

VOCATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BRAC
SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH: HOW
THIS IS INFLUENCING SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF
FEMALE TRAINING GRADUATES

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

I have conducted the research following all possible ethical ways. The research participants were not harmed in anyway and their real names were not used. They were explained the purpose of the study and asked for consents verbally as the research was conducted virtually. Permission from BRAC Skill Development Program and BRAC IED was taken for the research.

Abstract

VOCATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH BRAC SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH: HOW THIS IS INFLUENCING SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF FEMALE TRAINING GRADUATES.

The research aimed to explore exemplary organization BRAC's skill development program's strategies for skill development of female adolescence and youth who are from vulnerable family background and out of school and job. Another major purpose is to learn its influence on socio economic lives of female training graduates. Qualitative approach has been used to develop understanding of intangible benefits and challenges in different aspects of their life. One Key informant interview with district manager, one semi-structured interview with a trainer, and 5 extended interviews with female training graduates from ALP project were conducted to collect qualitative data. The research took place in a branch of BRAC SDP in Cox's Bazar. The research found BRAC SDP's whole school improvement approach, non-conventional training initiative, integrated theoretical and practical approach, and linkages to job market are very useful strategies increasing female participation in the training and changing mindset of the people in that community but lack of job opportunities and safety, and gender stereotypes still exist and affect negatively. This research expects to bring changes in the education system, and promote skill development program for accelerating economic growth in BD.

Key Words: BRAC; Skill Development; Unemployment; Female Training Graduates; Economic Growth, Family Social

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my elder sister Tajkia Ahmad who encouraged me every time I was about to give up. Without her enormous support, it would not be possible to achieve the goal.

Acknowledgement

Above all, I am grateful to the Almighty Allah for blessing me with all the privileges and resources that were required to complete the research.

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List of Acronyms

BITAC	Bangladesh Industrial Technical Assistance Centre
BRAC	Building Resource across Communities
FO	Field Organizer
FST	Foundational Skill Trainer
ILO	International Labor Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFS	Labor Force Survey
MCP	Master Craft Person
NTVQF	National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework
PO	Program Organizer
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDP	Skill Development Program
SST	Soft Skill Trainer
ToT	Training of Trainers
TT	Technical Trainer
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
VSD	Vocational Skill Development

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Bangladesh is among one of the fastest growing economies in the world; however, the policymakers should think whether it could be faster and whether it can sustain the growth rate for long term. Unfortunately, despite the high growth, future of the youth is uncertain in Bangladesh which can be a dangerous barrier to sustainable growth. Statistics show that one third of the population age is between 10-24 years (BRAC, 2020) whereas 2.68 million people aged 15 are unemployed and 12.3% among 15-24 years old are unemployed (BRAC, 2018.a). In fact, each year about 2.2 million young people join the workforce where ten million young people are already unemployed or underemployed currently (BRAC, 2020).

Shockingly, unemployment problem is severe among the educated youth as well. Among the literate people, the unemployment rate is 5.3% (BRAC, 2018.a). Many graduate and post-graduate young people around us are looking for jobs but there are not sufficient jobs to accommodate all. On the other hand, employers are searching for skilled labor but cannot find enough. According to the three out of every four business leaders, there is shortage of skilled workers (BRAC, 2020). Indeed, our education system is failing to produce skilled workforce and entrepreneurs. Besides, those who are out of schools are apparently missing necessary skills. There are also 40% youth who are neither in any work, education nor training (BRAC, 2018.a). What happens to these people? Comparatively females are the sufferer as most of them remain outside of the job market due to lack of education, skill and social support. In fact, Bangladesh is beset with both unskilled labor force and the unemployment problem.

Hence, I decided to research on this topic, particularly on skill development training program as it can be an effective method to have impact on training graduates lives in short period of time. Besides, this research focus is narrowed down to females only as their participation is comparatively low in the job market. The study limits its coverage on the present mindset and condition of graduates of skill development courses.

This research paper is designed in 5 chapters which will give the readers clear idea about why and how this research is conducted, what the key findings are, and what should be done to make a change in the system. The first Chapter is basically introducing an educational problem, research topic, and the whole research idea. The subsections are – Research Topic, Problem statement, Research questions, Purpose, and significance of the study. The second chapter presents the learning on skill development from reviewing various literatures. It describes vocational training in foreign countries and in Bangladesh, BRAC Skill Development Program (BRAC SDP), necessity of skill development for females, and social & economic effects. The third chapter explains methodology through Research Approach, Research sites, Research Participants, Sampling procedure, Data Collection Method, Role of Researcher, Data Analysis, Ethical Issues and Concerns, Credibility and Rigor, and limitation of the study. The fourth chapter showcases the under 9 broad themes. Finally, chapter 5 discusses the results, come to a conclusion and presents some recommendations for the future.

1.2 Research Topic

Vocational Skill Development through BRAC Skill Development Program in Bangladesh:
How this is Influencing Socio-economic life of Female Training Graduates.

Currently many organizations have been providing training to female labor force. Nevertheless, the capacity and quality of these organizations and strategies are not sufficient. Besides, research shows that participation of female in skill development is not much. In fact, the necessity and benefits of the trainings for them are not well-known and not encouraged. Thus, I intend to explore BRAC Skill Development Program, an established organization in Bangladesh, and how their training affecting the lives of female trainees.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Bangladesh has been dealing with natural disasters, poverty, high population growth, and unemployment since its independence. The reasons and solutions of these challenges are directly and indirectly linked with education and human resource development (Sarker et al., 2019). Sarker et al. (2019) expressed their concern that in developing countries, proper attention is not given to school dropout by the policymakers, and the responsible authorities. Productivity, social and economic development can be largely affected by lack of quality education, unemployment, exploited and depressed youth. Bangladesh government has brought tremendous change in our education system especially in primary education. However, drop-out rate is still upsetting. Dropout at school level in Bangladesh is 68% whereas only 32% students manage to reach to higher secondary level. Despite enrollment of girls has increased dramatically, drop-out rate is still high among girls. Moreover, after dropping out of school, less girls get engaged in income generating activities than boys (Sarker et al., 2019). Not only are these drop out girls becoming unemployed, “75% of all school drop-out girls are victim to child marriage” (BRAC, 2018.a, p. 1). According to a government report, the dropout rate of girls at the secondary level is 42 percent which is higher than the dropout rate of boys at secondary level (Daily Star, 2018).

It is high time we seriously think about the alternative way to turn them into productive human capital. Technical and vocational education and training is a beneficial learning opportunity for all. This stream of education is not encouraged in our society thus many people are deprived from its benefit. As a result, many remain uneducated and unemployed. Female participation rate in labor force is growing; however, at unsatisfactory rate. According to Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2010, “labour force participation for women is 36 percent, compared to 82.5 percent for men” (Byron & Rahman, 2015, para. 5). So, it is apparent that low participation of half of our population, that is female, is a major reason for low economic growth of our country. Again the women who are in labor force are not skilled enough as they do not take part in TVET. On an average only 9-13% female take training from public institutions and 33% from private institutions (Islam, n.d., p. 4). As a result, women are confined to mostly informal employment where they often get exploited (Ahmed, 2016). Also in the formal settings, for example – garment factories, they have “low bargaining power, low wages, occupational segregation, and poor work environment” (Rahman, 2013, p. 1). The main reasons behind women reluctance in training is basically less social acceptance. People could not come out of the stereotype of men participating in TVET. Moreover, family restrictions, early marriage, transportation constraints, and lack of sanitary facilities create barrier for women participation (Islam, n.d.). Therefore, it is high time to work on increasing women participation in labor force as well as increasing their skills through vocational training.

1.4 Research Questions

What types of vocational skill development training BRAC Skill Development Program is providing and how these opportunities are changing socio-economic status of the female training graduates?

Sub Questions:

1. What are the opportunities BRAC Skill Development Program provides for underprivileged women to increase their employability and improve their skills?
2. What changes have been occurred in the lives of female training graduates through the vocational skill development trainings of BRAC SDP?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Purpose of the study is to investigate the training opportunities and facilities available by BRAC Skill Development Program for the unorganized female workforce and how it influences lives of female training graduates.

There are many young girls who cannot continue schooling due to financial crisis, or lack of family support, or poor performance. Also, there are divorcee, widow and other distress females. This study intends to learn whether skill development training brings any changes in their lives in terms of social and economic aspects. If it does, then I want to develop understanding of what changes it causes and if it does not then what the reasons are.

This study particularly focuses on disadvantaged females from underdeveloped area like Cox's Bazar and the role of skill development training by BRAC in females' socio-economic life. In fact, what changes came to their life after receiving training on a particular trade.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be significantly important to encourage change in our education system. The importance and findings will challenge the psycho-social stereotype of choosing general education disregard of interest and need. Since more skill development program is needed in our country for increasing female employment and growth, learning from BRAC SDP will show why and how skill development programs should be increased and regulated.

Moreover, this research will provide an additional option for people who are in need of employment, skills, and knowledge. The result of this study regarding influence of vocational training in their lives will encourage distress women to make decision in participating in the training and changes their socio-economic status. The academicians will be interested to conduct extended research on necessity and effectiveness of skill development in Bangladesh.

This research is very timely as many people lost their jobs due to Covid 19 pandemic. Developing market demanded skills and entrepreneurship can help many people to generate income and support their family. Bangladesh is a densely populated country. Its population could be turned into an effective human capital for higher economic growth of our country. For that, proper vocational training is required to develop necessary skills among the female labor force in order to increase employment and to ensure quality work for the competitive job market. This research will influence the government and policymakers to rethink and reshape the vocational education and training system.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

To deepen knowledge on my research topic, I have reviewed journal articles, websites, News articles, and reports. I developed an idea about vocational skill development in international and national level. I examined the policy and strategies of government and non-government organizations in Bangladesh for strengthening vocational skill development sector. Besides, I reviewed the demand and benefits of VSD training in the girls and women's life. Based on my desk research, I have designed the literature review section in the following categories- Vocational Education and Training in International level, Vocational Education and Training in Bangladesh, BRAC Skill Development Program, Necessity of skill development for female, and VSD & Socio-economic Condition.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Vocational Education and Training in International level

Unemployment problem is a global issue. Both the developed and developing countries face the rising youth unemployment problem. Commonwealth of Learning (n.d.) provided some statistics which shows how severe the problem is. Every year 40 million enter into labor market whereas there is already millions of unemployed looking for jobs. About 500 million jobs have to be generated to accommodate all these current and upcoming unemployed people into formal job system. According to UNESCO (2016), "the youth unemployment rate is nearly three times that of the rest of the population" ("Technical and Vocational Skills Development | COL", n.d., para. 1). Unemployment rate is higher among young. Besides, skill mismatch or skill-deficiency is like salting the wound. According to Commonwealth of Learning, in order to solve the problem, TVET organizers should provide following services -

- I. “Better support young people to transition into employment
- II. Develop technical skills, and employment and entrepreneurial skills
- III. Better match skills development to industry demand
- IV. Train and assess for competency
- V. Increase access and cost-effectiveness to meet the growing demand
- VI. Support lifelong learning”

(“Technical and Vocational Skills Development | COL”, n.d.,)

Since more or less all the countries suffer due to this lack of skill and unemployment problem, revolution in the education system is required. This issue is already identified and addressed by the sustainable development goals (SDGs). One of the Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4) talks about education with the formulation “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all” (UNDP, 2015). It has been observed worldwide that there is a “positive relationship between the quality and quantity of human capital in terms of skills and knowledge and development and growth in the world economies” (Macharia, 2019, p. 212).

The international organization UNICEF has been conducting some skill development programs for the young generation of countries. Dewan & Sarker (2017) described how UNICEF views skill development worldwide. It collaborates with governments and civil society in 190 countries and territories to promote adolescent succeed, and achieve their full potential, resulting in a safer future for them. UNICEF also believes that the aim of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is to ensure that all countries have “equal access to such training programs and increase the number of youth with skills relevant for decent jobs” (Dewan & Sarker, 2017, p. 5). UNICEF has been creating the pathway by projecting on skill development for the young and by skill it meant transferable skills and

technical skills. Here, transferable skills includes leadership, effective communication, critical/creative and logical thinking, problem solving, business skill, work management, project management etc. Whereas, technical skill includes, computer training (MS word, data excel, PowerPoint), and job specific skill which are associated with the specific occupation or profession a particular person is choosing.

India is the country with one of the fastest growing economy of the world. In the paper titled “Education for Skill Development and Women Empowerment”, Shetty & Hans (2019) stated the scenario, necessity, prospects and challenges of skill development in India. They argued that skill development training is one of the most important parts in the education system, which helps the citizens to turn their theoretical knowledge into pragmatic implementation. The authors also shed light on necessity of bringing structural changes in the educational system as a whole, so that vocational education can work in a systematic way. As they discussed,

The term ‘skill development’ refers to the productive capacities acquired through education and training in formal, non-formal and on-the-job settings. Skills development initiatives enable individuals at all economic levels to engage productively in livelihoods. The gap between demand and supply of skilled labor has to be filled by making necessary structural changes in the education system (Shetty & Hans, 2019, p. 64).

The author suggested that different sets of skills, such as enterprise development skills, technical skills, hard and soft skills should be incorporated in the educational system, so that the citizens can explore in the vast field based on their interest and skill.

In the Philippines, unemployment issue is very serious. Ambag and Bernarte (2015) highlighted the main two reasons - one is dropping out from school as not everyone can afford to go to school and the other is lack of job opportunities for graduates according to their choice or suitability. The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) revealed that the largest group of the unemployed people coming from 15-24 years old citizens followed by the group

of 25-34 years old (2014 Labor Force Survey (LFS)). This country is considering TVET as a solution to their unemployment problem. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) categorized the trainings on three types of courses such as technology, service, and trades courses. Philippines taking TVET as a strategy to reduce poverty as well, thus, it aims to prepare economically stable, responsible, productive and competitive labor force by equipping them with technical-vocational and academic proficiencies, work ethics and values. TESDA Director General Joel Villanueva is encouraging people to choose TechVoc by saying that "I know that the idea of a college or university education is always appealing, but TechVoc is more affordable, hands-on, and a path to a good job is shorter" (Ambag and Bernarte, 2015, p. 5). However, Philippines identified people's unclear perception about vocational education and training as the main challenge. The society thinks that TechVoc education is prepared for the dropouts, unintelligent and under-achievers only (Amoor, 2009 in Ambag and Bernarte, 2015). Beicht and Walden (2005) assessed the benefits of vocational education and training in their research study and found "personal development, improvements in efficiency on the job, networking, improved perspective for better or more interesting employment, chances to move up the career ladder, better earnings" are the most important ones (Ambag and Bernarte, 2015).

Kenya has high ambition of becoming a middle-income country by the year 2030. It envisions to build a newly emerged industrialized country based on a high skilled labor force (GoK,2005 in Macharia, 2019). Thus, the Social Pillar of the Vision plans to create well-trained skilled labor force through designing its education in such a way to achieve its goal (UNESCO, 1961 in Macharia, 2019). Macharia (2019) thinks that in order to get a pool of skilled manpower, deliberate training must be available to the masses. There is biasness against technical courses. Compared to university courses, technical courses have lower social status and chance of getting lower paying jobs (Macharia, 2019). The government of

Kenya has introduced free Secondary Education in 2008 (GoK, 2013) and this initiative resulted in higher transition rate from primary to secondary school level (Macharia, 2019). However, it could not ensure good result, rather most of the students scored below standard level. Many leaves school without any career choice. The study suggests that career counseling should be available assessing career procurement cost, the client's potential and other factors. Besides, Macharia (2019) argues that technical and vocational education should be prioritized in the countries where population growth is faster than the economic growth. This study stresses that TVET provides useful trainings to the labor force as its aim is to prepare a skilled individual for production and services (Macharia, 2019).

China is the new emerged power in the world. According to Mehrotra et. al, (2014), “for the past two decades, the Chinese economy has been growing by over 10 per cent per annum” (p. 1). This means that, the China has remarked its name in the one of the fastest growing economy in the world. China has started TVET program many years ago since 1949 and behind achieving this fastest growing economy, TVET has been playing the crucial role. Mehrotra et. al, mentioned different types of training in China, “according to the 1996 Vocational Education Law, China's vocational training includes pre-job training, job transfer training, apprentice training and on-the-job training and entrepreneurship training” (Mehrotra et. al, 2014, p. 9). As a result, China has been being able to provide quality skills to their population before they go for a job. To bring more effectiveness in the TVET programs China's Education Law asked for a budget. “Education Law also requires that 20 per cent of the annual education budget should be allocated to vocational education and training” said by Lai et al., 2011 (Mehrotra et. al, 2014, p. 9). This kind of investment creates chances for getting trainings and initially it improves in China's economic growth.

2.1.2 Vocational Education and Training in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is rated as one of the world's economic success stories, with an average annual GDP growth rate of more than 6% over the last decade and a half, according to a study titled as ‘Situation Analysis of Bangladesh TVET Sector: A background work for a TVET SWAp’ which is authorized by Khan (2019) is affiliated with Independent International Consultant RMDG. To improve more in the economic success stories it requires significantly more information based economy, battling financial shamefulness, and acknowledgment of a rational and exceptionally prepared professional design. In other words, to get a more upward sloping economy Bangladesh need more trained workers. But in current days, it is experiencing a lack of qualified labor because of not having skilled manpower.

The professional training helps the youth to make arrangement for their future career and gives guidance for a more extensive feeling of life. Khan (2019) informed that, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) aspires to be a middle-income country by 2024, and acknowledges the possible contribution of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to economic development by generating skilled manpower and employment. This is why the Bangladesh government has been investing in TVET.

In order to fortify TVET sector, the Government of Bangladesh has taken an initiative called “The TVET Reform Project” in 2007, with the support of International Labour Organisation and the European Union. International Labour Organization mentioned in their website that this reform project has been developed with the ambition of competing in the global market and eliminating poverty. It has targeted following 5 areas to work on - Policy, Relevance to the market, Strengthening capacity of managers and competency based method, Linkages between training institutions and industry, and Inclusive access. Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Bangladesh Technical Education

Board (BTEB), Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), and Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) are assisting Government of Bangladesh regulate the project (ILO, 2007). Many initiatives have been taken since then to achieve the goal. In the National Education Policy, which was approved in 2010, the government recognized the need of skilled manpower to meet both internal need and external demand of manpower. The policy has encouraged public-private collaboration to develop vocational institutions where boys and girls from poor family can have access. It has strategy for school drop outs from any level of secondary education to turn them into skilled manpower through vocational or technical courses. Stipends will be given to motivate them (Ministry of Education, 2010). There is also a particular policy on skill development which is called National Skills Development Policy (NSDP), built up on “other major government policies such as the Education Policy of 2009, the Non-Formal Education Policy of 2006, the Youth Policy of 2003, the National Training Policy of 2008 and the NSDC Action Plan of 2008” (Ministry of Education, 2011, p.7). This policy is formulated to for improving coordination as well as for ensuring better delivery of skills. It expects to develop a system which will increase employability and access to employment.

To bring more sustainability in TVET, under the Bangladesh: Skills Vision 2016, Bangladesh Government has been working with the support of ILO and European Union with a vision of skills development in Bangladesh in 2016, to bring effective improvement in TVET reform in Bangladesh (ILO, 2016). ILO has clarified that quality TVET is very important to the country's success in the global labor market and to ensuring good jobs for all citizens. NTVQF is also an initiative of the TVET Reform Project, according to a report National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) published by ILO ((Ministry of Education, 2011). The project is working towards reforming technical and vocational

education and training in Bangladesh through two parts; National Training and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF) and the Public National Skills Quality Assessment System. Bangladesh also undertakes 'Five-Years Plan' regularly. Shamsul Alam who is the Senior Secretary of General Economics Division of Ministry of Planning, Bangladesh, said in a roundtable discussion on "Investment in Skills in 8th Five-Year Plan" that government had focused and invested on skills development and technical education during the Seventh Five-Year Plan (Daily Star, 2019). Shamsul Alam also confirmed the Eighth Five-Year Plan, "we are going to focus on three main issues: (1) Job creation and GDP growth; (2) Ensuring equal opportunities for all; (3) Tackling the adverse effects of climate change" (Daily Star, 2019, para. 5).

The Government wants to increase female participation in TVET and its intention is visible through its additional policy focusing on women especially. In National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET, 6 strategic objectives are laid out which guide all vocational education and training providers to ensure all types of support to create conducive environment for females. Achieving 40% female enrollment, eliminating negative perception towards female participation, and establishing gender responsive environment are some major objectives (ILO, 2013).

Government of Bangladesh has an autonomous body and research center named Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Center (BITAC) that investigates ways to boost industrial development and disseminates technological information (BITAC, 2018). BITAC has been providing vocational training under Long-term advanced technical training program, Medium term technical training program, Short term technical training program, and Industrial Attachment Technical Training Program (BITAC, 2018)

United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been assisting Bangladesh in developing skills of youth. According to Sarker, and Salam (2011) expertise that, UNESCO has been working in TVET with the aim of preparing the youth by providing skill development trainings so that they could be skilled forever and they would not have any barrier to get a job. UNESCO is keen to support regarding the capacity development of the central authorities to map situations in respective fields, and to take appropriate action according to a report by UNESCO (2012) which is titled as ‘UNESCO Country Programming Document For Bangladesh’ (UNESCO, 2012, p. 7). In a sentence, UNESCO has been running this project under TVET for the Skills development of the youth and wants turn training into their Employability.

Muslim Aid Serving Humanity, a UK based Islamic International Non-Governmental Organization, has presented a report on TVET on their website is that; the Muslim Aid Bangladesh Field Office (MABFO) has been conducting their TVET program as their major program by forming several units (Muslim Aid Serving Humanity, n.d). While following the government’s NTVQF, the MAIT offers quality skills training on market driven trade courses.

Female participation in TVET in Bangladesh:

Lower women participation in the labor force has always been a concerning phenomenon as well as in TVET. Following this issue “Female participation in TVET in Bangladesh is extremely low, ranging from 9% to 13% in public institutions and 33% in private institutions” according to report by ILO on its report National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET (NSDCS, 2012, p. 3). Similarly, it is found in a report by Asian Development Bank (ADB) is that, “Many NGOs provide different forms of training and training by NGOs accounted for 11% of all trainees; but the difference between men and

women differs substantially, with NGOs accounting for 16.8% of female trainees, and only 8.6% of male trainees” (ADB & ILO, 2016, p. 3). It is a worse imbalance in between man and women participation in TVET.

To reduce this problem the ILO has confirmed an initiative to increase female participation in TVET. In the same report ILO confirms that “Gender equality will be integrated throughout the TVET training system, curriculum, management and procedures” (ILO, n.d, p. 2). International Labor Organization (ILO) (2016) reported that public missions on sex reasonableness have seen an immense extension in the quantity of women making a pass at Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) courses. As a result, “there has been a 20% extension (appeared differently in relation to 2011 figures) in female understudy numbers, recollecting a climb for female enrolment in non-standard trades” (ILO, 2016, p. 6).

2.1.3 BRAC Skill Development Program

BRAC skill development programme is enabling unprivileged youth and migrants to access & acquire employable skills and equipping them with tools required to get decent work. In the (BRAC, 2020), BRAC SDP’S strategic vision for 2020 is given and that is to ensure “Inclusive and sustainable market development and promotes opportunities for youth, in line with the National Skills Development Policy, 2011” (p. 6). Basically, they have hands on apprenticeship. Besides they work on market development and improving working condition. Also they build up public-private partnerships and develop business and management capacity to strengthen the sector. There are 19 projects BRAC SDP is conducting to secure their purpose. These projects are mentioned in BRAC brochure.

Through various projects, from 2012 to 2020, within this short period of time, BRAC SDP has already reached many of its target people. It has put tremendous impact in different communities in Bangladesh. From the BRAC (2020), it is known that, BRAC SDP through

its skills training, jobs, and decent work intervention supported 236999 people in 46 districts of Bangladesh. Among them, “**72182** youth received skills training, **42017** people receiving employability and entrepreneurship training, **122800** people provided knowledge on decent work, **51670** youth placed in jobs and **71315** women were reached” (p. 5). Also many transgender people received skills training and persons with disabilities were reached. In fact, BRAC is working for different groups of people who need the support.

BRAC has been playing a significant role regarding Skill Development of young people in Bangladesh through addressing different problems and providing training according to that. A BRAC website article named ‘Promoting Incubation Support to Enterprises’ informed about the goal of BRAC for Skill Development in Bangladesh. It is informed that, BRAC promises to assist Bangladeshi young entrepreneurs in successfully growing their companies (BRAC, 2018.b). According to an article from BRAC website called “Enabling Young Entrepreneurs to Start off Strong”, “Small Business Association” reported that about a quarter of all new companies fail within the first two years which is why the lack of corporate acumen and industry knowledge is the number one wrongdoer, as a result, the cycle continues as more people are reluctant to start their own businesses after seeing too many others struggle (BRAC, 2018.c). In order to start successful enterprises in the informal economy, the young entrepreneurs combine their apprenticeship expertise with tried and true strategies. According to one of the BRAC report or story containing a name "Living, learning, inspiring", some BRAC trainings focuses on mainly languages and technology skills which are two major skills needed for the trainees and very much supportive to get employment in the job industry. Adding to that, they have not only developed the practice of putting money aside in their own accounts, but they also now begun to contribute to their relatives, who no longer see their daughters' marriage as an easy cure to all of their problems as (BRAC, 2018.d).

2.1.4 Necessity of skill development for female

Skill development is very crucial for a nation's economic prosperity. It is particularly for women to get involved in skill development for various reasons such as financial independence, and establishing gender equality in national economy etc. Given the current situation of worldwide pandemic, necessity of skill development for women has got even more important. According to UN Women, skill development and empowerment of women is directly interconnected with each other. According to the experts' opinion, it is very significant to make investment in the sector of women skill development. It says, "Investing in young women's economic empowerment and skills development is one of the most urgent and effective means to drive progress on gender equality, poverty eradication, and inclusive economic growth" (UN Women, n.d., para. 1).

In a report of Center of Strategic and International Studies written by Runde & Ramanujam, the authors argued that if women were to get trained in skill development and get actively involved in the economic activities, that would work as tremendous booster for the economy (2020). They also opined that women's contribution to the economy create positive impact on different significant social sectors, such as health. Based on their argument they suggested,

Developing countries need to leverage available domestic resources and foreign aid support to build up technical training and vocational education institutes that specifically aim at girls and women in their communities. As countries have a growing youth population that renews national aspirations and anxieties, the need of the hour is to fast-track women's ability to play an equal role in economic growth without adding an unreasonable burden on resources (Runde & Ramanujam, 2020, para. 12).

Both the authors agreed that gender responsive strategies for skill development of women is highly necessary, especially in developing countries.

In a paper titled 'Education for Skill Development and Women Empowerment', the authors Showjanya Shetty and V. Basil Hans (2019) discussed that it is very crucial for women to get trained through different skill development course because it enhances their ability to think

critically and reflect, which strengthens their decision-making capability. For that, access to resources and continuation of growth are required. Skill development has its own advantages -“Education opens the door to lead a life of liberty, but skill development enables liberty meaningful by allowing one to accomplish prosperity” (Shetty & Hans, 2019, p. 63). The authors argue that skill development shapes the mindset of women in a positive and pragmatic way. With giving a special emphasis on participation of women in skill development, they suggested to ensure proper work environment through leveraging existing government schemes for women to increase their participation in the labor force in an effective way (Shetty & Hans, 2019).

2.1.5 Skill development and social & economic condition

Shabbir et al. (2018) noted that, skills and human resource production has become crucial components for every nation's socioeconomic growth. That means, there is a root relationship in between skill development and socioeconomic development. Kavar (2011) described, “initial training provides core work skills and the underpinning knowledge, industry-based and professional competencies that facilitate the transition into the world of work” (Kavar, 2011, p. 3). Adding to that, skill development is the core process of social and economic development in a society. Bodley (1999) has described socioeconomic development as an elite-directed phenomenon in which social capital is concentrated in direct proportion to the size of society. That means, to bring positive changes and improvement in life standard of a citizen, it is necessary to have better social and economic condition or development.

Vocational skill development (VSD) and employability

The role of TVET is realized a long ago; however, is not well established in developing countries. According to Indian National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, introducing well

planned vocational education and training programs and implementing the programs rigorously can be an effective instrument to create productive employment (Agrawal and Indrakumar, 2014). In the context of our country, TVET can play major role to provide opportunities for the youth especially for those who leave mainstream education. TVET develops skilled manpower who can create self-employment and contribute to the industrial economy. The competitive skills include knowledge, practices of technology and sciences, and attitude to various sectors (Islam,n.d., para 2).

Vocational Skill Development and social status

There is a core connection in between vocational education and social status. According to Inyiagu (2014) is that, TVET showed up as one of the significant counter balance that will grow the economy, by making a talented work power that could work autonomously in the work market. To get a smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in social status, a citizen should have an economic flexibility. When a man is developed economically it automatically boosts his social standard. According to (Sandhu & Ahmed, 2018) is that, TVET assists women in overcoming socioeconomic difficulties in their lives, and skill development not only improves individual standards but also contributes to economic growth. Vocational Skill Development is helping women to acquire the capabilities they need to take an interest in the work market and empowering them to make an effective beginning in working life.

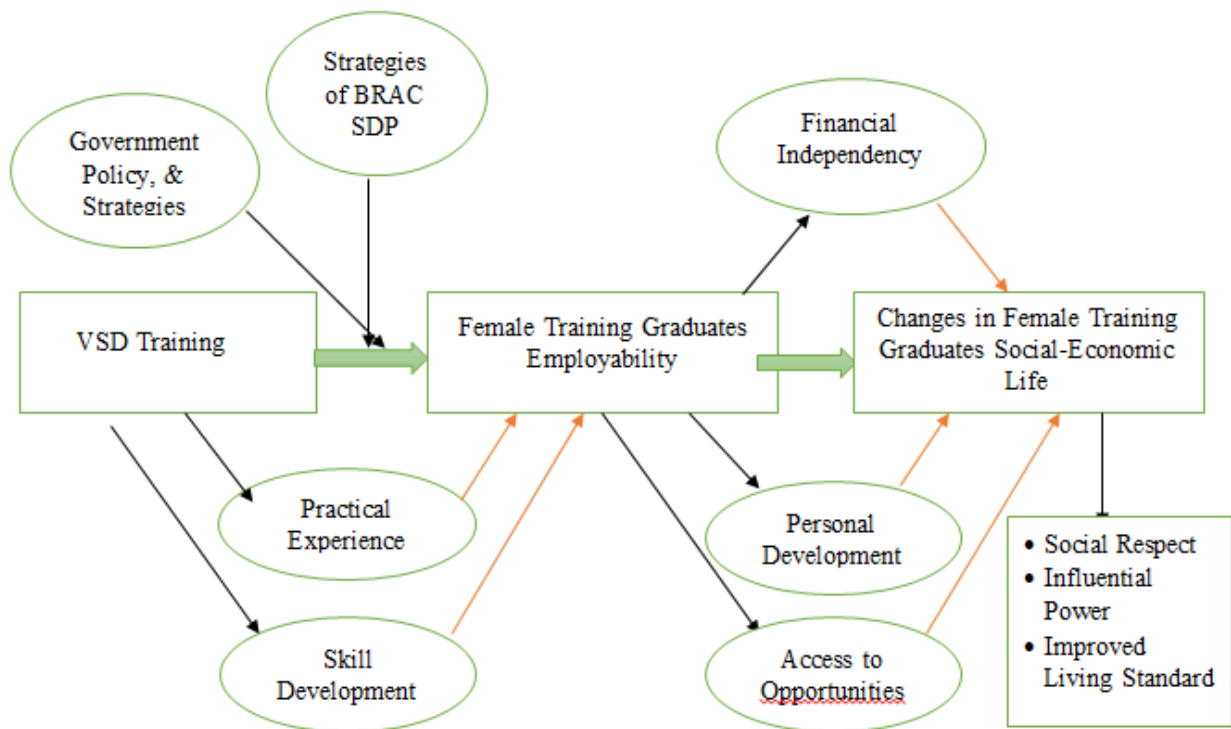
Gender issue in TVET:

Gender issue in TVET is a very concerning about the women participation or enrollment in it. According to Amoamah et.al (2016) is that, although there is a rise in women participation in TVET still majority of them do not choose or allowed to do. The status of women participation in TVET in a developing country like Bangladesh is very much crucial, because

here, gender disparity is so extreme in terms of labor force participation. Amoamah et.al, (2016) also noted that, women sees technology education as a male-dominated field to which they are not entitled. It is necessary to remedy this lack of attendance by recognizing the disparities between male and female research preferences. To reduce this gender issue, increasing women involvement in TVET is vital. According to Khan (2019) is that, women's ability and productivity will be enhanced by technological, vocational, professional, and higher education, and as a result, they will be able to enjoy social dignity by working in various job sectors (Khan, 2019). According to a journal called Gender Issues in TVET (2021) is that, vocational skill development is often seen as a successful tool for empowering vulnerable people in society by increasing their employability (Gender Issues in TVET, 2021). Because the people who are less skilled or unskilled they are unable to contribute to the economy properly.

Despite the progress that Bangladesh has achieved in girls' and women's education, still girls' and women are being discriminated almost everywhere in this country. Misola (2010) has noted that, this human loss has increased pressure on governments to improve gender equality, particularly in regard to women's enrolment in male-dominated technical and vocational education and training (TVET) courses (Misola, 2010). So as to achieve girls' and women participation in the Vocational Skill Development trainings and labor market, the awareness about gender equality has to be risen. ADB and ILO (2016) reported that, in 2000, women enrollment in TVET in Bangladesh was 24-25% and it is risen up to 27% in recently (ADB and ILO, 2016). Still, women enrollment and participation in TVET remains lower compare to the men.

2.2 Conceptual framework



I have reviewed various literatures and developed the conceptual framework based on my learning from those literatures. The main research question of my study wants to explore how VSD affects the life of female training graduates. From the literatures, I have found that VSD is being used as a worldwide tool to reduce unemployment problem which in turn decreases poverty and brings socio-economic development. The changes in female learners life is more realized as they are the most vulnerable in many context. In fact, there is a direct link between VSD training and employment of the female graduates and again the employment results in change in their socio-economic life. So, my hypothesis is that taking VSD training ultimately influences the training graduates' life.

In my study, I am exploring the VSD training through BRAC SDP; what strategies it follows to make VSD training meaningful for the female graduates. Here, BRAC SDP moderates or influences the effect VSD training has on employability and thus socio-economic life. By

socio-economic life aspects indicates their respect in the society, power to influence others, and their life standard.

There are some others mediators which are related to the relationship that has shown. VSD training let the trainees develop a particular job skill and have hands on experience. These two factors explain why VSD helps to get jobs. Similarly, getting a job leads to change in socio-economic life through personal development, financial independency, and access to many exposures.

All these relationships highly influenced by the government policy and strategies for VSD and gender issues. From various policy review, I found, in Bangladesh, government has already set up an inducive environment for VSD which laid out a path for the actors to walk on and make changes. So, I am not going to explore policy effects in my study. Rather in my methodology, data collection and result, I am focusing on the private NGO BRAC and its SDP for disadvantaged young females. Ultimately, the experience and perception of female training graduates will answer my research questions.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research method refers to the ways through which researchers collect data for their study.

For a research, methodology is a study of methods to gain knowledge and to indicate how the research is carried out (Rajasekar *et.al*, 2013).

Methodology section is very crucial for a research in order to get relevant and reliable data. According to Kallet, clear description of procedure should be given so that it could be repeated by others to test the validity of the results and to evaluate the possibility of the results' reproducibility (2004, p. 1). Therefore, this paper is going to discuss about research approach, sites and participants, and figure out the appropriate methodologies for a particular research topic.

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research approach has been used to get the intended information. According to Brikci, &Green (2007), the aim of the qualitative research is to understand different aspects of social life which are mostly expressed through words rather than only numbers (p. 4). They think that approach should be selected based on the research questions. Qualitative research basically answers what, how, and why types questions to learn about experience and attitude. The authors also suggested that if researchers want to understand the perspective of participants, explore the meaning of phenomena, and observe a process in dept, then qualitative approach is appropriate. In my research questions, I want to understand the perspective of trainees, explore how vocational trainings influencing their lives, and learn about their training process. Therefore, Qualitative research approach is appropriate for my research study.

3.2 Research Site

For this research, BRAC Skill Development Program has been chosen because this is a huge initiative by BRAC having large impact on the community. Among the trainees, a large proportion is women. It has been working on eight projects for the communities in cities and municipalities. Most importantly, now it is working for the Rohingyas and host community in Cox's Bazar (BRAC, 2019). As Cox's bazar is affected by refugee influx, host community is central to national and international attention and may need support more than ever. That is why despite there are many working stations of BRAC Skill Development Program all over the country, research will be done in one of the branches in Cox's Bazar. Data will be collected from Kolatoli branch. Moreover, this Cox's Bazar is a renowned place for tourism. There are potential people, however, this place is not developed in terms of equal participation, employment, quality education and trainings. How the BRAC skill development program is dealing with the challenge and having impact in trainees lives can be understood well from here. Moreover, for the researcher, it will be easier to access to information from BRAC Centre at Cox's Bazar.

3.3 Research Participants

As this research focuses on the influence of skill development in female's life, those who are female and already have taken training from BRAC SDP are the main participants. These participants' should be adolescence and youth as youth unemployment is one of main concerns behind the research. Also, they are to be from poor or vulnerable background because I wanted to learn how their life changes and what support they need. BRAC has

many projects with different target groups, strategies, and modules. In Cox's Bazar, only few are available. Among those, Alternative Learning Program (ALP)'s training graduates meet my criteria. Thus, I have selected 5 female training graduates from ALP. Besides that, 1 of the trainers of this project, and 1 center manager participated to provide necessary overall information about the general operation, ALP trainings and its graduates.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

5 young female trainees who fulfill the criteria are randomly selected from ALP training project for in-dept data collection to learn about the changes in their socio-economic status after the training. They are selected from two different training trade courses to have diverse information. Since this is a qualitative study, we will not use any statistical sampling process.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The selected research topic wants to investigate how vocational skill development through BRAC skill development in Bangladesh influences socio-economic status (education, income, occupation, individual motivation, life satisfaction) of female trainees. For this research, in dept-interview method had been chosen to collect data. Through interviews, qualitative data was collected.

3.5.1 Interview method

Three types of Interviews were taken taken.

One interview was conducted with a manager to learn about vision, policy, strategies, and operational information about BRAC SDP to get an overall picture from organizational perspective. A similar type of study – VET in secondary school in Papua New Guinea used semi-structured interview methods to learn from policymakers and institution head (Leke, 2010).

Second type of interview was done with a trainer of a training course. The interview was semi-structured to learn about his belief, opinion, technique, and experiences. This method is important for this study as the trainer is a good source of information about the activities and trainees.

Another type of extended interviews were taken from 5 female trainees who had completed training from BRAC SDP. It is a technique which is useful for “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p.3). Due to Covid 19 pandemic, interviews were taken over phone.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

According to Flick (2009), for qualitative research, role of a researcher is to give special importance to the participants as they are the main instruments to collect data (p. 106). The researcher has to adopt role based on the participants and situations. Sometimes building relationship with the door keeper is important. Access to information depends on it. As I was going to conduct research in an organization, I had to go through the hierarchy. As a researcher, at first, I presented my purpose and convinced the head office authority to get permission. I provided them an official letter issued by BRAC IED. Then I built rapport with the manager, trainers and trainees to get access to ample information.

Besides, I conducted the research in ethical and impartial way to get real data and information. Admitting biasness is one way to do it. I have served a primary school in Dhaka for 2 years as a teacher. Students were from low income community. I have seen many students drop out from school due to their parents’ inability to afford their studies. Besides, many other students are far behind the standard and they require intensive care to reach the

bar which seems very difficult in their context. When I came to know about technical and vocational education from my masters classes in BRAC IED, I realized that this genre could be a good path for the many people especially who need to generate income early. Therefore, I have a positive idea towards vocational training which may cause biasness. On the other hand, I do not have much knowledge but curiosity regarding skill development program; as a consequence, I did in-depth research to find out actual result. Besides, I was careful about avoiding leading questions during interviews, and use several methods to remove any kind of biasness.

3.7 Data Analysis

After gathering the data, the most crucial step of data analysis come. In this step, I reviewed data, interpreted and summarized the critical information in line with research questions. There are seven steps, suggested by Rossman & Rallis (2003), which guided me in analyzing the data in systematic way. At first, I gathered all data and prepared those for analysis; for instance, transcription of all the interviews. Then I reviewed the data. On the third step, I highlighted the key words or important information that corresponds with research questions with different colors. On the fourth step, I generated themes or categories based on the information I got during coding. Also, research question was a good guide to generate theme. Similar types of information went under a certain theme. Then I interpreted data and tried to understand the meaning and finally present the findings through summarizing main points.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Through admitting my pre-supportive mind toward vocational trainings for skill development, I am acknowledging my position and became conscious about remaining neutral. Moreover, multiple methods such as extended interviews with training graduates, and KIIs with an institute leader, and in-depth interview with a trainer have been chosen to ensure

credibility through triangulation. Furthermore, proper virtual consent was taken from each participant. Combining all of these efforts, I ensured trustworthiness.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

I have completed Teach for Bangladesh fellowship which gave me platform to work in a low income community based primary school with a goal to ensure whole school development. There I experienced many talented students drop out for financial reason as well as family complexity. They do not develop any skill to get a good work. From there I got the interest to research on skill development. The reason I have particular focus on females is that I have seen the drop-out rate is higher among female students. Also, I have done a Global Girls' Education Fellowship under Teach for All where we discussed how challenging it is for girls to continue education, to gain employability skills, and to develop entrepreneurship skills. Thus, I wanted to make my research specific and decided to work with the female participants.

I prepared a research proposal first as a process of developing this study. I had a particular course on developing proposal in BRAC IED. Two professors supervised me and approved the proposal. Finally, I proceeded with the guidance of my research supervisor.

I believe, my current work experience is beneficial for this study. Presently I am working for Centre for Peace and Justice, BRAC University and I am leading a research in collaboration with Cardiff University. In this research, I am reviewing literatures, developing data collection tools, selecting interviewees, and conducting interviews. These learning will definitely help me to take forward this study because the steps are same.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The biggest challenge was the availability of the participants as they have already completed the trainings and are scattered in different places. The pandemic has made the situation

complicated. I had to take interviews over phone because it was not safe for the participants and for the researcher to meet physically during the pandemic which makes it difficult to build rapport and communicate clearly. Moreover, I had a plan to observe few training classes as one of the methods of data collection but I could not because the training were cancelled due to lockdown. However, I had to cancel the plan.

Another big limitation of this study is that it is a small scale research due to time constraint and lockdown situation in the country. This research used only one method that is interview. If I could review BRAC SDP's program and operational module, I might have got more concrete information. Despite several attempts, I could not collect the modules from BRAC head office.

In order to address these challenges, I had to be careful and follow systematic ways. I went go to the Cox's Bazar branch office of BRAC Skill development program and provided them with a formal letter from BRAC IED. Confirming permission, I had taken a contact list of participants with phone number. After that I made a specific plan so that I could collect quality data in short time over phone. I explained the purpose and took appointment beforehand. Keeping the probable barriers in mind and following necessary strategies, it was possible to conduct the research properly. Finally, this research opened a gateway for further extended research on this similar issue.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

My research results present the idea on how BRAC SDP contributes to the skill development of females and how these females are influenced by the program from the perspective of both BRAC SDP and the female beneficiaries. Rather than presenting numbers, list of achievement, and so on, my intention was to figure out how BRAC SDP addresses the need of disadvantaged group of females in a particular context, what strategies and principles they follow which make their effort worthy. In fact, I tried to learn the secret behind their widespread impact. On the other hand, what females think about skill development and how they perceive and realize the VSD in their life was another section of the research.

I have generated 4 broad themes after reviewing the results. These themes present the qualitative data that are important to understand the research questions and the study topic.

These themes are given below –

1. BRAC SDP's Policy and Strategies to support Females Labor Force
2. Challenges for Females in Participating in VSD training and Job
3. Importance of Skill Development in Females' Life
4. Effects of BRAC's Skill Development Training On Female Learners Socio-Economic Life

These themes build up on each other and all together give a whole idea about the research. I widely used the information of Cox's Bazar as an example or case that represents BRAC SDP in the similar contexts of our country and the condition of female in those contexts.

4.2 BRAC SDP's Policy and Strategies to support Females

BRAC started skill development program in 2012 as a component of BRAC Educational Program (BEP). While interviewing the district manager of BRAC SDP in Cox's Bazar, he discussed how BRAC SDP started its journey. He described, "Around that time, the demand of such program was increasing. Finally in 2015, BRAC SDP debuted as an independent program. Currently, 27 formal and informal projects are being implemented in the whole Bangladesh" (Interview #1, 10-04-21).

Since the data for this research was collected from the Cox's Bazar branch of BRAC SDP, the district manager enlightened me with information of major apprenticeship projects in Cox's Bazar.

The BRAC SDP program in Cox's Bazar started in 2015 with *Skills Trainings for Advancing Resource* project which continued till 2018. Then more fund started coming and BRAC SDP kept continuing its work for the same goal. *Alternative learning program* (ALP), which is for out of school adolescence, is one of the ongoing projects. It is a US funding projects started in 2018 and is extended till 2021. (Interview #1, 10-04-21).

The manager gave detail information about ALP since this is an apprenticeship based project for disadvantaged group and I have selected research participants from this project.

ALP's target groups of people are usually disable, transgender, victims of child marriage, school drop outs, tribal, widow, orphan and other minority groups. ALP is similar to STAR program but more conclusive. STAR provides theoretical training, soft skill training, practical training. Along with all these, ALP provides additional Foundational skill training. ALP gives training in 10 trade courses. For females, there are 2 tailoring courses, 1 beauty parlor course, and 2 computer courses (Graphic designing, and IT support technician) (Interview #1, 10-04-21).

This ALP project continuously tries to reach the unprivileged but potential female labor force. To attract learners ALP offers market demanded courses based on their door to door survey in every area. Besides surveying, BRAC arranges small meetings in those areas and explain about different trade courses and its career prospects (Interview #1, 10-04-21). The interested candidates can choose what s/he wants to learn. However, BRAC SDP assists the

females in choosing courses assessing capability of the candidate. For instance, “a drop out from class 5 will not be able to acquire efficiency in Computer, so BRAC suggest her to choose another trade course. On the other hand, anyone can learn course like tailoring” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

Since the girls in Cox’s Bazar face many family and social barriers, BRAC does not only target the learners; it deliberately gives importance to community involvement and development for robust outcome. BRAC officers go to different localities and discuss about various issues with the guardians of female trainees or the youth. The manager added, “Among the life skills, we talk about gender violence, justice and so on” (Interview #1, 10-04-21). BRAC also aware the people that legal actions will be taken if anyone disturb the female learners.

Although there is not any separate project for female learners, they are given priority in every project. There is a rule at BRAC SDP that it has to admit minimum 60% female learners. It can be more than 60% but not less than that (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). This quota system of BRAC SDP indicates that it values equity to bring women forward. In order to expand the area of work for women, BRAC has taken a timely initiative. BRAC has mandated that 10% female should be trained a Non-Conventional Trade (NCT) course that is usually done by males in our society (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). BRAC is very sensitive about girls and women. The district manager said, “People have a blind faith in BRAC!” He also explained the strict policy of BRAC to ensure girls safety is the secret of achieving the trust. Staffs of BRAC may lose their job for s girls or women related issues (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

All the programs of BRAC target the vulnerable groups of our countries. Realizing their difficulties and to encourage participation in the skill development programs, BRAC provides scholarship to the participants. The district manager informed that for each learner, BRAC

spent about 32,000 BDT in 6 month long training. It provides transportation allowance to a trainee amount to 800 taka in every month (Interview #1, 10-04-21). Motivation is also essential to cheer them up for continuing the training and the work. BRAC in different ways motivate its trainees. One of the female training graduates said, “during the training period, BRAC provided us 800 taka every month. Also, to encourage regularity, BRAC gave pens as gifts to us, who used to go to the training regularly” (Interview # 7, 12-04-21). The trainer was talking about his ways of motivating the female learners. He tells them, “You came here for skill development; you should learn with your heart and soul. If you learn the work, you can work here or start your own shop. I was like you once upon a time but there was not any training project like this” (Interview # 2, 10-04-21).

Developing skills come to a result when it is applied. BRAC helps them to get jobs and follows up their updates. One female graduate said, “due to financial crisis, I talked to the BRAC officers. They told me to learn tailoring and showed me a tailoring shop for practical learning. After 6 months of training, I have been working there for 2 years and get 5000 taka monthly” (Interview # 4, 10-04-21). Among the interviewed 5 female training graduates, one denied the information that BRAC helps to get a job after training. She said, “I went to a shop for 6 months and learnt many things. They told me that they would give me job but they did not. After training, I came back home” (Interview # 3, 11-04-21). Later in the interview she said that she worked there for some time but did not get paid and they said they would not keep her. This contradicts what she said earlier. She also claimed that she informed BRAC but did not get support. But she admitted that BRAC still follow up. In fact, this information was not consistent in throughout the interview.

In the skill development program, BRAC has integrated both the theoretical and practical teaching and learning. One of the female training graduates expressed how she felt about the theoretical part of their training. She said, “We had been taught 4-5 subjects like Computer,

Digital Literacy, Tailoring, Life skills etc. I forgot many things that I learnt in my childhood. I could learn those again and came to know about new things as well. I learnt with joy” (Interview #5, 11-04-21). Another training graduate mentioned how helpful the theoretical part was. She said, “I got education from BRAC training on English, Bangla, Math and Computer. BRAC gave us 6 books which are still come handy and I see the book if I forget anything” (Interview #4, 11-04-21).

According to the district manager, no other organization maintains the quality that BRAC does while working with huge quantity. In his opinion, BRAC is continuously improving because of its strong chain of command. (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). Interviews with BRAC SDP staffs (District manager and MCP) and the female training graduates gave information which reflects how seriously BRAC takes reporting, supervision and monitoring. According to the manager, there are three periods in ALP - preparatory period, training period, and follow-up period. In all periods, BRAC monitors and supervises closely (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

Another way to ensure quality of trainings is to hire skilled trainers. BRAC has some indicators to choose the qualified trainers. The district manager mentioned the criteria.

To qualify as a *foundational skill trainers*, candidates have to be minimum intermediate pass to Masters Graduate. After assessing their CV and exams, the selected ones are given training. Then they start teaching. The position of *Master Craft Person* requires practical experience of 10-15 years as well as educational qualification of minimum class 5 passed. However, these conditions vary for some courses. (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

To improve their capacity on the training module, BRAC SDP provides 6 different types of trainings in ALP for the people who are involved in this project. These are 2 days training for Master Craft Person, 1 day training for theoretical trainers, 5 days training for Soft skill trainers, 5 days training for Foundational skill trainers, 2 to 5 days training for BRAC staffs involved in this project, and 1 to 2 days training to learners (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

Besides all the direct training supports, BRAC performs its social responsibility towards its trainees and training graduates. The female training graduates spontaneously mentioned during interviews what support BRAC SDP provides to them. One said,

BRAC SDP provides free treatment facility. If someone cannot go abroad due to lack of money, BRAC financially helps him and make it possible. If anyone is abused for dowry, BRAC provides legal support. BRAC helps us to get jobs. Even after training BRAC communicates with us and gives us hope when we are in trouble (Interview # 5, 11-04-21).

From the manager, it is found that the main challenge is the Prejudice nature of people. He elaborated, “When we bring girls and women for training in the market, we do it with risk. We have to make people understand what we are doing. The cultural context of a place becomes very crucial in the case of bringing girls to the training program” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). It is a bit risky especially in a new area where BRAC SDP is not known well.

4.3 Challenges for Females in Participating in VSD training and Job

Since data was collected from Cox’s Bazar, challenges that the girls and women in Cox’s Bazar face came out. Family restrictions, social barriers, backward mindsets and less job opportunities deter the females of this place from coming forward, educating themselves, and joining the economy.

4.3.1 Cultural and social barriers

According to the MCP, during the training, BRAC faces challenges to ensure regularity of the trainees. Many parents do not allow or support their daughters to come to the training. In that case, the trainer said, “I inform BRAC and the market committee. We sit for a meeting and then talk to the parents. We ensure them about their daughters’ safety by regular monitoring.” (Interview 2, Trainer, 10.04.21). The trainer thinks that the main barrier is the mindset of people. He said, “as Cox’s Bazar is still like a village area, families and society do not like

girls going to the market to work. People think it is a disgrace to the family” (Interview 2, Trainer, 10.04.21).

The manager from his years of observation and experience, portrayed the context of Cox’s Bazar and pointed out the main challenges for female learners. He said, “Bigotry, conservative nature of families, common practice of eve-teasing in the community are the major obstacles” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). These problems in the society also affect the other spheres of life. “Child marriage is around 60% in Cox’s Bazar and most of the child marriage cases ended up in divorce. Also, people here think that men are supposed to work outside and women’s job is to do household chores” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). These types of mentality holding the females as well as the whole community back.

These issues, he mentioned, also have been echoed in the interviews with all the female participants. Eve teasing was the most evident problem. Saima (fake name) said, “Some boys used to disturb me. Once I was going to BRAC. Those boys were following me. Then one sir from BRAC noticed it and he managed. After that, there was not any problem” (Interview # 6, 12-04-21). The trainer also said that eve teasing exists in their society and if anything happens like that he complains to market committee (Interview # 2, 10-04-21). Eve teasing and lack of safety is one of the reasons family does not want to allow girls to go outside for training or work. Saima worked in a tailoring shop for 2-3 months after her training. It was a problem for her to move from home to workplace and sometimes it became 9-10 at night, thus, his father did not allow her to continue her job (Interview # 6, 12-04-21).

Girls are usually emotionally attached with their family and those who do not work are dependent on their family. When family put restriction, it creates huge negative impact on their progress. Munia (fake name) said, Many decent families do not let their girls go out at all” (Interview # 4, 11-04-21). Munia also shared her own experience. Her step mother

always tried to interrupt her from going to training classes regularly. It was very difficult for her to go to the classes. Although many girls want to participate in training and develop a skill, family and social restriction suppress them. Sadia (fake name) raised the same issue. She said, "Seeing me, many girls showed interest to learn but what people will say stops them (Interview # 5, 12-04-21).

Currently Rahima is unemployed. The reason she said was having no shops nearby for her as a girl to work because she is scared of condemnation by the society. She said, "There are two computer shops in my area but I do not go there as these are boys' shops. If I go there many people will say bad things" (Interview # 7, 12-04-21).

From Sadia's experience, it is found that, their movement, decisions, dress up everything is in a great extent controlled by the society. She said, "I have learnt how to walk, how to dress. Cox's Bazar is like a village. If girls do not cover their hair with clothes, people think negatively" They pass bad comments even if girls wear good dresses. People in this society are judgmental towards girls particularly. Many ask, "what do girls do outside so much?" (Interview # 5, 12-04-21).

Rahima pointed out the discrimination in the society. The social system puts double burden on the women. In a tone of sadness, she said, "I have to work home and cook when I come back from training but boys don't have to do it. This is the difference" (Interview # 7, 12-04-21).

4.3.2 Lack of opportunities

Lack of career opportunities in area like Cox's Bazar is a hindrance for women to grow. There is neither enough training opportunities nor good work opportunities. None of the female participants could tell name of any SDP or organization other than BRAC in Cox's

Bazar. Being unable to recall any such program or organization, Rahima said, “There is not enough training programs. Along with BRAC, others should also provide skill development training” (Interview # 7, 12-04-21).

Training increases the gap between skill and income which frustrated the women. In other words, when a female gets training and develops a skill, she expects a job and salary that matches her skills. However, underdevelopment in Cox’s Bazar does not provide her the opportunities. The mismatch after all the struggles discourages them to move forward. The manager said, “when a female training graduate does not get expected salary, a regret works within her if she could work somewhere else that would pay her well” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21). He also said that those who manage to go outside of Cox’s Bazar, get a chance to grow her career.

They have another good option, that is, to start up their own business. Unfortunately, even if they develop necessary skills from the training, they lack the capacity to invest to set up a business. Nadia (fake name) expressed her pain, “I have learnt many things but cannot do anything for not having money. People are poking now saying what useless tailoring I learnt, why I don’t do anything. If I had a sewing machine, I could earn money” (Interview # 3, 10-04-21).

4.3.3 Mindset of Females

In Cox’s Bazar, girls are aware of availability of training programs by BRAC SDP. This research finds that girls usually have interest to learn and develop a skill when they see the female trainees doing training. However, there is also another type of girls who does not want to work. They are mostly from solvent families. Nadia said, “when I tell other girls about the benefit of learning tailoring and the supports BRAC SDP gives, they say that they do not need to learn because they can pay and get the sewing done by others” (Interview # 3, 10-04-

21). Rather than working hard, they prefer to stay jobless. Only those whose family financial condition is vulnerable, they show interest. In fact, sometimes mindset of girls becomes a barrier to their own growth.

4.4 Importance Of Skill Development in Females Life

Now the necessity of skill development is highest than ever. The reasoning is given by the manager, “at the rate at which the number of newly educated poor is increasing at this time of corona, there is no alternative to technical education!” (Interview # 1, 10-04-21).

The female training graduate, Nadia, explained why it is important for females particularly. She said, “skill development training is very beneficial for females. For example, if someone becomes widow, she can rear her children with the income she can earn from her work like sewing blanket” (Interview # 3, 11-04-21). It means girls should develop skills to be financially independent and to support her family in crisis.

All the participants believe that male has more advantage to participate in the trainings as they do not have to go answer anyone where he is going. People see it positively when a boy receive training. However, one of the female interviewee, Sadia, mentioned that in the present time, females are given priority in job. Their chance of getting job is higher than men even when they have less qualification. Thus, skill development can bring more opportunities to females (Interview # 5, 12-04-21).

Considering the challenges females have in the society, Saima recommended to do training and develop a skill. She clarified, “since girls have less scope to study and they have to stay inside home, such training can help them to earn working from home” (Interview # 6, 12-04-21).

4.5 Effects of BRAC's Skill Development Training on Female Learners

Socio-Economic Life

Expected effects of BRAC SDP's are that the training graduates get jobs and settle in their life. "In my local community, there are many very poor people and school dropout girls. If I can train them, and help them to get established and benefitted, it will be my honor and I will get blessings from them" said by the MCP (Interview #2, 10-04-21).

When the training combined with family and social supports, then the benefits increase manifolds. Sadia enthusiastically participated in the training as she got support from her father, husband and the society (Interview #5, 12-04-21).

4.5.1 Personal Development

The training at BRAC SDP has changed many females' lives in many ways. Personal development is the evident one. From knowing nothing to developing a working skill boosted confidence in them. Munia shared her stories of how the training gave her hope. Because of her step mother, her father married her off at the age of 14. She could not last there for more than 3 months. When she came back home, her step mother started abusing her. She said, "at that point I felt that I lost everything. But when I recieved a training from BRAC SDP, I could believe that I had not lost anything. Everything would be fine again" (Interview #4, 11-04-21). Rahima said, not everyone can use computer. I can do something that many other cannot. It increased my confidence (Interview #7, 12-04-21). Along with confidence, the training motivated them to keep on going. "When people got to know I was learning computer, they used to say that it was a good work. It made me happy" she added. In the society, females are not encouraged to work. As a result, they do not develop confidence. The

trainer highlighted the ability of female trainees to work nicely. He said, “female learners easily get frustrated. When I give them motivation, they work better than males” (Interview # 2, 10-04-21).

By learning a work, they became self-dependent. Munia excitedly said, “I want to scream and say, I don’t know whether anyone learnt from BRAC SDP or not, but I learnt how to stand on my own feet. I succeeded” (Interview #4, 11-04-21). Samia could not contribute to the family with little income. However, she is happy with the fact that she could bear her own cost. She thinks she did not have to take money from her family and that is a big help for the family (Interview #6, 12-04-21).

Once they realized the benefit of training, they developed interest in learning. For instance, Rahima said, “I am not sure what more things are there in graphic designing but I anything new is there, I want to learn more” (Interview #7, 12-04-21).

4.5.2 Professional Development

The manager emphasized on the professional development of women in the society. He thinks that vocational education and training is beneficial for their career development. It can help them achieve something that general education cannot. After receiving the trainings, many skilled graduates move from Cox’s Bazar to Dhaka and Chittagong for their future career prospect and work there as skilled labor. He said, “A drop out female student from class 5 is being able to get a job with 15-20k only because of our training” (Interview # 1, 10.04.21)

Indeed, BRAC is the door to the career for many females. For all the research participants said that they did their first job after the training. They are happy about the fact that they could learn a work and found a way to earn. Saima said, “I learnt and now I can make dress

and earn money” (Interview # 6, 12.04.21). Rahima, who did the course on graphic designing, said, “I have been enlightened with basic education and the knowledge of computer” (Interview # 7, 12.04.21).

4.5.3 Financial Improvement

Financial improvement is the first visible effect after the training. Vocation training actually ease the path of getting job and some technical jobs offer attractive salary. He gave example of one of BRAC SDP’s trainees who dropped out from school when he was in class 9. He said, “after learning computer, she is doing a job in a NGO and earning 40,000 taka which is more than a university graduate earn in our country in general” (Interview # 1, 10.04.21). BRAC SDP develops liaison with the MCPs to give the learners job after training in their shops. MCP gives them salary based on their work. Information from the interviews shows that the amount of salary ranges between 2000 to 5000 taka per month. Rahima, Sadia, and Munia used to get 2000, 3000, and 5000 taka respectively (Interview # 7, 5, 4, 10-04-21 and 12-04-21). They could open bank account and learnt how to use it and some saved money from BRAC SDP. The MCP said, “They get 800 taka every month from BRAC. If they can save money from there, they can buy an old machine spending 3000 taka” (Interview 2, 10.04.21).

Due to financial improvement, Rahima could bear her own cost. She said, “During training, for transportation cost, I used to take money from my father but I could give back at the end of month after getting 800 taka from BRAC” After getting a job, she could contribute to her family which satisfied her enormously. She shared her feeling, “when I worked in the shop, I used to give my full salary to my father. I felt really good for my assistance to the family” (Interview #7, 12-04-21).

4.5.4 Changes in Social life

The manager thinks that changes come in every training graduate's personal and social life. He elaborated his statement, "when we arrange job for neglected and deprived females, it saves them from suicide or other unsocial work. They get a new path for socio-economic development in their life" (Interview # 1, 10.04.21). He gave his opinion that as an effect of skill development training, 80% barriers can be removed. BRACs regular consultation with parents and the community is an effective strategy.

Munia acknowledged the changes in her social life. Her neighbors now come to her and give her dress making orders. As a result, her recognition and respect has been increased in her family and society (Interview # 4, 11.04.21). Other participants also felt the same way. However, one participant, Saima, experienced a different situation. Saima feels that her respect is decreased in her society because of the training. As she used to go to the training alone, people in her society has now a misperception about her. They assumed she used to go somewhere else in the name of training on tailoring. Not having job after training has fueled the negative thought (Interview # 6, 12.04.21).

The training and job also improved the life standard of a participant. Munia said, "Now I make the dress I like as well as for my family members. Our food and living condition are also improved" (Interview # 4, 11.04.21). Their social safety has also improved due to their connection with BRAC. Sadia admitted, "BRAC has given me safety in the society. When eve-teasers get know my link with BRAC, they do not disturb me" (Interview # 5, 12.04.21).

BRAC SDP's activities and the female participants' involvement in training are gradually changing the mindset of people in the society. Saima shared how society's mindset has changed after her training, "Many people commented that what will you do learning this,

learn by yourself eat home etc. Now many of these people are learning” (Interview # 6, 12.04.21).

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

In this discussion section, I linked my findings with some learning from literature review. I gauged the services of BRAC SDP in the light of the ideal services that TVET organizers should offer, according to Commonwealth of Learning. In doing so, I analyzed the strengths of BRAC SDP that positively affecting the lives of female SDP graduates. Moreover, I explicitly highlighted the learning we can take away from BRAC SDP. Besides, I tried to find out the limitation and ways for further improvement. I discussed all these issues based on my observation and understanding. I also proposed some research ideas to be conducted.

5.1.1 Comparison with Standard TVET Services

The Commonwealth of Learning suggested five points such as supporting young people to transition into employment, developing technical skills, and employment and entrepreneurial skills, developing skill matching to industry demand, training and assessing for competency, increasing access and cost-effectiveness to meet the growing demand, and supporting lifelong learning ("Technical and Vocational Skills Development | COL", n.d.).

After learning about BRAC SDP, I found, it's ALP and many other projects recruit the ones who are out of school and jobs. After developing the skills, the training graduates enter into the job market. BRAC SDP creates the path through managing job for them. So, from nothing to entering into job market is definitely a good transition. Besides, from the interview with female graduates, I found BRAC supporting the youth by both training and job. BRAC SDP has multiple projects responding different need of different groups. Hands on apprenticeship,

market development, and improving work condition are three work areas for BRAC SDP. It is also developing skills, through integrated theoretical and practical approach; it teaches other soft and foundational skills which prepare them for competitive employment.

BRAC SDP found to be given importance to the context. It conducts survey in preparatory period of a project. It assesses the demand of the local market and popularity of trade courses among the learners. Based on the research finding, it offers 17 courses. Thus the skill development courses they offer matches with the market demand.

The MCP does Formative assessment. He evaluates for each task and assess whether they meet the standard. Regular monitoring and evaluation from BRAC SDP is also there. In this research, cost-effectiveness was not assessed. In case of access, BRAC is working relentlessly. The projects are inclusive for all but apparently BRAC SDP is working for equity. It is trying to give fair opportunities to the disadvantaged group of people in the society. Quota system and relaxation in the recruitment criteria reflect its conscious effort bring vulnerable group forward. In terms of life-long learning, developing a skill stays forever. BRAC SDP provides books that help them for life. Although BRAC SDP ensures placement and follow up regularly, it does not allow the learner to do other trainings. This research did not find any advance training.

It can be seen that BRAC SDP is working in all the above mentioned area of work. More research is needed to get clearer picture. I learnt that BRAC SDP has farsighted vision and strong operational systems to work align with the goal.

5.1.2 Major Strategies of BRAC SDP, and Context Analysis

Using Whole School Improvement Approach:

From the study, it is found that **family restriction** is the major barrier for many girls wanting to participate in the training. Also, those who did training cannot continue working without family permission. Families are either concerned about **security** or having **conservative mindset** or influenced by **social pressure**. So, only designing a good curriculum and giving training do not ensure positive impact on learners' life. In this study, the participants were unanimously happy about their learning but I got mixed results about their social and financial changes. Low income scale and lack of good job opportunity in the research area are some drawbacks. When they had job, they were financially independent and could contribute to their family. But they could not save with little income and their life standards have not changed much except wearing self-made dresses. After losing or leaving job for pandemic and family reason, they came back to the previous condition.

I find BRAC SDP is consciously addressing this issue using 'whole school improvement' approach. It is not only targeting the learners, it is developing the whole community. BRAC is gaining trust of the community through its community development services. BRAC SDP access to the community through influential people, changing mindset of people through discussing various gender and justice issues in the community, and consulting with the parents. This approach is the strength of BRAC SDP and it is working well as research participants know about BRAC SDP and they reported that almost all people know about BRAC. However, as we can see the changes happening in socio-economic life of the training graduates are not sustaining for various reasons, BRAC SDP still has a long way to go to develop the conducive environment for them.

Non-conventional Activities:

BRAC SDP's new policy of non-conventional trades for females can bring revolution in the working environment in Bangladesh. I must say, it is a groundbreaking initiative to break the

Gender stereotypes in our society regarding in developing technical skills. BRAC SDP indeed expanding the area of work for women in the society through Non-conventional work training. In this way, discrimination will diminish, access for females will increase, and social cohesion will develop gradually.

Also, I felt while talking to them, they do not have the drive to work as much as they had for training. They have accepted the reality that they are not allowed to work outside especially where men work. Thus, they mostly want to work from home. One interesting finding is that the families, who allow their daughter for training and jobs, financially weak. Financially stable families do not allow their daughters to go out for training or job. In fact, drive for training and job related to financial condition of family. What I sensed is that BRAC SDP does not focus on these unemployed but solvent females. BRAC SDP can work on this group as well.

Supporting Female Entrepreneurship:

One main problem for female graduates is that after training not everyone continue job due to family restriction, conservative society, and lack of safety. I think in the underdeveloped area like Cox's bazar where there is not much opportunities to work or progress, entrepreneurship should be encouraged to increase employment. However, these poor girls do not have money to invest. ALP training program does not provide any additional funding for the graduates for start-up. ALP only makes liaison with the shops to give them job. Family and society often do not allow them to work at shop with men. As a result, I have seen all the female graduates either doing job in low salary or leaving the job and sitting idle at home. Though they have dream of opening own shop or buying own sewing machine to work from home, they are

crying for money to invest. Covid 19 and lockdown situation has shown us what the modern world demands. Working from home has become the main way to work.

From the research, it is known that BRAC SDP has PROMISE program which provides loan after business skill development training and on some conditions. I observed, this available Loan facility is not known to the female training graduates. Many does not know the right information about admission to this entrepreneurship training courses at BRAC SDP. In my opinion, it would be more effective if BRAC recommends the ALP skill training graduates to PROMISE program. These 3 months complementary business course will help BRAC SDP to have huge impact in the society.

5.1.3 Why the results are important

This research is very significant because it explored the institutional approach for skill development as well as experience and opinion of female skill development graduates. The results inform about what challenges are there for skill development programs and for female participants.

5.1.4 Comparing to similar research studies

Gender and Water Alliance has done a similar study named Gender, Vocational training and employment in Bangladesh in 2014. This study concentrated on gender dimension in non-conventional trade. It did a comparative study between male and female trainees, and among 3 skill development centers including both public and private centers within Dhaka. This study found that there was no strategy or role to encourage females for technical or machine driven trade. Besides, participants were not satisfied due to the harsh behavior of teachers and instructors. In this case, BRAC is doing really well as in my study, all the training graduates were very happy about their training experience and the behavior and support of the staffs

and trainers. Water and Alliance (2014) also found that among the 3 centers, only one center has follow-up system. Pathetically, none of the centers bother much about linking the training graduates with job market and companies. In contrast, BRAC SDP has strategy to follow up after training and supporting the training graduates to get job.

In terms of the social environment, both the study got similar results. Water and Alliance stated that the negative perception of family and society limits their choices. I also learnt that family and society restrictions heavily influence their decision and retard them from doing training and job.

After comparing, it can be said that the social and family context are similar in low income community; however, the approaches to address the problem are different for different centers. BRAC has strong policy, strategies and foresight that other centers in that study lack. In fact, there is huge scope for private and public skill development institutions to improve and they can learn from the BRAC SDP's positive attributes.

5.1.5 Additional Research Ideas

While doing this research, I got many ideas that can give clearer picture of skill development in Bangladesh. Due to the pandemic situation, there were lockdown, movement restrictions and the training programs were shut down for an uncertain time. I wanted to use multiple methods such as training observation, document analysis, and FGD but it was not feasible at the time when this research was conducted. This research is mainly based on the participants' knowledge, experience, opinion, and feelings. It was literally a qualitative study. Backing up with some data would make this research stronger. However, it opens the door for many studies that can be done to take this research further. One type of study can be done on the similar topic just by including more methods to get a robust result. Another type of study can

be conducted by comparing skill development program in a government institute and in a private institute. Third type study also can be comparative study comparing different private organizations' skill development programs and their achievements. All these research could be a good source of learning for the educational policy makers and all the government and private vocational training institutes.

5.1.6 Educational Problem That Needs Further Research

From the research, I identified an educational problem in our country. The research participants are victims to Covid 19 pandemic. They do not have skills to apply their learning in challenging situation. There is no alternative system for education and training during pandemic or emergency situation. . The government and the private SDP organization should work on this issue and figure out a plan and way to continue the training program. We don't know how long Covid 19 will reign in this world. We do not have the luxury to wait forever. Maybe another virus or disease or disaster may attack next. We should be ready for emergency situation. Almost all the private universities, schools and colleges and many government educational institutions are teaching virtually. However, in case of vocational training that will be very challenging as the targeted people are the vulnerable people who will not be able to manage smart phone or computer. At the same time, they are the group who need emergency training and livelihood support. Research should be done on how this pandemic is affecting low income group and how they could be supported through skill development program during emergency situation. Low income people are the most effected in this pandemic. They can utilize this time developing a new skill. It will save them from destitution, depression, suicide, unethical and unsocial activities. New poor are increasing. SDP is the only way to solve the problem in minimum time.

5.2 Conclusion

The research started from the idea that how school drop-out girls, victims of child marriage, divorcees and other deprived females can be saved, educated, and prepared to be productive human capital. I came to learn about TVET and particularly focused on vocational skill development for my research. I found vocational training is the best solution for my target group. I planned to explore a renowned skill development training institute and its impact on the socio-economic life of female training graduates.

My purpose is to increase awareness among vocational training centres, learners, parents, and the community on gender sensitive approach. This study in fact presents BRAC SDP as role model due to its trust and popularity in the community. I collected qualitative data from BRAC SDP to know their strategies and projects. On the other hand, I gained knowledge on the training experience, challenges, need, and social & economic changes before and after training.

I found from the research that BRAC is driven for effective outcome. BRAC SDP influences social and economic life of female graduates; however, the scale depends on the job status and family & social support. Its quality training needs community support to get best result. The result suggests community development and creating inducive environment for females to join skill development training and finally the job market. My research encourages other organizations to come forward and work for ensuing equity in skill development sector.

My learning from this research is that VSD is very crucial to increase employment, reduce poverty, and empowering women. However, learners will enjoy the highest social and economic benefit of training, when they get job and decent income. Thus, vocational trainings, job market development and entrepreneurship should be developed hand in hand. I

believe this study magnify the importance of skill development in Bangladesh and thus, bring revolution in the education system.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations are given based on my realization from the results of the study. The findings from this research and my discussion on these findings point out many factors that should be addressed to improve the educational situation. My recommendation for BRAC SDP-

- Inform the training graduates about loan facilities and improve the loan procedure for female entrepreneurs
- For the long run, BRAC SDP can plan to create a female led market clusters on different job like tailoring shops or computer centres. It will encourage female to do job outside in the conservative society.

Including the mentioned ideas, I have some recommendations targeting various groups such as the government, Policy makers, Private skill development institutions, and Community mobilizers. In order to establish VSD training in our country and encourage female participation in training, I would like to recommend -

- Aware young girls about necessity of education, training, and employment through various awareness program in schools, social media, and in the community via local influential people and entertainment resources.

- Giving scope to the females of well off family to participate in the skill development program for ensuring women empowerment and reducing unemployment in Bangladesh.
- Female trainers can be prepared and assigned in the rural conservative areas to attract girls and women in the skill development training.
- Allocating sufficient budget to support skill development initiatives
- Changing mindset of the society towards female's participation in SDP should get priority in the policy and strategy
- Women doing one trade course should be allowed to participate in other trade course training to supplement her learning. For example, girls learning tailoring can be given opportunity to learn computer so that she can expand her business through digital marketing.
- Promoting TVET as a tool to stop social problems like child marriage, poverty, criminal activities etc.
- Introducing career counseling in school to assess school going girls basis on their interest, financial abilities, and academic performance, and then to suggest whether they should continue general education or vocation education and training. In this way, school drop-out rate will decrease and they will be turned into human asset for the country.
- Government's should invest and reform SDP to attract more people in the TVET stream
- All the vocational education and training institutes should build up liaison with various markets and shops.
- Vocational training institutes should expand its reach to rural areas where it is unusual for girls to study and do income generating activities.

- Government should urgently figure out strategies to provide vocational education and training in emergency situation and providing technical and logistical support for the arrangements.
- Long term planning and policy on vocational training should be formulated for sustainable economic growth and pro-poor growth

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Appendices

Appendix A. Consent Letter

Sample Consent Letter 1

**Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University
Master's Thesis Programme
MEd in Educational Leadership & School Improvement**

Consent Form

I am Tasnuva Ahmad, MEd. student in Educational Leadership & School Improvement at BRAC Institute of Educational Development of BRAC University. A research-based Master thesis will have to be submitted to my thesis committee as part of my obtaining the degree. You are invited to participate in a study titled “Vocational skill development through BRAC in Bangladesh: how this is influencing socio-economic status of female trainees.” The Purpose of this study is to learn about the influences of BRAC’s vocational education and training on the trainees’ lives.

You have been chosen as a possible participant in this study. I will interview you to know your views on the issue, and your experiences about available training programs, female trainees participation, challenges and outcome will contribute to the study a lot. Probably, it will take around an hour. There will be no monetary compensation for your participation. There is no identified risk from participating in it.

The researcher will maintain the confidentiality about your identity. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. The researchers named below will be responsible to ensure the protection of the information.

If you are willing to participate in this research, we would request you to sign this consent form. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Therefore, you may withdraw your participation at any time during the interview or later while the information is analyzed.

If you want to know more about this research or if there is relevant clarification that you may require, please contact the following persons.

Dilruba Sultana Programme Head MEd in Educational Leadership & School Improvement Address: House No. 113A, 2 Rd No 2, Dhaka 1212 Email: Dilrubaied@yahoo.com	Tasnuva Ahmad Student MEd in Educational Leadership & School Improvement Email: tasnuva.ahmad@gmail.com Mobile:
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I have read the consent form or my acquaintance read it to me. I completely understand my rights about participation and am willing to participate in this research.

Name : _____ Signature & Date : _____

Sample Consent Letter 2

অনুমতিপত্র

আমি, তাসনুভা আহমদ, বর্তমানে ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে 'এডুকেশনাল লিডারশীপ এন্ড স্কুল ইম্প্রভমেন্ট' বিষয়ে পড়াশোনা করছি। আমার মাস্টার্সের কাজে কিছু তথ্য সংগ্রহ করা প্রয়োজন। আমার মাস্টার্সের থিসিসের বিষয়বস্তু হলো মহিলা প্রশিক্ষনাত্রিদের জীবনে কর্মমুখী শিক্ষা ও প্রশিক্ষনের প্রভাব। এই ক্ষেত্রে আমি ঢাকা আহসানিয়া মিশনের প্রশিক্ষনপ্রাপ্তদের বেছে নিয়েছি। আপনার জীবনে প্রশিক্ষনের অভিজ্ঞতা এবং প্রভাব সম্পর্কে আপনার মতামত জানতে চাই। আপনার একটি ইন্টারভিউ নেওয়া হবে এবং এর জন্য প্রায় ১ ঘন্টা সময় লাগতে পারে। ইন্টারভিউটি কাজের সুবিধার জন্যে রেকর্ড করা হবে। আপনার পরিচয় গোপন রাখা হবে এবং শুধুমাত্র পড়াশোনার কাজে ব্যবহার করা হবে। আপনার অপরাগতা থাকলে যেকোনো মুহূর্তে ইন্টারভিউ স্থগিত করার অধিকার আপনার রয়েছে। উল্লিখিত শর্তগুলোতে যদি আপনার সম্মতি থাকে তবে আপনার অনুমতি প্রদানের প্রমানস্বরূপ নিচে আপনার সাক্ষর দিন।

আপনার সকল সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতার জন্য অনেক ধন্যবাদ।

ধন্যবাদান্তে,

তাসনুভা আহমদ

শিক্ষার্থী, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা

মোবাইল: ০১৬৭৪২৬৯৯০৩

আমি অনুমতিপত্রটি পড়েছি বা আমাকে পড়ে শোনানো হয়েছে। আমার সকল অধিকার ও অংশগ্রহন সম্পর্কে আমি সম্পূর্ণ অবগত এবং সহিচ্ছায় এই গবেশনামূলক কাজে অংশগ্রহন করছি।

নাম: _____

সাক্ষর: _____

তারিখ: _____

Appendix B. Interview Guide

Interview Guide 1: Manager

1. Observed information

Position: **Manager**

Name:

Center /address:

Date:

Time:

Duration: 60 min

2. Personal information

- Age
- Sex
- Religion
- Location of origin
- Location of residence

3. Work status

1. What is your role and responsibility here at BRAC SDP?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. How is your experience of working here?

4. General Operation

4. How many projects does BRAC SDP have?
5. Do you have any special program for female labor force?
6. What is the procedure for girls and women to join the BRAC SDP?
7. Do you provide any scholarship for female participants?
8. What are the challenges BRAC faces?
9. Where do you get the funding?
10. What education and trainings are available for women?
11. Does BRAC expand the opportunities for women to live the life that they have reason to value?
12. How do you decide which capabilities (or opportunities) matter to trainees?
13. Why should girls join vocational training program in your opinion?
14. Do you think there is enough skill development program in Cox's Bazar?
15. Do you think there is enough skill development program in Bangladesh?

5. Participation of Female Trainees

16. How do you attract women into the training programs?
17. What is the ratio of male-female participants?
18. What are the popular sectors girls are interested in for employment and skill development?
19. What are the current demand of the market from employees?
20. What are the obstacles female labor force faces?
21. How do you support female trainees knowing that they face a lot of barriers?
22. How do you keep track of the female graduates after completion of training?
23. Are there any specific challenges for females in Cox's Bazar to participate in SDP?

Role of Skill Development Program in trainees life

6. What are the expected outcomes of the trainings?
7. What social changes do the training programs bring in the female graduates' lives?
8. Do you see any change in income after completing training?
9. Do you manage job for them?
10. What types of responses, feelings, and feedbacks do you get from female graduates after training?
11. Is there any change in employment opportunities for women in BD?

7. Policy Priority

12. What is BRAC's vision regarding female labor force?
13. What is BRAC's future plan about female labor force?
14. What Policy changes are required to improve the quality of vocational trainings?
15. What Policy changes are required to improve the quality of life of female labor force?
16. What is your suggestion for other private skill development program in BD?

Interview Guide 2: Trainer

Observed information

Position: **Trainer**

Name:

Center /address:

Date:

Time:

Duration: 60 min

2. Personal information

- Age
- Sex
- Religion
- Location of origin
- Location of residence

3. Work status

1. What is your role and responsibility here at BRAC SDP?
2. How long have you been working here?
3. How is your experience of working here?
4. What are the courses you train?

4. Training Details

5. How do you design a course?

6. How do you decide which capabilities (or opportunities) matter to trainees?
7. How do you set the target output?
8. What type of materials you use for training courses?
9. Is there any separate course for female trainees?
10. How do you evaluate a course?
11. How do you assess the trainees?
12. What are the conditions or criteria to graduate?
13. What are the challenges you face during trainings?
14. We talk about technology a lot now-a-days. To what extent do you use modern technology in your courses?
15. From where do the trainers get trainings? How frequently?

5. Participation of Female Trainees

16. What differences do you observe between male and female trainees if there is any?
17. What is the ratio of male-female participants?
18. Do the girls actively response in the classes?
19. What the age range of females participate most in the SDP?
20. What are the popular sectors girls are interested in for employment and skill development?
21. What are the current market demand of employers from employees?
22. What are the obstacles female labor force faces?
23. How do you support female trainees knowing that they face a lot of barriers?
24. How do you keep track of the female graduates after completion of training?

6. Role of Skill Development Program in trainees life

25. What are the expected outcomes of the trainings?
26. What social changes do the training programs bring in the female graduates' lives?
27. Do you see any change in income after completing training?
28. Does BRAC manage job for them?
29. What types of responses, feelings, and feedbacks do you get from female graduates?

7. Recommendation

30. In your opinion, what is the role of modern technology in the skill development courses?
31. What do you think, what types of skills might be needed in the future?
32. What do you want to suggest for new trainers?
33. Why should girls join vocational training program in your opinion?

Interview Guide 3: Female Training Graduates

1. Observed information	2. Personal information
<p>Position: Female training graduates</p> <p>Name: Rahima</p> <p>Center /address:</p> <p>Date: 11/04/21</p> <p>Time: 11 am -12 pm</p> <p>Duration: 60 min</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education: Class 6• Age: 22 years• Sex: Female• Religion: Islam• Location of origin: Cox's Bazar• Location of residence: Cox's Bazar Link Road• Marital status: Divorcee• No. children: 0

3. Participant's Training

1. আপনি কোন ট্রেনিং প্রোগ্রামে অংশ নিয়েছিলেন?
2. কতদিনের ট্রেনিং ছিল?
3. কবে ট্রেনিং টি করেছিলেন?
4. কিভাবে ট্রেনিং এর খবর পেয়েছিলেন?
5. কেন ট্রেনিং টি করেছিলেন?
6. ট্রেনিং করার পূর্বে কি আপনি অন্য কিছু করতেন?
7. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা কেমন ছিলো?

4. Current Job status

8. আপনি কি করেন বর্তমানে?
9. আপনার বেতন কত?
10. আপনি কি আপনার কাজ বাঁ চাকরি নিয়ে সন্তুষ্ট ?
11. আপনি কি মনে করেন আপনার কাজের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় দক্ষতা আপনার আছে?
12. প্রশিক্ষন কি আপনার কাজ পেতে সাহায্য করেছে?
13. আপনার আর কোনো প্রশিক্ষন প্রয়োজন আছে বলে মনে করেন?

5. Family and Social network

14. আপনার পরিবার এবং সমাজে মেয়েদের কাজের উদ্দেশ্য প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়াকে কেমনভাবে দেখা হয়?
15. আপনার সমাজে মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়া কি স্বাভাবিক ব্যাপার?
16. ট্রেনিং এ অংশ নেওয়ার সময় পরিবারের সহযোগিতা কেমন পেয়েছিলেন?
17. ট্রেনিং চলাকালীন কি কোনো সামাজিক বা পারিবারিক সমস্যা বা বাঁধার সম্মুখীন হয়েছিলেন?
18. প্রশিক্ষনের পরে সমাজে এবং পরিবারে আপনার সম্মান ও ক্ষমতার কি কোনো পরিবর্তন এসেছে?
19. পরিবারে আর্থিক সহায়তা করতে পারছেন?

20. ট্রেনিং এর পর আপনার প্রতি পরিবার বা সমাজের ব্যবহার বা মনমানসিকতার কোনো পরিবর্তন এসেছে?

6. Challenges

21. কাজের এবং প্রশিক্ষনের সিদ্ধান্ত কি নিজে নিয়েছিলেন? এই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া কি কঠিন ছিলো?
22. ট্রেনিং প্রোগামে মেয়েদের প্রতি মনভাব কেমন?
23. প্রশিক্ষনের সময় কি কোনো অসুবিধে হয়েছিল? চলাচল বা আর্থিক কোনো সমস্যা?
24. আমাদের দেশে ছেলেদের এবং মেয়েদের জন্য কি সমান সুযোগ প্রশিক্ষনের?
25. সমাজের দৃষ্টিতে ছেলেদের এবং মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়াকে সমান ভাবে দেখা হয়?
26. মেয়েরা প্রশিক্ষনের ব্যাপারে কতটা জানে এবং কতটুকু সচেতন?

1. Improvement and Advantages

27. ট্রেনিং টি কি আপনার কাজে কোনরকম সহায়তা করছে?
28. ট্রেনিং এর পর আপনার আর্থিক অবস্থার কোনো পরিবর্তন হয়েছে?
29. জীবনযাত্রার মানে কোনো পরিবর্তন হয়েছে?
30. আপনার আত্মবিশ্বাসে কি পরিবর্তন এসেছে?
31. ট্রেনিংয়ের সার্টিফিকেট আপনার কোনো কাজে লেগেছে?
32. সর্বোপরি এই ট্রেনিং প্রোগাম কি আপনার উপকারি মনে হয়?
33. ব্র্যাক আপনাকে আর কোনো সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতা করে?

8. Future Plan and Recommendation

34. আপনার কোনো পরামর্শ আছে প্রোগ্রামটিকে কিভাবে আরও ভালো করা যায়?
35. আপনি কি অন্য কাউকে ট্রেনিং করার জন্য পরামর্শ দেন? যদি হ্যাঁ হয়, কেন?
36. আপনার কি মনে হয় মেয়েদের এই রকম প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়া উচিত?
37. আমাদের দেশে কি যথেষ্ট প্রশিক্ষনের ব্যবস্থা আছে বলে মনে করেন? আরো কি বাড়ানো উচিত?
38. কিভাবে মেয়েদের অংশগ্রহন বাড়ানো যায়?
39. আপনার ভবিষ্যৎ পরিকল্পনা কি?

Appendix C. Interview Note

INTERVIEW AND TRANSCRIPTION SAMPLE

1. Observed information	2. Personal information
Position: Female training graduates Name: Rahima Center /address: Date: 11/04/21 Time: 11 am -12 pm Duration: 60 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education: Class 6• Age: 22 years• Sex: Female• Religion: Islam• Location of origin: Cox's Bazar• Location of residence: Cox's Bazar Link Road• Marital status: Divorcee

3. Participant's Training

1. আপনি কোন ট্রেনিং প্রোগ্রামে অংশ নিয়েছিলেন?
 - লেডিস ট্রেইলরিং এর কাজ শিখেছি। ব্যবসার ট্রেনিং নিয়েছিলাম। ব্যবসার ট্রেনিং এর মধ্যে কিভাবে একটা দোকান দেয়া যায়, এর লাভ- ক্ষতি কি, কিভাবে নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়াবো এই গুলো শিখেছি।
2. কতদিনের ট্রেনিং ছিল?
 - ৬ মাসের জন্য ট্রেইলরিং শিখেছি। ৩ মাসের জন্য ব্যবসা কিভাবে করতে হয় তার ট্রেনিং নিয়েছিলাম।
3. কবে ট্রেনিং টি করেছিলেন?
 - ২০১৮ সালে ট্রেইলরিং শিখেছি। আর ২০২০ সালে ব্যবসা কিভাবে করতে হয় তার ট্রেনিং নিয়েছিলাম।
4. কিভাবে ট্রেনিং এর খবর পেয়েছিলেন?
 - বাড়ির পাশের এক টেইলর (দিদার) আমার আর্থিক অবস্থা খারাপ দেখে আমাকে বলেছিলেন যে ব্রাকে একটা ট্রেনিং করতে। ব্রাক এ গিয়ে কর্মকর্তাদের সাথে কথা বলি। ওই টেইলর আমাকে ব্রাকের সাথে পরিচয় করিয়ে দেয়। পরে ওনারা আমাকে ট্রেইলরিং শিখতে বলে এবং একটা দোকান ঠিক করে দেয়।

5. কেন ট্রেনিং টি করেছিলেন?

বাড়িতে অভাবের কারণে পরে। আমি ৫ম শ্রেণিতে পড়ার সময় আমার মা মারা যান। বাবার আর্থিক অবস্থা ভাল না। পরিবারে বড় ভাই নাই। এই জন্য পড়ালেখা ছেড়ে দিয়েছি।

6. ট্রেনিং করার পূর্বে কি আপনি অন্য কিছু করতেন? না বাসায়ই থাকতে হত।

7. আপনার অভিজ্ঞতা কেমন ছিলো?

আমি আপনাকে কিভাবে বোঝাবো। আমি চিৎকার করে সবাইকে বললেও আমার কথা শেষ হবে না। অন্য কেউ শিখছে কি শিখে নাই ব্রাক এ কাজ করে আমি জানি না কিন্তু আমি নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়াতে শিখেছি। আমার সফলতা আসছে। আমি ব্রাকের ট্রেনিং থেকে পড়াশোনাও শিখেছি। এখানে টি টি ইংলিশ, বাংলা, অংক, কম্পিউটার সব কিছুই ক্লাস করাতে। ব্রাক থেকে আমাদের ৬ টা বই দিয়েছিল। ওই ৬ টা বইয়ের মধ্যে যা কিছু ছিল সব কিছুই আমাদের এখন কাজে লাগতেছে। মাঝে মাঝে কিছু ভুলে গেলে বা না পারলে এই বই গুলো থেকে দেখি।

4. Current Job status

8. আপনি কি করেন বর্তমানে?

- ওখানে ৬ মাস কাজ শেখার পরে ওই দোকানেই কাজ করি। ওখানে প্রায় ২ বছর চলছে। এদিকে বাসায় থেকেও কাজ করি আমি। নিজেই যাতে একটা দোকান দিতে পারি এই জন্য পরে ব্যবসার জন্যও একটা ট্রেনিং নিয়েছি।
9. আপনার বেতন কত?
 - ৫০০০ টাকা বেতনে কাজ করি।
 10. আপনি কি আপনার কাজ বাঁ চাকরি নিয়ে সন্তুষ্ট?
 - হ্যাঁ খুশি।
 11. আপনি কি মনে করেন আপনার কাজের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় দক্ষতা আপনার আছে?
 - হ্যাঁ।
 12. প্রশিক্ষন কি আপনার কাজ পেতে সাহায্য করেছে?
 - আমার কিছু চাওয়ার আছে ম্যাম। যেহেতু আমার মা মারা যাওয়ার পরে সৎ মার কারণে আমার বাবা আমাকে একটা বিয়ে দিয়েছিল ১৪ বছর বয়সে। সেখানে ৩ মাসের বেশি থাকতে পারি নাই। বাড়িতে ফিরে এলে সৎ মা অত্যাচার করত। তখন মনে হইছিল আমি সব কিছু হারাইছি। কিন্তু যখন ব্রাক থেকে ট্রেনিং নিলাম তখন মনে হইল আমার আবার সব কিছু ঠিক হয়ে যাবে। আমি কিছুই হারাইনি। তাই ব্রাক এ যে কোর্সই আসুক না কেন আমি শিখতে চাই। শুধু এইটা না। ব্রাক এর কোর্স না করলে আমার জীবনটা কি রকম যে হত.....
 13. আপনার আর কোনো প্রশিক্ষন প্রয়োজন আছে বলে মনে করেন?
 - ম্যাম দর্জি কাজের কোন শেষ নাই। প্রতিদিন নিত্য নতুন একটার পরে একটা ডিসাইন আসতে থাকে।

5. Family and Social network

14. আপনার পরিবার এবং সমাজে মেয়েদের কাজের উদ্দেশ্য প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়াকে কেমনভাবে দেখা হয়?
 - আমাদের দেখে অনেকেই বলে আমার মেয়েকেও ওখানে কাজ শিখাবো যাতে কারো বোঝা হয়ে না থাকে।
15. আপনার সমাজে মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষন নেওয়া কি স্বাভাবিক ব্যাপার?
 - না স্বাভাবিক ব্যাপার না। অনেক ভদ্র পরিবারের মেয়েদের তো বাসা থেকে বের হতেই দেয় না।
16. ট্রেনিং এ অংশ নেওয়ার সময় পরিবারের সহযোগিতা কেমন পেয়েছিলেন?
 - অনেকেই অনেক কথা বলত। আমার সৎ মা আমাকে ক্লাস করতে দিতো না। আমি ৬ মাস ক্লাস করেছি অনেক কষ্ট করে। আমার মাথায় একটাই চিন্তা কাজ করছিল তা হল আমার তো মা ও বড় ভাই নাই। তাই আমি যদি ক্লাস না করি তাহলে আমার তো কোন উপায় নাই। তাই আমি ৩ মাসে এক দিনও বন্ধ দেই নাই ক্লাস।
17. ট্রেনিং চলাকালীন কি কোনো সামাজিক বা পারিবারিক সমস্যা বা বাঁধার সম্মুখীন হয়েছিলেন?
 - প্রথমে আমার সৎ মা ভরসা বা সহযোগিতা করে নাই। তখন ব্রাকের স্যাররা আমাদের বাড়িতে গিয়ে বলছে যে আমি কাজ শিখলে নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়াতে পারব তখন আমার আব্বু সাপোর্ট দিয়েছে। এখন যখন একটু একটু করে কাজ করতেছি এখন সব স্বাভাবিক হয়ে গেছে। এখন তো কিছু বলে না।
যখন রাস্তায় বের হই তখন অনেকে অনেক কথা বলে। সব কথা কি কানে ঢোকানো যায়... আমার আব্বু যখন যেতে দিচ্ছে তখন আর কে কি বলবে... অনেকে অনেক কথা বলবে কিন্তু সেটায় কান দিলে তো আমার উন্নতি হবে না। এখন তো সবাই বলছে যে আমি কাজ করে এখন নিজেই সফল হচ্ছি। এখন কেউ কিছু বলে না। ১ম যখন বের হইছিলাম তখন বলেছিল আর কি।