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**NATIONAL STRATEGY  
FOR PROMOTION OF GENDER  
EQUALITY IN TECHNICAL AND  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING (TVET) 2012**

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**NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL SECRETARIAT  
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH  
IN COLLABORATION WITH ILO  
TVET REFORM PROJECT**

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## Foreword

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The empowerment of women through education and training is widely recognized as the key to unlocking economic opportunity in many developing countries. Women need equal access to education and training to acquire or improve their skills which will allow them better job opportunities and improved social status. Research across the globe highlights the socioeconomic benefits of women's economic empowerment at both micro and macro levels. In 2005 the Millennium Development Goals were adjusted to include "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people". Within the UN system, the ILO takes the lead in reporting on trends concerning the achievement of this goal. Since its inception in 1919, the ILO has been devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

In Bangladesh, women are still under-represented in the labour market, particularly in the informal employment, characterized by low pay, poor working conditions and lack of protection.

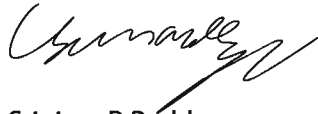
The Government of Bangladesh recognizes the need to reduce and eventually eliminate the current disparities which exist between female and male employment rates in the labour market. An important step towards achieving this is to ensure that women have equal opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge to secure decent work. The National Skills Development Policy 2011 states that *"women should have equal access to both formal and non-formal programs so they can acquire or improve their knowledge and skills for meaningful employment or upgrade existing employment opportunities"*.



The National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET in Bangladesh transfers the recommendations of the National Skills Development Policy into a realistic framework of clear priorities and targets. It was developed by a Gender Working Group, comprising of 15 representatives from key government ministries and departments, employers, workers and civil society organizations, with the support of ILO TVET Project and the National Skills Development Council Secretariat. It provides an overview of the current status and nature of gender inequalities in TVET, highlights the priority areas for action, discusses a number of steps to promote equal participation of women in TVET, seeks to break gender stereotypes, and outlines the way forward.

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The strategy is the first policy initiative of its kind in the TVET sector in Bangladesh, an important milestone towards women taking a greater role in the skills development system and a fundamental step forward towards Bangladesh becoming a middle-income country by 2021. We thank the Gender Working Group and Jyoti Tuladhar, International Consultant, for their excellent contribution in preparing the strategy and Srinivas B Reddy, Skills Training Advisor, ILO TVET Reform Project, for initiating, guiding and technically supporting the formulation of the strategy. We would also like to thank Saadya Hamdani, Senior Gender Specialist, Decent Work Team (DWT), New Delhi and Akiko Sakamoto, Skills and Employability Specialist, DWT, Bangkok for their extensive review, suggestions and inputs. On behalf of the National Skills Development Secretariat, the Gender Working Group and the ILO, we present this draft strategy and solicit your support to realize gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the skills development sector in Bangladesh.



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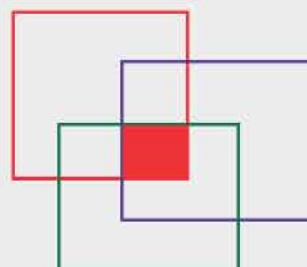
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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information & Statistics
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCC	Bangladesh Computer Council
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BITAC	Bangladesh Industrial Technology Assistance Centre
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BTEB	Bangladesh Technical Education Board
CMES	Centre for Mass Education and Science
DTE	Directorate of Technical Education
DUET	Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
ECNSDC	Executive Committee of National Skills Development Council
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GWG	Gender Working Group
HRD	Human Resource Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISC	Industry Skills Council
IT	Information Technology
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NTC	National Training Council
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework
NVQF	National Vocational Qualification Framework
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PLAGE II	Policy, Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality Phase II Project
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDP	Skills Development Project
STEP	Skills and Training Enhancement Project
TSC	Technical School and College
TTC	Technical Training Centre
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## Executive Summary

Women's participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh is strikingly low, ranging from 9% to 13% in public institutions and 33% in private institutions, the average is approximately 24%. National Skills Development Policy (NSDP, 2011)<sup>1</sup> for Bangladesh clearly states that "given the current low participation rates of women in skills development, special efforts are necessary to correct this gender imbalance, particularly in the formal training system".

The overall aim of this National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET is to develop a strategic framework with a clear set of priorities and targets with performance accountability mechanisms providing some specific and concrete actions and activities to increase female participation in TVET through a comprehensive and holistic intermix of social, economic, institutional and systemic transformational measures.

These activities will be broadly inline with the already approved measures for women in section 14.5 of NSDP. At the same time, the strategy will also take a few steps forward and propose innovative methods to achieve wider gender equality goals that will support and complement the main purpose of achieving gender balance within the TVET system. The National Strategy is intended to be incorporated in the National Skills Development Council (NSDC) Action Plan.

### **Anchored on this, the more specific objectives pursued by this National Strategy are to:**

- Increase female participation in formal TVET institutions by at least 60% from the present 24% to reach 40% by 2020;
- Increase female employment by at least 30%;
- Increase quotas for female teachers (30%) and female staff (20%);
- Quotas for females in TVET management should be at least 10%;
- Enhance positive attitudinal shifts in views regarding female trades and employment;
- Ensure gender friendly environment in education and training institutions and work places;
- Create linkages between industry demand and supply for skills;
- Establish extensive gender-responsive support systems and counseling services;
- Accommodate skills training for workers in the informal economy also;
- Establish adequate data management system to capture sex disaggregated data on TVET and:



<sup>1</sup> The NSDP was approved by Cabinet on 30 January 2012.

These specific objectives have been clustered into six Strategic Objectives with several priority actions proposed for each objective.

<b>Strategic Objective 1:</b>	Achieve 40% female enrollment in TVET by 2020
<b>Strategic Objective 2:</b>	Transform mind sets and attitudes to eliminate negative perception for women in training and employment especially towards “non-traditional skills”.
<b>Strategic Objective 3:</b>	Establish gender responsive environment with appropriate support systems.
<b>Strategic Objective 4:</b>	Create and strengthen linkages between demand and supply of skills, and accommodate skills training for informal workers.
<b>Strategic Objective 5:</b>	Strengthen TVET institutional capacity on gender competence at all levels.
<b>Strategic Objective 6:</b>	Establish adequate data management system to capture sex disaggregated data on TVET.

The NSDC Secretariat, in collaboration with the ILO TVET Reform Project has taken this initiative to boost up the rate of female participation. This strategy has been developed with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders from the private and public sectors and with active cooperation from an informally organized Gender Working Group (GWG). The group comprises of 15 representatives from government ministries and departments and 3 civil society organizations. It defines the major action areas for implementation, the primary actors to be involved in undertaking the action and the support mechanisms needed for each of these areas to be geared for action. The main thrust of the strategy is that promotion of gender equality in TVET relies on an outcome-based system and dedicated and trusting cooperation among stakeholders who will promote gender mainstreaming as a crosscutting theme throughout the system.

Eight guiding principles for this strategy are: (i) equality of access and opportunity for women and men, (ii) equity between women and men, (iii) gender mainstreaming as a crosscutting principle, (iv) flexibility and diversification, (v) demand orientation, (vi) lifelong learning, (vii) outcome based system and (viii) feasibility and practicality.

For the implementation of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality, it is proposed to dovetail into the already existing structure set up by the NSDP (2011), and be integrated into the 14th key task in the NSDC Action Plan on Equity issues. The Equity Advisory Committee in BTEB<sup>2</sup> will monitor the gender dimensions in the quality assurance and take up regulatory responsibilities. Gender mainstreaming is a crosscutting issue and it will be mandatory to integrate gender dimensions into all the key tasks of the NSDC Action Plan.

<sup>2</sup> This is mentioned in section 20.13 (g) of the NSDP (2011)



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The currently functioning informal Gender Working Group is proposed to be formalized as an Advisory Committee and attached to the NSDC Secretariat. It will be further strengthened and assigned the responsibility of advisory supervision for effective implementation of the Gender Strategic Action Plan.



## Introduction

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- 1.1 Competency as the function of knowledge, skills and attitude has been recognized as a pivotal stepping block to achieve empowerment of women. Over the last few years there has been an increasing felt need that a training and skills development policy and TVET gender strategy must be emphasized in countries with growing economies such as Bangladesh. Both men and women, if equipped with market-responsive skills, can make significant contribution to their own well-being and the country's economy. Many training interventions, however, do not cater for the specific needs of women who are under-represented in formal training programmes and often directed towards typical female occupations. Gender differences in training provision, methodology, training content and transition to labour markets have not been taken into account and the absence of follow up and result-based objectives (SMART) is not providing the required data for evaluation.
- 1.2 The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP, 2011) for Bangladesh clearly states that "given the current low participation rates of women in skills development, special efforts are necessary to correct this gender imbalance, particularly in the formal training system". Female participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Bangladesh is strikingly low, ranging from 9% to 13% in public institutions and 33% in private institutions. The average calculated is approximately 24%.
- 1.3 The Government of Bangladesh has unequivocally signaled its commitment to address all kinds of structural, direct and indirect barriers that impede the full participation of women in the economic sphere by ratifying ILO Conventions 100 on Equal Remuneration in January 1998 and 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) in June 1972, and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) in November 1984. The CEDAW Committee<sup>3</sup> has applauded Bangladesh for adopting "a number of policies, programmes and plans of action to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination against women, such as the Policy for the Advancement of Women, aimed at eradicating gender disparities and the "Vision 2021" programme aimed at mainstreaming of gender issues. The Committee also praised the establishment in 2009 of the National Council for Women and Child Development, headed by the Prime Minister, and the establishment of Gender Responsive Budget in ten ministries in 2009-2011".
- 1.4 Bangladesh has made some great strides in promoting gender equality in the education sector by managing to close the gender gap in gross and net enrolment ratios in primary and secondary education. However, this success has not been replicated in achieving gender parity at the levels of technical skills development and in particular the TVET sector. In fact, the TVET sector is

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<sup>3</sup> Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on Bangladesh, 48th Session, 17 January - 4 February 2011

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characterized by gender inequalities and stereotyping, reinforcing gender division of labour in occupational segregation in the labour market which is a constraint for women to enter into new, non-traditional and higher income professions. Girls and boys are channeled into different paths, usually resulting in different outcomes and in particular different earnings. The social mindset of families and girls'/women's own views need to be changed, to remove gender disparities in access to opportunities at receiving training in diversified skills so that the life status of both women and men is enhanced.

- 1.5 The National Skills Development Council (NSDC) Secretariat, in collaboration with the ILO TVET Reform Project has taken this initiative to formulate a specific gender strategy to promote gender equality within TVET and boost up the rate and quality of female participation. Section 14 in NSDP, 2011 delineates measures to be taken for improved access of under-represented groups to both formal and informal skills training so that they can develop skills that increase their employability. Women are designated as a special category within the under-represented groups.
- 1.6 The purpose of this National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET is to develop a strategic framework with a clear set of priorities and targets with performance accountability mechanisms in order to **increase female participation in TVET through a comprehensive and holistic intermix of social, economic, institutional and systemic transformational measures, leading to improved employment status.** A set of specific concrete activities that are provided will be broadly in line with the already approved measures for women in section 14.5 of NSDP. At the same time, the strategy will go a few steps forward and propose innovative methods to achieve wider gender equality goals that will support and complement the main purpose of achieving gender balance within the formal TVET system. The National Strategy is intended to be incorporated in the NSDP and the NSDC Action Plan.



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- 1.7 The TVET gender strategy has been developed with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders from the private and public sectors and with active cooperation from an informally organized Gender Working Group (GWG) constituted of representatives from 15 government ministries and departments and 3 civil society organizations.<sup>4</sup> It defines the major action areas for implementation, the primary actors to be involved in undertaking the action and the support mechanisms needed for each of these areas to be geared for action. The main thrust of the strategy is that gender equality promotion in TVET relies on an outcome-based system and dedicated and trusting cooperation among stakeholders who will promote gender mainstreaming as a crosscutting theme throughout the entire system.



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<sup>4</sup> Annex 2 provides a full list of representative organizations involved. A total of 20 members represented from these organizations: 8 female and 12 male. All the organizations have various levels of experience on gender development and technical training; those who attended from the Government agencies were also gender focal points of their own Ministries; those who represented from NGOs have extensive experience on implementing gender equality promotional activities in collaboration with GoB.

## Current Status and Nature of Gender Inequalities In TVET

- 2.1 One of the main obstacles faced in discussing the rate of male and female participation in TVET is the dearth of reliable data. National statistics for TVET in Bangladesh are not readily available. As stated above, we have varying estimates of female participation in TVET, ranging from 9% to 13% in public institutions and 33% in private institutions, the average calculated would come to 24%. TVET institutions are not fully capable of maintaining detailed records either on the overall structure and maintenance of TVET institutions or on teachers and students. Monitoring and tracking systems are under-developed. It is not surprising, therefore, that sex disaggregated data would be particularly lacking.
- 2.2 In 2008, the overall female enrolment rate in TVET was around 24%. Similarly, the number of female instructors overall was about one-fifth of the total number within technical institutes. It is also worth noting that the lesser number of TTCs within the variety of technical education providers was more on par with the national averages for women's participation. TSCs were severely lagging behind national averages of gender inclusion by about half (i.e. one-tenth of all teachers and one-eighth of all students within TSCs were female).<sup>5</sup>
- 2.3 Occupational segregation by sex is a social reality in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas. The male dominated society entertains cultural values that encourage it further. As a result, in vocational training institutes, particularly in those operated by government agencies, trade skills in sewing, tailoring, housekeeping, some computer training and electronic assembling, have a higher number of women; while more productive industry based skills such as automobile repair, welding, machine operation, electrical repairs, etc. are dominated by men. These trades are in high demand and women are excluded from occupations based on these skills. However, there are also emerging technologies/local occupations such as mushroom cultivation, computer software, hardware repairs, mobile repairs which could be projected as pro-women.
- 2.4 There are other government and private institutions which provide skills training. National Hotel and Tourism Training Institute, Department of Social Welfare, and Department of Youth run programmes on food preparation, bakery, sewing, livestock rearing, crop production, fish culture, knitting, electronics, refrigeration, garment and computers. A number of Ministries and departments engage women in projects



<sup>5</sup> See Annex for a detailed Table which gives us some estimate of the situation through a number of technical institutions, teachers and enrollment by type, management and gender, Bangladesh Bureau of Education and Statistics, 2008.

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for employment, self-employment, income generation and other means of sustainable livelihoods. Among the Ministry of Industry programmes, the Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC) has been successful in creating employment for 145,000 women (42%) out of a total employment of 342,000 people. Female trainees represent 21% of total trainees in Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) (Ministry of Science and Information Technology). These illustrate some potential good practices to follow for the TVET system.<sup>6</sup>

- 2.5 Not only do women in technical and vocational schools tend to find themselves underrepresented, but this is also further reflected in their disproportionate numbers in the overall labour economy.<sup>7</sup> Women's overall involvement in Bangladesh's workforce remains at roughly 25% for women ages 15 - 59 as of 2008 . In addition, only about 10% of women who are employed earn wages for their labor; and on average, women earn approximately 60% of what men do in similar jobs in the market. Women who work in the Ready-Made Garments sector have also experienced an increasing earning gap in wages to that of men, where a survey in the early-mid 90s showed that over a seven year period the proportion of women's earning potential to that of their male counterparts fell by more than 20%, from 86 to 68% of male earnings in the same occupations.<sup>8</sup>
- 2.6 As a majority of women enter into non-formal work agreements and hazardous and exploitative forms of employment; opportunities for skills training and development through structured programs and educational institutions are few to non-existent. Women in Bangladesh are most often employed in manufacturing (i.e. Ready-Made Garments); as household and domestic workers; or the agricultural sector, and are rarely provided with any formalized training for these occupations, and often are forced to learn through non-formal or informal practices which do not monetarily value their participation in the workforce. In the informal economy<sup>9</sup>, skills development can contribute to improved productivity and working conditions. A strengthened apprenticeship system is an effective mechanism, but there is a special need to specifically develop a strategy to engage with the informal economy and improve the level of skills utilized in this important sector. Subsidized costs of training or/and exploring innovative ways of addressing the cost burden, including the use of micro-credit linked to business advice should be emphasized. Furthermore, apprenticeship systems should be strengthened, by

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<sup>6</sup> Data quoted from statistics provided in Gender Equality in Bangladesh, Progress and Road Ahead, Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, PLAGE II Project 2010.

<sup>7</sup> This data is not widely accepted as reflecting the total contribution of women in the labour force.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics used here are based on Begum, Paul- Majumder, Policy Research Report on Gender and Development Working Paper Series No. 12: Gender Imbalances in the Export Oriented Garment Industry in Bangladesh, The World Bank Development Research Group/ Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, June 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Informal Economy is defined as "the economic activities which are not regulated by government regulatory authority" (Decent Work and the Informal Economy, ILO, 2002, whereas Formal Economy is understood to include those "enterprises or economic activities which are regulated by government regulatory authority."

combining them with basic theoretical training to make them more powerful, particularly for women, who could be further exploited in apprenticeships.

- 2.7 Since women are severely hindered in economic endeavours from lack of access to viable skills training programmes; social discrimination in many different forms plagues women, constraining their participation in the growing labour economy in Bangladesh. Early marriage, household responsibilities, family restrictions, conservative social mindset, preference for male child and bias against girl children, transportation constraints, lack of physical and sanitary facilities and sexual harassment are some of the serious barriers that render the training and work environment not appropriate for women. They also face social barriers in getting a job. Motivational measures through media campaigns, cultural activities, adding subjects in the school curriculum and awareness programmes could be designed to overcome these barriers.
- 2.8 The prevailing norm among some of the key stakeholders is that young women should be home-based and/or undertake occupations that are regarded as suitable for women; and there is little conviction that young women and men should have equal (job and education) opportunities; women should only engage in socially approved traditional occupations only (sewing, embroidery), work without physical stress and easy to learn; non-traditional work involves risks; women's health and stamina are not suitable for all occupations and women should not work in public view, contact or scrutiny.<sup>10</sup>
- 2.9 However, there are stakeholders who are fairly open about female participation in 'non-traditional' trades, occupations or sectors. They hold that women's participations should not be limited in terms of course offerings. Some employers have also expressed their willingness to employ women in non-traditional sectors such as mobile repairs, electrical repair and electronics, "mechanics" for sewing machine repairs, if women were trained in these skills. Young women themselves, in some sectors, have been seen to come forward to opt for productive "non-traditional" skills. It seems that a progressive attitude and a little boost would go a long way to expedite these activities. Some TTCs and TSCs have also expressed their willingness to be innovative in their approaches towards increasing female participation, if adequate resources are made available to them.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Assessment of Female Participation and Access to TVET in Bangladesh, 2010, ILO TVET Project

<sup>11</sup> One-on-One Consultation with stakeholders in 2011, ILO TVET Reform Project

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- 2.10 While introducing women to non-traditional sectors and making non-traditional skills equally available to women, it must be ensured that women are not treated in a blanket manner through a "sameness approach" with men in such sectors. Women have some specific needs and concerns in training and employment and disregarding them will result in discrimination. Care must be taken to comply with ILO Conventions: on night work and underground work for women to ensure their safety and protection; on reproductive health and maternity protection (Convention 183) for exposure to harmful chemicals and biological contaminants and bad posture; on work-life reconciliation (Convention 156), etc. A concrete example would be the use of separate facilities such as rest-rooms, day care and nursing facilities for new mothers need to be considered to ensure a gender responsive approach.
- 2.11 The quality of TVET teachers/instructors has suffered as a result of the low profile of TVET institutions. Most TVET teachers/instructors have relatively low motivation because many of their aspirations and demands remain unmet. Lack of infrastructure facilities poses hardships for them. Some existing TVET teachers/instructors lack practical hands on skills required by the industry standards. This is a result of a training system that long emphasized theoretical knowledge (though often not aligned with modern technology requirements), disregarding the importance of practical skills and appreciation of the world of work. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the training management system would not be proactive in promoting measures that would require gender-responsive behaviour and taking extra steps for innovative promotional measures of any kind.<sup>12</sup>
- 2.12 The extent of "urban bias" in the provision of technical and vocational skills has also to be complemented by organizing vocational training programmes in rural areas directly targeted at specific groups. Vocational and skills training need to be comprehensive in nature, thereby focusing on the needs and potential of the trainees; aim for social equity in access and be sustainable in terms of technical, financial and environmental feasibility. The educational pre-requisites that TVETs have for enrollment should be made flexible. The minimum education level, which is a big problem in the context of Bangladesh in relation to women and girls with very low educational attainment rates, should be re- considered. In fact, the removal of the Grade 8 barrier for entry into any vocational training is one of the strategies to promote gender equality that has been considered by BTEB. The promotion of the entry of older women into employment should also be considered. TVET would have to organize special/flexible criteria for their inclusion.

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<sup>12</sup> One-on-One consultations by ILO TVET Project



2.13 The deployment of teachers and other trainers to rural areas is a challenge. Skills training may have a lower level of priority if other short term pressing needs such as maximizing household income or providing food security are not met. Efforts should be made to take training and associated activities as close as possible to where women actually are. Mobile Training Units should be encouraged to facilitate the access of rural women, who are by and large constrained due to mobility issues. Decentralization is very important; steps should be taken not to stop at upazillas level but actually go to villages and to union “parishad level” (smallest local government unit in Bangladesh). This would give much more opportunity to women. There are already NGOs in these areas such as BRAC who have established facilities and networks across Bangladesh that can be utilized.



2.14 The National Strategy considers all these shortfalls carefully and devises a number of key mechanisms to address them. In doing so, the Strategy bears in mind that some of these entrenched factors will take a longer span of time for change, while others will have to be pursued at a regular and continuous pace. It is expected that the strategy, when implemented with commitment and effectiveness, will bring about the anticipated results.



## Objective of National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET

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- 3.1 The overall purpose of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET is to provide a strategic framework charting out specific mechanisms, action areas and activities to implement the stated objective: **“to increase access of women to formal TVET institutions and employment through a number of measures”**. Section 14.5 in The National Skills Development Policy (2011) supports this further by stipulating some measures **“to correct ... gender imbalance” in skills development in the formal training system,** ultimately leading to improved employment opportunities for women.
- 3.2 Anchored on this, the more specific aims pursued by this National Strategy are to:
- Increase female participation in formal TVET institutions by at least 60% from the present 24% to reach 40% by 2020;
  - Increase female employment by at least 30%;
  - Increase quotas for female teachers (30%) and female staff (20%);
  - Quotas for females in TVET management should be at least 10%;
  - Enhance positive attitudinal shifts in views regarding “female” trades and employment;
  - Ensure gender integration throughout the TVET training system, curriculum, management and procedures;
  - Ensure gender friendly environment both in training and work places;
  - Create linkages between industry demands and skills availability;
  - Establish extensive gender-responsive support systems and counseling services;
  - Accommodate training skills for workers in the informal economy; and
  - Establish adequate data management system to capture sex disaggregated data on TVET.



## Guiding Principles of National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET

In pursuing the aims stated above, the following principles will guide and define further development and implementation of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET.



- 4.1 Equality of access and opportunity for women and men** is the first principle highlighted to achieve gender balance in the TVET system. This strategy will strive for social inclusion, remedying the previous neglect of under-represented women and disadvantaged groups, men and women without relevant schooling, school dropouts, people living in rural areas, people in informal economy, people with disabilities, young mothers who return to professional work after their children have grown up and also those who are already engaged in some kind of work including that from ultra-poor. Since this is a Gender Strategy, primary focus will be on inclusion of more women in the programmes but that will not in any way preclude attention to any other category of under-represented groups.

There is a need for massive promotional campaign to influence families of potential students.

- 4.2 Principle of equity between women and men** to ensure fairness and justice where the situational needs and concerns of men and women require differential treatments or special affirmative measures. Since women have lagged behind by a large margin in participation in TVET, equity measures will need to be taken in every dimension, either through promotional steps or quota reservations to ensure that women receive a fair share and that their special needs are attended to. TVET institutions will have to develop gender sensitive policies in order to ensure that women are not discriminated against through content nor organization of TVET programmes and to effectively prevent harassment of female trainees and staff members. Family counseling should be included so that information and support is provided to both students and their family members. This will help to ensure that students have the support of their families.
- 4.3 Gender mainstreaming as a crosscutting principle** will need to be integrated holistically into every aspect of the TVET system including programmes, management system, accreditation systems, recruitment of teachers, infrastructure development, curriculum, course delivery systems, research and documentation,

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and monitoring and evaluation. Gender sensitization training will need to be extensively provided to induce a gender-responsive approach and behaviour throughout the TVET system and the stakeholders. After recruiting teachers, we will need to continuously develop them through training/workshops and other measures and provide incentives using positive discrimination. In government, if staff members elect to work in training institutions, they should be given 30% increase in salary to attract them. Women should play a vital role in decision-making in all stages, from planning to design, monitoring and evaluation. Otherwise, just including them in specific stages will not be effective – they need to be involved in the whole project or programme cycle.

- 4.4 **Flexibility and diversification** will be observed in order to respond to the changing occupational requirements and to accommodate the different demands of men, women and the various target groups. The TVET system will allow and encourage flexibility and dynamic development of the TVET courses and products, to suit the market demand and convenience of participants. This applies to the organization and delivery of TVET programmes as well as to the way in which both women and men can pursue their individual occupational careers. In this process, female role models in non-traditional occupations should also be promoted.
- 4.5 **Demand-orientation** is another important principle. In order to respond to the competence needs and qualification requirements in the labour market, particularly with reference to the employability of women, all TVET needs to be geared towards enhancing the competitiveness in all economic sectors through a competent workforce. The TVET system needs to develop effective means of quality management to continuously monitor the relevance of TVET programmes with defined quality standards. An important mechanism for this will be the introduction of the system of assessment that is gender-responsive and equally supported and promoted by employers and industries that will ensure the employability of women under-represented groups.
- 4.6 **Life-long learning opportunities** need to be provided to enable the workforce to keep pace with the rapidly changing work environments brought about by technological progress and development in the organization of work. They should have pathways for skills enhancement, career progression and mobility and a culture of training at all levels. An important aspect of life-long learning is "re-skilling" when certain crafts/trades atrophy with time or market based changes, particularly so during economic downturns. Life-long learning also implies that people can continuously enhance their recognized qualifications. This is absolutely imperative in the case of women because their life-cycle requirements with marriage and child bearing and rearing responsibilities and

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care tasks often interrupt their learning and work periods. So age-bar or periods of absence from regular work should not be held against them in issues of access to skills training at any point in one's life. Workplace culture is extremely important.<sup>13</sup>

- 4.7 This Gender Strategy will promote an **outcome-based** system which means that identified competences needed in the labour market will become the final benchmark of teaching, training and learning, and that all institutions, rules and regulations of the TVET system will be (re-)defined so that they support men and women to become competent. This is particularly relevant to support female employability because targeted interventions in support of certain outcomes, already agreed upon between the training institution and the industry will enable smoother employment of women. This will pave the way for stronger conviction among employers about the performance capabilities of women workers. It may also be necessary to set an Indicator for an effective outcome, not only in competency achieved but also in securing of jobs.
- 4.8 In suggesting mechanisms for the Gender Strategy, serious consideration must be paid to whether or not the activities proposed are **practical and doable**. **Feasibility** of every activity needs to be pre-assessed. Only **concrete and specific** activities should be planned and undertaken, if effective and efficient implementation of the Strategy is to be achieved. However, since gender equality itself is a challenge in Bangladesh, it may also be advisable in certain cases to set targets that are challenging in order to ensure that there will be change. It will also be important to consider already existing related government policies/rules and regulations on women's education, employment and labour laws.



<sup>13</sup> In the tea Industry, for example, people have been known to start as a low level worker and die in the same status. They have very little upward mobility (discussed during Stakeholders Consultation Workshop on 10 January 2012)

## Priority Areas for Action

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Following the Guiding Principles above, six Strategic Objectives are outlined below with several high priority areas for action under each of the objectives. For each of these key areas, the Action Plan in Annex-1 delineates in detail the proposed activity steps to be undertaken, responsibilities of respective actors, the support needed and the possible time frame within which to effectively initiate and complete these activities. Note that each of these areas contribute to the overall purpose of the “enhancement of female participation in TVET” and will help achieve proportionate gender balance, guided by our ultimate goal of increasing female participation not only in enrollment but also in employment. Several lines of action are integrated: Policy Action, Institutional Action, Legal Action and Physical Facilities-related Action.

### 5.1 Strategic Objective:

#### **Achieve 40 per cent female enrollment in TVET by 2020 Priority actions:**

##### **Priority Actions:**

- 5.1.1 Provide full free education for girls in TVET up to Diploma level.
- 5.1.2 Provide stipend for every girl student.
- 5.1.3 Reserve special quota for girls, at least 25% in all TVET courses.
- 5.1.4 Provide gender responsive facilities and ensure safe and secure environment.
- 5.1.5 Organise mobile training programmes to encourage female participants in rural areas.
- 5.1.6 Provide incentives and rewards to TVET institutions with higher enrollments of girls, particularly in non-traditional courses.
- 5.1.7 Introduce “motivation measures” for employers to hire women graduated from TVET institutions.

### 5.2 Strategic Objective:

#### **Transform mind sets and attitudes to eliminate negative perception for women in training and employment especially towards “non-traditional skills”**

##### **Priority Actions:**

- 5.2.1 Carry out extensive social campaigning through sensitization and awareness-raising to reach out to girls, families, employers and all stakeholders.
- 5.2.2 Establish social network and information dissemination channels, particularly in rural areas.
- 5.2.3 TVET institutions may develop special promotional measures to attract female students to high demand non-traditional skills areas.
- 5.2.4 Increase visibility of women’s participation in all “non-traditional” spheres.
- 5.2.5 Strengthen political will and commitment.

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**5.3 Strategic Objective:**  
**Establish gender responsive environment with appropriate support systems.**

**Priority Actions:**

- 5.3.1 Ensure appropriate secured residential facilities for women trainees and teachers.
- 5.3.2 Set up female friendly infrastructure facilities within all TVET institutions to accommodate women with special needs and disabilities. (as per action plan).
- 5.3.3 Introduce and strictly adhere to zero tolerance against sexual harassment.
- 5.3.4 Ensure higher inclusion and effective participation of women in decision making positions.
- 5.3.5 Set up appropriate transport facilities for female students.
- 5.3.6 Introduce user friendly technologies designed for women in learning some skills.

**5.4 Strategic Objective:**  
**Create and strengthen linkages between demand and supply of skills, and accommodate skills training for informal workers**

**Priority Actions:**

- 5.4.1 Engender Employment Policy including measures for promoting women's employment.
- 5.4.2 Implement gender related provisions in Bangladesh Labour Act 2006.
- 5.4.3 Establish Job Centres providing guidance and support for jobs.
- 5.4.4 Enhance public private partnerships for women employment.
- 5.4.5 Encourage apprenticeships to help enhance women's employment.
- 5.4.6 Promote self-employment for women through entrepreneurship.



**5.5 Strategic Objective: Strengthen TVET institutional capacity on gender competence at all levels.**

**Priority Actions:**

- 5.4.1 Promote gender equality policies in TVET institutions.
- 5.4.2 Mainstream gender equality in staffing, programmes and budgetary processes of TVET institutions.
- 5.4.3 Conduct extensive capacity building on gender mainstreaming in all TVET institutions.
- 5.4.4 Revise all training curriculum, delivery modalities, registration procedures, evaluation forms to incorporate gender aspects.
- 5.4.5 Introduce special programmes designed for women in business and informal economy.
- 5.4.6 Establish diversified non-traditional programmes specially geared for female students.
- 5.4.7 Set up job counseling units within all TVET institutions with special capacity to advise both male and female students.
- 5.4.8 Enhance gender sensitive human resource development.

**5.6 Strategic Objective: Establish adequate data management system to capture sex disaggregated data on TVET.**

**Priority Actions:**

- 5.6.1 Establish and regularize monitoring and evaluation systems for TVET.
- 5.6.2 Conduct primary research and set up proper recording and documentation systems.
- 5.6.3 Set up, strengthen and develop sex disaggregated data base systems.
- 5.6.4 Introduce Participatory Gender Audit system to in TVET sector.





## Key Considerations

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In arriving at these strategic objectives and priority actions, consultations have closely focused in on: **“What does “an enhanced participation of women in TVET formal institutions mean? What will it involve?”**

Factors considered are the following:

- In achieving gender balance, should we opt for full equality in access and opportunity (50/50) for men and women or adhere to the global critical mass of 33% at least or would a more appropriately proportionate balance in this case be feasible and reasonable at 40:60 (female-male ratio), to align the target with NSDP provisions?
- In seeking equal access to opportunities, equal benefits and privileges, employers and industry related stakeholders would have a high level of responsibility and commitment. A close public-private partnership would have to be forged, with an equal responsibility from the training institutions to respond to new labour demands and relevant skill areas.
- Equal pay for equal work is a must. How can it be ensured given the current gender disparities in the labour market and the attitudinal barriers?
- As there are a large number of women involved in informal economy with low or no skills, they should receive special attention. Formal institutions should make provisions for short term training in skill areas suitable for women already engaged in informal employment, so that they may upgrade their skills and raise their productivity.
- Equality for women can only be achieved through equity measures, for two reasons: women have lagged far behind and in order to give them a level playing field, affirmative measures have to be established. Special promotional measures also must be launched to attract women to diversified trades with higher demands in the labour market and to meet the more special gender-based needs of women and to allay the fears of insecurity and harassment. Efforts should be made not only to attract but also to retain and maintain them in the selected non-traditional trades.
- Without transformed mind sets and attitudes among the family, the employers, the women themselves and the entire community at large, “enhanced participation”



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will not be feasible. Hence, an extensive, comprehensive and holistic social campaign needs to be set afoot to reach particularly the rural areas and convince different segments in society about the importance and value of women's employment, both as affirmation of their own human rights as well as a "smart thing" to do as an economic contribution to the family and the economy of the country as a whole.

- Due to the low profile of the TVET system as a whole and the prevailing perception of TVET as catering only to the disadvantaged groups and students with low grades, motivation among the trainers and management in TVET centres needs to be enhanced. The institutional capacity has to be boosted and the gender knowledge and responsiveness enhanced, both in types and contents of courses offered with appropriate technology for "high demand" new skills and the delivery modality as well as engendering the entire institutional management and environment.
- Special efforts must be made to extend the outreach of TVET to rural areas, particularly to skill areas pertaining to agriculture and off-farm activities. Early marriage and child bearing further limit the possibilities of rural young women who are severely restricted in their mobility and restrained to the domestic sphere in many communities.



## Way Forward: Implementation

For implementation of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality, it is proposed to dovetail into the already existing structure set up by the NSDP (2011), and integrate it into the 14th key task in the NSDC Action Plan on Equity issues. The Equity Advisory Committee in BTEB<sup>14</sup> will monitor the gender dimensions in the quality assurance and take up regulatory responsibilities. Gender mainstreaming is a crosscutting issue and it will be mandatory to integrate gender dimensions into all the key tasks of the NSDC Action Plan.

7.1 The NSDP has clearly designated two key organizations; NSDC and BTEB to deal with important challenges faced by the skill development sector in Bangladesh, such as "limited inter-agency coordination, poor linkages with industry and the labour market, insufficient capacity in key agencies, piecemeal regulation and quality assurance, and limited planning of delivery and infrastructure development, particularly at the district and upazilla levels."<sup>15</sup>

7.2 As the highest apex skills development body, NSDC is an important national forum where representatives of government, employers, and civil society can provide leadership and clear direction to skills development in Bangladesh. Under the NSDC Executive Committee (ECNSDC) and NSDC Secretariat, the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET will form one of the mainstays of their skill promotion programmes and its delivery will be facilitated by an advisory body of the Gender Working Group (GWG).



7.3 Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) is the other designated key body which bears the responsibility for national quality assurance and regulatory responsibilities for all skills development programmes including technical education up to diploma level, skills training and skills based non-formal education and training in Bangladesh. Under the guidance of NSDC, BTEB will involve MOLE, MOE and other key line ministries in the review and development of new skills standards and curriculum. BTEB has an Equity Advisory Committee to monitor and address issues related to under-represented and disadvantaged groups in the skills development system. Gender equality promotion should also fall under the purview of this Committee, again with the advisory assistance of the GWG.

<sup>14</sup> This is mentioned in section 20.13 (g) of the NSDP (2011)

<sup>15</sup> National Skills Development Policy (2011), Ministry of Education, Bangladesh

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- 7.4 A Gender Working Group has already been formed informally comprising of 14 representatives from government ministries and departments and 3 civil society organizations under the auspices of the NSDC Secretariat. They have been instituted to provide inputs into the entire consultation process leading to the preparation of the draft National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET. They have further responsibility of reviewing the strategy and providing inputs for its finalization.
- 7.5 It is now proposed that this GWG should be formalized as the Gender Wing of NSDC, as an Advisory Committee. It can be further strengthened by co-opting some new members inclusive of all key stakeholders, making it a full Advisory body of 20 members. Its main role will be to oversee the implementation of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET and ensure that gender issues are integrated into all key tasks of the NSDC Action Plan. The representatives who will be nominated as members of the GWG will also be the focal points on gender equality promotion in skills within their own ministries or organizations. Their function will be to ensure that those parts of the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET that are relevant to their own institutions are carried out effectively. In other words, they are watchdogs and alert promoters within their own organizations too.
- 7.6 The Executive Committee of the NSDC and the NSDC Secretariat carry the most important responsibility, assisted by DTE and BTEB, in facilitating, coordinating and ensuring that all stakeholders are on board to effectively and efficiently understand, internalize and execute the various tasks in gender mainstreaming, as pertinent to their own institutions.

## Conclusion

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A well-developed gender-responsive TVET system should be an answer to some of the challenges facing human resource skills development for sustainable development in Bangladesh. Since gender equality is emphasized in all key guiding policies of this country, and acknowledged as a cross-cutting issue in all sectors and sub-sectors, it is imperative that special attention be focused on gender balance and on removing all gender disparities. Both men and women, particularly from under-represented and disadvantaged segments of society need extra initiatives to bring them on par with others. In TVET programmes, this National Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality intends to do that. When effectively implemented, the NSDP (2011) expectation of “women’s enrolment should increase by 60%” could be surely achieved.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: Action Plan (Under Overall Supervision of NSDC)

### 5.1 Strategic Objective 1: Achieve 40% female enrollment in TVET by 2020

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.1.1 Provide full free education for girls in TVET up to Diploma level.	Provide full free education up to Diploma level which should include enrolment fees and all related expenses. Provide higher rate of stipend in TVET than what is used to encourage girls in secondary school.	NSDC to approve the Strategy for increased stipends and free education Line Ministries to issue directives to technical institutes	Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Development Partners, corporate business houses to provide resources	To be completed within current Sixth Five-Year Plan Period.
5.1.2 Provide stipend for every girl student	Initiate process by first providing stipend for every girl student	NSDC to approve required policy, process and respective line ministries to issue instructions, directives to technical institutes.	Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Development Partners, corporate business houses to provide resources.	To be completed within current Sixth Five-Year Plan Period.
5.1.3 Reserve special quota for girls (25%)	Issue government orders reserving special quota Keep provision for 50% enrollment of girls in newly established technical institutes	NSDC to approve required policy and respective Ministries to issue instructions, directives and provide resources for special facilities and processes	ILO TVET Reform Project, STEP, SDP, related projects and other development partners to provide requested support within project mandates	2012-2014
5.1.4 Provide gender responsive facilities and safe and secure environment	Provide gender responsive facilities include separate toilets, separate prayer rooms, child care facilities, safe transportation and common areas/rooms. Set up policies and guidelines on prevention of sexual harassment in line with the High Court Decision.	NSDC to provide guidelines on standardized rules and regulations for "gender responsive" facilities Respective Ministries to issue directives accordingly to institutions within their purview Institutions to create facilities & implement	Development partners to support building of physical infrastructure Women's organizations and NGOs to support with public campaigns and counselling on sexual harassment issues and ways of addressing grievances	2012-2014

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
	<p>Provide training on and enforce anti-harassment rules and regulations. Ensure zero tolerance to sexual harassment through campaigns and family counseling mechanisms</p> <p>Implement grievance procedures and mechanisms for handling instances of sexual harassment</p> <p>Design measures to keep young people occupied like extra-curricular activities, youth clubs, cleanliness, part time work etc to prevent harassment</p>	<p>Respective institutions to apply zero tolerance policy to sexual harassment according to directives by High Court and address grievances</p> <p>Union Parishad, Municipalities, Upazila Parishad, city corporation, Directorate of Youth Development and other social organizations</p>	<p>Human Rights Organizations, Women organizations etc</p>	
5.1.5 Organize mobile training programmes to encourage female participants in rural areas	<p>Set up Mobile Training Units with adequate provisions to facilitate participation of women from rural areas for whom mobility is a serious constraint</p> <p>Implement pre-voc qualifications to facilitate access of women with below grade 8 in line with NSDP</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy for Mobile Training Units</p> <p>BTEB to approve pre-voc courses</p> <p>Respective Ministries to issue directives and provide resources</p>	<p>ILO TVET Project, SDP, STEP, all relevant ministries, private training institutions, small employers in informal economy to support training programmes</p>	2012-2014
5.1.6 Provide incentives and rewards to TVET institutions with higher enrollments of girls, particularly in non-traditional courses	<p>Set up special awards for institutions such as more flexibility in operations; budgetary allocations for infrastructure development; special recognitions and awards for managers, instructors, etc.</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy for incentives</p> <p>Respective Ministries to issue directives and provide resources</p>	<p>Planning Commission, NSDC, relevant ministries</p>	2012-2014

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.1.7 Introduce "motivation measures" for Employers and Industry to hire women graduated from technical institutes	<p>Develop motivation schemes to include tax rebate to employers; tax holiday; low interest loans allotment of Govt. land for industrial area etc</p> <p>Provide special awards, recognition for employers who employ high percentage of women in cash or kind for encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility</p> <p>Provide utility services (gas, electricity, sewerage, ETP, etc) on priority basis at subsidized costs</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy for incentives to employers</p> <p>Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Industries, Ministry of Labour etc to issue special Govt. directives, orders &amp; notification</p>	Bangladesh Employers' Federation, BGMEA, BKMEA, Export Processing Zone Authorities and Private Sector Industry bodies to provide support	2012-2014

## 5.2 Strategic Objective 2: Transform mind sets and attitudes to eliminate negative perception for women in training and employment especially towards "non-traditional skills".

### Objective 1: Achieve 40 percent female enrollment in TVET by 2020

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.2.1 Carry out extensive social campaigns and reach out to women, community, employers and all stakeholders	<p>Make extensive use of electronic and print media, visual, radio, theatres, folk singers, short documentary films, short (2-3 minute) video clips, etc. in organizing TVET day, sensitization workshops, seminars and other public forms of communication</p> <p>Reach out to girls, women and heads of households especially female headed households, and men and families in rural areas</p> <p>Carry out advocacy for prevention of early marriage especially of girls</p>	<p>EC NSDC to chart out a communication strategy for social marketing</p> <p>Govt. Ministries, and training providers to seek support from civil society organizations, media and private sectors to operationalize the strategy</p>	<p>Private sector, news and media channels, civil society organizations to cooperate as part of the corporate social responsibility</p> <p>ILO TVET Reform project, SDP, STEP projects and other projects and development partners</p>	Social campaigning to begin in 2012



Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.2.2 Establish social network and information dissemination channels, particularly in rural areas	<p>Make use of Union Information Centres</p> <p>Work with 'TatthyaKendro' which can be utilized to connect every village on Skills by spreading posters, leaflets etc. for information dissemination, sensitization, awareness raising and attitudinal transformation</p> <p>Strengthen TVET sector links with primary and secondary schools including gender inclusive policy development, gender sensitive career counseling and course selection</p> <p>Strengthen teacher-students- parents relationship</p> <p>Work with trade unions in establishing social networks</p>	<p>Offices of the Deputy Commissioner/Local Government and functionaries of different ministries working at union level to collaborate with Union Information Centres</p> <p>All NGOs, teachers, (primary to university level) community and local leaders, trade union associations, elites in local area and religious leaders to cooperate in mobilizing opinions and disseminating information on need for attitudinal transformation</p>	<p>Local elected representatives to co-operate in establishing networks and conducting communication campaigns</p> <p>SDP and STEP Projects and other development partners to set aside targeted funds for establishing infrastructure: computer, mobiles, internet system</p>	2012-2016
5.2.3 TVET institutions to develop special promotional measures to attract female students to high demand non-traditional skills areas.	<p>Establish and publicize incentives for female participants and availability of facilities that will provide special amenities to female students.</p> <p>Develop high demand non-traditional courses geared for women with potential job prospects</p> <p>Demonstrate job placement offers</p> <p>Advertise industry linkages ensuring high job possibilities within Public/Private Partnerships (PPPs)</p>	<p>NSDC to advise all related ministries on preparation of promotional packages</p> <p>All relevant government departments, Employers and workers Organizations, to publicize and promote the promotional packages</p> <p>NGOs to support in preparing packages and disseminating information</p> <p>National media – TV, radio and print media to collaborate in publicizing the promotional packages and advertisements</p>	<p>ILO TEVT Reform Project, SDP and STEP and other development partners to support in developing promotional packages</p>	2012-2014

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.2.4 Increase visibility of women's participation in all "non-traditional" spheres.	<p>Motivate all training providers to increase women's enrollment in non-traditional skills Publicize role models of successful women in new trades, equal salary, and insurance on jobs.</p> <p>Develop and demonstrate high demand non-traditional courses for women</p> <p>Provide rewards for innovative work and performance to TVET institutions (trainers, managers, other staff) on gender equality</p>	<p>NSDC Secretariat/DTE/BMET/BTEB to commission studies to identify "good practices" on gender equality from all regions in Bangladesh</p> <p>Other Ministries: DWA and DYD to support with information and case studies</p> <p>NGOs/Private Sectors and news media to publicize, promote and advertise women in non-traditional trades and related success stories</p>	ILO TVET Reform Project, STEP and SDP and other development partners to provide requested support within project mandates	2012-2014
5.2.5 Strengthen political will and commitment	<p>-Create public opinion in favour of promoting gender equality through seminars/workshops etc</p> <p>-Encourage political parties to include gender responsive issues in political manifestos</p> <p>-Continue regular campaigns, dialogue and influence political decisions</p>	<p>Political parties, policy makers, decision makers, women's organizations, social activists, columnists, writers, journalists, other think-tanks, NGOs and civil society organizations to promote and maintain commitment to gender equality in all national development</p>	Development partners, local elected representatives etc	2012-2020

### 5.3 Strategic Objective 3: Ensure gender responsive environment with appropriate support systems <sup>16</sup>

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.3.1 Ensure appropriate secured residential facilities for women trainees and teachers.	Provide safe hostels/ residential accommodation Reserve hostel seats for women in already existing facilities Establish rules and regulations for possible high security and safety in and around hostel quarters	EC NSDC to set up guidelines for secure residential facilities Respective Ministries and TVET institutions to set up facilities	Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance/ Development partners to support with resources for infrastructure development	2012-2016
5.3.2 Set up female friendly infrastructure facilities within all TVET institutions to accommodate women with special needs and disabilities	Daycare centres to be set up for children of female participants and working female staff Separate washrooms for male and female; Nursing rooms for breastfeeding mothers Prayer-room facilities for both male and female Health care facilities, presence of doctor to be ensured, or at least a doctor on call Set up facilities for women with special needs (for those with disabilities) Gender friendly logistics support	NSDC to formulate guidelines and compliance mechanisms for "gender responsive" facilities Concerned Ministries, TVET institutions and industries (public and private) to set up gender responsive facilities	Planning Commission/Ministry of Finance/ Development partners to support with resources	During the Sixth Five-Year Plan period
5.3.3 Introduce and strictly adhere to zero tolerance against sexual harassment	Enforce anti-sexual harassment rules and regulations; Follow High Court Directives (2009); ILO recommendations and guidelines and other existing rules and regulations relating to anti- sexual-harassment and violence against women	Respective Ministries especially Ministry of Home Affairs to issue policy directives and set up enforcement mechanisms for zero tolerance All training institutions to follow those directives	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to produce situation reports and make recommendations to NSDC Institutional and legal support (MOE, DTE, BMET, BTEB, MOLE)	2012 onwards

<sup>16</sup> Before infrastructure facilities are considered, all TVET institutions need a specific gender strategy in written form.

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
	<p>Ensure respectful behavior towards women trainees, trainers and staff through awareness raising</p> <p>Institute recognition and awards system for demonstration of positive social attitudes</p>			
5.3.4 Ensure higher inclusion and effective participation of women in decision making positions	<p>Initiate balanced male/female management structure</p> <p>Ensure women's participation in policy making (10%)</p> <p>Sensitize and train women and men to actively participate in decision making processes</p>	<p>NSDC and Respective Ministries to issue directives on gender balance within management structures</p> <p>Training institutes to implement the directives</p>	DTE, BTEB, BMET to support decisions	Begin in 2012
5.3.5 Set up appropriate transport facilities for female students	Organize transport facilities for female students and teachers to ensure safety to and from training centres	Respective Ministries and public and private TVET institutes	Government Budget to allocate funds for subsidizing transport facilities	2012-2016
5.3.6 Appropriate user friendly technologies designed for women	<p>Asses existing technologies used by women</p> <p>Make possible modifications to suit the needs of women, including ergonomic equipment/furniture suitable for women, keeping in mind OSH concerns Increase access to knowledge and use of computers for female staff</p>	<p>Under the guidance of NSDC, DTE, BTEB, BMET to set up guidelines for relevant TVET institutes and industries to initiate assessment and modification</p> <p>TVET institutes and relevant industries to follow guidelines</p>	ISCs, Technological experts, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and Dhaka University of Engineering and Technology (DUET) etc., to provide technical support	2012-2014

## 5.4 Strategic Objective 4: Create and strengthen linkages between demand and supply of skills, and accommodate skills training for informal workers

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.4.1 Engender Employment Policy including measures for promoting women employment	<p>Review current Employment Policy from a gender perspective</p> <p>Conduct consultations with wide range of stakeholders specially with employers and women workforce for suggestions on gender issues to be considered</p> <p>Revise Employment Policy and initiate steps for implementation</p>	<p>NSDC, relevant Ministries and Employer and Workers Organizations to participate and collaborate on the entire process of policy reform</p>	<p>ILO, women's organizations and academic institutions to provide technical support</p> <p>Development partners support for research and analysis</p>	During the Sixth Five-Year Plan Period
5.4.2 Implement gender related provisions in Bangladesh Labour Act 2006	<p>Review Labour Act and Rules through a gender perspective</p> <p>Formulate gender friendly Labour Act and related rules and regulations</p> <p>Set up appropriate mechanisms to implement gender-related provisions effectively</p> <p>Collaborate with consultative group on amending Labour Act.</p>	<p>Relevant Ministries and Employers and Workers organizations and related NGOs like BILS to collaborate</p> <p>Ministry of Labour and Employment to produce compliance reports to NSDC</p> <p>NSDC to monitor and follow up on the entire process</p>	<p>Technical support from ILO and other Development Partners</p>	2012-2013
5.4.3 Establish Job centres providing guidance and support for jobs	<p>Conduct regular market surveys to identify potential jobs</p> <p>Establish linkages between Employers' Associations and Chambers (national and local level) and job seekers, to create employment</p> <p>Establish Job Placement Cell in all TVET institutions</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy on quotas for women's employment, and job placement cells and respective Ministries to issue directives accordingly</p> <p>NSDC secretariat in collaboration with DTE, BMET and BTEB to conduct surveys centrally and set up Information Outlets</p>	<p>Funding support from development partners</p> <p>ILO TVET Reform, SDP STEP and other projects to provide support within their project mandates</p>	2012-2014

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
	<p>Enhance quota system for women's employment (30%)</p> <p>Set up Special Cell at BMET for women's overseas employment</p> <p>Facilitate linkages with financial institutions for self-employment</p> <p>Strengthen linkages between skills supply and market demand for promoting women's employment</p>	<p>BEF, financial institutions/banks to cooperate.</p> <p>Training institutions to set up and manage Job Placement Cells and strengthen linkages with relevant industries</p>		
5.4.4 Enhance Public Private Partnership for women 's employment	<p>Expand existing government incentives to employers to promote equal employment practices that are supportive of women.</p> <p>Strengthen concerted efforts of development partners, Government, private sector and workers organizations to achieve better quality in training for women</p> <p>NSDC to develop PPP models to explore different modalities: (i) Govt. to establish infrastructure and run TTC/TSCs through PPP- accountability to be ensured by Govt. providing guidelines and policy; (ii)Govt. to set up TTCs close to industry, and TTCs to reflect industry needs</p> <p>Develop stronger alliances and collaborations with industry, unions, and NGOs and community agencies to support improved TVET programmes for women</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policies for incentives to employers and for promoting PPP through different modalities</p> <p>Government Ministries to issue directives to TVET training institutes to follow directives and strengthen linkages with private sector/Employers</p>	BEF and Private Sector Industries, to cooperate with Govt. initiatives through NSDC	2012-2014

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.4.5 Encourage apprenticeships to help enhance women's employment.	<p>Establish on the job mentoring system for female apprenticeships in non-traditional skill areas , following a gradual enhancement approach</p> <p>Utilize and expand industry links to facilitate transition to employment and improve employment outcomes for women in TVET</p> <p>Foster industry sponsorships on employment generation and work experience support.</p> <p>Introduce demand driven courses with offers of apprenticeships and job prospects for women in consultation with employers, specific industry and Industrial Skill Council (ISC)/ Sector Working Committee (SWC)</p>	<p>NSDC to set up guidelines for apprenticeship linkages with industries</p> <p>Relevant Ministries, Industry Skills Councils, Employers' Federation; private sector industries to implement those guidelines</p>	<p>ILO TVET Project/SDP/STEP/ Civil society organizations like BRAC/MAWTS/UCEP/ CMES to provide support in development of apprenticeship models</p> <p>Development partners and private sector to allocate resources</p>	2012-2016
5.4.6 Promote self-employment through women entrepreneurship	<p>Set up Special Insurance schemes</p> <p>Make soft loans available</p> <p>Help develop market linkages and information services to facilitate women entrepreneurs</p> <p>Form partnerships with institutions from countries with successful programmes for women in TVET and entrepreneurship</p> <p>Promote facilities like women corner in exhibitions/fairs etc to encourage women entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Relevant Ministries, Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh Women's Chamber of Commerce, other Employers' Organizations, Private Sector, Women's Entrepreneurship Associations and Banking Sector to collaborate on reform of laws for promoting women's entrepreneurship;</p> <p>NGOs to provide soft loans to women</p> <p>NGOs and news media to publicize "good practices" and role models</p>	<p>ILO-TVET Reform Project, SDP and STEP to provide resources for exposure visits within their project mandates</p> <p>Women's Associations to campaign and advocate for law reform to promote women's entrepreneurship</p>	Initiate in 2012

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
	<p>Identify good practices and promote role models of successful women in the country</p> <p>Provide entrepreneurial training including basic education/ business management courses</p> <p>Share good practices of NGOs, private and International organizations within the country and with good cases of gender enhancing programs within and outside the country.</p>	<p>TV media to advertise entrepreneurship possibilities for women through serial dramas and special promotion programmes</p>		

### 5.5 Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen TVET institutional capacity on gender competence at all levels.

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.5.1 Promote gender equality policies in TVET institutions (as per priority actions)	<p>Gender analysis of the policies, plans and programmes of institution</p> <p>Develop gender policy guidelines aligning e with the gender strategy to promote gender equality in TVET institutions</p>	<p>Relevant Ministries to issue directives to TVET Institutes</p> <p>TVET institutes to carry out gender mainstreaming as per guidelines provided</p>	<p>TVET Reform Project, SDP, STEP and other projects to support these initiatives</p>	<p>Initiate in 2012</p>
5.5.2 Mainstream gender equality in , staffing, programmes and budgetary processes of TVET institutions	<p>Develop standardized tools for mainstreaming gender in all policies, plans and programmes</p> <p>Develop guidelines to mainstream budgetary processes</p> <p>Ensure that workforce expertise, management system and facilities and services are gender-responsive and appropriate for the needs of women.</p>	<p>Relevant Ministries to issue directives to TVET Institutes</p> <p>TVET institutes to carry out gender mainstreaming as per guidelines provided</p> <p>MSDC Secretariat, DTE, BTEB and BMET to follow up on TVET gender mainstreaming process</p>	<p>TVET Reform Project, SDP, STEP and other projects to support these initiatives</p>	<p>Initiate in 2012</p>



Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
	Formulate a gender strategy for each TVET institution based on the National Gender Strategy for TVET			
5.5.3 Conduct extensive capacity building on gender mainstreaming in all TVET institutions	<p>Establish a pool of trainers on Gender Mainstreaming in DTE/BMET/BTEB</p> <p>Conduct comprehensive gender sensitivity awareness training for all staff of all institutions, teachers and particularly those in high-level management and policy making positions</p> <p>Undertake counseling and guidance for both students and parents on gender issues</p> <p>Review and harmonize training manuals for gender mainstreaming</p>	EC NSDC, DTE, BTEB and BMET to oversee capacity building of respective TVET institutes	Gender experts, TVET Reform Project, SDP and STEP BEF, NCCWE to provide technical support	Initiate in 2012
5.5.4 Revise all TVET related training curriculum and courses, delivery modalities, registration procedures, evaluation forms, to incorporate gender aspects	<p>Incorporate Amendments to Education policy to introduce gender sensitive courses / curriculum for TVET sector</p> <p>Review all TVET courses, procedures, delivery modalities and evaluation system from a gender perspective</p> <p>Introduce necessary revisions that would ensure gender inclusion, either within the main content itself or as additional modules.</p>	<p>BTEB to carry out curriculum revisions</p> <p>MoE, MoLE, DTE, BTEB and BMET to carry out revisions/ amendments of procedures and delivery modalities and oversee implementation</p> <p>Technical institutions to provide inputs and suggestions and implement</p> <p>Professional organizations with gender expertise to be commissioned for these activities</p>	ISCs, Gender experts, TVET Reform project SDP, STEP and other projects to provide technical support	Initiate in 2012

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.5.5 Introduce special programmes designed for women in business and informal economy	<p>Design entrepreneurship programmes for women, keeping in mind the needs of urban and rural micro-traders.</p> <p>Design a comprehensive curriculum for women informal workers at subsidized costs, keeping in mind special needs for flexible hours, part-time engagement, and particular trade types</p> <p>Design post-training support and counselling on upgrading their businesses</p> <p>Design exchange programmes for women to visit and network (e.g. special events in RAPA Plaza, Dhaka) and explore potential markets</p>	<p>DTE, BTEB and BMET to supervise designing of special programmes</p> <p>BTEB to design curriculum for special programmes</p> <p>Specific entrepreneurship training institutions to design programmes</p> <p>Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce/Women Entrepreneurs' Associations to assist in networking and organizing special events to boost women in marketing</p>	<p>TVET Reform Project, SDP STEP and other projects to provide technical support</p> <p>Directorate of Women Affairs, Directorate of Social Affairs, BEF/NCCWE to collaborate with inputs</p> <p>Women Entrepreneurs' Associations to provide guidance and experience to TVET institutes</p>	2012-2014
5.5.6 Establish diversified skill areas and trades	<p>Introduce productive new range of trades with high labour demand, e.g. electronics, architectural drafting, nursing, care givers, eco-tourism, sewing machine mechanics etc</p> <p>Provide adequate facilities and equipment for skill expansion in diversified new trades</p> <p>Conduct comprehensive training for women and men on rights, responsibilities, protection and life skills (confidence building, management skills)</p> <p>Consider not only quantity of production but also focus on quality of outputs</p>	<p>DTE, BTEB and BMET to supervise planning of new skill areas and providing facilities required</p> <p>Specific training institutions to deliver new courses</p>	<p>TVET Reform Project, SDP STEP and other projects to provide technical support and resources within their mandates</p>	Pilot programmes to be initiated in 2012

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.5.7 Set up job counseling units within all TVET institutions with capacity to advise both male and female students.	<p>Recruit Job Placement Officer in all technical institutes</p> <p>Set up job counseling services for both male and female students</p> <p>Disseminate information on ILO Conventions: Fundamental Rights at Work, Conditions of Work, OSH, Non-discrimination and Gender Equality</p> <p>Recruit female counselors, wherever possible</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy on establishing Job Counselling Units within TVET institutes</p> <p>Respective Ministries to issue directives and specific training institutions to operationalize them</p>	<p>TVET Reform Project, SDP, STEP and other projects to provide technical support to public and private TVET institutes</p>	2012-2014
5.5.8 Enhance Gender sensitive human resource development	<p>Increase the pool of female Instructors (25%)</p> <p>Recruit more female staff (20% ) and provide proper motivation and facilities</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy for reserving quotas for female instructors and staff in TVET institutes</p> <p>Relevant Ministries government departments to issue Directives and implement</p> <p>All training institutions to implement</p>	<p>Development partners to provide technical assistance</p> <p>NGOs and other civil society organizations to provide support</p>	2012-2014

## 5.6 Strategic Objective 6: Establish adequate data management system to capture sex disaggregated data on TVET.

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.6.1 Establish and regularize monitoring and evaluation systems for TVET	<p>Collect, analyze and publish performance and outcome data, that include trends over time and are disaggregated by sex and age, Persons With Disability (PWDs), and other demographic characteristics.</p> <p>Monitor and review the CBT development facilities of new training packages to ensure their relevance and appropriateness for women from diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>NSDC to analyze/ monitor to oversee M&amp;E Sections in all institutes to reach their goals</p> <p>Relevant government departments to collaborate with specific training centres, private sector to generate data</p> <p>DTE, BTEB and BMET to monitor and evaluate the activities</p>	<p>BBS/BANBEIS/NGOs/BEF/ ISCs for data collection and analysis</p> <p>ILO TVET Reform Project, SDP and STEP to provide technical support</p>	Initiate in 2012 and continue at regular intervals

Priority Actions	Proposed Activity Steps	Responsible Agencies	Possible Collaborating Agencies	Tentative Time Frame
5.6.2 Conduct primary research and establish proper documentation and recording systems	<p>Document comparative situations of men and women graduates from TVET institutions in employment</p> <p>Update database regularly</p> <p>Record and share case studies of exemplary successes of women in non-traditional occupations</p> <p>Conduct market and feasibility studies on most appropriate and high demand skill areas for women, on a periodic basis</p> <p>Initiate maximum information dissemination and sharing of new knowledge</p> <p>Ensure MIS storage</p> <p>Ensure that all documentation captures and analyzes gender related data</p>	<p>EC NSDC, DTE, BTEB and BMET to set guidelines for research and documentation</p> <p>NSDC Secretariat, DTE and BMET to carry out studies and surveys centrally</p> <p>TVET Institutes to set up research and documentation units within their organizations for collecting primary data</p>	<p>BBS/BANBEIS/TVET Reform Project, SDP and STEP to provide technical support especially for research studies</p> <p>Development Partners to provide funds</p>	Initiate in 2012 & continue
5.6.3 Set up, strengthen 5.6.4 /develop sex disaggregated data base systems	<p>Develop and harmonize gender responsive statistical tools for TVET sector</p> <p>Train officers on statistical tools.</p> <p>Compile recent gender disaggregated data in enrollment, retention and completion in vocational training</p> <p>Keep regular data on women job movements for two years at least</p>	<p>NSDC with BBS to review statistical tools for TVET</p> <p>NSDC secretariat to maintain TVET data base</p> <p>BBS to train officers on generation of sex disaggregated data</p> <p>DTE, BTEB and BMET to implement gender guidelines on data management</p> <p>TVET institutes to maintain data and provide inputs</p>	<p>Research and academic institutions</p> <p>NGO and other civil society organizations to provide support</p> <p>Development Partners to provide inputs and technical assistance</p>	Initiate in 2012
5.6.5 Introduce Participatory Gender Audit System into TVET sector	<p>Conduct institutional gender audit every 2 years to measure progress on gender promotion, following ILO methodology</p>	<p>NSDC to approve policy for gender audits, respective Ministries to send directives and TVET institutions to implement</p>	<p>Technical support from ILO and TVET Reform Project and SDP</p> <p>Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to co-ordinate gender audits</p>	Initiate in 2012 to establish a baseline and then carry out audits at intervals of every 2 years

## Annex 2: Representative Organizations in the Gender Working Group

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1. Ministry of Education, Govt. Of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
2. Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Govt.of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
3. Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. Of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
4. Ministry of social Welfare, Govt.of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
5. National Skills Development Council (NSDC) Secretariat
6. Directorate of Technical Education, Agargaon Sher –E- Bangla Nagar
7. Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training(BMET)
8. Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB)
9. Department of Youth Development (DYD)
10. Skills Training and Enhancement Project (STEP) - World Bank funded project implemented by DTE
11. Skills Development Project (SDP) ADB funded project implemented by DTE
12. Policy Leadership and Advocacy for Gender Equality (PLAGE) Phase– II Project under Ministry of Women and Child Affairs.
13. Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF)
14. National Coordination Council for Workers Education (NCCWE)
15. BRAC Bangladesh
16. Center for Mass Education and Science (CMES)
17. Under Privileged Children’s Educational Programme (UCEP)
18. Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women Technical Training Center

## Annex 3: Number of Technical Institutions, Teachers and Enrolment by Type, Management & Gender, 2008

Type of Institution	No. of Institutes		Teachers		Enrolment	
	Total	% Female	Total	% Female	Total	% Female
Polytechnic Institute (Govt.)	46	10%	1,276	129	56,733	9%
Polytechnic Institute (Non-Govt.)	108	28%	1,533	432	19,429	2%
Technical School & College (Govt.)	64	10%	1,130	118	29,369	12%
Technical School & College (Non Govt.)	16	29%	224	66	2,255	28%
Commercial College (Govt.)	16	24%	88	21	4,120	24%
Commercial College (Non Govt.)	7	14%	28	4	695	16%
Glass & Ceramic Institute (Govt.)	1	13%	15	2	888	7%
Graphic Arts Institute (Govt.)	1	27%	11	3	544	11%
Survey Institute (Govt.)	2	7%	15	1	714	5%
Technical Training Centre (Govt.)	31	17%	759	132	6,565	24%
Technical Training Centre (Non Govt.)	4	31%	29	9	111	0%
Textile Institute (Govt.)	6	9%	156	14	3,309	7%
Textile Institute (Non Govt.)	23	21%	127	27	6,374	6%
Textile Vocational Centre (Govt.)	40	22%	284	62	4,384	11%
Textile Vocational Centre (Non Govt.)	10	15%	72	11	1,204	19%
Agricultural Training Institute (Govt.)	13	18%	135	24	7,527	21%
Agricultural Training Institute (Non-Govt.)	91	20%	712	143	12,458	19%
Marine Technology Institute	1	8%	50	4	730	9%
SSC (Voc) (Govt.)	57	9%	453	41	3,902	2%
SSC (Voc) (Non-govt.)	1,384	23%	6,794	1,584	160,672	36%
HSC (B. Management & Voc) (Govt.)	57	19%	226	42	4,029	3%
HSC (B. Management & Voc) (Non-Govt.)	1,138	20%	6,586	1,309	127,323	25%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,116</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20,703</b>	<b>4,178</b>	<b>453,375</b>	<b>24%</b>

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics -



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