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# **THE NEED FOR INCLUDING LIFE SKILL EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME LED BY DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

**POLICY BRIEF**



## CONTEXT

One fourth of the country's total population is in the 15-29 age group. In numbers, the country's current youth population is 45.9 million (4 crore and 59 lakh), according to the census report recently published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This is considered as demographic dividend. In Bangladesh a high percentage of the work-age population is evident for some time now. But as the population growth rate decelerates, concerns about how long Bangladesh will enjoy this high work-age population have been raised. So how will this slowdown impact our labour market? How do we make the best of this demographic dividend until the work-age population dwindles and dependency increases, and how long do we have?

The Government of Bangladesh adopted National Youth Policy in 2017 in line with the spirit of youth leadership, social cohesion or self-development. Department of Youth Development (DYD) is the apex institute that mainly provides vocational education and training to the underemployed and unemployed youth for their gainful employment and enhanced opportunities for income generation.

Bangladesh needs skilled youth for its development but it is also urgent to tackle other threats like drug addiction, violent extremism etc. Although Bangladesh has made significant progress in CVE, the analysis reveals increased vulnerability to the emergence of VE. High vulnerability in west-central and southwestern Bangladesh among middle-wealth populations with traditional patriarchal structures that are economically active and well-connected to the surrounding world is also apparent. [1]. If we emphasize only unemployment, other issues such as peace, social cohesion, or ethics will remain overlooked.





## THE SCENARIO:



Since the inception (1981) of the Department of Youth Development (DYD) until June 2022, it has imparted training to 67, 65, 049 youths on different trades, with a view to creating employment and self-employment, and out of them 23, 32, 441 trained youths have engaged themselves in self-employment projects. Youth development programmes of the government have now been expanded to 480 upazilas. Undoubtedly the national achievement is impressive.

Despite all this success, the reality is the youth unemployment rate in Bangladesh saw no significant changes in 2021 in comparison to the previous year 2020 and remained at around 14.71 percent. In comparison to 2020, the youth unemployment rate decreased not significantly by 0.1 percentage points. [2]



## HOW THE ISSUE LIFE SKILL IS ADDRESSED IN POLICIES OR CURRICULUM:

The issue of life skill is quite relevant with the vision, mission and values described in the National Youth Policy 2017 that emphasizes on the emergence of forward-looking youth who can contribute to the country's development. It also highlights the relevant issues such as cohesion, self-development and leadership development. Accordingly the inclusion of life skills in the curriculum is clearly mentioned in the youth policy (8.1.14).



# POLICY GAPS


**1 / LIFE SKILL RELATED  
CLEAR PATHWAYS DO  
NOT EXIST IN NATIONAL  
YOUTH POLICY**

**2 / EXCLUSIVE LIFE SKILL  
TRAINING PROGRAMME IS  
NOT INCLUDED IN DYD'S  
PLAN AND CURRICULUM**

**3 / DYD-LED OTHER SKILL  
DEVELOPMENT  
INITIATIVES DO NOT  
INCLUDE LIFE SKILLS  
SESSIONS**

## MJF'S EXPERIENCE

The infrastructural expansion and outreach of the Department of Youth Development is quite impressive. However, MJF's intervention experience reveals that many youth join the skill development initiatives for family or peer pressure or with self-interest but do not take up the related occupations due to the lack of aspiration. Often market demand issue is not considered by both sides- the authorities and the training recipients. This leaves the inutility of the achieved knowledge and skill they achieve. If Life skill training is introduced prior to any skill development training, the trainees will thus participate with more dedication, commitment and enthusiasm. The need of life skill education is also felt by the youth.



'There should be training on life skill issue. It is good for better planning and self-assessment. Life skill learning can be helpful at any stage of someone's life. A youth, equipped with life skill knowledge, can take thoughtful decision'

-(A youth, Dhaka City)

Its proven effectiveness was evident in MJF-led Youth & Social Cohesion Programme. 37200 youth were trained to develop their life skills and leadership in the project areas. This efforts resulted in the emergence of 11234 young volunteers. Its result was also reflected when they got engaged in employment opportunities. Life skill also contributes to the prevention of violent extremism. This issue should also be considered.

'Life skill training is not arranged by the Department of Youth Development. Definitely this is required. The youth can learn the technical aspects from the skill development programme. Life skill education can help them to utilize that technical learning (received from the skill development programmes) in their practical life. It also contributes to their involvement in income generating activities'.

(A senior staff,  
Department of Youth Development)

'Few youth participated in our skill development programmes who had previously received life skill training from an NGO. The difference was clear, they joined with more eagerness and commitment'

(A district level DYD staff).



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

To draw the policy attention to the need to incorporate life skill education at national level capacity building initiatives, it is urgent to work closely with the multi-sectoral stakeholders. The relevant stakeholders will be the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Parliamentary Standing Committee, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Department of Youth Development, youth-led organizations, employers, etc. Consultation meetings will be held with the Ministry and the Parliamentary Standing Committee members. An assessment of the need for life skill education inclusion will be carried out. Roundtable and job fair will be organized, which the employers will attend. Different types of youth mobilization initiatives will be carried out with the participation of youth-led organizations and platforms.

## POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING THE LIFE SKILL TRAINING:

- The youth will be equipped with ethics, patriotism, cohesion, etc.
- Youth will participate in the DYD-led training programmes with aspiration, dedication and commitment.
- Life skill training will contribute to the prevention of violent extremism.
- This will contribute to the emergence of volunteers from different parts of the country.

## CHALLENGES:

- Reasonable budget allocation for life skill training
- Inadequate knowledge about the benefits of life skill training
- Appointment of competent life skill trainers or facilitators

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

**1** Series of consultations should be held with youth, youth-led organizations, policy makers and employers

**2** DYD should include life skill content in the curriculum of skill development programme

**3** Reasonable budgetary allocation for life skills training should be in place

**4** DYD should ensure standard module development for life skill training

**5** DYD should appoint qualified life skills trainers

**6** DYD should adopt a monitoring mechanism to ensure quality life skills training

## REFERENCE:

1. [https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/PA00Z8D1.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00Z8D1.pdf)
2. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/811657/youth-unemployment-rate-in-bangladesh/#:~:text=The%20youth%20unemployment%20rate%20in,significantly%20by%200.1%20percentage%20points>