

Decent Employment for the Youth (Goal 8 & Beyond)

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VNR 2020 of Bangladesh: Positioning Non-State Actors

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Discussion Points

1. Introduction: Structure, Composition and Challenges of Youth Labour Force
2. SDGs on Decent Employment for Youth
3. Role of Non-State Actors in Ensuring Decent Employment for Youth
4. Conclusion: Suggestions for the VNR

1. Introduction: Structure, Composition and Challenges of Youth Labour Force

❖ The government has committed to create 30 million additional jobs by 2030

- A large portion of this additional jobs would ensure employment of country's 11 million youth (aged 15-24 years).
- However, a 'business as usual rate of employment growth' would create only half (14.8 million) of the targeted jobs by 2030 which will definitely deprive a large section of youth.
- Targeted initiatives are required in order to address different types of vulnerability youth in the labour market.

❖ Youth labour market is underdeveloped

- About 25% of country's working-age population is youth (aged between 15-24 years); but only 18% of country's labour force fall within that category (LFS, 2016).
- The participation of both male and female youth workers is much lower (54.7% and 25.9% respectively) compared to that of the adult work force (about 94.0% and 39.0% respectively)
- Youth unemployment is considerably high (13.0%) compared to the national average (4.0%).
- Only 9% youth work in the formal jobs which is about half of the national average (17%) - majority of youth struggle to get decent employment ⁴

1. Introduction: Structure, Composition and Challenges of Youth Labour Force

❖ Different Categories of Youth Labour Force Confront Multiple Challenges

- *National Youth Policy 2017* (draft) has identified 16 categories of youth based on their needs
 - In terms of vulnerability, youth population can be categorised into 12
- *Female youth* are in vulnerable state
 - Only 25.9% of them participated in the labour market compared to 54.7% of their male peers.
 - Their share in NEET is significantly higher than that of male, although they are by and large at same state in terms of academic qualification
 - Female youth are more prone to informal jobs because of their limited skill, lack of mobility and limited level of aspirations etc.
- *Marginlaised youths* including dalit, plain land and hill tracts ethnic minorities, slum dwellers, physically challenged, madrasah educated, char dwellers and LGBTQ, has confronted deeper social and economic challenges.
 - Reflected in higher share of unemployment (about 23%), NEET (32%), landlessness and poverty.
 - These youth confronted multiple challenges in entering the job market such as livelihood, education, training and employment related challenges.
- *Youth in different districts* are not equally accessed to jobs
 - Youth unemployment is the highest in Chandpur, Jhinedah, Kurigram, Magura, Patuakhali, Pabna and Thakurgaon.

1. Introduction: Structure, Composition and Challenges of Youth Labour Force

❖ Youth Compete with Adult in Same Jobs

- Given the narrow base and limited diversity in the job market, youth has to compete with adult in almost similar types of jobs
 - These include teaching, personal services, sales, agriculture labour, fisheries & forestry, construction, metal, machinery, handicraft and printing, food processing, machine operators, and mining works.
 - Youth are found to be involved at a larger share in jobs related to food processing and garment manufacturing (17.1 per cent vs.5.9 per cent of adult labour force);
 - Youth are less-preferred because of their limited skills in communication, IT related knowledge, lack of attitude to work in group, problem-solving and independent thinking capacity (Citizen's Platform for SDGs, 2017).
- Irrespective of gender, location, level of education and employment status, majority of youth perceived that future job market will be more complicated for the youth (BRAC, 2019).

1. Introduction: Structure, Composition and Challenges of Youth Labour Force

❖ National Policies related to Youth Employment

- A total of 17 plans, policies, acts and rules have been identified which address concerns of youths.
 - The issue of youth employment has been addressed in the *National Youth Policy 2017*, the *National Skills Development Policy, 2011*, the *Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020*, the *Expatriate and Overseas Employment Policy 2016* and the *Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013*.
 - Key issues highlighted are establishment of network of training and technical service centers, quality improvement of tertiary education and preparing university graduates at international standard, self-employment and enterprise development through quality education, safe migration and overseas employment and anti-discriminatory legislation in the formal sector etc.
- The draft '*National Jobs Strategy for Bangladesh*' acknowledges the above-mentioned issues
 - Proposes some new measures such as introduction of employment exchange scheme for the youth.
- Youth related policies and measures could be further targeted and streamlined by amending/introducing new measures under different policies.

2. SDGs on Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Four Categories of Youth Employment Indicators

- SDG-related targets and indicators on youth employment can be categorised into four (World Youth Report 2019):
 - *Fostering economic growth and market development* (i.e. 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.10, 8a, 8.9 & 9.2);
 - *Addressing human capital and access to employment opportunities for youth* (8.6, 4.3 and 4.4);
 - *Labour regulation and social protections* (8.5, 8.8, 10.7, 10.c and 8.7) and
 - *International cooperation on delivering sustainable outcomes for youth* (8b and 8.4).
- Ensuring decent employment require achieving targets related to goal 8 and beyond
- The government has set milestones for each of the indicators to be attained by 2020, 2025 and 2030.
 - A gap analysis of those milestones could provide a basic understanding on the progress.

2. SDGs on Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Progress in Youth Employment related Targets is Not Satisfactory

- Indicators related to ‘fostering economic growth and market development’ are, by and large, on track in achieving 2020 milestones.
 - The extent of impact of robust economic growth on youth employment is unclear because of absence of strong linkages of macroeconomic, fiscal and sectoral policies on youth skill development and employment
 - Weak response of the private sector in terms of production and investment targeting the youth.
- Indicators related to human capital and access to employment opportunities for youth portray sluggish growth.
 - Unavailability of recent data (such as 4.3 and 4.4) and missing of milestones (4.4) of different indicators made it difficult to assess the progress.
 - Accessibility, availability and affordability of education and training for the marginalized youth have been seriously hampered due to poor public allocation, low quality and inefficient public services.
 - Lack of access to information on education, training and employment as well as absence of accountability and transparency of public service providers (related to SDG 16.6) disproportionately affect the marginalized youths in the job market (CPD, 2020).

2. SDGs on Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Progress in Youth Employment related Targets is Not Satisfactory

- In case of assessing the progress of indicators related to labour regulation and social protections, unavailability of data is a major challenge
 - Lack of milestones of some indicators and non-reporting of important indicator (e.g. 8.8.2: Increase in national compliance of labour rights).
 - The decline in number of fatal accidents is positive; however, rise in non-fatal accidents is a major concern.
 - Remittance cost has declined by undertaking various measures.
- Overall, national compliance initiatives on labour rights across all sectors is largely inadequate
 - Despite undertaking major initiatives in the major manufacturing sector, RMG during 2013-2019.
 - Slow or limited progress in labour rights and social protection is likely to disproportionately affect the youth workforce.
- Data on indicators related to international cooperation on delivering sustainable outcomes for youth (8b and 8.4) are missing.
 - Government, in technical cooperation of the ILO, has prepared a draft national employment strategy which has addressed a number of youth related issues and concerns.

2. SDGs on Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Allocation of National Budget for Youth Development and Employment is Inadequate

- The national budget has so far not yet prepared any thematic budget on youth related issues.
- National budget for ministries related to employment and youth development shows that allocation for the Ministry of Youth and Sports has increased by 17% per year since 2015
 - This rise was largely attributed to higher allocation for non-development budget.
 - During this period, allocation for development budget under this ministry has declined.
 - Allocation for the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has registered a rise by 22.6% per year since 2015 which was mainly happened due to enhancing development budget (32% per year).
- Unfortunately the lack of progress in implementing concerned SDG indicators portray that ongoing budgetary allocation is not sufficient to attain the expected outcome.

3. Role of Non-State Actors in Ensuring Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Role of CSOs

- The CSOs in Bangladesh are working on different issues related to youth development
 - Youth leadership, youth led campaigns, life skills for youth, job placement and decent work for youth and youth entrepreneurship.
 - In SDG point of view those are linked with 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6 and 8.8 (Rahman et al., 2020).
- Some of the notable mention of those activities
 - ‘Apprenticeship model modernised to serve school dropouts and marginalised youth’ by BRAC;
 - ‘Education for youth empowerment’ by the Save the Children;
 - ‘Tech-based innovations in dairy value chain’ by CARE Bangladesh;
 - ‘Reducing unemployment among rural youth through non-farm jute enterprise development’ by the Practical Action;
 - ‘Women’s café’ by ActionAid Bangladesh;
 - ‘Giving voice to migration-related grievances’ by the British Council; and
 - ‘Young persons with disabilities to create opportunities for self-employment in undertaking green businesses’ by Access Bangladesh Foundation.

3. Role of Non-State Actors in Ensuring Decent Employment for Youth

❖ Role of Private Sector

- Private sector in general has been directly contributing towards achieving goal 8
 - Through generating employment, ensuring workplace safety & security, workers' rights, gender equality and providing decent wages.
 - Different private sector organisations such as FBCCI, MCCI, DCCI, BGMEA and BKMEA and other organizations have undertaken specific initiatives targeting different goals and indicators of SDGs.
- Notable private sector initiatives include
 - Establishment of technical training schools (by BGMEA and BKMEA);
 - Skills for Employment Investment Programme (SEIP) (by BGMEA, BKMEA, BEF, BASIS, BTMA, BEIOA, AEOSIB, LFMEAB, BAPA, ISC & BWCCI);
 - Capacity building programme for mid-level management of factories (by CCCI);
 - Organizing conferences and workshops on youth employment (by DCCI, JCI);
 - Sustainability reporting (by BGMEA and different companies).
- BEF in consultation with leading private sector associations, has prepared the SDG implementation strategy for the private sector.
 - Identified four 'high priority goals' and five 'medium priority goals'
- Private sector and CSOs can take lessons from global good practices.

4. Conclusion: Suggestions for the VNR

❖ An integrated SDG frame led by goal 8 to implement decent employment for the youth

- The other supporting goals would be goal 4, goal 9 and goal 10.
- This frame will address the youth employment issue through four means/instruments.
- In the national monitoring frame for SDGs, NSAs should have specific role (e.g. associate partners) in implementing different SDG targets.

❖ Lack of milestones, missing data and non-reporting of key indicators have weakened the review process

- Government in consultation with the private sector and CSOs should set milestones of missing indicators for the years 2025 and 2030 and include proxy indicators in case of unavailability of data.
- National targets may be fixed for a set of proxy indicators related to decent employment for youth such as district level youth unemployment, youth NEET, training for youth, formal and informal participation in the labour market by the youth and youth harassment at workplace.

4. Conclusion: Suggestions for the VNR

❖ Formulating 'National Youth Budget'

- Government may consider formulating national youth budget which will address multi-dimensional aspects related to youth employment such as youth education, training, decent employment, gender equality, employment for the disabilities and marginalized groups.
- This budget should highlight initiatives undertaken both by the state and non-state actors.

❖ Enhance budget allocation and ensure effective public service delivery

- Government should allocate more budget particularly targeting improvement of quality of training, recruitment of competent trainers, IT related education and training, local-need based skill development training, workplace safety and security and workers' rights for youth and marginalized.
- Ensuring efficiency, transparency and accountability of public services in education, training and employment for the marginalized youths is critically important (CPD, 2020).

4. Conclusion: Suggestions for the VNR

❖ Formulating National Strategy for Youth Employment

- Proposed strategy should highlight on youth development, gender empowerment, concerns of marginalized youths, and preparedness of the youth for IT and enabled services, adopting new technologies by the youth.
- Formalization of jobs would be an important step.
- A right-based approach needs to be considered in addressing decent employment related issues for the youth.
- Further improvement of youth related policies and measures will be needed which include macroeconomic, sectoral, enterprise development, education and training, labour demand and labour law and legislation and labour market related policies etc. (ILO, 2015).

❖ Effective collaboration between State and Non-state Actors in Ensuring Decent Employment for Youth

- Taking lessons from global good practices state and non-state actors may undertake new and innovative collaborative programmes targeting youth employment.
- These may include establishment of coding schools; training on digital skills, career guidance, workshops on decent work, anti-harassment, prevention of violent extremism, institute management, liaison with industries, etc.; research on the soft skills, digital jobs and work-based learning, etc.

Thank you.