated, and technologically developed so that they can grab professional and skill jobs without hiring migrants. The Saudi ‘Nitaqat policy’ introduces quotas for the minimum share of Saudis in a firm’s labor force. Firms below the quota face significant constraints in foreign hiring and opening business. Conversely, firms who fulfill the Saudi quota receive benefits in terms of expedited visas for the foreign workers. However, foreign workers are preferred by the employers as they can be paid one third of their Saudi counterparts. The minimum wage to be paid to a Saudi worker is SAR 4000 whereas migrants are paid almost one third of their Saudi counter-parts. Country-wise quota is also given by the Saudi Government for skilled manpower. Countries like India, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, Philippines, Egypt, etcetera already in the row to send their skilled manpower in professional and high skilled jobs category. To summarize, the challenges ahead are mostly emanates from emergence of new laws to protect rights of native citizens, digitalization and automation, and image crisis, etcetera.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. There are opportunities for the skilled jobs specially in the construction sector such as electrician, mason, carpenter, driver, rod binder, etcetera. Job vacancies are also available for high skilled professionals such as doctors, care givers, pathologists, nurse, engineers, etcetera. Job opportunities are also available for skill and semiskilled jobs in the field of computer and IT, receptionist, sells representatives, etcetera.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. Person with professional technical know-how and experience are most welcome in the GCC countries, because employers are least interested to train and employ. Language proficiency and communication skill is a must for skill and semi-skilled jobs. Some essential transferable soft skills like commitment, trustworthiness, timeliness, adaptability to new technology, etcetera are essential for a permanent skill job. Employers want to rely on employees who work without supervision. Bangladesh possesses bad name due to its illiterate population in the GCC countries,

therefore ‘I suggest that Government should send only educated and physically fit people. There should a minimum educational eligibility criterion (may be 10 years of education). Employers are not interested to employ Bangladeshis in jobs like waiters, sells persons, cashier, receptionist, etcetera role as they are unaware about Arabian culture (cultural awareness), accepted rules of behavior (manners and etiquette), and poor personal demeanor (personal bearing)’. During PDT, motivational class should be conducted so that workers do not indulge in criminal and unlawful activities. ICT skill and Knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants are also essential for an honorable skill job in Arabian countries.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. English, Arabia, Hindi, and Urdu are well used in most of the part of the Arabian countries specially where many foreign workers live. However, English proficiency is most demanding.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Majority of the Bangladeshi workers are uneducated and they have no idea about their rights and obligations. The foremost skill gap is literacy. Almost 70% Bangladeshi migrants living in Jeddah have only 5 to 8 years of schooling who can only read and write. Lack in education is the prime barrier for skilling and upskilling. Though the unskilled manpower from India and Pakistan after certain period of time become skilled by undertaking training courses like driving, electrician, plumber, pipe fitter, auto mobile mechanics, air condition repair mechanics, mobile repair mechanics, etcetera, unfortunately upskilling is seldom found with Bangladeshi migrants due to lack of their intellectual ability.

The intellectual level of the migrants coming from the remote villages are below the standard, hence, it is very difficult to acquaint them with the destination country’s culture (ignorant about cultural differences), rules and regulations (ignorant about laws and rights of the migrants), spoken language, and rules of behavior (lack of manners and etiquette), etcetera. They possess very poor communication skill compared to migrant workers of India, Pakistan, and Philippines.

The migrant workers lack in basic IT and elementary computer skills (lack of ICT skill) which are now a days a basic requirement to avail social amenities like buying tickets, payments and other online activities, etcetera.

‘Most of the Bangladeshi migrants lack commitment, have a tendency of slacking, unable to adapt to new technology, untrustworthy, and unable to undertake physical hardship,’ said Mr. Arif. As discussed above, the most important skill for employment in the GCC countries is to have at least one professional technical skill and experience. ‘Lack of motivation, poor personal bearing, and poor time management are pronounced skills gap among Bangladeshi workers.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. ‘Often employers from Saudi Arab come to us to recruit skilled people for employment in the health care/medical services. Unfortunately, employers do not get enough applicants with certificate and experience, hence they look up to other countries. Despite all odds, when few are selected, they are found to be unskilled and inexperienced, thus need to be repatriated at the expense of the recruits. More often it is found that certified skilled people do not have any knowledge on his/her certificate, thus, Bangladeshi certificates are not recognized in the GCC countries without inhouse skill assessment test. Almost all Bangladeshi workers lack transferable/soft skills. Negative image of Bangladeshi workers discourages employers to recruit from Bangladesh. Regulatory issues such as Quota restrictions in the GCC countries will pose more difficulties for skilled and semiskilled population.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. In Saudi Arab, employers mostly rely on practical skill test.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. ‘Yes, we do maintain contact with potential employers.’

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. European countries have almost 75% enrollment in technical training whereas it is only 17% for Bangladesh. Hence efforts to be taken to sensitize students to pursue technical and vocational education. TTCs do not provide need-based training, after arriving in Saudi Arab there is a suitability/entrance test where many of the Bangladeshi skilled certified persons fail. Therefore, the training in the TTCs should be based on the requirements of the employers and the training module should be in accordance with the in-house skill examinations. Thus, ‘our TTCs should offer need-based skill training. Many developed countries now-a-days send their TTCs’ instructors to the industries to acquaint themselves with the state-of-the-art technology. Therefore, I suggest to arrange training of trainers (ToT) courses for technical training instructors.’ Proactive diplomatic efforts to be taken for accreditation of Bangladeshi TTCs with the employers. If accreditation could be arranged, it will ensure upgradation of TTCs to international standard. Communication skills and language proficiency are important aspect for employment. Therefore, efforts to be taken for improvement in spoken English language.

Bangladeshi education system follows age old syllabus without emphasizing on transferable soft skills, therefore ‘I suggest to incorporate soft skills training in the national educational curriculum and send only educated workers abroad to regain national pride and prestige. In this regard I suggest to form standing national education commission for continuous updating national educational syllabus.’

‘I heard from many workers that they did not earn need based knowledge and skill through PDT. Arabic language taught in PDT is not helpful as Arabians use local dialect, whereas PDT teach formal Arabic. Thus, PDT training curricula needs thorough review and reform.’

‘Being a labor attaché, my mindset is to promote sending labors in my country of work, whereas we should promote skilled workforce. Therefore, I suggest renaming labor welfare wing as ‘Manpower Welfare Wing.’

Through my interview with you, I strongly suggest to ‘formulate an Overseas Employment Monitoring Commission (OEMC).’ There is no system of regulating and monitoring the entire process of migration, i.e., demand by the employers, validation,

recruiting, training, departure, arrival in the destination country, etcetera. Hence, unskilled and uneducated (5-8 years of education) people have a chance to go to abroad. The entire system of recruitment and deployment should be closely monitored and supervised by the Government. Supervision and monitoring should include skilling and upskilling, recruitment, pre-deployment training, deployment in the destination country, watching the working and living condition of the migrants, and human rights violations issues. India and Philippines provide trade-based training and language training to their migrants. The system is well thought-out to fulfill the need of the job. Language training is given considering the likely deployment country. Likewise, Bangladesh should prepare and implement a module to promote skilling. The proposed module is appended below:

- Firstly, the potential aspirants should be registered under the MOEWOE or ministry appointed organizations.
- Secondly, aspirants should be given trade training through an exhaustive selection procedure considering background knowledge and capabilities of the aspirants.
- Simultaneously, they should be given destination country's language training. Culture, rules, regulation, religion, etcetera should also be part of the training procedure.
- The TTCs certificates should be internationally recognized and the institutes should be accredited with the destination countries' employers.
- After completion of the training, the trainees should be certified by the Government that he maintains national and international standard through a well laid out evaluation system.
- Thereafter, the aspirants should be in the waiting list for deployment in the overseas countries. While in the waiting list, they should be given the opportunities to undergo on-the-job training to gain experience on their respective trade.

In the light of the above, whenever there is any demand for employment, the recruiting agencies should place the demand of the workers to the MOEWOE or its appointed organizations. MOEWOE or its appointed organizations should select the manpower from the trained workers waiting list. Under no circumstances, none should be selected

without proper training and certification. The similar system is in vogue in Bangladesh for employment of teachers for schools. The system will address following points:

- Reduce corruptions in the recruitment process.
- None will be able to go without trade training and minimum educational level.
- Language training, orientation with the destination country's culture, rules, regulation, etcetera will be ensured.

MOEWOE in coordination with MOFA, MOHA, MOL, MOE should ensure following:

- Migrants go to the foreign country with a fixed and guaranteed job.
- Migrants have required experience on the respective trade and they are professionally sound.
- Migrants are trained on the host county's language and they are aware about the host country's culture, rules, regulations, traditions, etcetera.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. Education is the most important aspect for human resource developmnet followed by language and communication skill developmnet, and ICT skill. Bangladesh should incorporate transferable soft skills such as manners and etiquette, timeliness, team work, adaptability to new technology, and personal bearing, etcetera in the educational curriculum.

KI-3

Name of the Organization: Honeycomb Tech (an industrial engineering)

Date of Interview: 28 November 2022

Profession: Business. Provides mechanical engineering solution to Bangladesh, the UAE and Singaporean industries.

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. There are many reasons for unskilled labors instead of skilled and semiskilled workers in the GCC countries. However, following are some of the causes:

Bangladeshi education system does not provide essential soft skills in the students such as behavioral and ethical issues, language proficiency, and communication skills.

There are problems in TTCs also such as many consider TTCs training as only certificate proving training centers without providing technical-know-how, most of the TTCs have poor quality training staffs who are not capable of imparting training on cutting edge equipment, most of the TTCs have outdated equipment without state-of-the-art technology, students passed from TTCs do not have sufficient experience, thus most of them fail in proficiency test, and students' lack of interest in technical/vocational training.

Lack of synchronization in technical know-how and education is also a consideration for low number of skilled and semiskilled workers abroad. In Bangladesh, educated people are not technically sound and skilled populations are not educated. There is a myth in Bangladesh to be educated without specialization in any trade. So, there are educated people who are not wanted in the Middle-Eastern countries. Conversely, there are many skilled populations like welders, drivers, rod binders, masons, auto mobile technicians, mobile repair technicians, air condition repair technicians, barber, cook, etcetera but unfortunately most of them lack in basic education and they do not have proficiency in Arabic or English language, thus they are not also eligible to employed in the GCC countries.

In Bangladesh, there are efficient skilled populations spread throughout the country. Most of them are already employed in different industries, construction sector, and service sectors. They earn handsome amount of money inside Bangladesh which is equivalent or almost equivalent to earning in the GCC countries. But, since they earn handsome amount of money inside Bangladesh, they are not interested to go abroad. Conversely, newly graduated people tend to go abroad without sufficient experience. After landing in the destination, many of them come back due to lack of experience.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. The foremost challenge Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries is lack of understanding in Arabic or English, hence their mobility is restricted. Details of their challenges are enumerated below:

Due to poor educational and language proficiency, most of them cannot read instructions at the airport, bank, roads, or workplace, do not understand instructions from

managers/supervisors in the workplace, and they are unable to express their feelings to managers, supervisors, or even fellow workers.

To get a job in the GCC countries, one must have a trade training. As most of them are unskilled, many do not get a job, those who get a job they receive lower salary than peers. Somehow after getting the job, their suffering does not end here. There are new challenges such as, they are unable to fill up forms for registration, banking, and preparation of ID cards, faced difficulties to perform the task due to lack of education and practical experience. As a whole, most of them experience cultural shock.

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Filipino workers have good image and reputation. Workers from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal are also doing good.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. Regulatory issue such as Saudization and similar steps taken by other GCC countries are the foremost challenge. Earlier, whenever they needed manpower, instantly they used to ask Bangladesh for workers, now-a-days they have many options such as manpower from Nepal, Vietnam, Uganda, etcetera. The vacancies for manual labors are shrinking, the entire system is experiencing automation and digitalization. As Bangladeshi works are mostly unskilled, unaware about technological developmnet, they are likely to face job reduction and job cut. Technological evolution is the call of the day, professionals and skilled workers will lose jobs if they cannot adapt to new technology.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. People with excellent ICT skills, proficiency in language and communication skills, having at least one trade training will have better prospect in future.

Question Number 2B. Which occupations have better employment prospects in the future for Bangladeshi migrants?

Answer to Question Number 2B. Service sectors have ample of opportunities in the fields like care giving, health care, education, hospitality management, sales person, receptionist, security duty, etcetera. Construction sector also has good opportunities.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries? **Answer to Question Number 3A.** Professional technical skill is the basic requirement followed by experience on the relevant field. Next skill requirement is language proficiency and communication skill. In many cases it is found that, job vacancy is not available on preferred trade, in that case, candidate needs to change his trade for rapid employment. Under such circumstances, if someone is educated, he/she can quickly learn some new professional technical skill, thus education is highly desirable. In the era of 4.0 industrial revolution, knowledge on ICT and adaptability to new technology supplement education and professional technical skill. Bangladeshi workers are in image crisis. To regain lost image, it is suggested to motivate potential workers to be committed, trustworthy, timely, and maintain their personal bearing. They should be convinced to work without supervision. In the GCC countries, people are highly sensitivity about their religion and culture. Therefore, ‘I suggest Bangladeshi workers should learn culture and manners and etiquette of the host country. Physical fitness and knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants are also very important.’

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. Many of the skill jobs like receptionist, salesperson, restaurant worker, waiter, nurse, etcetera require proficiency in Arabic and English language. Hindi and Urdu is also widely spoken languages in GCC countries

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Technically skilled populations mostly lack education and communication skills. Newly trained skilled populations having elementary educational background and language proficiency are not experienced. Immediately after getting training from TTCs, they tend to go abroad without experience. After landing in the destination countries, most of them are unable to display required professional technical skill thus bound to be employed as unskilled worker or face repatriation. Bangladeshi workers have a bad name for tendency of slacking, they are not motivated,

ignorant about cultural differences, and mostly ineffective team member. It is the job of the recruiters and PDT providers to motivate them, unfortunately most of them lack motivation, they lack in manners and etiquette, and untrustworthy. This is the era of rapidly changing technological evolution, but Bangladeshi workers are found to be unable to adapt to new technology. Poor personal bearing and poor time management are another two drawbacks of Bangladeshi workers.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. Many skilled aspirants do not fulfill the minimum eligibility criteria; thus, employers face low number of skilled applicants. Those who fulfill criteria, they lack in experience despite having certificate. There are few, those who are selected as skilled but unfortunately after reaching to the destination, many fail in skill assessment test. Lack of soft skills such as personal bearing, language and communication skill etcetera are important issues to be employed as skilled worker specially in the big chain shops, hospitals, and offices where there are frequent interactions with the customers. Personal discipline and commitment are important issues for some specific skill jobs like front desk jobs, sales-person, etcetera. Negative image of Bangladeshi workers is an issue; employers look for dependable and ethical workers that is seldom found in Bangladeshi workers. Behavioral issues and brand name of are also considerations for skilled jobs. Bangladeshi workers could not yet create an impression as well-behaved and trustworthy workers. Regulatory and legislative issues play a vital role in bringing in skilled workers. Bangladeshi workers are often seen indulge in illegal jobs like cleaning cars, hawing, etcetera for earning extra money to realize money spent for immigration.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. Bangladeshi skills certificates are not recognized with validation through skill assessment test.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. Diplomatic missions are far away from districts where majority Bangladeshi missions are located. Generally, workers do not get

convenient support from the missions. However, service like passport renew can be done at ease after reaching to the mission or consulate.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. In Bangladesh, there are huge skilled population working in automobile workshops, welding factories, construction sectors, health sectors, etcetera but those skilled population do not have elementary education or language proficiency. Government may take effective steps to bring them under accountability and give them elementary education and language proficiency. Education and little bit of institutional training to the already skilled population will save lot of Government budget, time, and efforts. After fulfilling the eligibility criteria, these skilled population can be employed in overseas under Government arrangement. There is not publicity to motivate students to get enrollment in technical training. It is suggested that Government Sensitize more students to pursue technical and vocational education. Before, encouraging students for technical trade training, Government should offer need-based trade training through TTCs. TTCs instructors are not very enterprising and abreast with the latest industrial developmnet. Therefore, efforts could be made to arrange Training of Trainers (ToT) courses for technical instructors. 'Our TTCs are not accredited with the employers, thus their training standard and management do not maintain internation standard. If TTCs are accredited with the employers, Government officials and TTCs will under compulsion maintain internation standard. Thus, there is a need for accreditation of TTCs with the employers. TTC qualified students gain only certificate without much experience. Therefore, efforts should be taken to establish linkage between TTCs and Industries. Students will take theoretical lessons from the TTCs and practical training from the industries. Once graduated from the TTCs, these students will be experienced as well.' Emphasize on improvement in spoken English and Arabic skills. India provides Government sponsored Arabic and English language training to the potential migrant workers. Bangladesh Government may also make English and Arabic language learning widely available for the general mass of populations. 'Our education system does not address soft skills need. I suggest that national education system address the issue and incorporate soft skills training in the national curriculum.' Migration cost from Bangladesh to most of the GCC countries is higher than countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka. Efforts should be taken to reduce migration costs.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. First of all, Bangladesh should emphasize on professional technical skills, more students should be encouraged to take part in technical education. These technical graduates should be given opportunities to gain experience in their relevant fields. As communication skills is of paramount importance, therefore language proficiency training and communication skills development programs should be undertaken at national level. Overall educational standard should be upgraded. National educational system should incorporate salient aspects of soft/transferable skills like ICT skill, manners and etiquette, trustworthiness, timeliness, art of working as an effective team member, cultural awareness, religious sensitivity, and personal bearing and turnout. During PDT, potential workers should be motivated to be committed and work without supervision. Physical fitness is highly required because medical treatment is very expensive almost unbearable. Often, workers fall prey of unscrupulous recruiters and employers, therefore potential workers should have minimum knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants.

KI-4

Organization: Consul General's Office, Labor Welfare Wing, Dubai, the UAE

Interview Date: November 2022

Interview Place: Bangladesh Consul General's Office in Dubai, UAE

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Though there are a greater number of unskilled populations deployed in the UAE, a good number of skilled populations are also working, but their representation is less compared to unskilled populations. A gap between demand and supply of skilled populations exists in the UAE. Though there are huge demand of skilled populations, but those all are not fulfilled by the skilled Bangladeshis. Being one of the densely populated countries of the world with huge workable youngsters, Bangladesh could not yet make international standard certified need based skilled population. The reasons for lack of skilled populations are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

The workers are generally hailed from remote villages of Bangladesh. They do not have direct access to the town-based recruiting agencies. Youngsters from the villages are recruited by the second/third tier brokers. Neither the brokers encourage for skilling nor the aspirants have any idea about skilling.

Skilling/upskilling is apparently time consuming. The people living in the remote village are not interested to be trained for skilling. Some of them even consider it to be wastage of time.

The lack of social awareness about importance of skilling and its impact on wage earning and compensation package is also a factor for absence in high grade skill jobs. Skilled persons generally earn 03 times more wage than unskilled worker/labor which is not well circulated to the society.

There are good number of public and private skill training centers in Bangladesh, but people are not interested to be trained there, due to perennial mindset and unwillingness to devote time for training.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. Majority of the workers deployed in the GCC countries are uneducated. Their language proficiency and communications skill are also very poor. As a result, they cannot read instructions, fill-up forms, comprehend orders from managers, and unable to express their feelings. Due to lack of skills, they do not get suitable job; those who get, due to lack of experience they are unable to perform desired job, finally receive low pay.

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Filipino workers general do better than other, Sri Lankan and Nepali workers are also doing good.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. Very soon Bangladesh will lose employment market in GCC countries particularly in UAE. Reasons are multifarious; however, the most striking reasons are lack of professional technical skills, lack of ICT knowledge, poor

language proficiency and communication skill. Most importantly, Bangladesh has lost good image as proficient and dedicated workers. They have earned bad names as noncommittal, unmotivated, untrustworthiness, and have a tendency of slacking.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. There are scopes to grab a greater number of skilled jobs in the UEA. In order to grab skilled jobs, Bangladesh needs to prepare its youngsters as skilled, then prepare them to be experienced, achieve international standard to qualify in the suitability tests, and only then come as skilled person in the destination country. There are huge demands for skilled jobs in the fields like security, banks, security exchange, insurance company, etcetera. Health sectors, i.e., doctors, medical assistant, nurse, etcetera also have good opportunities. 'In recent times, few doctors came to the UAE as professionals at their own accord through direct contact with the employers. Engineering sector, i.e., civil, mechanical, electrical, etcetera also have good opportunities.

Skills status of Bangladeshi migrants are not satisfactory. However, since recent past a good number tailors/garments workers are working in the garment sector representing Bangladesh well. Few security personnel also started working as security guard whose wage is two times more than the persons arrived without a certificate/training. If a security guard come to the UAE following proper procedure with skills, they earn almost 2200 dirham whereas persons without certification and training earn only 1200 dirham in the UAE.

Question Number 2B. Which occupations have better employment prospects in the future for Bangladeshi migrants?

Answer to Question Number 2B. Jobs in the construction sector have better prospects. Plumber, pipe fitter, electrician, machine operator, etcetera has good demands. Now-a-days, good opportunities are also waving in security field.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. One has to have professional technical skill. Once he has that, the next requirement is experience. To be a highly paid skill worker, one needs to be educated as education is the mother of all skill. Educated and motivated

people are well mannered, cultured, mostly trustworthy, committed, and timely. Besides, employers want to see their workers have good command over English or Arabic language with good communication skill. Employers do not like unhealthy workers, they need to be physically fit and able to work without supervision. It is the time of 4.0 IR, so, employers will be happy if their high paid workers have basic ICT knowledge and keep them adaptive to new technology. 'I find workers from other countries present them in a better way; therefore, they are mostly seen in posh restaurants and shopping malls. Therefore, personal bearing is also important requirement.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, and English; all are fine in UAE. However, if someone is good in English, he/she will command better position in the company.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Arabic, Hindi, and English are widely spoken languages in the UAE. Most of the Bangladeshi migrants come here without proficiency in none of the languages. Though many of them can achieve proficiency within a very short period of time, but the initial lacking keeps them at a back seat while competing with their Indian, Pakistani, and Filipino counterparts. Bangladeshi workers are not motivated and committed. Conversely, Filipino workers are very sincere and dedicated to their job irrespective of the nature of job, may be very low-level work. Bangladeshi migrants lack professionalism. They have a tendency to slack off and somehow complete the job without perfection. On the other hand, Filipino workers are trustworthy and complete their job with professionalism and perfection. Bangladeshi migrants are not careful about their appearance and personal bearing, hence unsuitable for skill jobs such as salespersons, receptionists, waiter, health care provider, etcetera. Bangladeshi migrants are not aware about the importance of presenting them in a neat and clean manner. They lack in personal hygiene and sanitation. There are opportunities to be employed in the financial and banking sector, but due to lack of ICT skill and adaptability to new technology, most of them are disqualified at the initial stage. Poor language proficiency,

lack of communication skills, untrustworthiness, ignorance about cultural differences makes them ineffective team members.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. ‘Firstly, we do not have sufficient skilled manpower after fulfilling our requirement. Those who are skilled, they are already employed, only those who do not have sufficient experience, want to come abroad, thus employers do not get enough applicants. Besides, Bangladesh does not produce enough skilled population through technical training institutes, hence, there are shortage of skilled population.’ Generally, it is found that potential certified applicants do not have experience, thus they fail in skill assessments test. In the UAE, Bangladeshi workers are not highly valued due to lack of soft skills. Image crisis creates problem for recruiting agents to supply skilled manpower from Bangladesh.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. Generally, they recognize professional certificates likes certificates of doctors and engineers. However, now-a-days, there are doubts about those certificates as well.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. ‘Yes, we do. We call employers in various national day programs, we ask for meeting at their office and also in our embassy, etcetera.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A.

Mass scale social awareness program should be introduced to aware people about the benefits of skilling. It should be known to the aspirants that skilled persons earn 03 times more than unskilled workers. If someone reach to the UAE without skill certificate, he has very less opportunities to become skilled. Very few Bangladeshi migrants could convert into skilled worker from unskilled labor. Therefore, sensitize students to pursue technical and vocational education in Bangladesh.

Government should make a policy to ensure that all potential migrants have at least one need-based skill certificate and experience before proceeding abroad. Therefore, efforts should be taken to offer need-based trade training through TTCs. Securities Industry Regulatory Authority (SIRA) training is very effective for training and recruitment of security guards in the UAE. The training is only for one week duration. Bangladeshi migrants may grab the opportunity to convert as skilled manpower through SIRA training. Only one week of training could double the wage earning.

‘It is a perennial complain that our TTCs instructors are not well accustomed with the state-of-the-art technology, therefore some sorts of arrangement should be made for Training of Trainers (ToT) courses. None of Bangladeshi institutes are accredited with the employers, whereas most of the TTCs in Philippines are accredited with the employers specially nursing colleges. It is a proven fact that if TTCs are accredited they are bound to maintain international standard.’

Strive for international accreditation of TTCs by employers.

Since time immemorial, educational evolves to meet industries’ requirement not vice versa. Therefore, is paramount importance to meet the need of the market. There has to be need based education and training. The process should be continuous. Therefore, establishment of Standing National Education Commission is the call of the day.

The policy makers should be convinced that, it is better to send 100 skilled populations instead of 500 unskilled labors as 100 skilled persons can earn almost similar amount of remittance which is earned by 500 unskilled labors. Therefore, efforts to be taken to change bureaucratic mindset to promote skilled migration. At the same time, Government should rename the Labor Welfare Wing as ‘Manpower Welfare Wing’.

For migration to the Singapore, Singapore authority directly selects Bangladeshi workers. After selection, they are given skill training by their teaching staff under their own supervision. Similar system may be introduced for migration to the UAE and other GCC countries. The system of direct recruitment avoiding middlemen will encourage youngsters in the villages to be skilled and proficient in language. The entire system of migration should be brought under a single umbrella. Therefore, ‘I suggest to form a body in any name who will monitor entire migration process from beginning to the end.

Migration from Bangladesh is expensive specially air fare. Efforts should be taken to reduce migration cost.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. ‘The foremost priority is to change the mindset of the bureaucrats followed by constant monitoring of the entire process from beginning to the end.’ Other priority areas are, technical trade training, minimum 10 years of schooling, language training, and training on ICT. Our education system should incorporate soft skills like manners and etiquette, timeliness, and personal bearing, etcetera. Nonetheless, periodical lectures should be arranged in the schools and colleges on motivation, trustworthiness, slacking, and commitment. Schools and colleges should arrange periodic lecture and debate competition to enhance language proficiency and communication skill. Group tasks help achieve team work. During PDT, they should be taught about laws and rights of the migrants, culture in the host country, and religious sensitivity.

KI-5

Additional Secretary to the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Appointment: Director General, BMET, MOEWOE

Organization: MOEWOE

Date of Interview: 25 November 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. The definition of skilled between Bangladesh and the manpower receiving countries differ significantly. In Bangladesh, if someone undergo skill training in the TTCs or in the vocational training institutes, he/she is declared as skilled irrespective of his/her practical knowledge and experience. Vis-à-vis, internationally, one is considered as skilled only after attaining required theoretical and practical knowledge and experience. Overall standard of Bangladeshi population is much below the international standard. Bangladeshi so-called skilled population, while apply for a skill-grade job, mostly disqualify due to lack of practical knowledge and experience. Bangladeshi population are working over 175 countries of the world and majority of them are unskilled.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. ‘The matter to be addressed holistically, not in parts.’

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. In 2021-2022, Bangladesh has sent .967 million workers abroad which is record breaking testament of increased demand for overseas employment. BMET has given due importance to prepare skilled manpower in line with the growing demand matching modern technological advancement. In 2022, BMET established additional 25 training centers and 15 training centers are in the offing.

Answer to Question Number 3B.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. To work in a manpower receiving country, one has to have language proficiency of the host nation; such as English, Arabic, Korean, Japanese, etcetera. Majority of the Bangladeshi workers lack in language proficiency.

Bangladeshi workers primarily go abroad as labor. Majority of them do not have any professional technical skill. Hence, they often face difficult situation including low wage and least compensation package.

Knowing the rules (including knowledge on right of the migrants), regulations, and most importantly the culture of the host country is of utmost importance. The Pre-Deployment Training provided only for 03 days is not enough to learn the country’s language, laws, rules, regulations, traffic system, and culture. Bangladeshi workers lack in the above skills.

It is evident that the Bangladeshi migrant workers cannot display the standard like Indian, Sri-Lanka, or Filipino workers. They perform much below the standard displayed by their counterpart. ‘Our people lack in both hard and soft skills.’

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. TTCs are not proving skill graduates in line with need-based skill. Certified graduates are unable to perform in the assessment test. Employers want experienced workers, ‘we cannot provide required number of skilled, educated, and experienced workers to the employers.’

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. ‘Often we get complain that workers do not get expected service from the diplomatic mission.’

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Bangladeshi overseas missions have labor counselors in 28 countries whose jobs are to look for new opportunities, ascertain demand, skill requirements, and look after the wellbeing of the labors. Therefore, labor attaches should be pro-active to increase the vacancies and look for new opportunities for skilled manpower. Diplomatic missions should go a long way to promote employment and look after the welfare of the workers with dedication.

Migration to emerging job markets like Bulgaria, Romania is primarily sponsored by the recruiting agencies, relatives, and friends of the workers without direct intervention from the Government. Therefore, Bangladesh Government should take effective diplomatic steps to create more job opportunities to the above-mentioned countries.

A good number of Bangladeshi workers deployed in the overseas countries are illegal, they lead a measurable life without basic human rights and social amenities. Governed should take effective measures to send manpower legally. In this regard, there should be social awareness to encourage people to go abroad following authorized channels.

Accreditation of Bangladeshi educational and technical training centers with the manpower receiving countries is vital and call of the day. Political and diplomatic efforts should be directed towards arranging accreditation of the educational and technical training centers.

Bangladesh needs to ascertain the skills need and prepare its population to be educated and trained on need-based skills. Educational institutes and TTCs should be reconstructed accordingly. The training curricula and syllabus to be reviewed periodically in consistent with the international skills need.

The government and the financial institutes should facilitate getting soft loans to incur initial expenditure for migration.

The difference of currency exchange rate between formal and informal channel should be periodically reviewed and the difference should be reduced to encourage migrants to follow formal channel to send remittance. The existing 2,5% incentives should be increased to encourage migrants to follow formal banking channel.

MOFA, MOHA, and MOEWOE should work in close coordination and the officials involved in the process should be proactive to promote employment and remittance earning. Change the mindset of the bureaucrats.

Technology has entered in the construction sector. So, Bangladesh needs to bring state of the art technology in the training centers and orient the aspirants with the latest technology before deploying them to work in the overseas countries.

To send skilled manpower to the GCC countries, there could be a coordinated effort by the Madrasas, TTCs, and the BMET. Madrasa could take the responsibility to train on Arabic language. The language proficiency should cover all aspects of learning such as reading, writing, and speaking. Technical Training centers could take the responsibility to train Madrasa students on at least one professional trade training and computer training on Arabic language. Once the aspirants are skilled and language proficient, BMET could then take the responsibility to send them with skilled jobs.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. The training provided in the TTCs do not produce international standard workers. The certificate provided from these TTCs are not also accredited with the manpower receiving countries. Therefore, measures to be taken to maintain international standard and arrange accreditation.

Language proficiency is one of the most important skills needed for employment in the GCC counters. But, none of the GCC countries ask for language proficiency as a

prerequisite for employment. Thus, Bangladeshi people have not yet considered language proficiency as a requirement for overseas employment. Anyway, emphasis should be given on language proficiency and communication skill.

Most of the GCC countries demand for unskilled labor instead of skilled manpower from Bangladesh. Thus, a large percentage of people go to these countries without any skill.

The purpose of introducing MOEWOE was to facilitate sending labors abroad. Therefore, since inception, ministry officials are working on sending labors instead of skilled workers. The legacy is still on. Thus, Bangladesh could not prepare its manpower to go as skilled to the GCC countries. Thus, bureaucratic mindset needs to be changed.

Bangladeshi education system is not practical or work oriented. There is a superficial myth in the society to be educated without skill. Middle-class families hesitate to send their youngsters to TTCs, instead, they go to the universities of general education. Thus, measures to be taken to encourage students to get enroll in the TTCs. At the same time TTCs need to arrange need based skills training, accreditation with the employers, and transcend to international standard.

KI-6

Consul General, Dubai and Northern Emirates

Organization: Consulate General of Bangladesh, Dubai and Northern Emirates

Date and time of Interview: 19 June 2023

Place of Interview: Bangladesh Consulate General's Office, Dubai, UAE

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. The first batch of Bangladeshi workers came to the UAE in 1974 after opening Bangladeshi diplomatic mission. Most of the Bangladeshi expatriate live in Jabel Ali, Naifs, and Deira. Almost 1.2 million Bangladeshi people live in the UAE, among them about one million live in Dubai and Northern Emirates. A handful number of engineers mostly civil and electrical engineers are working in the UAE. They are mostly deployed in 'Dubai Water and Electricity Authority' and 'Emirates Airlines'. However, bulk of the workers are employed as construction labors. Over the years, a good number of business communities have been developed mostly in Azman area through garments factory and apparel trades. Most of the workers in the garments

factories are Bangladeshi. Bangladeshi workers are also working in various motors garage, automobile workshop, and repair and maintenance activities in Azman, Sharja, and Dubai. Generally speaking, above 70% Bangladeshi workers are employed as labors in the construction sector. Many are employed as cleaners, gardeners, agriculture workers, fisherman, restaurant workers, housekeeping, and domestic aid, etcetera. Around 20% Bangladeshis are working as drivers and sales-person. Workers those who came before 25/30 years, many of them opened business like owner of super markets, super stores, super malls, etcetera. A good number of motor parts shops, automobile workshops, repair shops, etcetera are won by Bangladeshi people. Bangladeshi businessmen are the primary employers for Bangladeshi workers. Off late, many Bangladeshis started coming in the UAE with tourist visa who later convert as temporary worker.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. It is difficult to start a fresh business in the UAE by a new-comer. Nonetheless, since recent past, a small group of people have started their own business-like computer-parts shops, grocery-shops, abya (bourka) shops, fruits and vegetables shops, etcetera. Most of the workers come as unskilled labor without any professional technical skill, so they face difficulties to get a job. Though few of the workers come as skilled workers with certificate, but later many of those certificates are proved to be fake. Thus, they have return or do lower class job with low salary. Most of the Bangladeshi vocational/technical certificates are not accepted by the employers without a practical test, during the test most of them fail to project accepted skill standard. Many Bangladeshis come in the UAE through ‘dalal’ (broker) who are mostly untraceable after few days, thus become kafel-less or guardian-ess. They suffer the most.

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Workers of Philippines are doing better.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. In future, requirement of unskilled labor will reduce, thus Bangladeshi aspirants will face difficulties if they od not undertake professional technical skill. Besides hard skill, soft skills are of paramount importance.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. Professional technical skilled people will have better opportunities. However, to remain relevant in the employment market, soft skills are also equally important.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. Language proficiency and communication skill help manage skill job. At the same time, if someone has ICT skills and technical know-how, the opportunity to get a job will be more. Experience is also a criterion for skill job. In addition, employers want that their employees should be educated, mannered, trust worthy, committed, and do not slack. Knowledge on UAE laws, culture, and religion give dividends for employment. Physically fit and personal bearing are also equally important for highly salaried jobs.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. ‘English is okay, however, if someone is good in Arabic that would be even better.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Bangladeshi workers are seldom seen in service sector jobs like tourism, hotel management, restaurant, front desk jobs, etcetera due to lack of skills. The most significant skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers are lack of communication skill followed by language proficiency especially in spoken English. Bangladeshi workers possess very little or no education, thus they are looked down. They are seen having no knowledge on laws and rights of migrants, manners and etiquettes, culture, and timeliness, etcetera.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. Education system does not effectively address practical aspects of theoretical knowledge, soft skills, language proficiency, and ethical aspects, etcetera.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. One has to appear practical test to get recognition of his certificate.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. ‘Yes, we are always in contact with the employers. Often, we meet to encourage them to recruit from Bangladesh.’

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Government should take measures to encourage youngsters to undergo vocational and technical training. The training syllabus should incorporate need-based skill training. Efforts should be taken for accreditation of Bangladeshi training institutes with the employers. Bangladeshi education system should incorporate essential elements of life skills such as manners and etiquette, life-long and life-wide learning skills (for adaptability to new technology), language proficiency, communication skill, ICT skill, etcetera. Under all circumstances, potential workers should come to the GCC countries with at least with one professional technical skill.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. Though English is one of the compulsory subjects in Bangladeshi educational curriculum but most of the students are unable to speak confidently in English. There are loopholes in the English learning system. Thus, top priority should be given on language and communication skill. Experience, physical fitness, ICT skill, commitment, trustworthiness, timeliness, and cultural awareness, etcetera are also highly significant.

KI-7: Mr. Al Amin, Proprietor of Manpower Supplying Company in Saudi Arabia

Profession: Manpower supplier for various events in Saudi Arabia

Date of interview: November 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Bangladeshi migrant workers are unskilled and most of them are employed as cleaner or labor in the KSA. ‘The people of the host country generally do not value Bangladeshi workers as they do not perform well in their respective job. There is a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled population in Bangladesh for overseas employment. Skilled population are mostly deployed to meet the domestic needs with handsome salary. Unskilled population are mostly interested to come to a foreign country for employment. Therefore, there is huge representation of unskilled labors in the GCC countries.’

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. ‘Migration cost is very high from Bangladesh compared to India, Sri-Lanka, and Pakistan. Each Bangladeshi migrant needs to spend at least 3 lack taka to come to the GCC countries, whereas Indian workers spend approximately 50-70 thousand BDT to come to the GCC countries.’ ‘Due to presence of a higher percentage of labors and cleaners, Bangladesh has earned the image as a potential source of labors. Therefore, immediate steps to be taken by the Government to send increased number of skilled populations to rejuvenate the gone image.’ ‘Due to various indiscipline acts and malpractices by the predecessors, GCC host nations are not respectful towards Bangladeshis. Some of the Bangladeshi migrants are involved in extra income activities like hawking, cleaning cars, etcetera which is a violation of the contract, thus earn negative reputation.’

Question Number 1C. Migrant workers from which countries are performing better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Philippines, India, and Sri Lanka.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. Image crisis is the foremost challenge. Frequent lies and untrustworthy activities bring negative image.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers to access more skilled and semi-skilled jobs in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 2A. ‘If Bangladesh start sending skilled, educated, experienced, and well-mannered workers then negative image will go. Opportunities exist in service sectors like health care, security, event management, etcetera.’

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. ‘Majority of the employers look for smart and young worker with good appearance (personal bearing) and confidence. They should have minimum level of education, professional technical skill, and experience. Physically fit, good in language proficiency and communication skill, ability to work without supervision, committed, trustworthy, well mannered (manner and etiquette) workers are always preferred for high salary skill jobs.’ Bangladeshi workers are seen unaware about Arabian culture; cultural awareness and knowledge on laws of the host country is very important.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. ‘English speaking proficiency is required, if someone can speak in Arabic that is even better. Hindi and Urdu are also spoken in many parts of the Arabian countries.’

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. The most pronounced drawback is poor educational background. On average, 80% Bangladeshi migrants have below SSC level qualifications, 15-20% are SSC qualified, and remaining 5% are HSC qualified. Besides educational qualification, Bangladeshi workers are unable to speak neither in English nor in Arabic language. Those who know some bit of English, their communication skill is poor. ‘I find our people do not look good, they maintain poor personal bearing, lack confidence, poor physical fitness, have a tendency of slacking, non-committal, and they are not

professional. Many of them do not know how to behave with women, they lack in cultural awareness and religious sensitivity.’ Some bit of knowledge on laws and rights of the migrants is essential for survival, otherwise they have to suffer, unfortunately ‘I do not find Bangladeshi workers are aware about laws and rights of the migrants.’

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. ‘Being involved in manpower, we do not find many skill applicants, most of the aspirants want to come as labor, that is easy for them.’ Those who come with some skills, they lack experience, thus fail in assessment test. As a whole, Bangladeshi workers are ignorant about soft skills.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. Recognize after practical test.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in your country engage with potential employers? If so, how?

Answer to Question Number 5B. Not always.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Government should make a policy so that only educated (having at least SSC qualification) persons can come to the GCC countries. Everyone coming abroad for work should have at least one professional technical skill. Language training should be incorporated in the education system to make them proficient in English. India arranges skill training and language course for the potential migrants. Bangladesh may follow Indian model; provide technical and language training to each migrant before departure.

KI-8

Secretary to the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh and Executive Chairman of NSDA

Organization. NSDA, Prime Minister’s Office, Government of the people’s Republic of Bangladesh

Address. Biniyog Bhaban,10-11th Floor, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207

Interview Date. 01 August 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Bangladeshi people are mostly unskilled. Most of them cannot fulfill the requirement of skilled job in the overseas country as Bangladesh has not yet introduced 'National Standard Certification' to recognize skill standard from TTCs. Following example is the testimony of the existing level of skills in Bangladesh, 'during construction of the great Padma Bridge, the authority could not employ welders trained from Bangladesh as they lacked experience. Later, the authority tried to bring back Bangladeshi welders working abroad. There was also a problem as none of them were holding National Standard Certificates. Ultimately, the Bridge Construction Authority had to bring foreign welders from Germany'. The background knowledge and technical know-how required for skill job is not seen within the Bangladeshi migrant workers. There is acute shortage of skilled manpower in Bangladesh specially in mid-level management. Bangladesh ranks 157th in HDI which is also a true reflection of Bangladeshi skill standard. Besides, Bangladeshi skill standard is not yet competence Based. The training and education are based on traditional system of learning without maintaining a relationship with the industry and job market need.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. 'Bangladeshi workers possess theory-based memorization dependent certificates which is not recognized in the overseas job market. Practically, they cannot handle modern equipment even after they are trained from technical training institutes' said Mr. Saha.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. There are more than 100 thousand TTCs in Bangladesh, among those 13% are government owned and 87% are private institutes. Mr. Saha said, 'recently one of the HR managers deplored, 15 candidates were sent to him from one of the TTCs for job, unfortunately none of them were found having compatible training as per industry requirement, hence all were sent back without a job. If this is the

case inside Bangladesh, same thing is also happening abroad. People have certificate but they are unable to operate cutting edge equipment. Bangladeshi industries, technical training centers, and educational institutes could not yet make mid-level manager in Bangladesh; hence most of the mid-level managers are bought from abroad.’

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers encounter when recruiting skilled and semi-skilled workers from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. ‘There is shortage of skilled manpower in Bangladesh to fulfill domestic needs, so obviously there will be skills gap for overseas employment. The age between 15 and 64 is considered as working population. In Bangladesh, uneducated and illiterate people are not unemployed, most of the educated people are unemployed. The equipment, machines, and available infrastructural do not address 4.0 IR. Bangladeshi training facilities do not acquaint students with the latest technological development, hence students passed from Bangladeshi institutes remain unskilled even though they are graduated from best institutes of Bangladesh. Hence, Bangladeshi graduates remain unskilled and do not get job in foreign job market as per their educational qualification,’ said Mr. Saha.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Mr Saha said, ‘on 31 July 2022, there was a meeting in NSDA with Honorable Prime Minister in the Chair. During the meeting, it was decided, henceforth national skill standard certificates will be issued by the NSDA if respective institutes are accredited with the NSDA.’ 1,250 institutes are in the process of receiving National Standard Certificate should they fulfill the requirements of the NSDA. ‘The requirements to receive National standard Certificate are; the institutes need to be accredited by the NSDA, the institutes need to run the course as per the requirement of the NSDA, the syllabus needs to be vetted the NSDA, mass publicity to be arranged highlighting the importance and usefulness of the technical training. People with good family background should be encouraged to get admission in the TTCs, and implementation of 8th-5 Year Plan to prepare a crucible of skilled HR in Bangladesh,’ said Mr. Saha.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to develop skills that will increase national remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. The teachers in the educational institutes and TTCs are not up to the expected standard required to produce skilled HR, thus periodical training should be arranged for the teachers like China. Assessment system in the educational institutes and technical training centers do not fulfill the national and international standard, thus those need to be standardized. Education system in Bangladesh does not address lot of elementary and rudimentary issues those are required for Competence Based Assessment; thus, education should incorporate supplementary aspects of education like soft skills training. In Bangladesh, technical and vocational training is considered as low graded education. Thus, many do not want to go to TTCs due to fear of social stigma. Such myth should be broken by mass media campaign.

KI-9

Senior Secretary to the Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh and Ex Executive Chairman of NSDA

Appointment: Defense Secretary of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Ex Executive Chairman of NSDA

Interview Date: 28 November, 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. The skill status of Bangladeshi migrants is not at all satisfactory. People are not skilled even after being trained from the TTCs due to lack of modernization in line with 4.0 IR. Students are not taught on transferable skills neither in educational institutes nor in TTCs.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. 'Bangladeshi workers lack in professional technical skills as there is no practical training on need-based skills. The workers significantly lack in soft skills as they are not taught on the soft skills in the educational institutions. The students mainly go to the training centers for certificate; learning is not the intention. These certificates are not recognized outside Bangladesh,' said Mr. Alam

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. ‘Bangladesh needs to identify job vacancies in the international job market, ascertain skills needed for those jobs, and train its HR accordingly. In order to coordinate the efforts of various agencies, NSDA was formed. Presently, 35 departments and 26 ministries are working for skills development in Bangladesh. Efforts are underway to make skills training more effective. However, MOEWOE in collaboration NSDA should work to gain accreditation with foreign employers and skills training should be incorporated in the syllabus at all levels,’ said Mr. Alam.

KI-10

Chairman & Chancellor of Washington University of Science and Technology, Virginia, USA

Organization. Washington University of Science and Technology, Virginia, USA

Place of Interview: Virginia, USA

Date of Interview: November 2022

Question Number 1A. Statistics show that most Bangladeshi migrants are employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs. In your opinion, what are the reasons behind this trend?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Skill gap between the requirements of employers to the skill possessed by the migrants from Bangladesh. Skills required by the manpower receiving countries are mostly high tech and job-specific to the latest technology and tools. Bangladeshi migrants coming with the experience and skill set mostly do not fulfill the requirements due to the difference in technology and experience environment between the countries.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 1B. Although having skill and experience in the fields, migrants are not getting opportunities in the field and positions they are expecting and losing enormous amounts of income, mostly forced to inappropriate or odd jobs with much lower salary levels than skilled personnel. Skills required by the industries are mostly high tech and job-specific to the latest technology and tools which are being used by the industries but not being in practice in Bangladesh.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in GCC countries?

Answer to Question Number 3A. Mid to high level expertise in the technology and tools used by the employers' industry.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers, especially in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. Spoken English.

Question Number 4A. What are the main drawbacks or skill gaps among Bangladeshi workers that affect their productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Bangladeshi migrants coming with the experience and skill set mostly do not fulfill the requirements by the employers due to the difference in technology and experience environment between the countries. Language Barrier, lack of professional technical skill, different work environmental, etcetera are the drawbacks among Bangladeshi workers.

Question Number 5A. Do employers in your country recognize skill certifications issued in Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 5A. Most of the field's certifications from Bangladesh (except for international certification authorities) are not recognized.

Question Number 6A. What are your recommendations for increasing the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. Introducing contemporary technology and environments in Bangladesh might minimize the skill gap of the migrants from Bangladesh. Skill base job seekers might be prepared before going abroad. They need to be trained on the technologies and tools that are currently used in the destination countries. Some training institutes are available in Bangladesh where their curriculum is set as per this requirement; for example, PeopleNTech in Bangladesh. If someone reach to a foreign country without training, they need to get training before deployment for their own sake. In either of the above cases, Bangladesh Government can arrange means and methods for providing financial help to the skill base job seekers.

KII-11

Position: Counselor (Labor)

Organization: Embassy of Bangladesh, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

Appointment Date: February 2023

Question Number 1A. Why are most Bangladeshi migrants employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs?

Answer to Question 1A. There are structural issues at both ends. Oman and Bangladesh lack an active agenda to recruit skilled workers from Bangladesh. On the other side, Bangladesh's approach since the 1970s has been focused on sending the largest number of workers, not necessarily skilled ones. Employers seek low-wage workers for 3D (Dirty, Dangerous, Demeaning) jobs, and Bangladesh continues to supply such manpower. This cycle is difficult to break due to the institutionalized model of sending large numbers of low-skilled workers. Female workers are especially vulnerable, as Bangladesh still sends mostly untrained domestic helpers, unlike other countries which have phased out such deployments.

Question 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in Oman?

Answer to Question 1B. In Oman, workers face oversaturation. Many arrive to find no jobs due to non-transparent visa practices. As a result, thousands of unskilled Bangladeshi migrants remain unemployed and often engage in informal or illegal work, making them vulnerable to arrest. Poor education and illiteracy are core issues, leading to problems in communication, document handling, and bank transactions. Many avoid the formal banking system and use hundi, affecting national foreign currency reserves.

Question 1C. Which countries' migrant workers perform better in GCC countries, and why?

Answer to Question 1C. Workers from the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Thailand outperform Bangladeshi workers in professionalism, skill, communication, and cultural understanding. For example, Filipino domestic workers and nurses are highly trusted; Indian and Pakistani engineers and technicians are also preferred.

Question 1D. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in the migration process?

Answer to the Question 1D. Policies like Omanization and Saudization, alongside automation and local hiring quotas (e.g., Nitaqat in KSA), are shrinking opportunities for foreign workers. Bangladesh also lags behind competitors due to a lack of skill certification recognition, weak image, and outdated recruitment systems.

Question Number 2A. What skilled and semi-skilled job opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers in Oman?

Answer to Question 2A. Oman has demand for skilled workers in construction (electricians, masons, carpenters, drivers), healthcare (nurses, caregivers), and service sectors (receptionists, IT technicians, sales representatives). However, these jobs require recognized certifications and relevant experience.

Question Number 3A. What skills are most preferred by employers in Oman and the GCC?

Answer to Question Number 3A. Employers prioritize professional technical know-how and relevant experience. Language proficiency, communication skills, self-discipline, and the ability to work without supervision are key. Employers prefer candidates' education and understanding of local customs and etiquette.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential for Bangladeshi workers in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. English is most in demand across Oman and the GCC. Arabic (including local dialects), Hindi, and Urdu are also commonly used in multi-national work environments.

Question Number 4A. What are the major skill gaps affecting productivity and employability?

Answer to Question Number 4A. Low literacy (many have only 5–8 years of education), lack of ICT and communication skills, poor cultural awareness, and limited soft skills are key gaps. Unlike Indian or Pakistani workers, Bangladeshis rarely pursue upskilling abroad. Many fail to adapt to technology or meet employer expectations. Motivation, time management, and workplace behavior are also concerns.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers face when recruiting skilled/semi-skilled Bangladeshis?

Answer to Question Number 4B. Employers report that certified workers often lack real skills. Many fail practical assessments, and documentation is often unreliable. As a result, employers avoid hiring from Bangladesh. A broader negative image, lack of soft skills, and policy constraints like quota restrictions worsen the situation.

Question Number 5A. Are Bangladeshi skill certifications recognized in Oman?

Answer to Question 5A. Not directly. Employers in the GCC, including Oman, rely on in-house or third-party skill tests rather than paper certificates.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi embassy in Oman engage with employers?

Answer to Question Number 5B. Yes. The labor wing actively engages with potential employers to promote recruitment from Bangladesh. However, more structured, long-term employer engagement is needed to rebuild confidence.

Question Number 6A. How can Bangladesh increase the number of skilled workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. To increase the number of skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad, there must be a strategic shift from merely exporting labor to deploying a skilled workforce that meets global market demands. This requires enhancing technical education by increasing enrollment and reforming the curricula of TTCs to align with real employer needs and international standards. The quality of training must be improved through the introduction of TOT programs and foreign accreditation of institutions. Language training, particularly in English, should be tailored to the specific communication requirements of destination countries to improve employability. In addition to technical skills, soft skills such as punctuality, hygiene, manners, adaptability, and professional behavior should be integrated into the national education system to build a well-rounded workforce. It is also suggested that the Labor Welfare Wing be rebranded as the Manpower Welfare Wing to better reflect the aspirations of a modern and skilled labor force. A more centralized and accountable system is needed for managing overseas employment, such as establishing an Overseas Employment Monitoring Commission (OEMC) to oversee the entire process from skill development and recruitment to deployment and worker welfare. This holistic approach aims to ensure that only certified, job-ready workers are sent abroad in response to specific employer demands, ultimately increasing the demand for Bangladeshi skilled labor in the international market.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on for skill development to increase remittances?

Answer to Question Number 6B. To increase remittance earnings, Bangladesh must focus on a set of strategic skill development priorities that enhance the global competitiveness of its workforce. First and foremost, strengthening both general

education and technical training is essential to produce competent and adaptable workers. Particular attention should be given to trade-specific training that reflects current global demands, supported by hands-on experience to ensure practical competence. Language proficiency, especially in English speaking and writing, must be improved to enable effective communication in service-oriented roles, while basic Arabic language skills can also be beneficial for integration in GCC countries. Digital literacy and ICT skills are increasingly indispensable across a wide range of occupations and should therefore be embedded in all training programs. Cultural awareness and an understanding of the legal systems and workplace norms of destination countries are critical to ensuring smooth adaptation and reducing risks of contract violations or deportation. Soft skills—including teamwork, professional etiquette, time management, and personal grooming—must also be prioritized, as they significantly influence employability and workplace performance. To maintain relevance with changing international labor market needs, a dedicated body such as a National Education Commission should be established to ensure that curricula are regularly updated. Collectively, these initiatives will enhance the productivity, professionalism, and global demand for Bangladeshi workers, ultimately resulting in increased remittance inflows.

KII-12

Organization: Saif Enterprise

Sector: Garments Business

Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Date: July 2022

Question Number 1A. Why are most Bangladeshi migrants employed in low-skilled or unskilled jobs?

Answer to Question Number 1A. Most Bangladeshi migrants in the UAE enter through unofficial channels or middlemen, without proper training or documentation. The emphasis in Bangladesh has historically been on quantity, not quality. Workers are sent abroad without verifying their job readiness or skill set. In many cases, individuals come from rural backgrounds with very limited education and no exposure to industry-specific work standards.

Question Number 1B. What challenges do Bangladeshi workers face in the UAE?

Answer to Question Number 1B. Bangladeshi workers often lack communication skills, especially in English and Arabic, which makes even basic interactions difficult. Employers in Dubai expect punctuality, discipline, and professionalism—traits many Bangladeshi workers struggle to demonstrate due to lack of orientation or preparation. Additionally, they tend to lack knowledge of local labor laws, customer service etiquette, and technology use.

Question Number 1C. Which countries' migrant workers perform better, and why?

Answer to Question Number 1C. Workers from the Philippines, India, and Nepal outperform Bangladeshis. They are generally better trained, more disciplined, and speak better English. Filipinos, in particular, excel in customer-facing roles due to their soft skills and communication ability. Indian workers, especially from South India, dominate the technical and mid-level management roles due to higher education and professional approach.

Question Number 1D. What are the likely challenges in the path to migration for Bangladeshi workers?

Answer to Question Number 1D. Apart from illegal migration practices and over-reliance on sub-agents, the biggest challenges are lack of pre-departure training, skill mismatch, and failure to align training with employer needs. There's also no monitoring mechanism to ensure job descriptions match what was promised. Employers become frustrated when workers are unable to meet performance expectations.

Question Number 2A. What opportunities exist for Bangladeshi workers in skilled and semi-skilled jobs?

Answer to Question Number 2A. The garment and retail sectors in the UAE offer huge potential—tailors, quality controllers, warehouse staff, drivers, IT support, and customer care agents. Hospitality (housekeeping, waiters, receptionists), construction (electricians, plumbers), and logistics also offer prospects. But employers want assurance of workers' reliability, basic literacy, and soft skills.

Question Number 3A. Which skills are most preferred by employers in the UAE?

Answer to the Question Number 3A. Employers prefer practical trade skills with demonstrable experience. In garments: tailoring, cutting, machine operation, and quality checking. In retail: communication, sales, and POS operation. Soft skills like punctuality,

honesty, teamwork, and adaptability are increasingly important. Workers who show initiative, follow instructions, and communicate well are highly valued.

Question Number 3B. What language skills are essential in the service sector?

Answer to Question Number 3B. English is essential across most industries. Arabic is useful in customer service, especially in retail. Many employers prefer workers who can at least understand basic Arabic commands and hold simple conversations in English. Urdu/Hindi helps in interacting with South Asian colleagues and supervisors.

Question Number 4A. What are the major skill gaps affecting Bangladeshi workers' productivity?

Answer to the Question Number 4A. The biggest gaps include poor communication, lack of basic technical training, and absence of soft skills. Many workers do not understand professional workplace expectations such as grooming, hygiene, timekeeping, and customer service standards. They are also behind in ICT skills—unable to operate smartphones or basic apps, which are crucial for tasks like delivery tracking or payment systems.

Question Number 4B. What difficulties do employers face when recruiting from Bangladesh?

Answer to Question Number 4B. Employers face uncertainty about the authenticity of the workers claimed skills and experience. Many workers come with certificates but lack real competence. Recruiting agencies in Bangladesh often fail to screen candidates effectively, leading to dissatisfaction and costly turnover. This reputation gap is a major barrier to hiring more from Bangladesh.

Question Number 5A. Are skill certifications from Bangladesh recognized in the UAE?

Answer to Question Number 5A. No, not by default. Employers conduct their own tests or rely on trusted in-country evaluations. Bangladeshi certifications hold little weight unless verified by performance or through recognized institutions partnered with UAE companies.

Question Number 5B. Does the Bangladeshi diplomatic mission in the UAE engage with employers?

Answer to Question Number 5B. Yes, but interaction is occasional. Stronger, proactive partnerships are needed between the embassy and business owners to align supply with demand, especially in niche areas like tailoring, light manufacturing, and retail.

Question Number 6A. How can Bangladesh increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled workers abroad?

Answer to Question Number 6A. To increase the number of skilled and semi-skilled Bangladeshi workers abroad, it is essential to develop training programs that are directly aligned with employer demand in destination countries. This can be achieved through close collaboration with overseas business owners and industry representatives. The curricula of TTCs should be reformed to include industry-specific modules tailored to sectors such as garments, hospitality, and retail technology. A centralized digital platform for verifying skills and certifications would enhance transparency and build trust with foreign employers. Language proficiency and customer service training should be made mandatory components of PDT to better prepare workers for service-oriented roles. To promote fair and efficient recruitment practices, the role of middlemen must be reduced and clear selection standards should be established. Additionally, introducing overseas internship or apprenticeship programs would provide potential migrants with valuable hands-on experience, increasing their employability and competitiveness in the global labor market.

Question Number 6B. What priority areas should Bangladesh focus on to increase remittance earnings?

Answer to Question Number 6B. To sustainably increase remittance earnings, Bangladesh needs to adopt a holistic and demand-driven approach to skill development that aligns with global labor market trends. Emphasis should be placed on expanding and modernizing technical and vocational education, especially in trades that are currently in high demand across the GCC region—such as construction, elderly and child caregiving, hospitality, and textile work. Training programs must incorporate practical, hands-on learning to ensure workers gain real-world competency before deployment. In parallel, English language proficiency—both spoken and written—should be improved through targeted instruction, while basic Arabic training can facilitate smoother communication and cultural adjustment in Gulf countries. Improving foundational education is equally

important, as it strengthens critical thinking, learning adaptability, and overall confidence. Additionally, cultural sensitization and legal literacy should be embedded into pre-departure orientation programs to better prepare workers for the norms, expectations, and regulations of host countries. ICT training and digital skills are increasingly necessary even for semi-skilled roles, and must be made accessible across all training centers. Soft skills, including discipline, teamwork, etiquette, and customer interaction, should be considered core competencies rather than optional enhancements. Finally, a dynamic labor market information system should be developed to monitor foreign job trends in real-time, enabling Bangladesh to plan training and migration policies more strategically. This comprehensive strategy would lead not only to higher earnings and remittances but also to greater job stability and reputation for Bangladeshi workers abroad.

Annexure H: Analysis of Critical Skill Development Areas and Ways Forward

Professional Technical Skills

1. Any work that requires special training or particular skills and involves education is considered a profession (cambridgedictionary, 2024). Professional technical skills can be defined as the ability to perform specific technical tasks effectively in the workplace. More specifically, these skills refer to the technical or specialized knowledge and expertise required to excel in a given job. Therefore, the prerequisite for acquiring professional technical skills is technical or vocational training and education. In this research, professional skills have been identified as the strongest predictor of salary (Beta = 0.684, Pearson $r = 0.924$).

2. **The Importance of Technical Education for Economic Growth and Remittance Inflow in Bangladesh.** Most of the developed countries have boosted their economy riding on the technical manpower, whereas Bangladesh is still struggling to aware its citizens about the importance of technical skills. Salman (2022) citing Amin²⁵ said that 50% to 60% polytechnic graduates get a job within 06 months of their training and almost 85% get a job, while remaining 15% become entrepreneur. Remittance inflow will triplicate if Bangladesh could send skilled population abroad. Therefore, scholars suggest to invest in technical education. Salman (2022) citing DTE states that Bangladesh Government has taken initiative to include technical and vocational subjects in the educational curriculum from class VI to X for main stream education including madrasah education from 2023.

3. **Existing State of Technical Training in Bangladesh.** Recognizing the importance of technical education and aiming to make it accessible to the general population, the government has allocated significant resources for technical and vocational education and training. Salman (2022), citing the Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), states that over the last 12 years, student enrollment in technical training has increased significantly. In 2009, student enrollment was 4.73 lakh, which rose to 14.63 lakh in 2020, accounting for 17.25% of total education and training. There are 10,452 government-approved public and private institutions providing technical education throughout the country. Of these, 154 institutions—including 4 engineering colleges, 49 polytechnic institutes, 2 teachers' training institutes, and 64 technical and

²⁵ Mr. Ruhul Amin is the Principal of Barisal Polytechnic Institute.

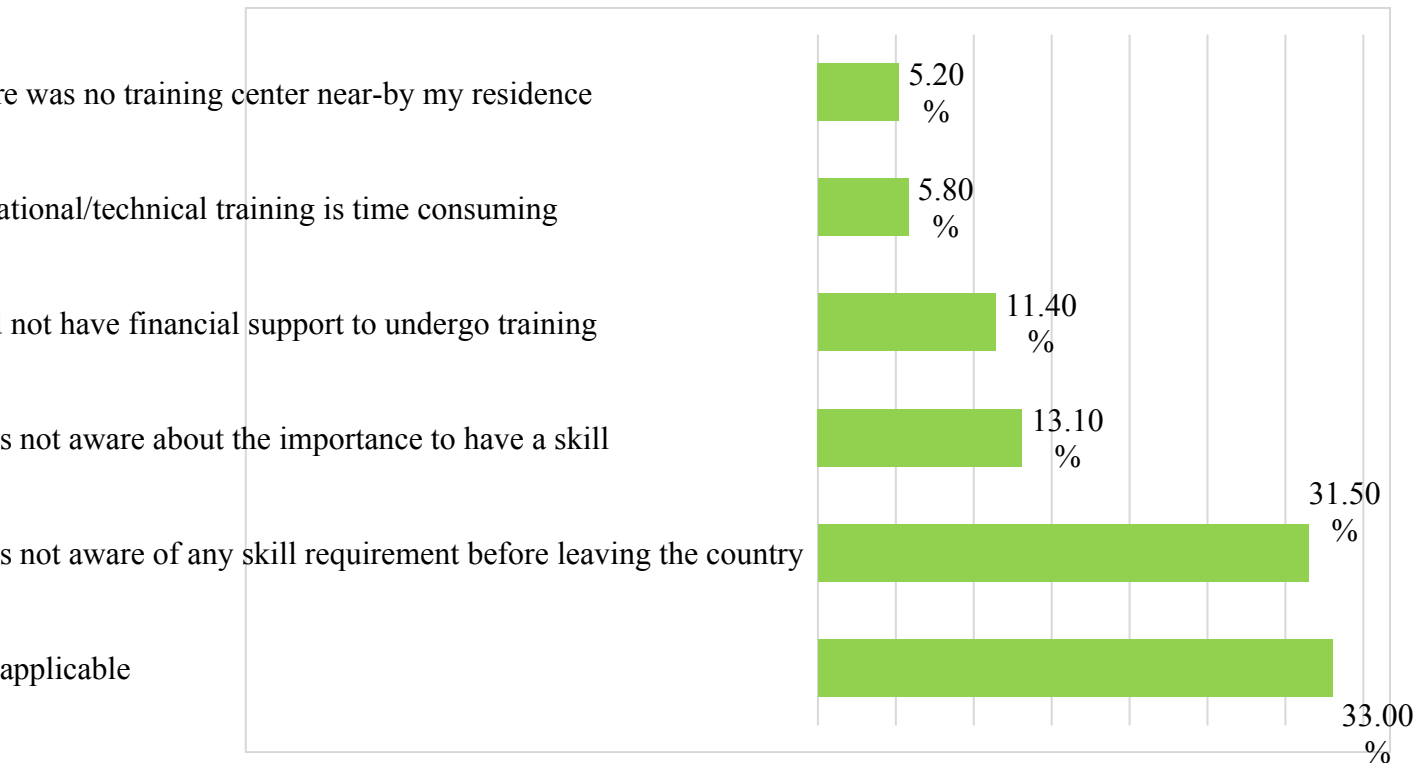
vocational training colleges—offer technical and vocational education and training in Bangladesh (Salman, 2022).

4. **Drawbacks in Technical Education.** The technical education system in Bangladesh faces several key drawbacks. Firstly, many training courses are outdated, and even when some courses are relevant, the institutes lack the necessary equipment for practical training. As a result, graduates often feel that their training does not adequately prepare them for the job market. Additionally, the Bangladeshi technical education system operates separately from general education, meaning only a limited number of students receive technical training (Siddiqui & Farabi, 2021). There are also significant infrastructural shortcomings in skills training across the country, with insufficient equipment and a lack of state-of-the-art technology being major constraints to need-based skills development (NSDP, 2021)²⁶. Moreover, the equipment, machines, and infrastructure available at the TTCs do not meet the requirements of Industry 4.0 (KI-8), leaving students unskilled despite graduating from the best institutions. Finally, the training provided at TTCs does not meet international standards, resulting in their certificates being unacceptable to foreign employers (KI-5).

5. **Challenges to Accessing Skills Training.** Challenges to accessing skills training among migrant workers is shown in the *Figure-25*. The responses from participants reveal several key barriers that hindered their access to skills training before migrating from Bangladesh. The majority of respondents, accounting for 31.5%, expressed that they were unaware of any specific skill requirements prior to their departure. A large portion of Bangladeshi workers comes from remote villages, where there is limited access to information about technical and vocational training. During the recruitment process, neither the recruiting agencies nor their agents (often referred to as Dalals) inform workers about the importance of acquiring technical skills. Instead, recruiters focus primarily on sending workers as quickly as possible to maximize their earnings. This strategy benefits both parties: recruiters earn more money in a shorter time frame, while recruits are eager to leave quickly and begin earning money without delay. However, in recent years, some social awareness programs have been introduced through mainstream and social media, organized by the government, to educate potential migrants about the value of technical training:

²⁶ *National Skills Development Policy (NSDP)-2021*

Figure 25: Challenges to Accessing Skills Training



Source: The Illustration is based on the Survey of the Study

In addition to the lack of awareness, several financial and logistical challenges also prevent workers from pursuing technical training. For instance, 13.1% of respondents mentioned that they were not aware of the importance of acquiring a skill. Another 11.4% stated that they lacked the financial support necessary to undertake technical training. Moreover, 5.8% of respondents felt that technical or vocational training was time-consuming, which deterred them from pursuing it. A further 5.2% reported that they did not undertake technical training simply because there were no training centers nearby their residence. These last three factors—financial constraints, time pressures, and the absence of training facilities—are interrelated and reflect the economic struggles many migrant workers face.

The majority of Bangladeshi migrant workers hail from rural, economically disadvantaged backgrounds. In these regions, financial constraints are a major challenge. To finance their migration, many workers resort to borrowing money, often by mortgaging land, selling valuable family heirlooms, or seeking loans from friends and relatives. Once they decide to go abroad, the primary goal becomes securing employment as quickly as possible to repay their debts, often without considering the value of

acquiring skills or gaining relevant work experience. This rush to migrate, driven by financial pressure, leaves little room for skills development, which could enhance their employability and long-term earning potential.

In summary, financial difficulties and a lack of awareness about the importance of technical training are significant barriers that hinder many Bangladeshi workers from accessing skills development before migrating. While there has been some improvement through government-led awareness programs, addressing these financial and infrastructural challenges is crucial to improving the employability and success of migrant workers.

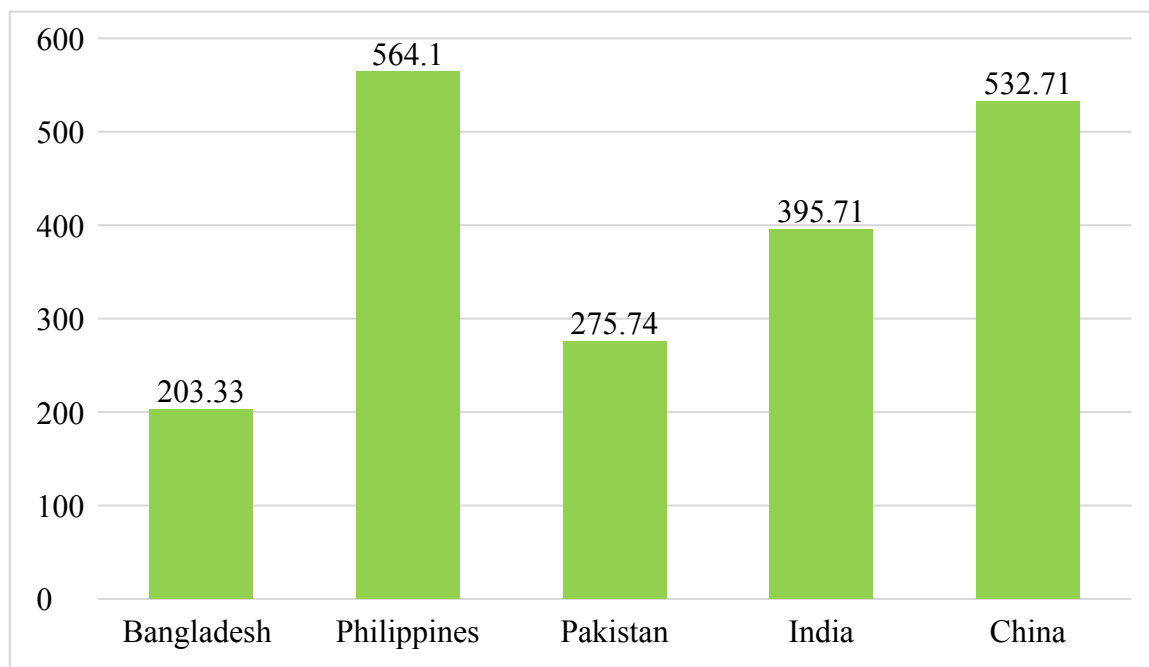
6. **Comparative Enrollment in Technical Education and Training.** In Bangladesh, technical or vocational training remains less popular compared to general and madrassah education. This disparity is evident when comparing enrollment figures across different countries. Salman (2022) states that only 17.25% of students in Bangladesh enroll in technical education. In contrast, countries with more advanced economies and industries have significantly higher enrollment rates in technical training. For example, in Germany, 75% of students pursue technical education, reflecting the country's strong emphasis on vocational skills and its apprenticeship-based model. Japan follows with 66%, and China with 55%, both demonstrating the importance placed on equipping their workforce with technical expertise to support industrial growth. Similarly, Singapore (65%), Australia (60%), South Korea (50%), and Malaysia (46%) all show higher enrollment percentages, indicating that vocational training is an integral part of their educational systems (Salman, 2022).

The difference in enrollment rates highlights a significant gap in technical education and training between Bangladesh and these more industrialized nations. In Bangladesh, the low enrollment in vocational training is partly due to cultural preferences for general education, which is often seen as more prestigious. Additionally, the limited infrastructure for technical education, along with the lack of awareness regarding its benefits, further discourages students from pursuing such pathways. This gap in enrollment is a crucial issue for Bangladesh, especially considering the growing demand for skilled labor both domestically and internationally. A skilled workforce is essential for economic growth, particularly in sectors like manufacturing, technology, and services.

7. **Consequences of Lack of Professional Technical Skills**

7.1 Impact of Unskilled Labor on Remittance Earnings. The working and living condition of unskilled workers' is far below international standard. Their salary and compensation packages are also low compared to skilled workers. Siddique (2021, p. 10) states, the yearly growth rate of remittance for Bangladesh is less than the yearly growth rate of workers. One of the prime reasons is, in recent years Bangladesh has sent a greater number of unskilled workers than those of previous skilled and professional workers (Siddiqui, 2021, p. 11). Bangladesh is branded as the primary source of low paid workers which is why per worker remittance is lower than its competitors like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Philippines. The average monthly remittance sent by a Bangladeshi expatriate is 203.33 USD which is 564.1 for a Filipino worker, 275.74 USD for a Pakistani worker, 395.71 USD for an Indian worker, and 532.71 USD for a Chinese worker (Siddiqui, 2023). Impact of unskilled labor on remittance earnings is shown in *Figure-26*:

Figure 26: Impact of Unskilled Labor on Remittance Earnings (In USD)



Source: Siddique (2023)

7.2 Poor Working Conditions and Exploitative Environment Due to Lack of Skills. Poor working conditions and an exploitative environment caused by the lack of skills among Bangladeshi migrant workers lead to several severe consequences. According to Etzold & Mallick (2015, p. 5) (2015, p. 5), the security situation at many workplaces is below international standards, resulting in frequent injuries, illnesses, and even fatalities. Additionally, labor migrants often face delayed payments, with their

wages being significantly lower than those of local workers in the host country. Migrants are typically forced to live in poorly arranged mass lodging with inadequate access to healthcare and other essential social amenities. Female migrants, particularly those working as maids or domestic aids, are highly vulnerable to sexual harassment and even rape. Furthermore, many Bangladeshi migrants are compelled to pay exorbitant fees charged by recruitment and travel agencies, a practice that is widely seen as exploitation.

7.3 Behavioral Challenges Caused Due to Lack of Skill Training. After arriving in the destination country without professional technical skills, many Bangladeshi migrant workers struggle to secure stable employment. Those who manage to find a job are often preoccupied with the need to earn extra income, which significantly impacts their work behavior. According to a report by City & Guilds and IOM (2017, pp. 17, 30), several behavioral issues arise due to the added burden of repaying debts. Many workers lack dedication to their primary job, prioritizing supplementary income over job performance. As a result, they often complete tasks without attention to detail or perfection. Additionally, to offset the financial pressures, some workers take on extra jobs or engage in unlawful activities. Employers frequently report that Bangladeshi workers lack a sense of company ownership and responsibility, which affects their overall productivity and work ethic.

8. Ways Forward. Throughout the ages, education and training are developed to meet the need of the industry. As present generations are hovering in the 4.0 IR, therefore, education and training system should also in sync with 4.0 IR. Following are the ways forward for a greater number of technical skilled manpower in Bangladesh:

- **Establish Linkage between TTCs and the Industry.** Bangladesh should promptly establish stronger linkages between TVET institutions and industry sectors. Institutionalized connections between TTCs and industries will motivate students to pursue technical training, offering improved employment opportunities, stipends for sustenance, and enhanced credentials through On-the-Job Training (OJT). Additionally, industry linkages will familiarize students with state-of-the-art technologies.
- **Raise the Standard of TTCs to International Level.** In a recent survey, 65% of employers emphasized the need for Bangladeshi TTIs to meet international standards. To achieve this, all aspects of training—including

infrastructure, teacher qualifications, teaching methods, and training aids—must be upgraded. This elevated standard will not only enhance the quality of education but also encourage employers to offer accreditation.

- **Arrange Accreditation of the TTCs with the Employers.** In the survey, 71% of employers recommended that TTCs should obtain accreditation from the industries they aim to serve. For instance, many Filipino Nursing Training Centers are accredited by hospitals in the USA, Canada, and Europe (factsanddetails, 2015). Graduates from these centers are directly employed in the accredited hospitals in Western countries. To replicate this model, efforts should be made at the political and diplomatic levels to secure accreditation of TTCs with employers in GCC countries.
- **Introduce Periodic Teachers' Training in the Industry.** In Bangladesh, there is currently no structured policy to ensure continuous professional development for instructors. In contrast, in China, technical training instructors are required to spend at least one month in the industry each year, or two months every two years, to stay updated on the latest technologies (Stiftung, 2015, pp. 35-39). Bangladesh could consider adopting a similar policy to enhance the skills and relevance of its instructors.
- **Introduce Need based Training Courses and Syllabus.** In the survey, 78% of employers recommended that Bangladeshi institutes should offer need-based trade training courses. According to the World Bank (2018, p. 33), governments should align immigration policies with labor market demands. Similarly, skills training should be designed to meet market needs, ensuring relevance and effectiveness.
- **Branding of Skills Development Training.** In the survey, 81% of employers emphasized the need to encourage vocational and technical education among young people. Building trust and confidence in technical training and skills development is essential (unicef, 2022). The relevant authorities should take effective steps to brand technical education, positioning it on par with general education. The introduction of high-demand, need-based skills training courses, with guaranteed jobs, competitive wages, attractive compensation packages, and positive publicity, would greatly enhance the branding of skills development (The

Business Standard, 2022). To shift public perception, Bangladesh could draw inspiration from the Skill India Initiative²⁷ (UNICEF, 2022).

Experience

9. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023), experience is defined as practical knowledge or skill gained through observation or participation in events or activities. Experience is often confused with skill or professional skill. Kanade (2019) argues that while experience is describable, professional skill is demonstrable. Experience reflects what one has done in the past, while skill refers to what one can do in the present. Skill is the ability to apply experience to new situations. As noted by City & Guilds and IOM (2017, p. 26), employers emphasize that experience is a critical quality they seek when hiring. In this survey, experience has been identified as the second-highest predictor of salary (Beta = 0.224, Pearson $r = 0.782$).

10. **Challenges to Send Experienced Workers from Bangladesh.** Following are the challenges to send experienced workers from Bangladesh:

- According to KI-3, a major challenge in sending experienced workers abroad is that many of them are already well-established in Bangladesh, earning a decent income for their sustenance. As a result, they are not interested in leaving their families and friends to work in a foreign country. In contrast, younger generations, eager for extra income and early career establishment, are willing to go abroad immediately after graduation, even without experience. Consequently, they often fail the suitability test, leading them to take low-skilled jobs such as tea boy, laborer, or cleaner, or face repatriation (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, pp. 26-31).
- Statistics reveal that 87% of people in Bangladesh are self-employed (ILO, 2024), with 90% of them possessing only primary education or less (unicef, 2022). Many are engaged in high-tech repair and maintenance work, such as repairing cell phones, computers, refrigerators, air conditioners, automobiles, and welding. While most of these individuals lack formal education, many have valuable hands-

²⁷ Since 2015, the National Skill Development Corporation of India with Ministry of Skill and Entrepreneurship Development commissioned a mass media movement for the Skill India Initiative (unicef, 2022). The movement changed attitude towards skill development and aimed at inspiring the youths to undertake skill development training. Since launching of the campaign, above 10 million people have been benefitted yearly through Skill India Campaign (unicef, 2022).

on experience (KI-3). However, these experienced but uneducated workers are ineligible for overseas employment.

- Rasul (2023) points out that collaboration between universities and industries in Bangladesh is limited. Technical training courses and their syllabi are not aligned or synchronized with industry needs. TTCs design and conduct training programs in isolation, without consulting with industry stakeholders. As a result, graduates from universities and TTCs often find their skills irrelevant to industry requirements.
- TTCs also lack state-of-the-art training aids necessary to produce competent workers for industries. Due to insufficient funding, they are unable to acquire cutting-edge equipment that is widely available in the industry (KI-5).
- Rasul (2023) states that collaboration between universities and industries are limited in Bangladesh. Technical training courses and their syllabus are not linked and synchronized with the industries. TTCs plan and conduct training courses in isolation without consultation with the industries. Therefore, graduates passed from the universities and TTCs remain irrelevant for the industries.
- TTCs do not have state of the art training aids to produce competent workers for the industries as they do not have funds to procure cutting edge equipment which are widely available in the industries (KI-8).

11. **Ways Forward.**

- **Introduce Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Program.** City & Guilds and IOM (2017, pp. 29, 36) suggest that the RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) program can help Bangladesh secure more skilled and semi-skilled jobs by identifying experienced workers who may lack formal education or training. These workers should have their prior learning recognized after receiving basic education and theoretical lessons (ILO, 2012). To implement the RPL program, the MOEWOE and NSDA should collaborate. According to KI-3, given that many of these workers already possess proficiency and experience in their respective fields, the skilling program should include essential elements such as basic theoretical lessons in their discipline, education up to class eight or eight years of

schooling, training in spoken English, and an orientation to the culture, tradition, and history of the destination country.

- **Introduce Linkage between TTCs and the Industries.** The linkage between TTCs and industries would provide students with hands-on experience by operating state-of-the-art equipment available in the industries. Therefore, TTCs should establish strong connections with industries to leverage their advanced facilities. This collaboration will benefit all three parties: students, TTCs, and industries. Students will gain practical experience in operating cutting-edge equipment, enhancing their skills. Industries, in turn, will offer stipends during apprenticeships, motivating more students to enroll in TTC courses. TTCs will benefit by not having to invest in expensive state-of-the-art technology for training, instead focusing on delivering theoretical lessons. Students will only be sent to industries after completing the necessary theoretical training and safety instructions. Finally, industries will benefit by training their future employees, which will reduce both recruitment and training costs for new hires.
- **Examine Experience Level of the Workers' Prior to Issue of Smart Card.** Smart cards are issued by BMET prior to departure, with participation in PDT being one of the eligibility criteria. Despite reports of anomalies and corruption in the process (Ovee, 2024), BMET should assess the experience level of workers who are leaving for overseas employment as skilled or semi-skilled workers. Those who fail the evaluation test should be sent back to industries to acquire the necessary level of experience.

English Speaking Proficiency (Communication Skill)

12. Communication skill is the ability of an individual to communicate effectively with others or effective interaction with others (differencebetween.com, 2015). Communication skills include a wide variety of skills ranging from listening to speaking. For example, an employee who needs to conduct a presentation needs effective vocal skills. English speaking proficiency has been identified as the third highest predictor of salary (Beta=0.054, Pearson $r = 0.666$).

13. **Difference between Communication Skills and Language Proficiency.** According to differencebetween.com (2015), though both the skills go hand in hand, there is a dichotomy between language proficiency and communication skills. Language allows

communication through structured use of words. To be an effective communicator, one needs to have proficiency in language as it allows him communicate effectively with others. If individual lacks in language proficiency he/she will face difficulties in effective communication. Therefore, language skill is a prerequisite for effective communication. There are four domains of language, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Once individual is competent in all the domains of language, he/she can only then communicate effectively. However, mere proficiency in language does not guaranty effective communication (differencebetween.com, 2015). Communication includes effective listening to others and expresses himself clearly and concisely with bravery and clarity. Therefore, language proficiency and communication skill refer to two different skills.

14. **Importance of Communication Skills.** The primary role of the service sector employees is to offer services to its clients. The communication either written or vocal is the only means for contact either physically or virtually between service providers and the service recipients. Effective communication is vital for the employees like sales persons, managers, supervisors, cashiers, who often interact with the customers, clients, and colleagues. Poor communication may lead to misunderstanding, conflict, and even loss to the business (linkedin, 2023). Conversely, efficient communicator earns good image for himself and make profit and better business output for the company. Individual is benefitted from effective communication by building relationship with colleagues, clients, and customers. The organization is benefitted from effective communicator by use of his/her motivational, encouragement, and promotional words (linkedin, 2023). According to Pumble (2023), 86% employees and executives believe that lack of effective communication is the prime cause of workplace failure, on the other hand, employees and executives believe that effective communication increases 25% productivity.

15. **Asia and Global Ranking of Countries Based on English Language Proficiency Scores.** English-speaking proficiency of Bangladeshi people in relation to other countries is shown in the *Table-45*:

Table 45: Asia and Global Ranking of Countries Based on English Language Proficiency Scores

Country	Ranking in Asia	Global Ranking	Score
Singapore	1st	10th	611

Philippines	2nd	27th	562
Malaysia	3rd	30th	547
South Korea	4th	32nd	545
Hong Kong	5th	33rd	542
China	6th	38th	520
Macau, China	7th	45th	505
India	8th	50th	496
Japan	9th	55th	487
Nepal	10th	60th	480
Pakistan	11th	61st	478
Bangladesh	12th	63rd	476
Vietnam	13th	65th	473
Sri Lanka	14th	68th	466

Source: Human Resource on Line Report (2021)

As shown in the *Table-45*, Bangladesh ranks 12th in regard to English-speaking proficiency among Asian Countries and 63rd globally (HRM, 2021). Singapore stands top in English-speaking proficiency among Asian countries and 10th globally. Countries like the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, Hong Kong, China, Macau-China, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan are ahead of Bangladesh in regard to English-speaking proficiency among Asian countries.

16. Impact of Language Proficiency on the Employment and Livelihood of Bangladeshi Expatriate Workers in GCC Countries.

- Siddique (2023) states that above 50% Bangladeshi expatriate workers deployed in the GCC countries experience grave communication difficulties stemming from poor language proficiency which seriously affect their income and livelihood. KI-2 said that the most important lacking among Bangladeshi expatriate workers is communication skills. Arabic is the national language in the GCC countries while English is widely spoken language. Most of the Bangladeshi workers are neither

good in Arabic nor in English, hence they are unable to communicate well. Due to barrier in communication skills, workers face difficulties in day-to-day's activities thus devoid of basic amenities and prone to exploitation.

- According to KI-4, Arabic, Hindi, and English are widely spoken languages in the UAE. Most of the Bangladeshi migrants come to the UAE without proficiency in neither of the languages. Though many of the migrants can achieve proficiency within a very short period of time, but the initial lacking keeps them at a bay while competing with their Indian, Pakistani, and Pilipino counterparts.
- KI-1 opined that due to linguistic barrier Bangladeshi workers are not even considered for many skill and semi-skill jobs like receptionist, sells-person, supervisor, medical assistant, office assistant, etcetera. Thus, Bangladeshi workers are branded as labors, they are neither competent nor desire to be employed as skilled or semiskilled workers.

17. **Ways Forward.** Following are the ways forward to create workforce who will be efficient in communication skill:

- According to Remotify (2021), 15% of the global workforce in 2022 are the Filipinos. As part of the national educational curriculum from primary to tertiary level, all Filipinos are trained to write, read, and speak in English language fluently. They are trained to be effective communicators from school to workplace. Bangladeshi education system does not make good communicators. Language learning is primarily limited to grammar without serious attention to spoken language. Many developed countries like the USA, the UK, Germany emphasize on communicative language in the form of organizing debates, public speaking, presentation, etcetera on contemporary issues, etcetera. In the light of the above, Bangladesh should concentrate more on communication skill in English.
- The quality of language teachers in the remote schools and colleges are not up to the standard. Therefore, neither the teachers are good communicators nor they know the art of making good communicators. Therefore, communication skills should be evaluated while enlisting teachers for schools and colleges.

- The educational curriculum should be reviewed to make necessary modification with an intend to make language proficient citizens. In schools and colleges, students should be given opportunity to be the commentator, anchor, master of the ceremony, etcetera so that they can improve their communication skills. The opportunities should be kept open for all the students so that maximum students are exposed to the audiences/spectators. We should get rid of the mentality of nominating teachers and same students over and over again
- Language learning institutes either public or private should pounder on making good quality communicators.

Education

18. According to Michael Spence's Signaling Model (1981, p. 321), education is at the epitome of all the skills and the most important signal to deduce ones productibility. Piseddu (2022) states that education is a systematic process of learning with the objective of acquiring knowledge. The use of knowledge is not always immediate. The learning could be in the classroom or any environment. Education has broader perspectives than training as it helps learn facts, concepts, and theories. Conversely, training is the process of learning something to perform a specific skill or behavior. In this study, education has been identified as the fourth greatest predictor of salary (Beta= 0.037, Pearson r = 0.619).

19. **Challenges in the Existing Education System.** The challenges within Bangladesh's existing education system are significant and multifaceted. Rasul (2023) highlights that a quarter of the population remains illiterate, with many children, particularly boys and girls, unable to access education. The education system faces several barriers, including inadequate facilities that fail to promote an inclusive and equitable society, especially in light of the demands of the 4.0 IR. Poverty remains a key obstacle to equitable access. According to Rasul (2023), the education system struggles with poorly trained, underappreciated, and underpaid teachers who are burdened by outdated instructional methods. Additionally, budget allocation for education falls below the standards set by the Paris Declaration²⁸, with Bangladesh spending only 1.5% of its GDP and 12% of its total public expenditure on education in FY 2022-2023. Both public and private universities suffer from a lack of capable, quality, and compassionate

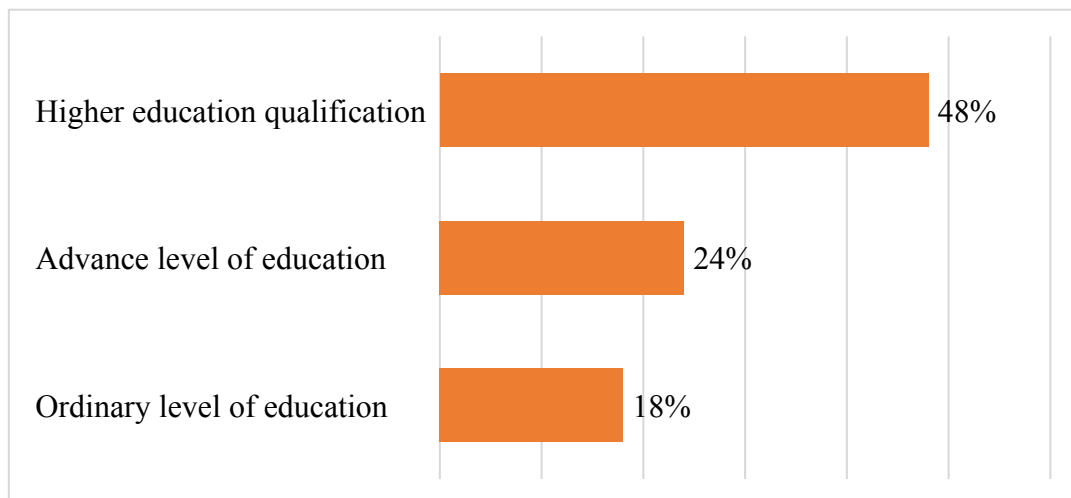
²⁸ Paris declaration is a call for investing 4-6% of the GDP or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure (Rasul, 2023).

educators, and most institutions lack essential amenities like libraries, laboratories, and research facilities. Rahman & Anwar (2020) argue that the education system fails to produce students who are equipped to tackle the challenges of the 4.0 IR, as educational institutions primarily focus on rote memorization rather than critical thinking or practical skills. The evaluation system relies on memorizing lecture notes rather than assessing students' ability to interpret, innovate, or apply practical knowledge, limiting their ability to develop the skills necessary for the modern workforce.

20. Impact of Education Level on Income: A Comparison of Earnings in the UK.

Research in the UK indicates that individuals with an ordinary level of education earn 18% more than those with no qualifications, 24% more with advanced level education, and 48% more with higher education qualifications (Wilson, 2012, p. 121). The increase in income relative to those with no education is illustrated in Figure 27:

Figure 27: Increase in Income in Relation to No Education



Source: Wilson (2012, p. 121)

21. Consequences of Low Level of Education.

- City & Guilds and IOM (2017, p. 29) revealed that many Indian and Pakistani workers initially come to the GCC countries as laborers or masons and later transition into roles such as crane operators, heavy vehicle operators, and, in some cases, even entrepreneurs. These gradual career advancements are rarely seen among Bangladeshi workers, with low levels of education being one of the key barriers preventing such progression (KI-2).

- KI-2 noted that skilling, reskilling, and upskilling are common among the Philippine, Indian, and Sri Lankan communities in the GCC. After working in low-skilled jobs for several years, many workers pursue professional training courses in fields such as driving, plumbing, pipe fitting, electrical work, automobile servicing, air conditioning servicing, and mobile repair. Unfortunately, upskilling is seldom observed among Bangladeshi workers due to their low educational levels. However, in recent years, a few Bangladeshi workers have managed to become entrepreneurs and grow their own businesses.
- KI-2 cited another example to highlight the consequences of low education. In 2022, the Labor Welfare Wing in Jeddah handled a case in which a Bangladeshi expatriate was involved in a road accident. According to local law, the defaulter or their insurance company is supposed to cover the victim's medical expenses. However, the victim received no compensation from either the offender or the insurance company. It was later discovered that the defaulter had taken the victim to the hospital, obtained their signature on a blank piece of paper, and later filled it out as a 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC), absolving the defaulter of any liability. Such incidents frequently occur in the GCC, where workers fall victim to fraud, and lack of education is the primary reason for such exploitation.
- KI-3 stated that most Bangladeshi workers in the GCC are dependent on others for routine tasks such as opening bank accounts, transferring money, obtaining health insurance, securing licenses, and handling legal matters. As a result, many workers rely on middlemen and informal channels like hundi (illegal money transfer systems).
- KI-1 emphasized that education is the foundation of all intellectual activities. The higher the educational background, the sharper an individual's reflexes. Due to their lack of formal education, Bangladeshi workers' reflexes are significantly slower compared to those of workers from other countries like the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. As a result, employers must invest additional time, resources, and effort to train and acclimatize Bangladeshi workers, whereas workers from competing countries are often able to adapt more quickly.

22. **Ways Forward.** Following are the suggestive measures for educational development and increased number of skilled workforces for overseas employment:

- **Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Education for All Segments of Society.** Education is the foundation for developing both soft and hard skills. During the survey, 74% of employers emphasized the importance of Bangladesh taking necessary steps to educate its population. Rasul (2023) asserts that education is not merely a consumption expenditure, but a national investment that benefits society as a whole, meaning the education policy should prioritize inclusivity for people from all walks of life. In line with this, several steps are recommended (globalgoals, 2024): first, it is essential to ensure that all boys and girls, including those from remote villages and streets, receive free primary and secondary education that leads to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Second, the government must guarantee that everyone, including women and children, has access to technical, vocational, and higher education. Finally, the government should implement effective measures for recruiting qualified teachers at all levels, including primary schools, to ensure that educators are capable of delivering quality education.
- **Integrating Key Hard and Soft Skills into the Education Curriculum for Employment in the GCC Service Sector.** During the survey, 52% of employers recommended that Bangladesh should integrate essential hard and soft skills into the educational curriculum to improve employability, particularly for the service sector in GCC countries. Key skills that should be incorporated into the education system include ICT skills, language proficiency, communication skills, manners and etiquette, cultural awareness, teamwork, timeliness, and trustworthiness. By embedding these skills into the curriculum, Bangladesh can better equip its workforce to meet the demands of the global job market, especially in the GCC region, ensuring workers are well-prepared for both professional and interpersonal challenges.
- **Enhancing the Quality of Teachers, Especially in Remote Areas.** The quality of teachers, particularly in remote villages, requires special attention and immediate improvement. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the future of students, and their ability to deliver quality education is crucial for the overall development of the nation. To uplift the quality of teaching, several measures must be taken, including regular professional development programs, better training, and access to modern teaching resources. Additionally, teachers in

remote areas should be provided with incentives and support to overcome the challenges they face due to limited access to resources. By enhancing the quality of teachers, Bangladesh can ensure that students in every region, especially rural and underserved areas, receive a high standard of education, which will ultimately contribute to a more skilled and capable workforce.

- **Promoting Life-wide and Lifelong Learning Skills in the Education System.** The 4th goal of the SDG 2030 (UN, 2016) emphasizes ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning²⁹ opportunities for all. To align with this global objective, Bangladesh's national educational curriculum should prioritize the development of life-wide and lifelong learning skills among students at all levels. From primary to university, the education system should focus on fostering practical learning experiences that extend beyond traditional academic knowledge (Rahman & Anwar, 2020). This approach would equip students with the skills necessary to adapt to ever-changing environments, enhancing their personal and professional growth throughout their lives.
- **Establishing Minimum Educational Qualifications for Overseas Employment.** Each migrant worker represents the country abroad, and their actions and behavior shape foreigners' perceptions of Bangladesh and its people. An educated individual is better equipped to represent their country in a foreign environment. Siddiqui (2005) argues that housemaids should only be allowed to work abroad after receiving necessary training and passing at least SSC or its equivalent. Therefore, the government should consider setting a minimum educational qualification for overseas employment to ensure that Bangladeshi workers are better prepared for the challenges abroad and can more effectively represent the nation.
- **Aligning the Education Budget with the Paris Declaration.** The Paris Declaration calls for investing 4-6% of a country's GDP or at least 15-20% of total public expenditure in education (Rasul, 2023). This global commitment underscores the importance of prioritizing education to foster long-term economic and social development. Currently, Bangladesh allocates only 12% of its total

²⁹ *Wilson (2012, p. 334) citing European Union (2002:2) describes lifelong learning as all learning activities undertaken throughout life with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competencies within a personal, civic, social, and or employment related perspectives.'*

public expenditure to education, which falls short of the Paris Declaration's recommendation. To achieve a more inclusive and effective education system, the government should aim to increase its education budget from 12% to at least 15%. By doing so, Bangladesh can ensure that adequate resources are directed toward improving the quality of education, infrastructure, and teacher training, ultimately benefiting the country's future workforce and enhancing global competitiveness.

Cultural Awareness

23. According to dictionary (Merriam-Webster, 2024), culture is defined as 'the customary beliefs, social norms, and traits of a racial, social, and religious groups.' Another definition defines culture as 'a set of shared values, attitudes, goals, and practices that exemplifies an establishment or organization' (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Apparently, there is an interconnection between culture and manners and etiquette, but practically, there are dichotomies between them. While culture is customary beliefs and social norms, manners are behavior that reflects one's attitude, etiquettes is a set of societal rules that acts as catalysts for positive human interactions (harappa, 2020). According to Coleman (2015), cultural awareness is understanding of the people, social structure, and their culture. It is the ability to work with a culture and utilize it to achieve success. Understanding the culture of the gulf region is vital to be an effective and highly demanding workforce. Gulf region is highly rich for its culture and tradition. According to Siddique (2023), while the region is rapidly reforming and embracing international business practices, its deep-rooted cultural values continue to play a pivotal role in shaping its financial and business dynamics. In this study, cultural awareness has been identified as the fifth greatest predictor of salary (Beta=0.034, Pearson $r=0.565$).

24. **State of Cultural Awareness.** All GCC countries strictly adhere to Islamic cultural practices in their daily activities, although people of other religious backgrounds are also permitted to practice their beliefs, provided it does not cause public disturbance. Migrant workers come from diverse regions and represent various religious groups such as Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, etc. As a result, they often need to interact with migrants from different faiths. KI-1 noted that Bangladeshi workers are not adequately informed about the multi-religious nature of the societies they are joining. Showing respect for other faiths and understanding religious sensitivities is essential for fostering a healthy social and work environment in these multicultural settings. According to KI-5, understanding the rules, regulations, and, most importantly, the culture of the

host country is crucial for a smooth experience abroad. KI-2 added that many Bangladeshi workers in GCC countries are largely unaware of the local culture. KI-1 pointed out that most Bangladeshi migrants have little knowledge of the Arabian way of life. They often require extensive acclimatization to the cultural and social norms, which should ideally be part of the PDT or incorporated into the curriculum of TTCs in Bangladesh.

25. **Ways Forward.** Politeness and respectfulness are very much ingrained into the culture and nature of the Filipinos (Kok, 2021). KI-1 said that though Filipino workers are more expensive than others, they are desirable by the majority of the employers due to their acquaintance with the cultural of the host country. On the contrary, Bangladeshi workers are not desirable due to their ignorance on culture of the host country. Therefore, all migrants should be taught about the culture of the host country during PDT. In this regard, a separate package on culture of the host country should be introduced. Besides, all skilled and semiskilled workers should be aware on following aspects of the GCC culture (Harris, 2015):

- **Influence of Family in Management.** Harris (2015) states, study revealed that 87% businesses in Kuwait are family owned and family has huge influence in the business. Family influence to some extent supersede finance or performance. The influence includes staff hiring preference, employee advancement, supplier preference, and performance evaluation. Therefore, employees need to maintain good relation with the owner's family.
- **Autocratic Leadership Style.** According to Harris (2015), most business in the GCC countries are managed by few family members that operates autonomously over the organization. Therefore, workers must be aware about the influential members of the organization.
- **Wasta Concept.** Wasta³⁰ is a well-known concept in the GCC countries that is a cornerstone of many businesses process. Workers should be aware about Wasta culture and maintain international standard to get through Washta culture used by others (Harris, 2015).

³⁰ *Wasta is a well-known concept in the Arabian Peninsula where people use their personal connection to get favour or benefit (Harris, 2015).*

- **Choice of Words in Communication.** Harris (2015) states, politeness is very important in the Arabic culture. Sometimes politeness is more ethical than truth. Workers must understand that impoliteness with the employers or their family members is unethical and could be detrimental (Harris, 2015).
- **Maintain Islamic Culture in the workplace.** Islam is the widely practiced religion in the GCC countries. Workers need to understand Islamic culture and must stay away from all subjects that are perceived as wrong in Islam (Harris, 2015).
- **Nationality Issue.** Harris (2015) said that judgment, evaluation, and treatment of workers by nationality is quite common in the GCC countries. Employees are hired and their careers are also tracked by nationality.
- **Tendency of Power Projection.** There is a tendency of power projection in the GCC countries. According to Harris (2015), laws and procedure are not essentially absolute ethics in the GCC countries. Most importantly, powerful leaders often circumvent rules for the sake of projecting powers. Adaptability is the greatest asset and key to success.

ICT Skill

26. According to indeed.com (2024), technological development has made ICT an essential element in every economic sectors. People rely on ICT not only for their professional doings but also for day-to-days happenings, social life, and leisure time passing. ICT could be divided into advanced and basic, while advanced ICT skills are required for ICT professionals and the basic ICT skills are required for customer service, operations, and management. For this study, we shall not dip into details of advanced ICT required for ICT and cyber security professionals, but to the basic ICT skills. In this research, ICT skill has been identified as the sixth greatest predictor of salary (Beta=0.030, Pearson r=0.581).

27. **Basic ICT Skills Requirement.** Basic ICT skills are essential for performing a wide range of tasks in today's digital world, including operating computers, cell phones, tablets, cash registers, and other digital platforms. These rudimentary ICT skills vary across industries, but some fundamental skills are commonly required in most customer service roles. These include typing, preparing spreadsheets, sending and receiving emails, data entry, filling out forms, cash management, customer care, and conducting online

searches. Additionally, job-specific skills, such as operating cash registers, inventory management systems, and scanning equipment, are important for performing specialized tasks. Familiarity with utility apps like Uber, Lyft, and delivery platforms is also crucial. Basic technical skills, such as starting and shutting down computers, connecting printers, and managing file servers, are necessary for day-to-day operations. Moreover, understanding the basics of cybersecurity and data security is vital for safeguarding sensitive information in an increasingly digital work environment.

28. **Bangladeshi Workers' Status on Basic ICT Skills.** Bangladeshi workers often lack basic ICT and computer skills, which are now essential for accessing various social amenities such as buying tickets, recharging mobile phones, paying for internet connections, and engaging in other online activities (KI-2). KI-4 emphasized that ICT skills have become crucial in most modern countries. Due to their limited ICT knowledge, many Bangladeshi migrants are vulnerable to exploitation and harassment. Their lack of essential ICT skills prevents them from accessing critical services, leaving them susceptible to scams and fraud.

29. **ICT Development Infrastructure Available in Bangladesh.** The Government of Bangladesh established the Ministry of ICT in 2011 by renaming the existing Ministry of Science and Technology to place greater emphasis on ICT development (Ministry of ICT, 2024). In 2014, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications and the Ministry of ICT were merged to form the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and IT. At the same time, the ICT Division was created under this new ministry. The ICT Division's vision is to develop 'people-friendly IT in building Sonar Bangla,' while its key missions include: establishing a prosperous Sonar Bangla through reliable cyber access at the grassroots level, developing IT-based human resources, fostering export-oriented growth of the IT industry, and utilizing citizen-friendly IT technology.

30. **Challenges in Developing ICT Skills.** The Government of Bangladesh has recognized the importance of ICT in preparing its youth for the challenges of the 4.0 IR. However, several obstacles hinder the effective implementation of the ICT policy. According to Jarin (2022), these challenges include: the majority of primary school students not having access to computers, either at home or at school; many schools lacking computer laboratories, preventing students from gaining hands-on experience with essential ICT tasks like printing, internet browsing, and email management; the subpar quality of ICT teaching staff; and while internet usage has increased across the

country, most high-speed internet access is used for social networking and news consumption, with little positive impact on developing ICT-based knowledge.

31. **Ways Forward.** Following are the suggestions to create ICT savvy workforce (Jarin, 2022):

- **Introduce ICT TOT Courses for School Teachers.** It is essential that all teachers receive institutional training to ensure they possess the basic ICT skills required to effectively teach students. This training should cover fundamental tasks such as starting a computer, typing, connecting to a printer, and browsing the internet, thereby enabling teachers to confidently integrate ICT into their classrooms.
- **Allocate Budget for ICT Resources in All Primary Schools.** The government should allocate sufficient funds for providing computers and internet access in all primary schools, including those in the remotest villages. This will ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn basic ICT skills, such as operating a computer, browsing the internet, and printing documents, which are essential for their academic and professional futures.
- **Introduce Computer-Aided Education in Schools.** Over time, schools should adopt computer-aided education and learning systems to enhance the quality of teaching. Integrating technology into classrooms will not only make learning more interactive and engaging but also better prepare students for the demands of the digital age.
- **Encourage NGOs to Support ICT Education.** NGOs should be encouraged to provide ICT materials and resources to schools, particularly in underserved areas. By collaborating with NGOs, the government can enhance the availability of teaching materials, training programs, and digital infrastructure in schools that are otherwise lacking in resources.
- **Orient Potential Migrants with ICT Tools During PDT.** As part of the pre-deployment training (PDT) for potential migrants, they should be familiarized with essential internet connectivity tools and communication apps, such as WhatsApp and Viber. Additionally, migrants should be educated about popular social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter), as

these tools are integral for communication, social interaction, and staying connected with families while working abroad.

Language Proficiency (English Writing)

Language is a systematic means of communicating ideas and or feelings by the use of conventional signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood their meanings. Language is one of the key factors considered by the employers while making a hiring decision. In this research, language proficiency (English writing) has been identified as seventh greatest predictor of salary (Beta=0.011, Pearson $r=0.650$). Lack of language proficiency among Bangladeshi workers and its priority has also been recognized by the government of Bangladesh as Foreign Minister of Bangladesh³¹ (Siddiqui, 2023) said that ‘various countries seek for doctors, nurses, caregivers, etcetera from Bangladesh, but we cannot provide them with adequate number due to lack of language proficiency’. Moreover, if a worker is proficient in the local language and applies for a job at a shopping mall in any of the GCC countries, they are likely to secure a sales position with a monthly salary of BTK 50,000. However, if the worker lacks language skills, they may only qualify for a cleaner's job, earning a maximum of Tk 20,000 per month (Mahmud, 2024).

32. **Challenges in English Language Teaching in Bangladesh.** In Bangladesh, English has always been a predominant language in government administration, private offices, education, and law (Hassan, et al., 2019). Since the country's independence in 1971, English has been a compulsory subject at every educational level, from primary to tertiary. Despite its importance, the focus of English teaching in Bangladesh remains primarily grammar-centric, with inadequate emphasis on developing writing skills. Islam (2020) also critiques the current state of English language teaching, suggesting that it is not progressing in the right direction. Hasan et al. (2019) identify several key issues in English language teaching at the secondary school level in Bangladesh. One major challenge is the lack of qualified teachers, as many educators do not hold qualifications in English literature or language, which significantly affects the quality of instruction. Teacher overload is another issue, with many teachers burdened by a high number of classes, limiting their ability to focus on delivering quality education and addressing individual student needs. Additionally, low salaries compel many teachers to take on

³¹ Mr. AK Abdul Momen was the foreign minister of Bangladesh between 2018 and 2024.

private tuition jobs, diverting their attention from their primary teaching responsibilities and professional development. The limited resources available for teaching, including insufficient funding for modern teaching aids and technology, further hampers the learning experience.

33. **Impact of Linguistic Inefficiency on Migrant Workers.** Siddique (2023), citing various experts, highlights how linguistic inefficiency contributes to the oppression of migrant workers in multiple ways. Expatriates often face difficulties in accessing essential services due to language barriers, which can lead to missed opportunities and inadequate support. When confronted with physical abuse or exploitation, migrant workers struggle to seek justice, as their inability to communicate effectively further isolates them. Female workers, in particular, are more vulnerable to violence and abuse, with language barriers making it harder for them to perform domestic duties and seek help. Additionally, both male and female workers are hindered in maximizing their earnings and remittances, as limited language proficiency restricts their opportunities for better job prospects and career advancement.

34. **Advantages of English Language Proficiency in the GCC Service Sector.** Multilingual skills, particularly in English, offer numerous advantages, especially in the service sector, which interacts with people from diverse backgrounds. English proficiency, both spoken and written, enables individuals to engage effectively with people worldwide, access a wide range of ideas, and connect organizations to global networks. As the primary medium of international communication, English promotes equality and transparency, aligning with global standards (HRM, 2021). Additionally, English proficiency facilitates faster technology transfer, allowing individuals to compete in the global marketplace. Furthermore, it provides both male and female workers access to international laws, conventions, and regulations that govern their rights and welfare, enhancing their overall empowerment and security.

35. **Ways Forward.** Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) are considered as the most demanding global workforce. Proficiency in English language brought the Filipinos in the global stage as the most efficient and effective workforce (Remotify, 2021). KI-1 states that almost all the employers prefer to have Filipino workers even paying more, due to their unique quality of multilingual proficiency. Therefore, Government should address following key areas for qualitative improvement in English language (Hassan, et al., 2019):

- Beside existing system of evaluating grammar through examination; emphasis should be given on English writing proficiency from primary level of education.
- TTCs those prepare potential workers for overseas employment, should extensively use English language with a view to enhancing language proficiency.
- English teachers should be recruited based on their qualification on English literature and language proficiency.
- Teachers should be taken on board while finalizing English language syllabus at different tiers of education.
- Education budget should be judiciously distributed for English language training aids, establishment of language laboratory, and other required infrastructures.

Knowledge of Legal Affairs (Laws and Rights of the Migrants)

36. According to migration-portal (2022), migrants rights are explicitly and implicitly set by the international law including international human rights and other public law instruments. IOM (2024) report suggests that there is no comprehensive international binding instruments or frameworks that govern migration. However, there are plethora of international rules that govern state authority along with their responsibilities, obligations, and individuals' rights. Some of these rules have been formulated through State-to-State relations, negotiations, and practices; and are enshrined in legally binding and non-binding multilateral and bilateral treaties and instruments.

37. **Dire Working and Living Conditions of Migrant Workers in GCC Countries.** Rohoman (2023), citing BIDS, paints a bleak picture of the situation faced by migrant workers in the GCC countries. In 2019, 67% of workers reported experiencing abuse, 73% had no safety guidelines, 62% lacked access to healthcare, 24% did not receive their salaries, and 42% faced delays in payment. A study by MOEWOE revealed that 35% of women were victims of sexual harassment, and 43% received irregular salaries (Islam, 2021). The conditions faced by migrant workers are further exacerbated by ignorance of their rights and laws (Hafiza, 2018). Many workers endure horrible living and working conditions, performing essential tasks such as cleaning offices and building cities, yet remain invisible and deprived of basic human rights (MEI, 2010). Female migrants, in particular, often work long hours, face sexual harassment, and are vulnerable to human trafficking, which leaves them exposed to even greater dangers like slavery, prostitution,

and imprisonment (Islam, 2021). The Kafala³² system, often used for exploitation, prevents workers from changing jobs or leaving the country without permission, making them highly vulnerable to abuse and deportation (Rohoman, 2023).

38. **Remedial Measures Taken by International Communities and Bangladesh Government.** In order to protect rights of the remittance fighters³³, Bangladesh Government has signed various international conventions and protocols and enacted various acts like OEMA -2013, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy-2016 (EWOEP), and various legal frameworks, etcetera. Details of the conventions, protocols, and acts are listed below:

- **International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers (ICRMW) and Member of their Families-1990.** Details of the conventions have been discussed in **Appendix-1**.
- **Overseas Employment and Migrants Act (OEMA)-2013.** Details of the act has been discussed in **Annexure E**.
- **Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (EWOEP)-2016.** OEMA-2013 is complemented by EWOEP-2016. Efforts were taken in 2017 to expand the labor market, to promote skills development of migrant workers, and to ensure the safe and dignified migration opportunities for women. EWOEP-2016 refers to modernizing the Overseas Employment Policy-2006 in light of ICRMW-1990 and SDGs and it complements OEMA-2013 (IOM, 2019, pp. 19-20). It emphasizes the promotion of safe, orderly, and regular migration, as well as adoption of gender sensitive strategies for labor migration from Bangladesh. EWOEP-2016 identifies six priority areas for safe labor migration as follows:
 - Protection of the rights of migrants and their families.
 - Welfare support for migrant workers.
 - Gender-specific labor migration.
 - Integrating labor migration with national development.

³² *Migrants are subjected to 'Kafala' system in the KSA and all across the GCC countries. Under the Kafala system, workers need to have a sponsor who is called as a 'kafeel'. Kafeel guarantees migrants' needs such as legal residence, entitlement to work, and relevant welfare needs, etcetera (City & Guilds and IOM, 2017, p. 22).*

³³ *In Bangladesh, expatriate workers are widely called as remittance fighters.*

- Migration governance.
- **Migration Management and Governing Institutes.** Details on migration management and Governing Institutes have been discussed in **Appendix-2**.
- **Legal Frameworks.** Migration governance calls for the establishment of an inter-ministerial steering committee and a multi-stakeholder national labor migration forum to strengthen and reorganize the labor migration governance system. The list of relevant ministries involved in the skills development and overseas employment is as follows:
 - Ministry of Commerce (MOC)
 - Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism (MOCAT)
 - Ministry of Education (MOE)
 - Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE)
 - Ministry of Finance (MOF)
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)
 - Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)
 - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW)
 - Ministry of Law (MOL)
 - Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE)
 - Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MOLGRD)
 - Ministry of Planning (MOP)
 - Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW)
 - Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA)
- **International Cooperation for Facilitating Migration.** International cooperation for facilitating migration have been discussed in **Appendix-3**.
- **The UAE Domestic Workers' Law.** The UAE Domestic Workers' Law allows following rights to the domestic workers (Deena, 2022):

- Compulsory one day break per week. Nevertheless, if the worker work is employed during off day, he will be entitled to a day in lieu or a cash reimbursement.
- Every worker is entitled for compulsory 12 hours of break per day. At least 8 hours of work to be consecutive.
- Workers are entitled for one moth leave in each year.
- The company/employer will bear the price of a 02-way air ticket in every 02 years.
- Employees are entitled for 30 days of sick leave; the first 15 days to be fully paid and remaining 15 days to be on half-pay.
- Workers have the right to receive a copy of their employment contract.
- The domestic worker has an obligation to respect the privacy of the employer.

39. **Ways Forward.** Hafiza (2018) stated, in order to alleviate the sufferings and to ensure rights of the workers, firstly, the concerned authority should acknowledge the difficulties faced by the workers. If difficulties are acknowledged, articulation of the remedial measures would be pragmatic and actions taken to rescue destitute would be relatively effective. Following are the ways forward:

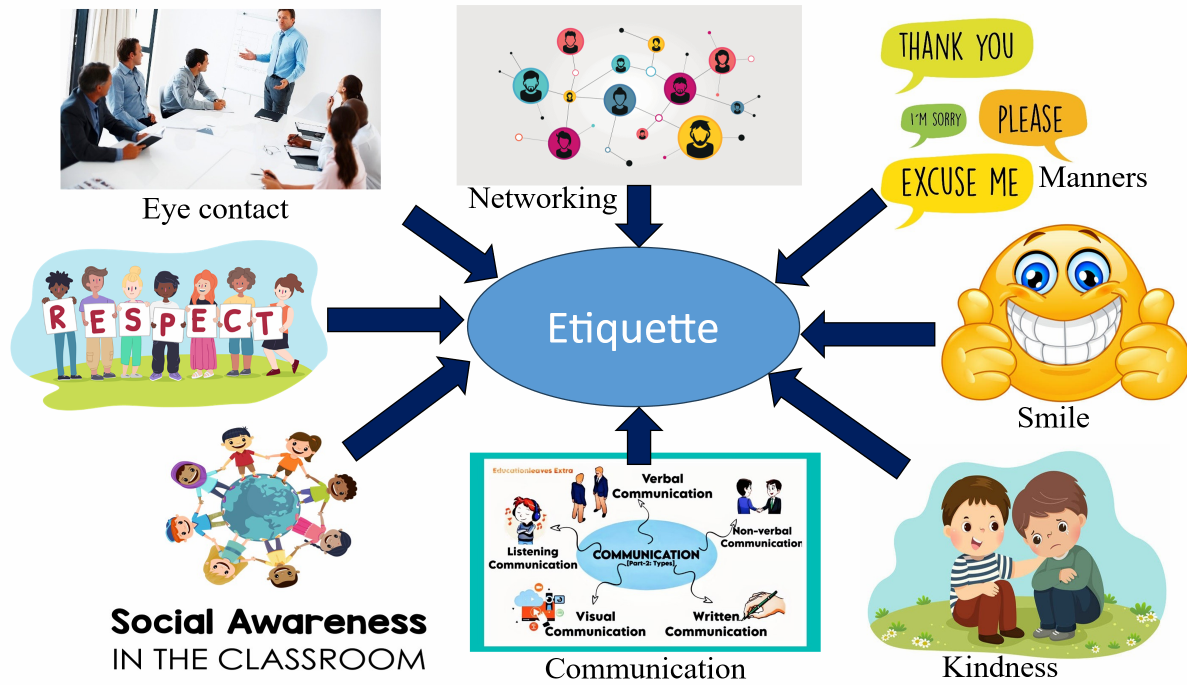
- Specific lessons on migration conventions, labor rights of the employing country, and OEMA-2013 should be taught thoroughly during PDT so that appropriate actions can be taken by the workers in case of any infringements.
- Recruiting agents should ensure presence of the workers during PDT. Following mentioned responsibilities of the recruiting agents should be known to the employees (Barkat, et al., 2014, p. 45):
 - It is the job of the recruiting agents that employers follow the service terms and conditions during the service tenure.
 - Recruiting agents must hand-over a contract paper to each emigrant delineating details about the jobs contract.
 - Recruiting agents will not ask any extra fees from the workers except service charges.

- Agents are not empowered to recruit unqualified employees for the job for which he/she is not experienced.
- Bangladeshi workers are left to the whims of their kafeel. They are unaware about where and how to redress their grievances against the employers and recruiters. Therefore, concerned labor attaches of Bangladesh embassies should be proactive to visit employees' work and living place and figure out whether or not living and working condition is in-accordance with the international law.
- While visiting the workers, concerned attaches should brief and remind workers about their rights and obligations as per employing country's national law. Workers should be reminded about the consequences of infringement of job contract.

Manners and Etiquette

40. Manners and etiquette revolve around human behavior and often used interchangeably. However, there is dichotomy between manners and etiquette and should not be confused with each other. According to Harappa (2020), manners are behaviors that reflect a person's attitude and etiquette is a code of conduct and a set of societal rules that acts as catalyst for positive human interactions. The key difference between manners and etiquette is that manners remain unchanged across communities whereas etiquette changes with a change in societal customs and norms (harappa, 2020). Etiquette provides a structure within which good manners can flourish. Hasan (2019) suggests that etiquette evolve from various aspects of social life such as manners, smile, kindness, communication, social awareness, respect, eye contact, and networking. Etiquette and its relevant aspects are shown in the *Figure-28*:

Figure 28: Etiquette and Its Relevant Aspects



Source: Hasan (2019)

A relation can be made and broken by our behavior and attitude, that is manners and etiquette (Hasan, 2019). Knowing and practicing manners and etiquette help living in a fraternity with peace and prosperity avoiding conflict. For example, human behavioral pattern changes with the change of environment. The way one behaves in an official formal program, the same way he/she does not behave while in a social or informal gathering. For each occasion, there are a prescribed manners and rules of etiquette. Learning, adapting, and practicing manners and etiquette help in multifarious ways as mentioned below (harappa, 2020):

- When someone knows the art of excepted rules of behavior, it gives him confidence to interact with people from varying background.
- One learns to listen to others and respond respectfully avoiding conflict, thus promotes effective communication skill.
- Learning the art of manners and etiquette help build social bonding and strengthening social relationship.
- Individual will be better equipped to influence other views thus he will be able to gain respect and legibility from others.

41. **Dimensions of Manners and Etiquette.** Filipino workers are considered champion in regard to manners and etiquette. Filipino workers are considered as global workforce and most demanding by majority of the global employers due to championship in good manners and etiquette. Good manners and etiquette are deeply ingrained in Filipino culture. They are well acclaimed for their manners, etiquette, warmth, and hospitality. Filipinos are taught to be respectful and courteous since their childhood (ScarletDoll, 2024). Following good manners and etiquette are taught to the Filipino children (ScarletDoll, 2024):

- Respect and politeness are ingrained in Filipino culture since childhood.
- Filipino people maintain a strong table manner when dining with others.
- Gift giving is an important aspect of social interaction in Filipino life.
- Filipino people maintain and take pride in personal bearing and appropriate attire for different occasions.
- Filipino people respect physical boundaries of others. They are taught to give personal space to others. It is uncourteous to touch someone without his/her permission.
- Children are taught to apologies in case of any mistakes or if they have offended someone. Saying ‘sorry’ is a sign of humility and a means of reconciliation.
- In Filipino culture, it is important to express gratitude. Saying ‘thank you’ is a good manner throughout the world.
- Choice of words in communication is very important to create an impact across the audience. Filipino people are well known for politeness and showing respect while speaking. Using ‘please’, ‘thank you’ when making request or asking help is a sign of good manners.

42. **State of Knowledge on Manners and Etiquette.** According to a survey conducted by City & Guild and IOM (2017, p. 29), several employers expressed concerns about the behavioral issues of Bangladeshi migrant workers, which have become a point of contention in the hiring process. These concerns have led some employers to prefer hiring workers from countries like Nepal rather than Bangladesh. One of the primary issues raised by employers is that Bangladeshi workers often lack knowledge of

internationally accepted rules of behavior, manners, and etiquette, which are critical in a globalized workplace.

KI-3 also highlights that in many cases; Bangladeshi workers show a lack of awareness regarding proper workplace conduct. This ignorance of global workplace norms can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts, especially in multinational or diverse environments. For instance, workers may be unaware of how to interact respectfully with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds or may inadvertently violate professional codes of conduct due to differences in communication styles, dressing norms, or workplace hierarchy.

Such behavioral gaps are particularly concerning in customer-facing roles, where interpersonal skills, politeness, and an understanding of local customs are essential. This lack of cultural sensitivity and behavioral training can hinder workers from performing effectively, limit their chances of career advancement, and negatively impact their employer's reputation, leading to reluctance in hiring workers from Bangladesh.

Employers often prefer workers who are not only skilled in their trade but also exhibit professional behavior and respect for cultural differences, which are key to maintaining a harmonious and productive work environment. Therefore, there is a pressing need to address these behavioral gaps through training programs that focus on international workplace norms, manners, and etiquette. Improving these soft skills would enhance the employability of Bangladeshi workers and ensure they are competitive in the global labor market.

43. **Ways Forward.** According to Hasan (2019), there are three stages of learning manners and etiquette as follows:

- **Stage-1: At Home with Parents and Guardians.** The first stage of learning manners and etiquette begins at home, guided by parents and guardians. As the saying goes, "every home is a university, and the parents are the teachers" (Theyunion, 2022). Parents are the first and most influential educators in a child's life, with children often learning more from them than from teachers, peers, or social media. The lessons imparted by parents shape a child's behavior and attitudes throughout their life. However, due to a lack of formal education and an ineffective learning system, many parents in Bangladesh are unaware of the basics of manners and etiquette. Unfortunately, many parents neither practice nor know

how to teach these essential life skills to their children. To address this gap, parenting courses should be organized to equip potential parents with the knowledge of how to foster good manners and etiquette in their children.

- **Stage-2: At School by Teachers.** The second stage of learning manners and etiquette takes place in school, where teachers play a crucial role. Classroom education on good manners helps children grow into well-rounded, respectful citizens, colleagues, and family members. Knowledge of manners and etiquette can significantly impact a student's success and future career (Richey, 2021). However, in Bangladesh, many teachers, especially at the lower levels of education, are untrained and lack the confidence to impart these essential lessons. Even well-trained teachers in higher educational institutions are often overwhelmed with large syllabi and the pressure of balancing teaching with coaching, leaving little time to teach values such as manners and etiquette. To improve this, the inclusion of manners and etiquette in the national curriculum could enhance the overall education system. Additionally, TOT courses should be implemented to equip teachers with the skills needed to teach these subjects. Once teachers are properly trained, they will be better able to guide students toward becoming well-mannered global citizens, ready to work in multicultural and multinational environments.
- **Stage-3: In Professional or Working Environments.** The third stage of learning manners and etiquette occurs in the professional or working environment. In many countries, the military includes etiquette and manners training as part of their curriculum, helping maintain a disciplined and respectful atmosphere both in and out of the field. Similarly, government officials undergo training in manners and etiquette during their basic courses to maintain proper decorum in the workplace. Given the importance of these skills in professional settings, it is essential for organizations and institutions to integrate training on manners and etiquette into their professional development programs (PDT). Such training would promote a respectful and productive work environment, essential for fostering effective teamwork and professional growth.

Appendix -1: International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers (ICRMW) and Member of their Families-1990

Dated: 18 December 1990, General Assembly Resolution 45/158

Salient aspects of the **ICRMW** are enumerated below (UN, 1990):

1. **Article-7.** In accordance with the human rights, all migrants to be treated without distinction of any kind such as, sex, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or any other status.
2. **Article-8.** Migrant workers including their family members shall be free to leave any state including state of their origin except those are provided by law to protect national security and public order. Migrant workers and their family members have the right to enter and remain in the state of origin.
3. **Article-9.** The right of life of migrant workers and their family members shall be protected by law.
4. **Article-10.** No migrant workers or their family members shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

5. **Article-11.** No migrant workers or their family members shall be held in slavery or servitude or compulsory labor.
6. **Article-12.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
7. **Article-13.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
8. **Article-14.** No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, correspondence or other communications, or to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation. Each migrant worker and member of his or her family shall have the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.
9. **Article-15.** No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be arbitrarily deprived of property, whether owned individually or in association with others.
10. **Article-16.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to liberty and security of person.
11. **Article-17.** Migrant workers and members of their families who are deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person and for their cultural identity.
12. **Article-18.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to equality with nationals of the State concerned before the courts and tribunals.
13. **Article-19.** No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be held guilty of any criminal offence on account of any act or omission that did not constitute a criminal offence under national or international law at the time when the criminal offence was committed, nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time when it was committed.
14. **Article-20.** No migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be imprisoned merely on the ground of failure to fulfil a contractual obligation.
15. **Article-21.** It shall be unlawful for anyone, other than a public official duly authorized by law, to confiscate, destroy or attempt to destroy identity documents, documents authorizing entry to or stay, residence or establishment in the national territory

or work permits. No authorized confiscation of such documents shall take place without delivery of a detailed receipt. In no case shall it be permitted to destroy the passport or equivalent document of a migrant worker or a member of his or her family.

16. **Article-22.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall not be subject to measures of collective expulsion. Each case of expulsion shall be examined and decided individually.

17. **Article-23.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to have recourse to the protection and assistance of the consular or diplomatic authorities of their State of origin or of a State representing the interests of that State whenever the rights recognized in the present Convention are impaired. In particular, in case of expulsion, the person concerned shall be informed of this right without delay and the authorities of the expelling State shall facilitate the exercise of such right.

18. **Article-24.** Every migrant worker and every member of his or her family shall have the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

19. **Article-25.** Migrant workers shall enjoy treatment not less favorable than that which applies to nationals of the State of employment.

20. **Article-26.** States Parties recognize the right of migrant workers and members of their families to take part in meetings and activities of trade unions and of any other associations established in accordance with law, with a view to protecting their economic, social, cultural and other interests, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned.

21. **Article-27.** With respect to social security, migrant workers and members of their families shall enjoy in the State of employment the same treatment granted to nationals in so far as they fulfil the requirements provided for by the applicable legislation of that State and the applicable bilateral and multilateral treaties.

22. **Article-28.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to receive any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of their life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Such emergency medical care shall not be refused them by reason of any irregularity with regard to stay or employment.

23. **Article-29.** Each child of a migrant worker shall have the right to a name, to registration of birth and to a nationality.

24. **Article-30.** Each child of a migrant worker shall have the basic right of access to education on the basis of equality of treatment with nationals of the State concerned. Access to public pre-school educational institutions or schools shall not be refused or limited by reason of the irregular situation with respect to stay or employment of either parent or by reason of the irregularity of the child's stay in the State of employment.

25. **Article-31.** States Parties shall ensure respect for the cultural identity of migrant workers and members of their families and shall not prevent them from maintaining their cultural links with their State of origin. States Parties may take appropriate measures to assist and encourage efforts in this respect.

26. **Article-32.** Upon the termination of their stay in the State of employment, migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to transfer their earnings and savings and, in accordance with the applicable legislation of the States concerned, their personal effects and belongings.

27. **Article-33.** Migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to be informed by the State of origin, the State of employment or the State of transit as the case may be concerning:

- a. Their rights arising out of the present Convention.
- b. The conditions of their admission, their rights and obligations under the law and practice of the State concerned and such other matters as will enable them to comply with administrative or other formalities in that State.
- c. States Parties shall take all measures they deem appropriate to disseminate the said information or to ensure that it is provided by employers, trade unions or other appropriate bodies or institutions. As appropriate, they shall co-operate with other States concerned.
- d. Such adequate information shall be provided upon request to migrant workers and members of their families, free of charge, and, as far as possible, in a language they are able to understand.

28. **Article-34.** Nothing in the present part of the Convention shall have the effect of relieving migrant workers and the members of their families from either the obligation to comply with the laws and regulations of any State of transit and the State of

employment or the obligation to respect the cultural identity of the inhabitants of such States.

29. **Article-35.** Nothing in the present part of the Convention shall be interpreted as implying the regularization of the situation of migrant workers or members of their families who are non-documented or in an irregular situation or any right to such regularization of their situation, nor shall it prejudice the measures intended to ensure sound and equitable-conditions for international migration as provided in part VI of the present Convention.

Appendix-2: Migration Management and Governing Institutions in Bangladesh

1. **General.** MOEWOE is the focal ministry for labor migration policies and program implementation. Migration is a concept that encompasses a wider range of cross-border movement such as forced migration, refugee movements, trafficking, reintegration, and family reunification (IOM, 2019, p. 13). MOEWOE has following organs to promote overseas employment from Bangladesh (IOM, 2019, p. 16):

- Government Institutions
- Private Sectors.
- Development Partners

Civil Society Organizations also play a vital role for migration from Bangladesh (IOM, 2019, p. 9). A good number of migrations for work also take place through following medias (BMET & ILO, 2015, p. 8):

- Social networks.
- Family members.
- Relatives.

- Friends, etcetera.

Following institutes are involved to facilitate migration from Bangladesh:

2. **BMET.** According to IOM (2019, p. 16), under the authority of the Emigration Ordinance 1982, the BMET was tasked to regulate labor migration process which later replaced by Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 (BMET & ILO, 2015, p. 7). BMET is the main executive arm of MOEWOE and responsible for monitoring private recruitment agencies, facilitating the process of recruitment and migration of Bangladeshis for overseas employment including overseeing DEMOs and TTCs. DEMOs and TTCs act as district-level decentralized service points for managing labor migration from Bangladesh (IOM, 2019, p. 16). Currently there are 42 DEMOs, 64 TTCs, and 6 Institute of Marine Technology (IMTs) in Bangladesh. Both DEMOs and TTCs operate under the authority of BMET. Currently, aspirant migrants in Bangladesh are required to complete online registration, record their fingerprint, and collect a digital smart card from selected DEMOs. TTCs offer a wide range of skills training programs for both men and women. Migrant workers also receive mandatory pre-departure orientation which prepares them for a career in a foreign country and for living and working environments in destination countries. The pre-departure orientation programs cover information related to rights and regulations, cultural aspects, language, climate, and complaint mechanisms and support systems in country of destination.

BMET provides 02 types of pre-departure orientation training in 62 of its training centers: a 3-day mandatory pre-departure orientation and a 7-day pre-departure orientation for labor migrants to the Republic of Korea. In 2017, the range of skills training offered by the TTCs included following:

- Automobile maintenance.
- Electrician and electronics.
- Electrical machine maintenance.
- Refrigeration and air conditioning.
- Mason.
- Rod binder and tiles fixer.
- Welding and fabrication.

- Mid-level ready-made garments supervisor.
 - Merchandizing for ready-made garments sector.
 - Civil construction.
 - Graphics design.
 - Machine tools.
 - Plumbing.
 - Pipe fitting.
3. **Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL).** The key purpose of BOESL is to deliver efficient, honest, and quick services to the esteemed foreign employers in the field of employment and deployment of manpower (BOESL, 2023). BOESL is directly responsible for migration management to China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea (IOM, 2019, p. 11).
 4. **Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB).** PKB's services include loans to aspirant migrants and reintegration loans to returnees.
 5. **Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB).** WEWB offers welfare services to migrants and their families in Bangladesh.
 6. **Labor Attaches.** In Country of Destination, the labor attachés work closely with WEWB to channel services to Bangladeshi migrants. Currently, there are 29 labor wings in Bangladeshi diplomatic missions (IOM, 2019, p. 16). The officers of these labor wings monitor the welfare of workers, inspect workplaces, provide legal aid, and facilitate the return of deceased migrants.
 7. **Industry Skill Councils (ICS) in Bangladesh.** The ISC is a TVET reform initiative by the Government of Bangladesh, supported by the ILO and funded by the EU, aimed at restructuring TVET and strengthening industry-national training system links. ISCs facilitate skill development by bringing together employers, workers, and government agencies to address sector-specific needs. They advise on skill development, monitor industry practices, expand industry-training partnerships, and provide industry-specific training for instructors. Technical Skill Councils (TSCs) within ISCs ensure the relevance of competency standards.

As noted by the ILO (2013), it is essential for training institutions to stay updated on industry needs, employment trends, and technology to produce relevant skilled workers. The development of a more effective skills data system in Bangladesh, integrating industry and government data, ensures accurate and timely demand-side information. As of 2024, ISCs have been established in five sectors: agro-food processing, transport equipment, leather and leather goods, hospitality and tourism, and IT. These sectors host Skills and Career Development Centers (SCDCs), offering specialized training, fostering partnerships, and developing curricula. Two Centers of Excellence in leather technology and agro-food processing further enhance skill development. The government, under the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP), is committed to expanding the ISC network with industry and development partners, ensuring sustainability and coordination across sectors. Future plans include building capacity in existing councils, establishing new ones, and transforming similar councils into fully operational ISCs through collaboration with the Asian Development Bank.

8. **Private Sectors.** According to IOM (2019, p. 12) Private Channel Recruitment at the private level is managed by more than 1,000 licensed recruitment agencies. BAIRA is the main trade association for recruitment agencies. MOEWOE through BMET regulates recruitment agencies by issuing, suspending, and cancelling licenses. Fines for non-compliance are levied and deducted from Government-held deposits. According to IOM (2019, p. 17), private sectors refer to recruitment agencies and their agents and subagents. The recruitment agencies and their agents are registered entities, but the subagents are not legally registered. Subagents include members of the aspirant migrants' social networks such as relatives, friends, and neighbors. Approximately 35% of labor migration visas are procured by recruitment agencies, more than 60% are procured through a migrants' social networks, and about 2% cent are procured by BOESL (IOM, 2019, p. 17).

9. **Development Partners.** According to IOM (2019, p. 18), several development partners and intergovernmental organizations such as UK, the USA, Switzerland, ILO, IOM, UN, etcetera work with Bangladesh to promote safe and regular migration as follows:

Appendix-3: International Cooperation for Governing Labor Migration

1. **General.** Bilateral Labor Agreement (BLAs) and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are 02 major instruments to stipulate the terms and conditions under which Bangladeshi migrant workers are employed in Country of Destination (IOM, 2019, p. 22). As of 2017, Bangladesh has signed 02 BLAs with Qatar and Kuwait, and several MOU with China, Hong Kong SAR, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Maldives, Malaysia, Oman, KSA, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the UAE. As Bangladesh strives to promote skilled migration, Employment Permit System (EPS) with the ROK and Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) with Japan are useful steps in meeting the demand for skilled labor with trained labor migrants from Bangladesh. Both EPS and TITP are managed by BOESL.
2. **Regional Cooperation.** Bangladesh is an active member of many regional cooperations like Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, Bali Process, and Budapest Process, etcetera (IOM, 2019, p. 22). The above mentioned cooperations facilitates communication between manpower receiving and manpower sending countries. Details of the regional cooperations are appended below:
3. **Colombo Process.** Colombo Process is primarily a platform for manpower sending or origin countries (IOM, 2019, p. 22).
4. **Abu Dhabi Dialogue.** Abu Dhabi Dialogue is a platform for both manpower sending and receiving countries (IOM, 2019, p. 22).

5. **Bali Process and Budapest Process.** Both Bali and Budapest Process focus on irregular migration and human trafficking in the Asia Pacific region (IOM, 2019, p. 22).
6. **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).** GFMD is a government-led voluntary and informal mechanism for cooperation among states on migration issues (IOM, 2019, p. 23).
7. **Global Compact for Migration.** Global Compact for Migration was proposed by the Government of Bangladesh at the UN Secretary General's office. The Global Compact for Migration-related negotiations cover 06 thematic issues such as human rights of all migrants, drivers of migration, international cooperation, governance of migration, contributions of migrants, diasporas, and smuggling of migrants (IOM, 2019, p. 23).