

SKILLS-IN-DEMAND IN BANGLADESH LABOUR MARKET AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

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ACCRONYMS

BACI	Bangladesh Association of Construction Industries
BEF	Bangladesh Employers Federation
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BLFS	Bangladesh Labour Force Survey
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BoPinc	BoP Innovation Center
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
DYD	Department of Youth Development
GO	Government Organization
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization of Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MISC	Migration Information Support Centres
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PKB	ProbashiKalyan Bank
PROOFS	Profitable Opportunities for Food Security
RMG	Readymade Garment
SaFaL	Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages
SCITI	Small and Cottage Industries Training Institute
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WARBE	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants
WEWF	Wage Earners Welfare Fund

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh is an economy with a significant surplus in labour. Due to the growing gap between the number of entrants into the labour force and the number of jobs created absorbing the surplus labour has turned into a major problem for the country. This problem takes a new angle when the question of deployment of returning workers into labour market comes to the agenda.

Returning workers have to compete with the domestic labour force already seeking job. Around 54 million people are engaged in Bangladesh labour market, of which 6.8 million are in the formal sector and 47.3 million are in the informal market. Among the total population, male and female was 80.9 percent and 19.1 percent respectively in the formal sector. The rate of involvement in the informal sector for male and female was 68.5 percent and 31.5 percent respectively. This substantial labour force has been growing at a rapid 3 percent per year—adding around 2 million workers each year (Labour Force Survey, 2010).

Upon arrival, most of the workers are, however, unaware about their employment opportunities in the domestic labour market. Their potential employers are also ignorant of the capabilities of these prospective job seekers as information on returning migrants are not available to them. If they would have known about the skill level of the returning migrants, in many cases they could engage them efficiently in the most suitable places of their enterprises and could plan their future ventures accordingly. The policy makers will also be benefitted if they have the pertinent qualification inventory of the returning workers at the time of developing fiscal and financial incentives for the public and private sector wage employment generation as well as entrepreneurship promotion initiatives. Therefore, effective re-integration of migrant workers requires information of both the skills demands and opportunities in the labour market.

The existing literature on migration although is primarily focused on analyzing the impact of remittances on the socio-economic status of the receiving households, a number of studies provide useful insights into the re-integration prospect of the returnee migrants. Dahles (2009) after analyzing a number of literatures on return migration concluded that, in order to channel diaspora and returnee capital investments, proper institutional structure is crucial. She also emphasized about government initiatives to encourage the migrants to return and to invest in domestic economies, which are observed in countries like India, China and Taiwan.

McCormick and Wahba (2001) also analyzed entrepreneurial activities of the returnees of Egypt with an emphasis on exploring the linkages between overseas employment, savings and entrepreneurial activity of the returnees. With the help of an econometric model of the probability of entrepreneurial activity, the authors inferred that, for the literate returnees, overseas savings along with the duration of stay abroad tends to increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur. The result for the illiterates is however different and the estimates found no evidence of

the importance of duration of stay abroad on the probability of being entrepreneur. Based on their findings, the authors finally concluded that, it is not only due to capital market imperfections, but also failures for acquiring human capital that constraint the entrepreneurship in LDCs.

In a report of the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2002), an attempt has been made to understand the re-integration process of the return migrants to Bangladesh economy. It has utilized information from 200 returnee households as well as interviews of government officials, members of private sector, personnel of banks and relevant association working on migrants. The primary survey revealed relevant information of the socio-economic profile of the returnees as well as their process of re-integration, It however found that the reintegration process was not quite easy and as informed by the returnees, lack of information on the trend of business, lack of job opportunity, lack of access to formal credit along with the absence of advisory services are the key constraints for successful re-integration.

In addition to professional constraints, the IOM study also reported about a number of social problems as informed by the returnees-these include greater expectation from the relatives and friends, friends/families seeking financial assistance from them etc. Many of the returnees expressed their frustration over the fact that, due to the lack of contact with the mainstream economic activities, they had to choose several self-employment activities for their living. A significant percentage of the returnees also expresses their dissatisfaction over the type of work in which they were engaged after returning. In order to reintegrate into the economy in an efficient and smooth manner, the returnees suggested a number of strategies including those of, improvement in the law and order situation, better access to credit and technical knowhow, controlling of extortion, better linkage between the skills of the returnees and the available employment opportunities, better reorientation strategy, assistance for future migration etc.

Wadud (2012) particularly analyzed the reintegration program of Bangladeshi returnees in the context of Libya. He discussed about the strategies that has been applied for an effective reintegration of the returnees, including that of an extensive campaign to disseminate necessary information to the returnees, establishment of a comprehensive database of all returnees and registration done by the BMET at the airport, establishment of a call centre and dissemination of such information through the involvement of media etc (Wadud, 2011). The effective utilization of this call centre, according to the author was a key towards effective reintegration of the returnees.

Islam (2010) in a strategy paper cited the success stories of the effective re-integration of the returnees. As for example, he referred the case of Philippines, where the return migrants' monetary contribution to the domestic economy is highly appreciated. The returnees have the opportunity to avail special investment packages. Philippine overseas contract workers also can avail certain financial privileges, which help them to re-integrate to the domestic economy. Another

success story as cited by Islam (2010) is that of India where the return migrants are responsible for operating a number of organizations including those of the ICT villages in Bangalore, real estate business in Hyderabad. Providing financial assistance to the ventures of the returnees by different banks also contributed significantly towards the re-integration of the return migrants.

Notwithstanding these insights and success stories, the returnee migrants of the country are faced with both advantages and disadvantages. Considering the returnees' competency gained through work abroad and relative financial solvency if achieved through accumulated financial capital either brought back or saved from sent remittances, these workers may have some competitive edge in comparison to their domestic counterparts. Their disadvantage on the other hand, is their lack of knowledge on the labour market along with the lack of network with potential employers. For ease of reintegration into the local labour market, matching of the interest, competency and skill level of return migrants with the willingness and capacity of the enterprisers to absorb return migrants in potential labour market sectors is important.

The broad objective of the study is to analyze the supply and demand side dynamics for reintegrating the returning migrants in domestic labour market. In this context, the specific objectives are to: (a) analyze the preference/interest, competency and skill level of return migrants; (b) assess the capacity of the enterprisers to absorb return migrants in certain sectors; (c) develop a set of recommendations for the government and non government organizations to ease the re-integration process. In this context, the report has analyzed interest and skill level the returnees (supply side) as well as the absorptive capacity of the existing enterprises (demand side). Based on such information, the report has identified two potential sectors for wage employment and two for self-employment activities.

With a view to understand the capacity and interest to absorb the returnees in the domestic labour market, this study has consulted: (i) existing literature; (ii) preferences and skill profile of the returnees as revealed in the profile survey carried out as the part of ILO-BILS study on "Study on Labour Demand and Supply of Returning Migrant Workers with Profiling Survey of Returning Migrant Workers"; and (iii) key informant interviews. As for the literature, the report has gone through a number of researches focusing on the re-integration process of the returnees as well as the recommended policies. The primary survey which was conducted on 1,200 returnees has collected information on the socio-demographic profile of the returnees, their preferences for job, the skills that they have acquired etc. Finally, the KIIs attempted to capture the demand side of the scenario while collecting information from the relevant personnel regarding the interest of the potential employers and absorptive capacity of the relevant domestic industries.

The following section of the study highlights the supply side dynamics of Bangladesh labour market. Basic information of labour market and returning migrants, as well as the skill profile of returnees with socio-demographic information has been analyzed in this section. In section three, the demand side

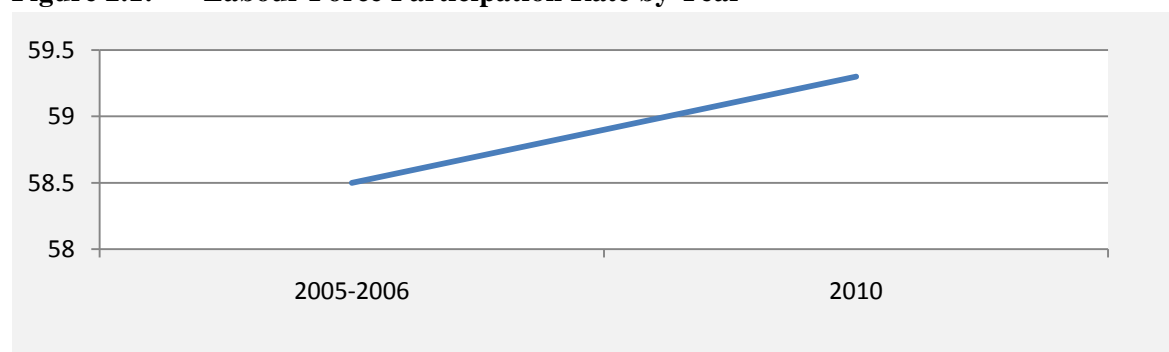
dynamics of the labour market has been explored in terms of wage employment potential and interest, preferences and future plan, SME development potential of returning migrants, and communicating skill and enterprise support demands. Section four has analyzed the matching supply and demand scenario of the returning workers. Combining the information from the demand as well as supply side, some specific sector for the re-integration of the returning workers has been identified in this section. A number of recommendations have been put forward for better integration of the returning migrants' workers in the concluding section of the study.

2. BANGLADESH LABOUR MARKET: THE SUPPLY SIDE DYNAMICS

Basic Structure of the Labour Market

According to Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2010 (LFS 2010), labour force participation rate stands at 59.3 percent, which represents a growth of 0.8 percent over the couple of years (Figure 2.1). The rate of growth in labour force, however, is lower than the growth of population. During the period of 1999-2000 to 2010, population of the country has increased by 24.4 million (from 124.30 million in 1999-2000 to 148.70 million in 2010), whereas the total working age population rose by 21.4 million. Among the total working age population (above 15 years of age), the number of employed persons increased by 6.7 million—from 47.4 million in 2005-06 to 54.1 million in 2010. On the other hand, almost 2 million people have been added to the labourmarket compared to nearly 1.6 million-job opportunities every year.

Figure 2.1: Labour Force Participation Rate by Year



Source: Bangladesh Labour Force Survey, 2010

Table 2.1 Characteristics of Population and Labour Force (in Million)

Year	Population		Working Age population		Employed population		Unemployed population	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1999-00	64.1	60.3	38.3	35.9	31.1	7.9	1.1	0.7
2002-03	68.3	65.1	41.2	39.6	34.5	9.8	1.5	0.5
2005-06	70.0	67.3	43.0	41.6	36.1	11.3	1.2	0.9
2010	74.2	73.6	47.9	47.7	37.9	16.2	1.6	1.0

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2010

Of the total employed person, 47.56 percent was engaged in agricultural sector followed by 35.35 percent in service sector and 17.52 percent in industrial sector. Besides this, for the male, the highest 41.11 percent was engaged in the service sector followed by agricultural (40.18 percent) and industrial (19.60 percent) sectors, whereas for female, the highest 68.84 percent was engaged in

agricultural sector followed by service sector (21.89 percent) and industrial sector (13.32 percent) (Table 2.2). The statistics of employment by major economic sector therefore depicts that the engagement of female in agricultural sector remained as the highest position in broad economic sector.

Table 2.2: Employment by Broad Economic Sectors in 2010

Broad Economic Sectors	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture	47.56	40.18	64.84
Non-agriculture	53.07	60.71	35.21
Manufacturing	12.44	12.73	11.77
Other industry	5.28	6.87	1.55
Services	35.35	41.11	21.89

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2010

Data regarding growth of employment by major industry reveals that except in the education, public administration, and financial intermediation industry, share of employment in other industry has increased over the years. Among the broad industries, highest about 24 percent has increased in the real estate industry. Share of agriculture, manufacture and construction labour in broad economic has increased four percent, six percent and about 14 percent respectively. However the engagement of female has increased more than that of the male in the maximum industries i.e. in the manufacture and construction industry the male engagement has increased 5 percent, and 13 percent respectively, where the female employment has increased around 10 percent and 20 percent respectively (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3 Growth Rate of Employment by Major Industry (2005-2006 to 2010)

Industry	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture hunting and forestry	4.29	1.79	8.41
Mining and quarrying	18.98	18.44	22.18
Manufacture	6.34	5.15	9.62
Electricity gas and water supply	12.04	11.14	27.46
Construction	13.52	13.01	19.51
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles	1.53	-0.66	23.39
Hotel and restaurants	3.89	4.01	2.34
Transport, storage and communications	3.81	-0.78	32.99
Financial intermediation	-8.28	-5.36	-20.32
Real estate, renting and business activities	24.47	22.97	45.17
Public administration and defense	-12.31	-10.90	-26.52
Education	-0.37	-0.08	-1'27
Health and Social Work	7.92	7.48	8.58
Others community, social and personal service activities	6.30	2.28	11.96

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2010

Key Characteristics of the Returning Migrants:

Bangladesh is one of the world's top emigrant countries, with 5.7 million existing migrants and a net migration rate of one out of 250 inhabitants. The migrants contribute greatly to their families, communities and the country's economy through remittances. These migrant workers, in most cases stay abroad for a limited and predictable period of time and then returns to the origin country.

They mainly return after completion of work, as they are usually contracted to work for a fixed period of time. Many returnees decide to move back due to their worsening living and working conditions abroad i.e. low wage, excessive working hour, problem with employer etc. Some returns due to physical and mental illness. Sometime they have to return before the end of their agreements due to political and economic crisis in the receiving countries or on the security ground such as; a number of migrants returned from Libya due to political crisis and conflicts.

It is therefore obvious that a number of migrant workers are returning in the home country each year. But data regarding how many migrant workers are returning in the country each year is not available in Bangladesh. Though the statistical division of BMET keeps records of yearly migration flow by country of employment, yearly overseas employment statistics by categories and institutions that sent them and country wise and year-wise remittance earned through the wage earners scheme, there is no record on returning migrants. No other private or non-government organizations however keep record of returning migrants. Just a study reveals, till October 2012, 17,518 migrant workers had sent back by deportation from the destination country (Siddiki and Sultana. 2012) to Bangladesh.

Skill Profile of the Returning Migrants

As for the returning migrants' both the overseas and domestic working experience in various trades is the key attributes to their skills. In addition, the principal skill features i.e. age structure, average level of schooling, pre-migration and post-migration training opportunities can be considered to have positive contribution towards the skill level of returning workers. This section has explored the findings of the 'Profiling Survey of Migrants Workers' to understand the skills and competency of returning workers which includes socio-demographic information, experience and skills acquired in domestic and overseas employment, and training experience (before departure and in abroad).

Socio-Demographic Information

As high as 68 percent of the returning workers are in the age group of young adults (18 to 40 years) - a demographic strength of this force can certainly be considered as a positive factor in terms of labour market (Table 2.4).

In terms of educational attainments, about 74 percent of the returnees have completed at least primary education or have even studied further which reflects their higher educational qualification compare to the national average of labour force. In comparison to female migrants, the male counterparts are found to have possess better education on an average-as high as 31 percent of females, compared to 18 percent males have no education on an average and greater proportion of males are also found to have higher schooling than that of the females.

Table 2.4 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Returnees

	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Age (Years)						
Less than 18	5	0.5	3	1.1	8	0.7
18 to 24	112	12.1	46	16.9	158	13.2
25 to 34	499	53.8	160	58.8	659	54.9
35 to 44	203	21.9	59	21.7	262	21.8
45 to 54	84	9.1	4	1.5	88	7.3
55 years and above	25	2.7	0	0.0	25	2.1
Educational Qualification						
Illiterate or Functional literacy ¹	168	18.1	85	31.3	253	21.1
Up to five	299	32.2	105	38.6	404	33.7
Six to ten	396	42.7	80	29.4	476	39.7
Completed Secondary level	45	4.8	2	0.7	47	3.9
Completed Higher Secondary level	10	1.1	0	0.0	10	0.8
Graduate and above	10	1.1	0	0.0	10	0.8

Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014), BILS

Experience and Skills acquired in Domestic and Overseas Employment

In order to understand the labour market potential of the return migrants, it is important to analyse the type of jobs they used to do at home before migration. As revealed in Table 2.5 it is mainly those who were engaged in agriculture and fishing sector (23.6 percent) later decided to migrate. The occupation of the migrants before migration also included those of wage employment (12.2 percent) and self employed activities (16.3 percent). There are however a number of migrants who went abroad without any prior experiences of job, and this is particularly common for the females. It is found that as high as 39.7 percent of the females were housewives before going abroad and 16 percent of the total respondents (both male and female) were unemployed. Therefore, although a number of returnees already gained certain degree of job experience before leaving the country, we should not generalize it for all and this should be carefully considered particularly for the females.

¹Functionalliteratepeopleincludewhohave no formal education, but can sign name, read simple words and cancount.

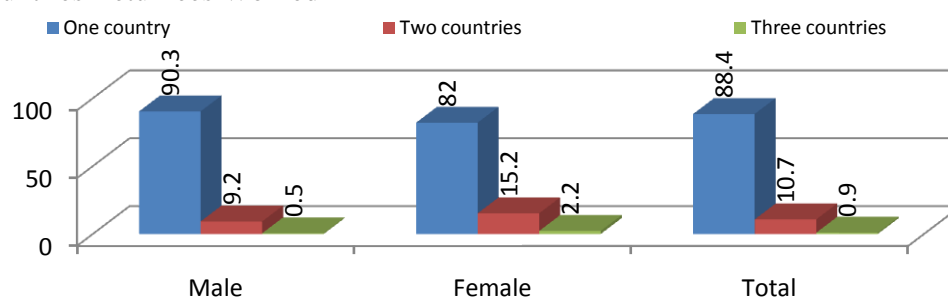
Table 2.5 Occupation before Migration

Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Student	74	8.0	16	5.9	90	7.5
Service/Job	77	8.3	69	25.4	146	12.2
Self employed	179	19.3	17	6.3	196	16.3
Unemployed	153	16.5	39	14.3	192	16.0
Day labourer	23	2.5	4	1.5	27	2.3
Agriculture and fishing	275	29.6	8	2.9	283	23.6
House wife	-		108	39.7	109	9.1
Driving	31	3.3	0	0.0	31	2.6
Work of Carpenter	30	3.2	1	0.4	31	2.6
Construction worker	51	5.5	0	0.0	51	4.3
Others	35	3.8	10	3.7	45	3.8
Total	928	100	272	100	1200	100

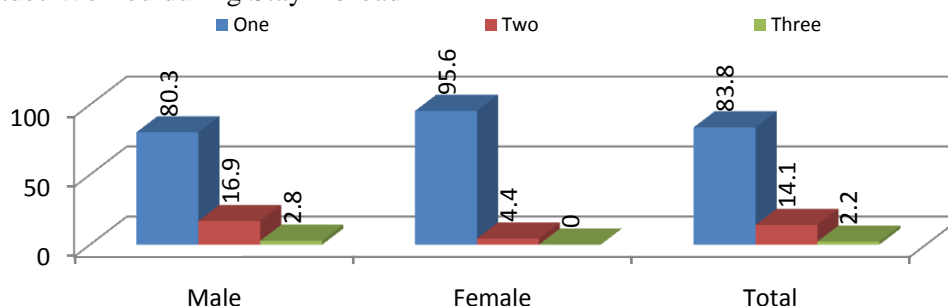
It is however their in-migration experience that is expected to have significant contribution towards developing their skill profile. The profile survey highlights that, a number of returnees even have an experience to work in more than one countries, which is expected to have contributed towards diversified experience. Around 12 percent of the returnees informed that they have multi-country experience and about 16 percent workers worked in more than one trade (Figure 2.2). This has expected to contribute towards diversified skill and experience.

Figure 2.2: Number of Countries and Trades Returnees Worked at Abroad

Number of Countries Returnees Worked



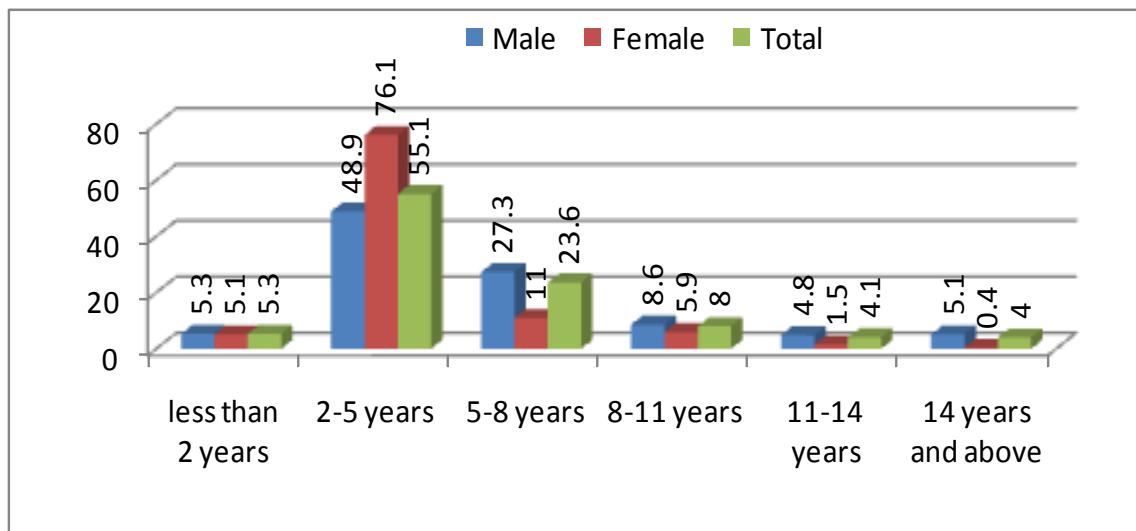
Number of Trades Worked during Stay Abroad



Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

The survey also shows that more than half of the returnees (55 percent) have overseas employment experience of 2 to 5 years and about one-fourth of the returnees worked for as high as 5 to 8 years. As high as 16 percent of workers reported that they have overseas employment experience of at least 8 years (Figure 2.2). For certain types of jobs, e.g. construction, driving, years of working experience in the overseas labour market should have positive contribution towards skill formation. As for the skill level and experience of female migrants, it was found that females had experience in lesser number of countries and spent lesser time than their male counterparts (only about 19 percent female stayed abroad for more than 4 years, where the number for male was 46 percent). They were however engaged in greater types of jobs than men (Figure 2.2 and 2.3).

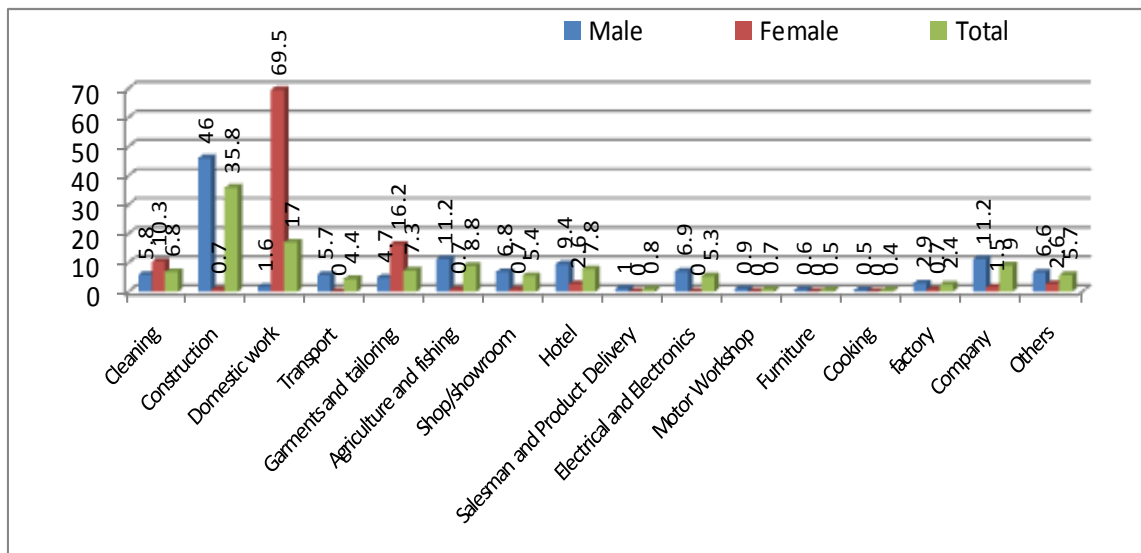
Figure 2.3: Duration of Stay Abroad



Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014)

From the occupational profile of the migrants while they were abroad, it can be inferred that, construction sector predominated the occupational choice of the migrants. As high as one-third of them get absorbed in the sector. Returnees were also engaged as cleaners (13 percent), worked in tailoring or garments sector (6.8 percent) or food processing sectors (10 percent). Working as domestic help was also a common choice for the migrants, and around 13 percent reported to be engaged in such jobs. Majority of the female workers mainly worked as domestic worker (69 percent), followed by 18 percent and 13 percent worked as cleaning worker and garments/tailoring worker respectively. Male migrants were mainly engaged in construction work (46 percent), agriculture and fishing (11 percent), company (11 percent), hotel (9 percent), electrical and electronics (7 percent), and shop and show room (7 percent).

Figure 2.4: Types of Work after Migration



Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014)

It is noteworthy that the skills related to construction work, carpentry, driving, and electrical work are more common among the male returnees. On the other hand, skills, as claimed by them, related to domestic work, garments work, cleaning, and cook are more among the females. While analyzing the skill profile of the returnees, we should however keep in mind that, for certain occupations e.g. domestic work, performed primarily by the females, we cannot formally categorize the skill level. In such cases it is mainly the experience gained while working in that particular job.

In sum, a number of factors, e.g. experience/job at home country prior migration, experience while being abroad, number of years spent abroad, amount of time spent abroad, number of countries in while worked and number of types of jobs worked, help to contribute towards the skill and experience level of the returnees. A combination of these factors is expected in many cases to transform into a more able worker than their non-migrant counterparts.

Training Experience

Besides on the job training, returning workers often have the opportunity to avail formal skill up-gradation training. BMET provides pre-departure training to migrants. Overall training rate is not that high and the case is worse particularly for the female returnees (Table 2.6). Post-migration training has been very limited to less than one-fifth of the returnee migrants interviewed.

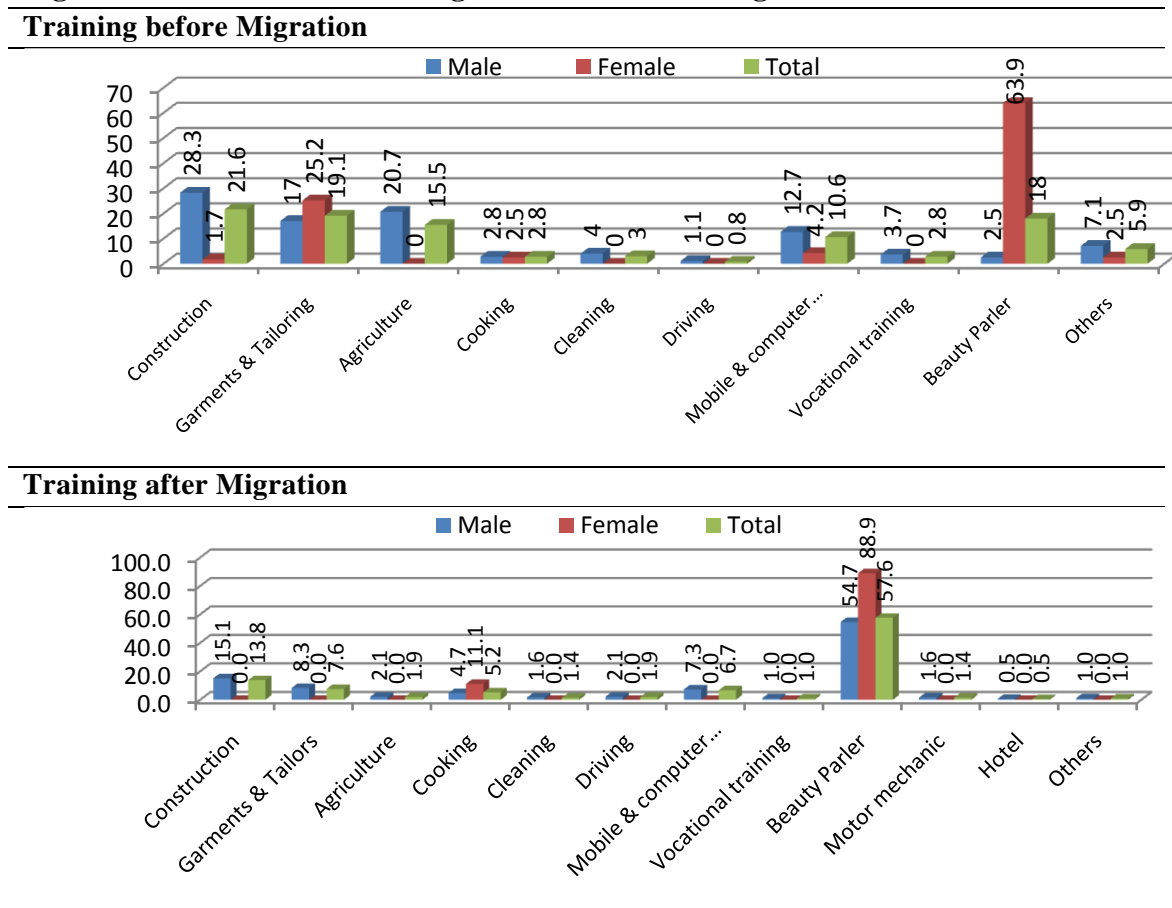
Table 2.6: Training before and after Migration

Training	Before Migration						After Migration					
	Male		Female		Total		Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	353	38.03	119	43.80	472	39.30	192	20.68	18	6.62	210	17.50
No	575	61.96	153	56.30	728	60.70	736	79.31	254	93.38	990	82.50
Total	928	100	272	100	1200	100	928	100	272	100	1200	100

Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

As for pre migration training, the top five areas of pre migration training are construction, garments and tailoring, beauty parlour, agriculture, mobile and computer servicing. In case of training while the migrants were abroad, it is interesting to find that, more than half of the returnees reported about receiving training at beauty parlours with another 14 percent had training in construction sector. Other areas of training were cooking (5.2 percent), garments and tailoring (7.6 percent), and mobile and computer servicing (10.6 percent) (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5: Areas of Training before and after Migration



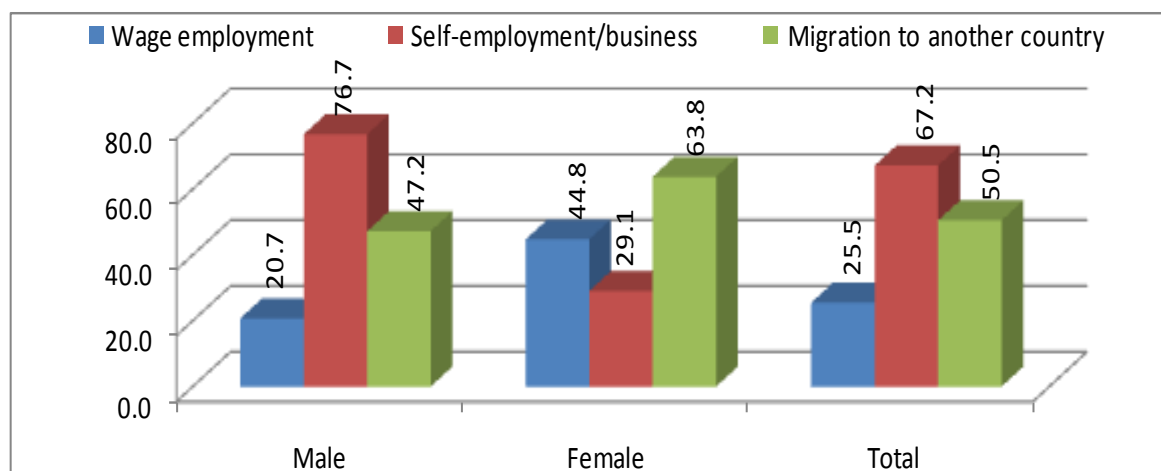
Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

However, the percentage of returnees receiving such training is quite low. It indicates the post migration training was not that diverse for the migrants (Figure 2.5). While comparing, pre and post migration training experiences, it can be inferred that, construction and garments are the two most common areas of training received by the returnees.

Preference of Future Work of Return Migrants

The migrants were asked about their interest to work in Bangladesh. Multiple responses were received from the returnees. Their responses reveals that around one-fourth of them were interested wage employment in the country. In comparison to the males, female returnees had shown more interest to work as wage employed (45 percent). The male returnees rather preferred to work in businesses as self employed workers (77 percent). It is interesting that, most of the male returnees shown lac of interest to work as a wage employed at the home country. Re-migration however had a choice for a significant percentage of return migrants- especially for the women (Figure- 2.6).

Figure 2.6 Future Working Preferences of the Return Migrants



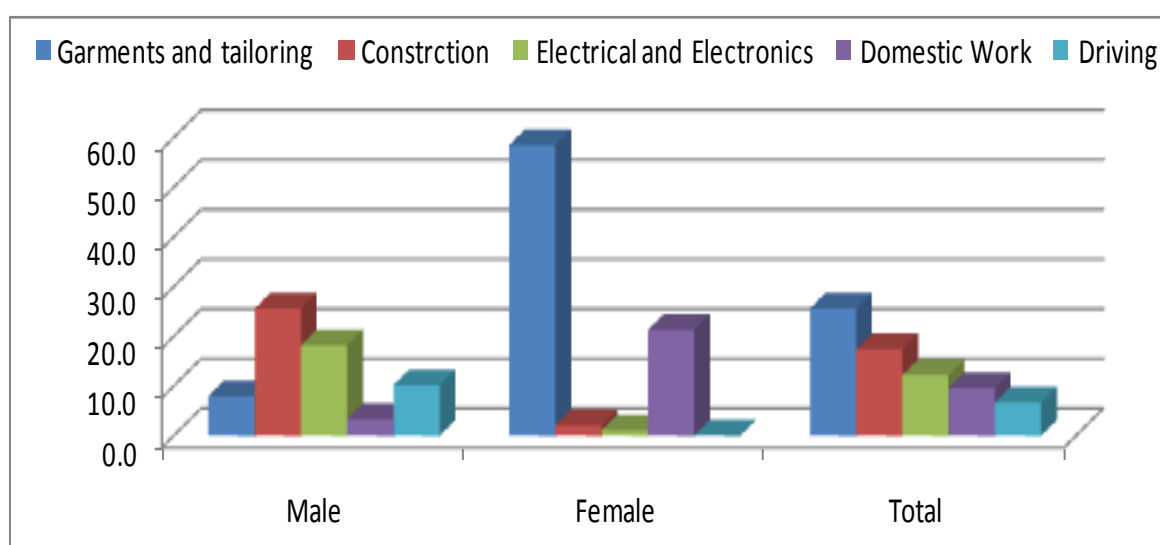
Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

The return migrants who prefer to work at the home country and/or who would be unable to arrange job abroad is expected to search for jobs while matching their: (i) preferences; (ii) experience and skill gained; (iii) training experience (pre-migration as well as post-migration) along with the (iv) opportunities available in the domestic labour market. If we go through their job preferences (Table 2.7), then we cannot come to any conclusion as the respondents have quite a diversified choices with around 5 percent do not even have any specific choice. In spite of such a wide range of choices, in Figure 2.7, the top five preferred sectors of the migrants have been identified with garments and construction being the most preferred choices.

Table 2.7: Types of Preferred Occupation

Preferred Occupation	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not specified	19	10.8	7	7.4	26	9.6
Job at Power plant	4	2.3	-	-	4	1.5
Job at Bank	3	1.7	-	-	3	1.1
Job at Private company	7	4.0	1	1.1	8	3.0
General supervision	1	0.6	1	1.1	2	0.7
Cleaning	4	2.3	2	2.1	6	2.2
Government job	2	1.1	1	1.1	3	1.1
Cooking	6	3.4	3	3.2	9	3.3
NGO activities	2	1.1	1	1.1	3	1.1
Nursery/Gardening	2	1.1	-	-	2	0.7
Driving	18	10.2	-	-	18	6.7
Garments and tailoring	14	8.0	55	58.5	69	25.6
Construction	45	25.6	2	2.1	47	17.4
Domestic work	6	3.4	20	21.3	26	9.6
Electrical and electronics	32	18.2	1	1.1	33	12.2
Carpentry	5	2.8	-	-	5	1.9
Other (Call centre, printing, religious work, salesman, shoe-making, health sector)	6	3.4	-	-	6	2.2
Total	176	100	94	100	270	100

Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

Figure 2.7: Sectors of Preferred Job

Source: Profiling Survey of Return Migrants (2014).

Identifying the Potential Sectors from Supply Side

In order to understand the suitable sectors for the reintegration of the returnees, it is important to consider: (i) experience of the migrants; (ii) preferences; (iii) training received by them; (iv) availability of appropriate job matched to their skill; (v) willingness of those in the demand side to recruit the returnees and to value their skill gained abroad. It is mainly the *interest* and the *capacity* of the workers that are considered for understanding the potential sectors. After a careful analysis of the skill level and preferences of the returnees, a number of potential sectors where the return migrants can be absorbed have been identified in this report. Agro- based business, garments & textile, real estate and housing, and electronics are some of the thriving investment sectors of Bangladesh that at the same time have higher business potentiality and also employment generation competences.

Based on such information, we have identified two potential sectors— construction sector and readymade garments sector as the most suitable sectors for wage employment of the returnees. In this context, it is the preference of the potential workers, training received before and after migration, type of skill acquired—these factors have been considered. Garments and tailoring are the favoured areas for around one-fourth of returnees (25.6 percent), most of who are females. In fact, about 60 percent female potential job seekers want to work in RMG industry. About 19 percent respondents informed to have received training on garments before they went abroad, of which 17 percent are male and 25.2 percent are female. While being abroad 7.6 percent received training related to garments. In addition, around 7 percent of the returnees reported that they have worked in garments. Therefore, considering both preferences, experience as well as skill level, RMG can be considered as a potential sector for the re-integration of the returnees. It is not only from the supply side, but also from the demand side, considering the requirement of skilled labour in this sector, it can be considered as one of the thriving sectors of the country with immense employment opportunity².

Another potential sector, based on the preferences of the return migrants could be the construction sector as more than 17 percent prefers to work in this sector. Very much expectedly this has been the predominant preference for the male returning workers. One-fourth (25.6 percent) of the potential male job seekers are eager to work in the construction sector. A considerable number of returnees also have received training in this sector (21.6 percent before migration and 13.8 percent after migration), which has expectedly improved their skill profile to work in this sector. In this context, around 32% returnees claimed that they have acquired skill

² BGMEA has continued voicing their concerns on the shortage of skilled manpower. “Currently we have a 25 per cent shortage of the total labour requirement for the RMG sector,” Abdus Salam Murshedy, former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), said. “If we get policy support from the government, the present growth rate in the RMG sector will continue at least for next 10 years,” headed (The Daily Sun, 9 February, 2011)

in construction sector. As for the demand side, growth in the construction sector (See Table 2.2) with ‘Building Boom’ and mega projects like ‘Padma Bridge’ may help to absorb these workers.

As for self-employment, on the basis of prior experience and preference of the workers— agro-based activities and small and medium enterprises can be considered as the most appropriate sectors.

3. BANGLADESH LABOUR MARKET: THE DEMAND SIDE DYNAMICS

Wage Employment Potential of the Returning Workers

This section will analyze the demand side of labour market with the emphasis of future preference of work of returning migrants, interest and capacity of enterprisers, level of qualifications required, set of skill and competency demanded, and challenges to re-integrate the returning migrants in the selected sectors of present labour market.

Given the relevant information from the supply side, as part of this research, we have interviewed a number of persons, some of whom are closely associated with these sectors. These interviews have therefore served as the basis of our analysis of the demand side of the labour market.

Interest and Concern of the Owners of Enterprises:

The reintegration process of return migrants depends on the active participation and collaboration from the government, nongovernment organizations and owners of the concerned sectors. The study found both interest and concern of relevant stakeholders regarding the reintegration of the returning migrant workers in the domestic labour market.

The findings of Key Informant Interview (KII) reveal that the employers of construction industries are quite interested to recruit return migrants in their construction site. However, as the returnees used to get paid higher in foreign countries, the potential employers perceive that they have to pay relatively higher wages to the returnees and that often discourages them to employ return migrants (KII 3 and 7). The Bangladesh Employer's Federation (BEF) and Bangladesh Association of Construction Industries (BACI) have shown interest about the recruitment of return migrants and according to BACI, a significant number of return migrant workers are already working at different construction sites (KII 3). The Employer's Federation's view is also enthusiastic and inspirational in this context as they are interested to act as a facilitator in the reintegration process (KII 7). The key informant also informed that the organization has already taken a number of initiatives to develop an effective strategy to reintegrate the returning workers.

Certain institutions that have the scope to provide training facilities and financial support to the potential workers can play an important role to reintegrate the return migrants. The specialized government organization, the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) has shown interest in this regard. One of the key informant noted that, BMET requires certain modification of existing working agenda and effective set of policies for such re-integration. The existing policies are limited only to serve potential migrants, not the returnees. The key informants has informed that the BMET can participate in reintegrating process of returning migrants by providing training facilities to match their skill with the

prospective employment at the district level office through its existing training centers (KII 1). BGMEA has both interest and positive experiences of recruiting returning migrant workers. According to BGMEA, though it has no opportunity to reintegrate the returning workers, at present, due to cost cutting strategy but in future depending on the business stability they are interested to participate in the reintegration process and providing training facilities to the workers (KII 8).

Skill and Competency Demand by the Potential Employers

Skilled return migrants are in demand in the construction sector. A key informant (from BACI) said, “We look forward to employ the skilled workers and most of the returning workers certainly possess such skill— especially the mason and the painter have higher demand in construction sector” (KII 3). An employer of a real estate company said that the developers always look forward to the skilled workers who will be able to manage the site independently and would not always be dependent on the engineers regarding the matters of constructions. The informant also think that the skilled returnees should possess the qualities to manage the worksite independently. He opines that the return migrants should be able to adjust themselves with the wage structure of the local labour market KII 6).

Discussion with BGMEA reveals that although skilled RMG workers are available in the local labour market, the returnees have certain qualifications, which makes them better candidate than their domestic counterparts. He opined that the returnees are generally quick learners and are disciplined and sometimes they also possess greater level of technical skill than the local workers. If the returnees can prove their professional skill and technical know how, BGMEA will certainly prefer them when it comes to the question of recruitment (KII 8).

Access to training facilities required an organized approach and coordination between the GO and NGO. Training facilities can be initiated according to the interest, demand and in an organized way. NGO can play the role of organizing in the local level and assess the interest, demand and rationale for the training and recommend to BMET to develop training module & arrange training in the local level training center or districts level offices (KII 1).

Scope and Opportunities

Returning migrant workers have scope of reintegration in Bangladesh labour Market. Employers of both garments and construction industries were found interested to employ skilled returning migrants. Particularly female migrant workers have the better scope to work in garment sector. Though BGMEA claimed that, currently garments sector has no opportunity to reintegrate the returning workers due to cost cutting strategy, BGMEA statement however reveals that in future depending on the business stability they are interested to participate in the reintegration process and providing training facilities to the returning workers (KII 8).

Training is a very essential part to prepare a skilled manpower. The government institution— BMET has scope to provide training in skill development of returning workers. BMET provides institutional training through technical training centers. It has been conducting both formal and special training courses in its 38 technical training centers, the Institute of Marine Technology and three Apprenticeship Training Offices nationwide. Through the training centers BMET can provide skill development training. The government also has the scope to reintegrate the skilled workers in the government-funded projects in generally, in the construction projects in particular. In these cases government may introduce quota system for returning migrants (KII 6). The skilled workers can engage in the construction work in their local area complying with their expectation to work in hometown. If a comprehensive information database can be developed it is possible to distribute the work among them according to their aspirations including local provisions of job opportunities (KII 3).

The Non Government Organizations (NGOs) have also the scope to provide the training facilities for returning workers. The BEF has its own training institute, which provides training for the managerial level however special training course can be initiated and managed for the returning workers if systematic and organized approach can be developed (KII 7). WARBE, a non-government organization has 16 local Migration Information Support Centres(MISC) across the country to cater direct support to the concerned migrant communities which can be a model to organize the returning workers (KII 5).

The furniture sector of Bangladesh has great business potentiality. There are many furniture enterprises of our country, which is also owned by the returning migrant, and they might be interested to be collaborated of the reintegration process of migrants. This sector has a wide scope to absorb a large number of skilled returnees. The establishment of profile & database of returning workers will reduce the communication gap between the workers and employers (KII 4).

Challenges to Re-integrate in Wage Employment

The process of reintegration comprises some key challenges and limitations, which should be address-giving preference to introduce an effectual reintegration process of returning migrant workers. Lack of information of the government as well as the employers about the returnees, insufficient information of the workers about the opportunities in the local labour market and the absence of appropriate government policy regarding the reintegration of returning workers were identified by the key informants as the main challenges of reintegration process A similar conclusion is drawn by the IOM study (IOM 2002) which reveals that the reintegration process was not quite easy and as informed by the returnees, lack of information on the trend of business, lack of job opportunity, lack of access to formal credit along with the absence of advisory services are the key constraints for successful re-integration.

Lack of Information

Information about the extent of return migration and on their reintegration and rehabilitation experience, or their specialized skills is not available in Bangladesh. Lack of such information hinders the private sector from assessing the returnees' skills and specialization (IOM, 2002), and also the overall reintegration process of returning migrants. Since the owners have no available information regarding the skills & demand of returning migrant workers, they cannot recruit their required skilled workers though many skilled returning workers are available according to their demand. An employer of construction industry said that the subcontractors or contractor recruits the workers of construction sector. Subsequently most of the owners are unaware about the patterns of work going on in their construction site. This may affect the employer's positive initiatives and real practice of preferring recruitment of skilled returning workers in their project (KII 6).

Though initiative has been taken by the government to develop a database, it has limitations of comprehensive information about the returning migrants. Only name, passport number, name of returning country is available. But the details including local address, skill, and interest are not collected in the process. There is also absence of specific returning workers' reintegration targeted/ oriented program in the government initiatives.

Communication Problem

Reaching to the returning migrant workers and organizing them in a platform for ease communication and information sharing are the main challenges at this stage as information regarding returning migrants yet to be available here. Due to lack of information, it is quite difficult to make linkage between the employers and workers. Both the employers and workers remain untouched to each other due to lack of a formal setup of information dissemination and sharing. (KII 3, 7 and 4).

Mismatch between Employers' Willingness to Recruit Returnees and Returnees' Aspiration

Another problem regarding reintegration of returnees is that the demand and expectation of returning workers is often quite high with respect to the labour market of Bangladesh. According to the key informants, higher wage expectation of the returning migrant workers is acting as a constraint to reintegrate them in the domestic market (KII 3 and 7). The interviews also reveal that the returning workers change their profession frequently due to socio-economic reasons and that creates problem for the employer to finish the work timely (KII 3 and 5). Although there is no concrete evidence available for the reason behind their change of occupation, several socio-economic factors e.g. lack of networking with the local labour market, higher expectation (both monetary as well as non-monetary) in jobs due to exposure to international market may create instability in their choice of occupation.

Lack of Institutional Support

The evidence shows that institutional support for returning migrants is hardly observed in Bangladesh. The government organization BMET, the private sector (particularly BIRA), or the non-government organization—including the migrant workers association—do not have any program which has visible impact on reintegration of migrant workers (IOM, 2002). The BMET provide training only to the outgoing migrants. No training facilities—either technical or briefing training are available for the returnees. The training center however suffers with lack of adequate equipment and tools essential for hands on experience, accordingly often only theoretical knowledge has been shared with the trainee that creates problem in practice, claimed a key interviewee (KII 4).

Bangladesh has an active non-governmental sector. Many of them provide different types of support to the potential migrant workers, but a few of them are working for the reintegration of returning migrants. However their activities are mostly confined in the campaign program and proper use of remittance. No activity is found available for the returnees who want to engage as wage employee.

Absence of Policy Framework

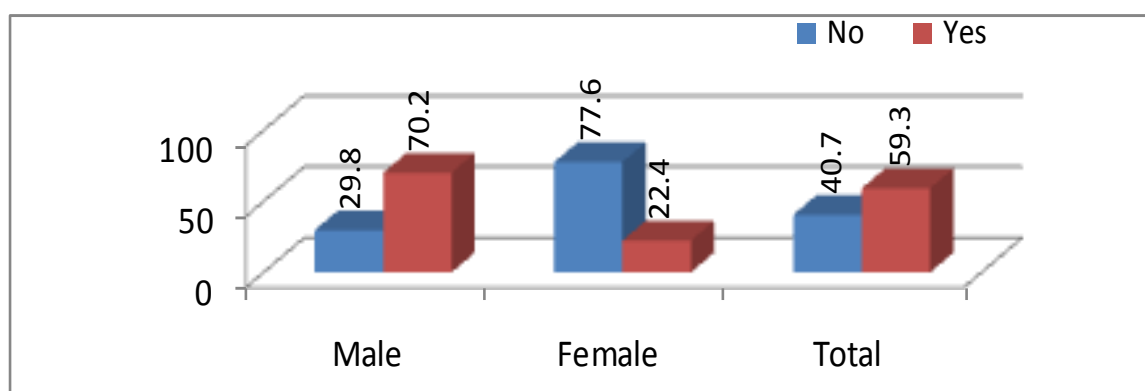
Active government policies and strategies are compulsory for successful and sustainable reintegration of returning migrants. It is found that the reintegration issue of returning migrants is almost absent in the government policies and plans. A policy decision to provide credit to the returnees and to allocate resources from the WEF for returnees provides for the wellbeing of the returning migrants workers. Access to credit is an essential component but not panacea to entrepreneurial success. A whole host of policy supports are required. The absence of returning migrant's reintegration issue in the government policies and strategic plan is one of the obstacles for enhance the overall reintegration process of the migrants.

Self Employment Potential of the Returning Migrants

As discussed in analyzing the supply profile of the returnees, the survey data reveals that 16.3 percent of the returnees were self-employed before migration and they have to a large extent been involved in small businesses. The common small businesses of the returnees before migration were tailoring and embroidery shop (2.7 percent), fish-farming (0.3 percent), poultry-farming (0.3 percent), grocery shop (3.8 percent), peddling (0.3 percent), fish selling (0.3 percent), food-shop (0.4 percent), mobile phone-shop (0.1 percent), and vegetable-selling (0.4 percent). Findings of the profiling survey reveal that 60 percent of returning workers wish to be self-employed. More male (70 percent) rather than females (22 percent) are interested to work as self-employed (Figure 3.1). They have willingness to start any type of entrepreneurship in the country. More than one-fourth of those who aspire to be entrepreneurs want to start some form of agro-based industry, including those related to agriculture or fishery. In addition to agro-based entrepreneurial activities,

a large number of returnees expressed their preferences for SME entrepreneurship. The preferred SME entrepreneurship however includes business of grocery or stationary shop (42 percent), green vegetables (3 percent), transport/ rent a car (5 percent), and tailoring shop (16 percent) (Table-3.1). In addition, while being abroad certain categories of workers e.g. carpenters, supervisors, poultry farmers, salesman etc. might have the possibility to acquire entrepreneurship skill. Therefore, with proper training/guidance and credit support, we can expect them to initiate successful entrepreneurial activities at home.

Figure 3.1: Whether Returnees want to be Self-Employed



Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014)

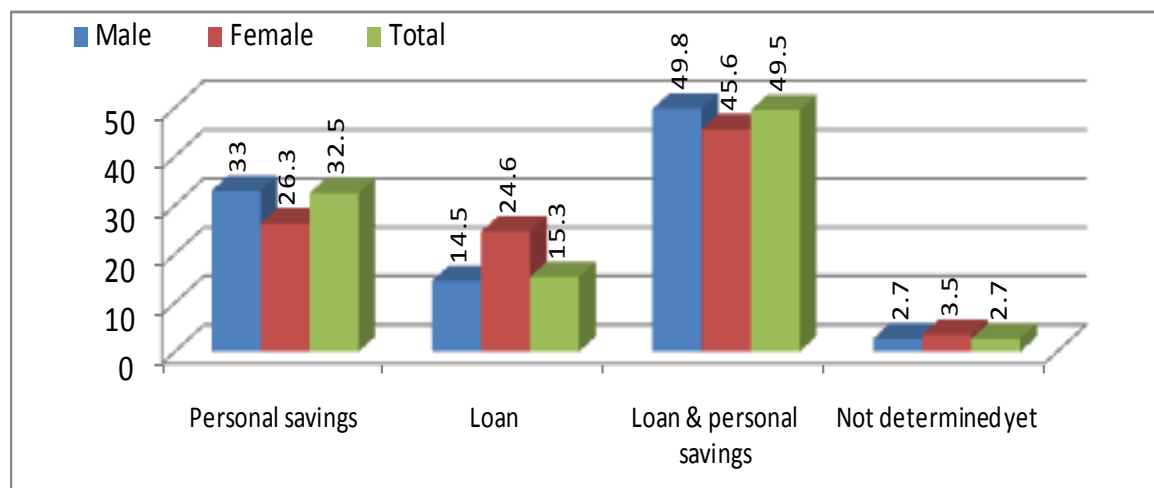
Table 3.1: Preferred Areas of Self-Employment by Returning Workers

Broad Sector	Specific sector	Male		Female		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Not specified		108	16.6	6	9.8	114	16.0
Agro-based enterprise	Agriculture	115	17.7	5	8.2	120	16.9
	Fishery	40	6.1	7	11.5	47	6.6
SME	Shop (grocery, stationary etc.)	168	25.8	26	42.6	194	27.2
	Tailoring shop	14	2.2	10	16.4	24	3.4
	Transport / rent a car	35	5.4	0.0	0.0	35	4.9
	Clothing business	21	3.2	2	3.3	23	3.2
	Electrical shop	20	3.1	0.0	0.0	20	2.8
	Green vegetable	24	3.7	0.0	0.0	24	3.4
	Furniture business	21	3.2	0.0	0.0	21	2.9
	Husk/pulse/bran business	14	2.2	1	1.6	15	2.1
Large enterprise	Construction firm	16	2.5	0.0	0.0	16	2.2
Others		55	8.4	4	6.6	59	8.3
Total		651	100	61	100	712	100

Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

In order to establish small businesses, access to credit is a pre-requisite. Beside their skill and experience, access to finance of the returning migrants is a prime reason for their involvement in entrepreneurial activities. As shown in Figure 3.2, in addition to personal savings, more than 15 percent of their portfolio is expected to be backed by credit obtained from different sources. As for the sources, most of the returnees (73 percent) preferred banks as the prime source and with 12 percent preferred NGOs as the source of credit.

Figure 3.2: Source of Finance by Returnees to start Entrepreneurship planned



Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

Table 3.2: Source of Credit planned by Returnees

Source of loan	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Bank	304	74.3	25	62.5	329	73.3
NGO	44	10.8	10	25.0	54	12.0
Family & relatives	44	10.8	4	10.0	48	10.7
From any source with low interest	14	3.4	1	2.5	15	3.3
Other businessman	3	.7	0	0.0	3	.7
Total	409	100.0	40	100.0	449	100.0

Source: Profiling Survey of Returning Migrants Workers (2014).

There are some thriving trade open for return migrants such as commercial agricultural production, agro based trades, agro processing industries, SME initiatives in both rural non-farm sectors and urban areas, along with GO and NGO facilitations in those trades.

As for agricultural entrepreneurship, sectors like poultry, dairy, fisheries have flourished enormously in recent years. There is ample scope for export in these sectors through processing and value addition. A number of agro based industries like that of poultry farm, dairy farm, food processing plant, fish freezing/processing industries etc. have significant potential in this context. Reputed local businessmen

and prospective foreign investors are highly encouraged to communicate with the banks for the establishment of agro-processing industries in Bangladesh. Project under joint venture as well as direct foreign investors are given special priority in this context.³ Under agro-based industries, certain sub-sectors e.g. (i) canned juice /fruit and (ii) dairy and poultry can be particularly considered to have significant potential. Given that Bangladesh has a huge supply of raw materials for the agro-based industry and there is a substantial demand supply gap in the agro-based industry, the potential entrepreneurs can avail such opportunities. Besides, government and NGOs have been conducting regular training programs in developing a skilled manpower for this industry. Progressive agricultural practices, improved marketing technique and modern processing facilities would enable the agro-processing industry to improve its quality and expand production levels significantly (BOI).

As shown in Box 1, Bangladesh Bank has also taken particular initiative to promote agro-based industry.

Box 1: Refinance Scheme for Agro-Processing Industry

Bangladesh Bank has introduced a Refinance Scheme for Agro-processing Industry with a fund of Tk. 100.00 crore (ICD Circular 01, November 04, 2001). Through different scheduled banks and financial institution, around 91.16 crore taka fund has been disbursed till March 31, 2010. As of 31 March 2010, eight banks and twelve financial institutions have signed participation agreement with Bangladesh Bank to avail this refinance facility. Under this fund, Bangladesh Bank provides refinance facility through PFIs to different agro-based industries to enhance the growth of agro-based and agro-processing industries.

Box 2 Model Agricultural Interventions for Agricultural Entrepreneurs

Solidaridad Network Asia, national and international stakeholders, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bangladesh has started implementing the Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages (SaFaL) programme in the south west of Bangladesh. SaFaL is working towards the intensification of agricultural production in the sub-sectors of aquaculture, dairy and horticulture by means of efficient farm-management, targeting around 57,000 farm households in Bangladesh in Khulna, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Jessore, and Narail district.

PROOFs is a project carried out by a consortium of ICCO, iDE, BoPinc and GAIN, which will organize farmers into producer groups, train them in business skills, facilitate agro-processing and market linkages and bring in end buyers and local companies. This project will be implemented in the North-west of Bangladesh (Gaibandha, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Rangpur districts) and in the South (Barisal, Bhola and Patuakhali districts), benefitting approximately 3,40,000 people.

³See www.bkb.org.bd, accessed in August 2014

With a view to re-integrate the returnees in the agro-based industries a number of models can be considered. Box 2 exhibits two such extensive agricultural interventions which our returning workers may encounter as many of their home districts have adopted such interventions.

In the absence of considerable heavy industry, GOB has emphasized on SME promotion for necessary trade and industrial development. SME foundation has been established for providing technical support to the entrepreneurs. Required fiscal and monetary policies are streamlined off and on for smooth development of the sector. Schedule Banks and non-bank financial institutions, under the leadership of Bangladesh Bank, go for comfortable financing for the entrepreneurs. Bangladesh Bank has identified several clusters like light engineering and agricultural machinery cluster in Bogra, handicraft cluster in Jamalpur, indigenous MonipuriTant (Handloom) cluster in Moulavi Bazar and many others where specific scheduled banks have been engaged to look after the financing need for the cluster entrepreneurs⁴

Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB) to be one of the potential sources of financial supports for returning migrants who want to develop SME or agro based industry. PKB is a specialized bank who ensures the benefit and welfare of the migrant workers and always gives preferences to reintegrate the returning migrant workers. It has existing specific financial/loan schemes (up to taka 5 lakh) to support the returning migrants (KII 2). The returning workers who are interested to initiate self-employment can take loan from this bank within 15 days without any bond. PKB mainly provides loan for agriculture, cattle farming, poultry farm, dairy farm, bio-gas plant, shop or small business, electronics and electric business, auto bike etc. There is a difference between the interest rate of loan of PKB for the outgoing migrant workers and returning migrant workers. The interest rate is nine percent for the outgoing, migrant workers, where the rate is eleven percent for the returning workers (KII 2).

Like Probashi Kallyan Bank, the Agrani Bank currently has started a loan schemes for returning migrants. Some specialized Bank like Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Karmasangstan Bank would also have potential actors in this regards.

Communicating Skills and Enterprise Support Demand

Communicating between the skills and demand is one of the big issues to reintegrate the returning workers. The employers, non-government organizations and researchers, all of the stakeholders identified the communication gap as main barriers to reintegration process (IOM, 2002). The communication between returning workers and service providers or employers is equally important for the economic reintegration of returning migrants. The effective matching of skills and demand mainly depends on a functioning communication system. This section analyzes the communicating process between the skills and demand of deferent

⁴Rahman, A (2013): Inclusive Finance and Sustainable Development, BIBM, Dhaka

stakeholders. The literature review and finding of key informant interviews highlights that taking the following strategic consideration can develop the communication system.

The information about skills and interest with expectation of returning workers should be collected and categorized systematically. A comprehensive database development is an effective mechanism to archive the information of returning workers according to their skills, specialization. The database has to make accessible to the employers through an online system or physical arrangement like periodic job fair or any specific sector wise bilateral or tripartite negotiations.

It is found that the public and private service providers do not have any training program specially for returning migrants. To improve skill level of returnees and match skill and demand between the service receivers and service providers is important. The public and private sector skill training provider should be engaged to develop and certified the skills of returning workers according to the demand and requirements of the employers. Separate training module has to develop for the separate trade with the consultation or direct involvement of the concerned employers. The Training Center of BEF, BGMEA, and BMET may be as potential training center in this regard.

The BMET District Office and NGOs' working with the migrant workers at grass root level through community based organization such as WARBE Foundation and BRAC can play effective role to aware and suggest the returning workers by providing essential information to their skill development and certification of prior skills of the workers who want to acquire in the job. The local level public and private organization also can arrange training program, which is required for returnees complying with their interest and expectations. The public and private organization not only will provide training to the workers but also have to recognize their acquired skills by providing assessment certificate that will be accepted by the employers.

The BTEB has set up some assessment centres which provide assessment certificate for 'recognition of prior learnings' after competency based training and assessment. The returning migrants also can engage in this programme to assess and certify their skills gained overseas for the consideration of the employers of domestic labour market. But the information regarding this programme is not available to the returning migrants. To make such information available to the returning migrants the government—particularly BMET and Local government can play an important role by its information centre.

An information cell and support center can bridge up the gap between the interest of returning workers and available opportunities by providing information about jobs opportunities, skills requirement of employers, training facilities, trade license, microfinance and other relevant supportive information, and career counseling. One stop service also may be supportive in this regard.

The workers returning home after a long period are unacquainted with the potential investment sectors as well as local economy. The information cell and support center in these regards can play influential role in this regard. The sound analysis of the relevant labour market condition and investment potentiality can facilitate an effective reintegration program for the returning workers who are willing to be self-employed through SME. Agro-business, garments & textile, real estate and housing, electronics are some of the thriving investment sectors of Bangladesh that at the same time have higher business potentiality and also employment generation competences. But the identification of proper investment sector varies mainly depending on time, place, communication, environment and availability of raw materials. The investment experts and analyzer can be very effectual as advisor to take the right decision which can be provided by setting a counseling method by building the capacity of existing manpower or recruiting the experienced personnel. This counseling can be provided through a national center and also establishing community-based organization in the local level preferring the migrant workers concentrated area.

The SME development and management-training program can be significant supportive schemes for the returning workers who are interested to SME development. The SCITI and DYD training program can provide influential supports to the returnees for being a successful entrepreneur.

The supports regarding rehabilitation of returnees i.e. loan facilities, training facilities and re-migration opportunities etc. are still in dark site to the returning migrants. The local government, BMET, district manpower office or the Technical Training Centers, and NGO can take steps to improve the quality of service for the returning migrants.

4. MATCHING SUPPLY AND DEMAND IN THE LABOUR MARKET

In this section, with a view to utilize the skill of the returnees and to re-integrate them into the domestic economy, information from both the demand and supply side along with international experiences has been utilized. After analyzing the skill component and preference of the workers, we also explored information gathered through the interviews of the key informants, particularly emphasizing the skill demand and absorptive capacity of the economy. The report has also consulted relevant international literature to understand the existing strategies followed in other countries in this regard. The report has identified RMG and construction as the potential sectors for the returnees seeking wage employment, whereas agro-based industry and small and medium enterprise for those interested in self-employment.

We have analyzed the available schemes, supports and existing potential opportunity, which can be utilized for the reintegration complying with the interest and skills of returning workers. The reintegration process in local labour market mainly includes the job placement skills and initiating entrepreneurship or self-employment. The analysis of skill and interest of the returning workers reveals that most of the workers interest and skills matches to the thriving investment sectors. Though a study reveal the contrast scenario that a large number of skilled returnee migrants involved in the occupation which do not have any relevance to the skills they had acquired abroad (IOM and UNDP, 2002). In many ways to match the demand and supply an intermediate connecting mechanism is almost absence that is the forefront priority to initiate a reintegration mechanism. Development of capacity building and enhancement mechanism is essential for both the group who are interested to get involved in employment and interested to entrepreneurship.

The establishment of a comprehensive database or information dossier of returning workers has been identified as the key issue to initiate the reintegration process. It would be helpful to bridge the gap between employers and workers as well as would be supportive for the institution provides financial aid for entrepreneurship to verify the identity & look into the requirements. The findings explores that there hardly existed any counseling service or information channel to help returning migrants in integrating in the domestic labour market. Though, it has been found that recently the BMET with help of Immigration Authority (Special Branches of Police) has initiated to form a database of returning migrants.

A large portion of returning workers is interested to initiate small and medium enterprises. The financial support (from the government and other private institution) is one of the frequently expected demands by the returning workers. It is found that the Prabashi Kalyan Bank is the only specialized bank provides financial supports directly to the returning workers rehabilitation. Besides this the government has the opportunity to expand this service to the local level reaching a MoU with other state owned banking institutions. The specific returning migrant

rehabilitation or reintegration schemes can be initiated in the banks that have greater geographical coverage including the rural level.

The matching of supply and demand depends on the categorization of both sides. The categorization of returning workers includes both the micro and macro level factors. The returning workers are divided into several categories according to their skills and trades. The gender and geographical area wise categorizations would also be helpful to matching the supply & demand. Besides the wage expectation and interest of returning workers should also be taken consideration before categorization.

While considering the re-integration process, a number of issues that have come up in the survey data and/or key informant interviews, have to be kept in consideration. Firstly, a careful observation of the survey data reveals that, in many cases the returnees changed their occupation while being abroad. This switching of occupation in certain cases can lead to degradation of skill. The re-integration process should carefully consider the pre and post-migration work and training of the workers while absorbing them in the market.

Secondly, in terms of training received, due to the differences in the structure of labour market, certain types of training as well as experience might not be useful in the context of domestic labour market. Future training programs must incorporate and carefully consider such an issue.

Thirdly, the human capital acquired in the foreign countries can also not be of high value and as a result in spite of foreign work-experience, the returnees might not be able to utilize their acquired human capital and this can be particularly important in the context of entrepreneurship development. As revealed in international literature, it is not only capital market imperfection, but also failure to acquire human capital that constraints the development of entrepreneurship in LDCs. Given that most of our workers are working in low-skilled jobs this issue can be particularly crucial in terms of re-integration. Greater number of years of experience as a domestic worker, for example is not expected to add any value to the development of entrepreneurial quality.

Fourthly, as revealed in the interviews, certain facilities/options are available only to the potential migrants but not to the returnees. Integrating the returnees in such schemes is crucial for their successful re-integration.

Finally, KII reveals that the returnees have higher expectation in terms of wages and such a perception can create a discrimination and negative bias in case of recruiting the returnees. Further investigation is required in this matter and although this issue has not been examined in our survey, future research is required to understand the reservation wage of the returnees. The government in this regard can also provide guidance to the potential employers to the value (if any) of foreign experience to the jobs.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a skill deficient country like Bangladesh, returning migrants can play a crucial role in terms of the development effort of the country. It is not only the remittances sent or carried by the migrants but also by the social capital generated by them through the networks, flow of knowledge, technical know-how and skill that can have significant contribution towards the socio-economic and development discourse of the country. Against this backdrop, the aim of this research, amongst others, is to understand and identify strategies to re-integrate the return migrants in the domestic economy in an efficient manner. The target is, to re-integrate the workers to suitable jobs and to effectively utilize the skill and knowledge that they have gained abroad in a manner that they can contribute towards the development of respective sectors.

The key informant interviews as well as international experiences have identified the constraints and challenges for efficient re-integration of the return migrants. The relevant personnel of the demand side also suggested a number of strategies to facilitate such re-integration. Based on the finding of the report, the policy makers may consider to design policies and strategies as suggested in this report, for facilitating smooth re-integration of the return migrants in these selected sectors.

In order to successfully re-integrate the returnees, government as well as the development partners, NGOs etc. should make a coordinated effort. Especially, in order to utilize the skills of the return migrants, it is of paramount important that the government take specific steps in terms of timely implemented policies and strategies. Based on the international experiences along with the experiences shared by the key informants, a number of strategies as outlined below can be considered:

Preparing a Comprehensive Database

The main constraint for successful re-integration of the returnees as pointed out by all of the key informants is the lack of coordination and information. In order to track the returnees and to share their information among the relevant stakeholders e.g. with the banks, SMEs, employers, a comprehensive database with detail information of such as socio-economic background, skill, education, training etc. should be prepared. The immigration information desk at the airport can be utilized in this regard and the government should strengthen their role to facilitate better tracking of the returnees. The BMET with the help of Immigration Authority (Special Branches of Police), Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP) & Election Commission (EC-National database) should be come to a memorandum of understanding to access & share the information of their respective database. The local government may be included in this process to update the profile of workers comprehensively setting up local level unit of data collections.

Setting up Information and Support Centre

Use of a call centre for disseminating information about the available training, counseling, credit, trade license, and employment opportunities can prove to be useful. For providing quick information, one stop service centre can be established. A strategy of Help Line and/or Help Centre can be a crucial tool to help the returnees.

Promoting Coordination and Networking

In order to coordinate with the returnees, collaborative strategies of the GO and NGOs should be in place. Existing NGOs, which already have network with the grassroots and community level activities, should be utilized for the purpose of communicating the returnees. Involvement of local government should be taken into account in this regard as well.

The government, especially the MOEWOE should help in matching the potential returnees with the prospective employers. The Ministry should act as building the bridge between the workers and the employers. In our context, it should have relevant information regarding the construction and garments sector along with the information of sources of fund and other administrative and legal information for setting up small businesses. To facilitate communication, a website can also be developed through which both the employers as the returnees can communicate with each other by them.

The government should open cells in Bangladesh Bank as well as in other related institutions which will help the return migrants in improving their entrepreneurial skill, provide them necessary credit and business support, offer them entrepreneurship plans etc. The government should consider opening small units or welfare cells based on the embassies of the foreign countries which will help the potential returnees in terms of information, logistics related to potential employment opportunities at home.

Providing Financial Support and Investment Opportunities

Providing financial support to the return migrants is crucial for their re-integration in the economy. The government can offer credit at low rate to the returning migrants to establish small industries. The government also should allocate separate budget, especially for information dissemination and training to facilitate better re-integration. The budget for the training centers for the migrants/return migrants should be increased and be matched with the needs of the returnees. The GOB can also initiate special investment packages for the returnees for setting up agro-based industries and small-scale enterprises.

Awareness Raising

Returning workers suffers lack of information and link of connection and the lack of awareness about the wage employment and proper use of remittance generate the cause of misery. Community awareness should be increase in this regard.

Framing Pro-migrant Policies

Finally, government should take necessary policies and strategies in order to make the landing of the returnees smooth and ensuring their successful reintegration in domestic labour market. Strategy should be taken to protect the migrants from any fraudulent practices and safe guard their interest while being in abroad. In this context, the government should track the migrants and also should provide necessary logistic supports e.g., information support, legal support, and financial supports while they are in foreign countries. The study finding reveals that workers are not allowed to open bank account in abroad as a result they sent all the money in home which is not properly utilized many times. Government should take proper initiative so that the migrant workers may open bank account in abroad.

Given the tremendous contribution of the return migrants in the economy of Bangladesh, it is important that the government with the help of NGOs and private sectors take timely initiative to re-integrate them. It is needless to mention that, strong institutional support in terms of constructing and maintaining data base of the returnees, providing special investment packages and credit facilities, offering training facilities to strengthen the skill that they acquired abroad, facilitating the communication between the returnees and the prospective employers etc. are crucial for a successful reintegration of the return migrants. Strategies and policies as such- directed towards such reintegration should be designed and implemented on a timely and efficient manner.

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ANNEX A:

LIST OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS (KIIS)

- KII 1: Mr. Javed Ahmed; Joint Secretary and Additional Director General of BMET.
- KII 2: Mr. C. M. Koyes Sami; Managing Director and CEO of ProbashiKallyan Bank.
- KII 3: Engr. ShafikulAlamBhuiyan; Advisor: Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI).
- KII 4: Syed SaifulHaque; Chairman: WARBE Development Foundation.
- KII 5: Mr. C. R. Abrar; Refugee and Migratory Research Unit (RMMRU).
- KII 6: Architect AkhilAkhterChawdhury, Managing Director, Shuchana Development Ltd.
- KII 7 : SaquibQuoreshi, Secretary, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka and Representative, Bangladesh Employer Federations (BEF)
- KII 8: Md. SahidullahAzim, Vice President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
- KII9: Md. Hasan Imam, Program Coordinator, BRAC Safe Migration Program