



▶ The National Skills Development Policy 2011 through gender lens

July 2020

Key recommendations

- ▶ **Social campaign on TVET: Promote TVET diploma and short course at the *upazila* level and TVET success cases to be showcased to increase female enrolment**
- ▶ **The career path and job opportunities communicated by the institute's job placement cell**
- ▶ **Employment opportunities within the surrounding area of the institutes**
- ▶ **Accommodation and transportation facilities for females during their training and industry attachment**

The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) is currently reviewing the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011 in order to upgrade it and ensure its relevance in the changing context of policy environment, market demands and future of work. The EU funded Skills 21 project of ILO is providing technical support to the government for this policy review. As part of the policy review process, Skills 21 project has reached out to its partner Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institutes across the country to conduct a series of online policy dialogues. The objective of these policy dialogues is to integrate the perspectives and inputs of direct implementers (TVET institutes) of the NSDP into the upgraded policy.

Background

ILO Skills 21 conducted a series of orientation workshops on 'Organizing Policy Dialogue' at nine partner TVET Institutes in 2019. As an outcome of these capacity development interventions, these institutes have organized online policy dialogues and systematically provided their opinion on issues to be addressed in the NSDP review.

The event

The second online policy dialogue of this series titled "The National Skills Development Policy 2011 through a gender lens" was held with the Khulna Mohilla Polytechnic Institute (KMPI) on 30 June 2020. The dialogue was attended by the principal, teachers and instructors, industry representatives and students among others.

The discussion

The policy discussion brought out different issues relevant to the NSDP from the perspective of inclusion of women in skills development. Since KMPI is an exclusive female institute, the participants highlighted specific problems relating to female students in TVET sector that can be addressed through NSDP. The issues ranged from low enrolment of female trainees in TVET, absence of clear career paths, lack of local demand based courses, lack of awareness among female TVET graduates on job prospects; to cultural barriers to access due to distance of institutes and industries, lack of accommodation and transportation facilities. Despite NSDP 2011 provision to support and promote inclusion of women in skills development; **female enrolment rate in TVET institutes is significantly low.** The TVET courses are still not considered as a popular line of education despite government efforts. Increasing female enrolment was raised as a policy priority in the discussion. This is also evident from the very low enrolment rate in KMPI. Out of the 500 available seats, current enrolment is only 220.

The principal of the institute identified the higher minimum requirement of CGPA in government institutes compared to their private counterparts as one of the reasons of low enrolment of female students. While private institutes require only CGPA 2-2.5, government institutes require minimum CGPA 3-3.5.

Another identified underlying reason for low female enrolment was the lack of relevant courses for women. By relevance, the Principal of Khulna Mohila Polytechnic Institute pointed towards the courses that lead to better and suitable job prospects within

the locality and preferably allow working remotely from home.

Accommodation facility considering the current context of social safety and security has been identified as another area of concern that results in low enrolment of female students who live far away from the institutes.

As a possible solution to low enrolment of female students due to lack of security, female students and teachers suggested including **accommodation provision and transportation facilities** during their training in the TVET institutes. This would address the family concerns about the female student's security which often is a barrier to their education in TVET.

 *We can introduce women friendly technology courses to attract more female students to our institute. NSDP's section 11.4 has specific mention of discontinuing the less popular courses and TVET institutes are given authority to introduce new courses.*

▶ Kazi Neamul Shaheen / Principal / Khulna Mahila Polytechnic Institute

An important policy concern is the **social image of TVET sector.** Some of the female students raised the issue that women are very often discouraged to enter into TVET sector for education as public perception of TVET, especially among the people from upazilla level is very negative. This could be linked to the **lack of awareness about the prospect of TVET graduates.** To address the lack of awareness, many advertising campaigns are conducted in district level from the TVET institutes. However, bringing **social campaigning at upazilla level** might help change public perception and bring

more female students into TVET. The **success cases of female TVET graduates can be promoted** through these campaigns for changing negative public perception of it. Hearing about female graduates working in the industries and earning on their own could encourage more parents to admit their girl child in TVET institutes for shaping their careers.

Reflecting on **female graduates' lack of interest to travel further for industry attachments** and preference of staying at home following their graduation, reviewing the existing courses to cater to the local market demand was suggested. Masum Bellah, one of the teachers of Khulna Mohilla Polytechnic raised the issue of absence of local industries relevant to the courses offered in their institutes. Owing to the conservative mentality of parents, students do not travel beyond their cities for industry attachment following their course completion. The nearest industry distance from Khulna Mohilla Polytechnic was identified to be 55km away. Thus, the **institutes should offer courses that will have prospect in local industries.**



Khulna has very limited opportunity for job placement in technical sector. Parents don't want to send their daughters away to bigger cities. So most of the students even after 4 years of study, do not complete the industry attachment.

► Masum Bellah/ Dept. Head (Electronics) / Khulna Mahila Polytechnic Institute

Apart from the absence and considerable distance of local industries, another reason for students not joining in employment is **unawareness of the**

prevailing work from home opportunities. This implies the crucial **role of job placement cells at institutes as well as communicating a clear career path prior to and during the courses.** NSDP could provide a guideline mandating institutes to provide these services.

An observation came up in the discussion that female graduates are often demotivated to break the glass ceiling the society and their families develop for them and prefer to stay within their given boundaries. A workable solution through the NSDP discussed by the participants was to keep a scope of **motivational classes emphasizing importance of financial independence** along with regular courses supporting female students in joining industries even if far away from their home. Raising the number of female instructors would also communicate a positive message in the society and a sense of security among the female students about joining TVET courses. **Raising the number of female instructors in each TVET institutes** could be addressed in the revised NSDP for a ripple effect in the community to enrol higher number of female students in courses.

Considering the prevailing global emergency situation, online classes has been undertaken by some TVET institutes. However, a major policy concern about **women's limited access to online courses** was highlighted in this regard. In addition, instrument based trainings cannot be conducted efficiently online which is becoming an issue for the students. Therefore, it was suggested that the revised policy should **reconsider online classes as an emergency response which can further deteriorate the unequal access to digital technologies from gender perspectives**

Policy recommendations from the discussion

Concerns	Recommendations
Significantly low female enrolment rate in TVET institutes due to higher entry requirement, course suitability for women and from security concerns for travel and accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Introduce women friendly courses at institutes ▶ Reconsider the entry requirements for female students at TVET institutes/ take affirmative action ▶ Accommodation and transportation facilities for females during their training and industry attachment should be considered
Negative public narrative of TVET graduates	<p>Social Campaigning needs to be increased for upholding the positive image of TVET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promote TVET diploma and short courses at the <i>upazila</i> level ▶ TVET success cases to be showcased to increase female enrolment
Female graduates' lack of interest to travel further for industry attachments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The career path and job opportunities need to be communicated by the institute's job placement cell <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given the socio-cultural practice, opportunities for working from home in case of certain occupations should be communicated to increase female participation ▶ Employment opportunities within the surrounding area of the institutes needs to be explored as most of the institutes are situated far away from the area of the institutes implying cost and safety concern for the families of female students
Female graduates are often demotivated to break the glass ceiling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Motivational classes emphasizing importance of financial independence along with regular courses

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