



Social Security for Development of Human Capital and Transformation of Marginalized Groups

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Name and Brief Description of the Project

The name of the project: SKILLS and TRAINING ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (STEP).

Brief description of the Project:

- ▶ This program aims to:
 - ▶ 1. Strengthen selected public and private training institutions to improve training quality;
 - ▶ 2. Increase employability of trainees, including those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ▶ Particularly, stipends are provided to women and students from poor socio-economic background through this program for engaging underprivileged young in technical and vocational education.

The lifecycle stage and thematic clusters

- ▶ Fund Providers: The World Bank, Canadian Government and the Government of Bangladesh
- ▶ Duration: Primarily the program was scheduled for 2010–2016, but this program has been extended up to 2019 observing the successful implementation and outcome of the first phase.
- ▶ Cost: Total cost of the program is US\$ 224.55 million, among this US\$ 179.00 million is provided by the development partners.
- ▶ Thematic Clusters: Two
 - ▶ 1. Institutional improvement. The STEP program aims to improve the Quality and Relevance of Training provided by the Technical and Vocational institutions in Bangladesh.
 - ▶ 2. Enhancement of inclusive education. Students from disadvantaged socioeconomic background and women cannot effort expenses to pursue technical and vocational education in Bangladesh. The STEP program therefore aims to provide stipends to these students, so that they can pursue technical and vocational education, and make themselves suitable for the workplaces.

Contribution to human development and economic growth, poverty reduction etc.

▶ **Human Development:**

- ▶ Currently, 1,35,631 students are receiving stipend, of whom around 24 percent is female.
- ▶ The cumulative number of stipend recipients, as of academic year 2017-18, are 2,40,118
- ▶ In 2016-17 a total of 75,301 applications (10,323 female; 64,978 male) from 162 institutes are received for stipend. After scrutinizing the eligibility and needs priority of these applicants, around 60 percent students will get stipend. However, stipends are guaranteed for all female students without any scrutiny.
- ▶ The latest available pass rate is 91%, 90% and 95% for overall, female, and disadvantaged group respectively.

▶ **Economic benefit:** based on data self-reported by short-term training institutions, the employment rate of trainees after six months of completion of training is 49%.

- ▶ As of September 2018, 1,25,057 short course trainees, have been supported with taka 700.00 monthly through this program for their vocational education and training.

▶ **Poverty Reduction: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** There are many poor people who are skilled in different technical works/trades, but they do not have certificates/recognition. With the help of Bangladesh Technical Education Board, STEP has provided certificates to 24,620 such skilled persons. Now they are more confident and getting more salary or benefits.

Success stories (innovation, efficiency etc.)

- ▶ Student enrolment was only 1 percent (among all students enrolled at higher secondary level nationally) before the commencement of the STEP project in 2010. Now enrolment rate has been increased to around 16 percent in 2018.
- ▶ 20 percent quota has been reserved for female candidates for admission in the government polytechnic institutions.
- ▶ The success of STEP program has also prompted to formulate the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality in TVET.
 - ▶ This National Strategy aims to increase women's participation in formal TVET institutions to 40% by 2020.
 - ▶ This Strategy also enunciates to increase the quota for female teachers in TVET from 13% in 2016 to 30% by 2020.

Challenges in delivery of benefits

- ▶ To make STEP program more effective:
 - ▶ 1. Initiatives are required to change negative social perception about women participation in technical and vocational sector.
 - ▶ 2. Data regarding women employment in TVET sector need to be updated and available
 - ▶ 3. Partnership between public and private sectors need to be strengthen for increasing women employment in private sectors

Lessons learnt

- ▶ STEP program has revealed that marginalized groups such as, women and poor people in Bangladesh are capable to learn technical and vocational education if they are supported with stipends.
- ▶ Secondly, the negative perception and mindset against the technical education for women in the society has been changing. It has been revealed through the increasing rate of employment of women in the industry workforce. The size of the labor force in Bangladesh has increased from 40.7 million in 2000 to 66 million in 2018 (<https://tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/labor-force-total-wb-data.html>). This increase has been fuelled by greater participation of women and young people in the labor force.

Recommendations

- ▶ 1. The area of stipend need to be extended so that we can cover more vulnerable members of the society. The government has formulated Technical and Vocational Education Policy for Differently-Able People. A 5 percent quota has been granted for differently-able people for their admission in the public polytechnic and vocational institutions. Through this provision, so far 329 differently-able students have been enrolled in public polytechnic and vocational institutions in Bangladesh. These students could be supported with STEP's stipend program.
- ▶ 2. International accreditation are required for Bangladeshi technical and vocation degrees, so that graduates from marginalized groups of people would be able to compete for a job in international labor market

Thank You

