

Bridging education-employment gap



[EDUCATION](#) is the most powerful weapon for personal development and the development of the nation. It is the key to doors to knowledge, opportunity and social mobility. Yet in many developing countries such as Bangladesh, a widening gap between what students are taught in schools and what the job market requires is widening. This mismatch is now one of the most pressing issues of the [education](#) system of Bangladesh.

Educational Resources

Every year, thousands of students graduate from schools, colleges and universities. But many of them find it difficult to find proper jobs. At the same time, employers complain of having difficulty finding candidates with the necessary skills. This paradox of high levels of educated unemployment and

the labour market skills shortage illustrates a basic mismatch between the education system and labour market realities.

The problem is not only the number of the graduates but the nature of their preparation. Traditional education has been a way to get theoretical knowledge and perform in the examinations. Students spend years learning what is away in the textbooks and memorising content to score well in examinations such as the Secondary School Certificate Examinations and the Higher Secondary Certificate Examinations. While the worth of the examinations lies in the fact that they assess academic achievement, they often promote rote learning over practical learning.

Education

As a result, many students complete their formal education without acquiring the practical skills required in the modern place of employment. Employers increasingly want persons who can communicate effectively, creatively solve problems, adapt to changes and be able to function in a group. These 'soft' or 'employability' skills are not usually emphasised enough in the traditional curriculum.

The high speed at which the global economy is changing has made this issue even more pressing. Advancements in technology, automation and digital communication have fundamentally altered the nature of work. New industries are developing as the old jobs change or become extinct. In such a dynamic environment, education systems need to prepare learners not only for existing professions but also for the preparation of already non-existent professions. This demands a curriculum focused on flexibility, lifelong learning and critical thinking.

Educational Resources

One of the most important reasons for the education-employment gap is the lack of integration between vocational and technical training and the rest of the academic system. Many students and parents still reject vocational education as a second-best option that pursues general academic pathways even if these pathways are unrelated to labour market demands. This perception is part of the current shortage of technically qualified workers in manufacturing, construction, information technology and services.

Institutions such as the National Curriculum and Textbook Board have to ensure that the content of education is in sync with the changing needs of society. The curriculum should be informed by research and input from the industry as well as labour market trends. Collaboration between [educators](#), policymakers and employers will lead to programmes that equip graduates better for real challenges. One reason for the misalignment is the little practical experience that students get when they study. In many institutions, learning is still quite classroom-based and there is little space for internship, apprenticeship or project-based work. Without direct interaction with professional settings, students have difficulties in translating theory to practice.

Introducing structured internship programmes and industry partnership can again radically change the situation for the better. When students are working in actual professional settings, they gain insight in workplace expectations, organisational culture and practical problem-solving. The experiences also help them to build confidence as well as professional networks that help their transition into employment.

Career guidance is another important element that needs to be given more importance. Many students choose academic subjects without having

complete knowledge about their career implications. Because of this, they can graduate with degrees that are not in line with market opportunities or personal interests. Establishing effective career counselling services in schools and colleges can help students to make appropriate decisions on their education path and professional aspirations.

Education

Digital skills are something every person in today's world must have in order to succeed in job market. The digital transformation of society has brought new possibilities for information technology, electronic commerce, digital marketing and data analysis. Digital competence is now a mandatory requirement in almost all professions. [📖 Educational](#) institutions must, therefore, ensure that students develop their technological literacy to become comfortable and creative navigators of the digital landscape.

Language skills, especially speaking in English, is also a strong determinant of employability. As the country becomes increasingly integrated into the global economy, communication skills are critical in accessing the international opportunities and working across different international business houses. Strengthening the language [📖 education](#) and training for communication

could, therefore, help graduates to become more competitive on the local and the global job market.

Educational Resources

Aligning education and employment is also an active role for industry and government. Employers can work with educational institutions to develop training programmes, offer internship and provide insights about skills requirements. Government policies may aid such collaboration through industry incentives. Another important dimension is entrepreneurship. Traditionally, many Bangladeshi students want to pursue mostly government jobs or those in established organisations. However, the future of employment will, perhaps, be more reliant on innovation or entrepreneurial initiative. Encouraging students to develop entrepreneurial skills, including creativity, risk-taking and business planning, can enable them to create their own opportunities rather than simply entering the job market.

Entrepreneurship education can be incorporated with project education, incubators and mentorship. Students that operate their ideas into ventures develop problem-solving, leadership as well as managerial abilities that are helpful both as entrepreneurs and employees. Inclusiveness should also be

taken into account in redressing the education-employment dichotomy. Students that come from rural regions, disadvantaged communities and marginalised communities are often faced with more obstacles in the higher education and employment sectors. Policies aimed at improving infrastructure, expanding access to digital resources and providing financial support can help to ensure that all students have the skills that they need to become people who are able to take up meaningful job.

Teacher training is another important facet of such transformation. Teachers determine learning experiences and career aspirations of students. If teachers are capable of modern pedagogical skills, knowledge of contemporary labour market trends, they can guide students better as far as relevant competences are concerned. Continuous professional development programmes are useful to help teachers keep abreast of changing practices in education as well as industry requirements.

Educational Resources

Assessments will also need to change. Traditional examinations assessment is on recall, not application. The use of presentations, projects and group work gives a better picture of student abilities. Over 100 years, Bangladesh has been aware of the need to balance education and work and a number of initiatives have been introduced to encourage skills development and technical education. The efforts are important steps to these ends. Sustained commitment and coordinated action are needed to get closer to lasting results.

The purpose of education is to make people with skills, knowledge and attitude needed to be successful in today's employment and make the country move

forward. Aligning education with labour market needs helps to give graduates direction and benefits.

Education

The process towards making education meet employment needs is all-encompassing and collaborative. Curriculum reforms, industry links, hands-on training options, career guidance, digital literacy and entrepreneurial education necessary to build an effective and dynamic [educational](#) system must all work together to make up for the gap.

With a large, young population, there is enormous potential for economic growth. This potential can, however, only be realised if young people can be equipped with the knowledge and skills that they need to have opportunities to live in a rapidly changing world.

By enhancing the link between education and employment, Bangladesh can convert the demographic dividend into a great engine for national development. The challenge is massive, but so is the opportunity. Through strong consideration and collective efforts, the nation can develop an education system that provides knowledge and prepares students to shape the future with confidence, creativity and resiliency.

Economics

*Sohan Reza is a lecturer in at the Rajshahi Education Board Government
Model College*