

**Gender Equality and English in TVET:  
An Investigation into Women's Participation and Employability**

Final Research Report by

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## ABSTRACT

Almost half of the population being women (49.4% as reported by WB, 2019) in Bangladesh, it is highly important to ensure their active participation in both the white collar and blue-collar job sectors to be able to achieve the country's goal to graduate from the category of the Least Developed Countries by 2024. It is observed that the Bangladeshi people hold white collar jobs in high esteem and everyone aims for their career in those sectors whereas the technical and vocational education and service sectors remain unattended despite the availability and demand of ample opportunities and adequate support from the government. In addition, in a patriarchal society like ours, people mostly have a male chauvinistic mindset that leads them to think that women should engage into household chores and if they wish to be employed, they should aim for the white-collar jobs as technical and vocational sector is not suitable for them.

For both the women and men, in both general and TVET sectors in Bangladesh, English plays a significant role in ensuring gateways to higher education and better career opportunities. Women face more challenges and hindrances in accessing opportunities because of the prevailing perceptions and practices in the male-dominant society. At the backdrop of such reality, the present study narrows down its focus to explore the standing of English in women's participation and employability in TVET sector. In doing so, the study adopts a qualitative approach in collecting data by conducting focus group discussion sessions with female diploma students studying in different polytechnic institutes across the country, in-depth interview sessions with teachers, head teachers and alumni, and key informant interview sessions with experts, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and employers in different government and non-government sectors related to TVET.

Data reveals that the role of English in TVET sector is highly important though, at present, the treatment of English in the institutes is not adequate. It is an essential requirement for anyone, irrespective of gender, seeking better entrance to higher education and better career opportunities; however, in the case of the women, the knowledge of English can be specifically advantageous as women, because of their gender, face different types of challenges. The study ends with a set of suggestions regarding proper placement of English and ensuring empowerment of women, minimizing gender divide in Technical and vocational education and employability.

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Introduction

Traditionally, the social system in Bangladesh is patriarchal and largely male-dominated. Such social system maintains a division of labour that restricts women's mobility, defines their roles and responsibility in household maintenance only. It is because of the perception about the division of labour by gender that males contribute to productive labour while females contribute to reproductive and care labour; women's paid work outside the home is usually not recognised as a significant economic activity. Similarly, unpaid work (income earning or expenditure saving) within home is not seen as valuable economic activity, even by the females themselves.

Though the contributions of Bangladeshi women are quite substantial to their households and to the country's economy, they remain unnoticed largely due to existing social norms and unfavourable social perception towards them. Gender inequality in most of the cases is based on traditional gender roles and male governed sociocultural restrictions imposed on women's mobility and participation in public spheres. Along with the gender roles, social structures are also fundamental in determining who gets access to English education and who is deprived of this opportunity (Rahman, 2017, p.2). As most female workers in Bangladesh are primarily involved in the informal sector of the economy, their contributions are often overlooked, undervalued and most importantly, unpaid. However, women's share in economic activities are increasing at a faster rate (the female labour force participation rate increased from 29.2% in 2005-2006 to 36.0% in 2010), resulting in changing the traditional scenario of male dominance (See Labor Force Survey Report 2010). Their increasing participation in income generating activities is gradually transforming the traditional values and gender roles of women in Bangladeshi society, in general. In particular, social attitudes towards women are changing and creating more opportunities for them to take part in the decision-making processes. In such changing context, there is a lot of optimism about the role of TVET and English language that may create new possibilities for development and help women to overcome traditional barriers.

At present, Bangladesh is aiming to achieve highest economic growth that requires both men's and women's contribution in every sector of the country. Bangladesh will not be able to fulfil her dream and vision until or unless she can ensure the elimination or significant

reduction of discrimination regarding gender. However, there has been an increase in awareness as evidence from government initiatives have led to the formulation of national policies to facilitate a development process involving women in all spheres. Bangladesh signed the conventions and agreements on women's and girls' rights and development including the Human Rights Convention, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), The Child Rights Convention (CRC), the Vienna Convention and several International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. The government combined the guidelines of the CEDAW, BPfA and the SDGs and formulated her first national Women's Development Policy (NWDP) in 1997, and updated it (NWDP, 2011) in 2011 (Alam, 2020). TVET sector also tried to develop skills of more marginalized females like female Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Girls with disability have been receiving ICT training since 2015. Under the Social Security programme, around 432,800 financially insolvent female PWDs received allowance in FY 2018-19. Support is extended to other marginalised communities including orphans, ethnic minority groups, transgender, tea workers and Dalits. Destitute girls are getting shelter, food, general education, sports and recreation. Victims of human trafficking, sex workers, elderly women and women are being kept in safe custody. Imprisoned Women are being supported for child care, meditation and training (Alam, 2020).

Over-population is usually considered a barrier to the economic development of a country but people turn into human resources if they receive proper education and training and develop skills to be able to perform required skills-based works in the labour market. On the other hand, skilled population is rather a blessing that contributes to the financial mobilisation of the country and overall economic development. Realising the demands of the national and global market in the light of the technological and commercial advancement of the 21st century and the exploding population of the country, Bangladesh government, following the guidelines of World Bank (WB), UNESCO, ILO and other international bodies, has taken initiatives to focus on Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) as one of the crucial sectors for converting over-population into quality human resource enhancing effective workforce.

TVET operates through following an educational structure, parallel to the mainstream general education, ranging from primary to secondary to post-secondary levels of education and also including different types of training for school dropouts, in-service training or internships,

and other non-degree programmes (BTEB, 2020). The present research categorically narrows down its focus to a more particular issue and aims to investigate the standing of English in women's participation and employability in TVET sector.

In the context of the present situation, this proposed project attempts to bring out to what extent English language and TVET can contribute to uplift the socio-economic status of Bangladeshi women. The research will also shed light on the challenges women face to access TVET and English language skills and the possible ways to overcome those challenges.

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

With a drive to empowering women and increasing their active participation in the economic activities of the nation, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has adopted certain measures and provided guidelines to emerge as a middle-income country by 2030. In addition, the GOB has also realised the importance of TVET in fulfilling its target and adopted workplan and strategies to reach the target. As detailed above, it is found the almost 50% of the population is women and their participation is comparatively low in TVET. For empowerment of the population, the first requirement is the successful attainment and completion of education. However, it is known to us that every year a lot of students fail in the SSC and HSC examinations for their poor performance in English e.g., nearly 11.63 lakh students appeared in the HSC examination in 2017 and 2.17 lakh students failed in English only (The Daily Star, 2017). This study, in a very specific way, narrows down its focus on investigating the standing of English in women's participation and employability in TVET sector. The role of English in empowering women in Bangladesh has not been studied earlier regarding both general education and TVET. The study focuses on women and TVET as the GOB considers both these issues are highly operational in achieving economical goals of Bangladesh. The study thus intends not only to come up with significant findings with regards to female students' role in the TVET sector and how English plays an important role in enhancing their performance during their vocational training but also aspires to fill up the gap regarding the role of English language proficiency in enhancing female students' performance in the TVET sector and thus contribute to the field. The findings of the study are likely to serve as a point of departure of the GoB for strengthening English language training for students of the TVET sector and encourage female students to go for studying in the TVET sector.

## 1.2 Rationale of the study

English plays an important role in broadening opportunities to education and employment for all. However, it is observed that the participation of women in TVET sector is less. Moreover, the sector being technical and vocational, it is highly replete with English terms and expressions. To ensure the goal of the GoB towards achieving SDGs and graduating from the category of the Least Developed Countries in 2024, there is no alternative to ensuring the participation of all citizens, including women in all sectors of education and employment, especially the TVET sector, which is less opted by the country people, particularly for women. At the backdrop of such contextual reality, it is necessary to systematically study the nature of relation between English, TVET and the empowerment of women which is hardly addressed in any researched-based study before. With a view to exploring their roles, relations and extents, the present study intends to investigate the issues in a systematic manner, identify the challenges, and come up with a set of suggestions to overcome them.

## 1.3 Objective(s) of the study

The objective of the research is to explore:

- the nature that the role of English and TVET plays for women in different employment sectors.
- the existing link between English, TVET and empowerment of women in Bangladeshi society.
- the extent to which TVET and English language skills can contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of women in Bangladesh.

The above-mentioned objectives lead to the formulation of the following research questions that further shapes and impacts on the methodology and findings from data, in the study.

1. What is the nature of interaction between English and women empowerment in TVET participation and employability?
2. To what extent can English ensure women's active participation in TVET and employability in a sustainable manner?
3. How far can English address the gender inequality in employability in TVET?

#### 1.4 Scopes and limitations of the study

The study focuses specifically on the enrolment of female participants in the diploma level TVET programmes as these students are likely to choose their career path immediately after they complete their diploma. Such diplomas are offered by both government and non-government institutions included in this study. To obtain a comprehensive picture, the study critically investigate the curriculum, materials, instruction, female learners' perceptions and expectations, experiences of the female alumni, (head) teachers' opinions, employers' experiences, experiences of the agents sending human resources abroad, opinions of concerned personnel as in people working in The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), experts from ILO, trustee board members or owners of private polytechnic institutes etc.

We intended to collect data entirely from female participants from each of the category that we mentioned above but it was not possible for us to do so. Firstly, it was not possible to find entirely female teachers or head teachers, female alumni, female employers, and female experts. In fact, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to get access to our sources of data. On numerous occasions, we had to face cancellation of our scheduled interviews or focus group discussion (FGD) sessions. We had to reschedule the sessions, on in some rare cases, we had to conduct the sessions using Zoom or Google Meet apps or over the telephone. Had there not been any pandemic, we could give some extra effort to collect data only from the female participant. In this study, only the students included all female learners. Another limitation of the study is that we wanted to include 6-8 participants in each of FGD sessions with the students though in some of the sessions the number was around 3 or 4. The students who we contacted and invited to participate in the FGD and who promised to come did not appear finally. We called them from the premises of their institutes but many of them did not take the call despite several attempts and many of their parents took the call and mentioned their concern about the pandemic and unwillingness to send the daughters to the institutes. In such cases, we decided to go ahead with the students who came and compromise with the number of the participants.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.0 Literature Review

In a patriarchal society like ours in Bangladesh, people seem to have been nurturing a more tradition-bound mindset which considers TVET more fitting for men/ male students or workforce. Though in March, 2018, the Secretariat of the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP) found that Bangladesh met the criteria for the first time to graduate from the least developed countries (LDC) category list in 2024, she has to meet the graduation criteria in the triennial review in 2021 again so that her name can be permanently proposed by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for ultimate graduation from the LDC in 2024. The criteria include gross national income (GNI) per capita, human assets index (HAI) and economic vulnerability index (EVI) and Bangladesh has to meet all three graduation thresholds of these criteria (Risse, 2018). As almost 50% of the population is women, the challenge of meeting these criteria cannot be done at the cost of inequitable female participation both at the domestic and the international levels, especially when many multinational companies are spreading their business in Bangladesh, and the world is turning into a global village for more convenient transport system and rapid growth in online connectivity and dependence; successful access to both the multinational companies and the global market require the participation of all citizens, irrespective of gender, proficient in English.

In addition, the citizens of the developing countries are often found to have a preference for White collar jobs whereas the reality is the country's financial mobilization requires the combined contribution of citizens employed in both white collar and blue-collar jobs. TVET usually leads to blue collar jobs (UNESCO\_UNEVOC, 2006) which are held in less superior esteem as career options, for all in general, for women in particular. It is also found that the gender disparities are more prevalent in some fields like science, technology, engineering and mathematic (STEM) skills and knowledge globally where the representation of women account for 35% of STEM students in higher education (UNESCO 2017, p.11). Even in Bangladesh, particularly in TVET, the participation of women students is less in most of the stages of education in different proportions. Under such circumstances, Bangladesh National Skill Development Policy, 2011 and National strategy for promotion of gender equality in TVET, 2012 have been formally formulated to enhance female participation in TVET and gender equity in this regard.

English has been identified as an important soft skill for supporting economic development particularly in the field of technology industries, information and communication technologies, and business process outsourcing by Economist Intelligence Unit Report (2015). The changing socioeconomic context of the world and the process of globalization have enhanced the status of English in the world economy. “High proficiency in English is seen to be essential for socio-economic development in India and Sri Lanka ... The impact of globalisation and economic development has made English the ‘language of opportunity’ and a vital means of improving prospects for well-paid employment “(Project English, 2009). Following the same line of argument, Sergeant and Erling (2011) highlighted the main purpose of the projects like ‘English Language Teaching Improvement Project’ (ELTIP) in 1997, English in Action’ in 2008, and the language teaching approach like CLT in 1997 which were introduced for enhancing the human resource development and developing human capital. Coleman (2017) argues that proficiency in local languages and social multilingualism play an important role in the economic growth at the national level. However, Erling (2017) found the relationship of English and economic in Bangladesh to be complex though she found English to have impact on individual’s life to a limited extent, and hence warns the policy makers to realize such complexities and not to hold English “as a panacea for employability and poverty” (Erling 2017, p.402). Even though Erling et al (2012) found only limited evidence showing a relationship between them, perceptions about the English language and development are found to be strong in their study as well.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), on the other hand, being an important actor of global economic system is considered to provide capacity to access information and to reduce poverty among people to which they are often excluded. With intellectual labor as its capital, ICT can become as a magic wand to disseminate all inequality. Women in Bangladesh have marginalised socioeconomic status because of existing gender inequality based on traditional gender roles and male governed sociocultural restriction imposed on women’s mobility and participation in public spheres. Social structures are crucial in determining who is able to access any technology and use it beneficially. The current low penetration of ICT is a reflection of the digital divide existing in our society.

When a lot of research work and studies are done in understanding the role and relation of English in higher education and employment resulting in development in different countries e.g., in Malaysia (Malakolunthu & Rengasamy, 2012), in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2016; Hamid

& Erling, 2016), its standing with relation to imparting and receiving TVET has rarely been explored, particularly in the case of women participation and employability in this sector. One such study by Rahman (2017, p.201) found that “English has the potential to lead women to a possible socio-economic development in Bangladesh” to varying degrees after he collected data from women working in different fields including garments, NGO, SME, nursing, and primary school teaching. The earlier studies implicitly indicate development in relation to white collar jobs like career in civil service or academic (see Erling, Hamid & Seargeant 2010, p. 101) but the role that English plays in the case of blue-collar jobs has hardly been explored e.g., Vietnamese youth graduating from vocational institutes could use a foreign language like English independently (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). The study, hence, intends to investigate the standing for English in women’s participation in TVET and employability in blue collar jobs (if there is any). The study deliberately chooses women as its sample, aspiring that the implications of the findings based on the data from the most marginalized group might be more conveniently generalizable for other privileged groups as well. The study intends to come out with implications for sustainable capacity building, for further necessity for exchange of dialogues of stakeholders, for bringing in effective curriculum re-adjustment and innovative intervention strategies, with a view to empowering women participation in TVET and their employability in blue collar jobs.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

### 3.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study who would provide information-rich data for the researchers. Here, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion are adopted as the means of collecting data. The data were collected from 7 districts including Dhaka, Tangail, Barishal, Bhola, Rajshahi, Bogura, and Chattogram. In total, 10 Key Informant interview (KII) sessions with experts, policy makers, recruiters, international and local NGO personnel, investors in TVET education; 23 in-depth interview (IDI) sessions with teachers (5), head teachers (3) and alumni (15) and 7 focus group discussion (FGDs) sessions with 39 female students were conducted. With the permission of the participants, all these sessions were audio-recorded and then the oral data was transcribed verbatim. The participants of the study include (i) female students enrolled in TVET diploma programmes, (ii) teachers, (iii) heads of the institutes (iv) employers, (v) alumni, (vi) the recruiting agents sending human resources abroad, (vii) concerned personnel working at the policy making level e.g., people working in The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), (viii) Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), (ix) Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), (x), Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) (xi), Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), and (xii), International Labour Organisation (ILO).

### 3.2 Source of Data and Methods of Data Collection

The study starts with a review of existing resources and information through secondary data analysis and literature review. Secondary information and resources are sourced from Project Team, existing documents online, job advertisements, and/or third party if and where applicable. The desk review covers not only the existing researches and project documents, but also the existing policy scenario and some job advertisements.

The qualitative data collection techniques were adopted to find the answers to the research questions. FGD was applied as it is considered to be useful qualitative approach to obtain information-rich data from purposefully selected group of participants (Nyumba, Wilson, Derrick & Mukherjee, 2018). FGD was used to identify the overall perspective from female students of TVET sector. IDI was with teachers, head teachers and alumni and KII was used with the relevant stakeholders to explore the relation between English, TVET and gender

equality in TVET sector and employability in Bangladesh. Evaluation of educational documents including syllabus, and impressionistic evaluation of selected units and lessons from the English textbook were conducted as well.

The primary and immediate sample i.e., the female students are chosen using stratified random sampling technique as the research demands so. The female diploma students are chosen using this technique. The alumni are approached using snowball sampling technique.

The head offices of most of the important institutes and organizations e.g., NSDC, DTE, BTEB, UCEP and BRAC are located in Dhaka and there are many diploma institutes of TVET located across the country. The research team collected data from institutes located at seven districts, chosen randomly. They are Dhaka, Tangail, Narayanganj, Barishal, Bhola, Rajshahi, Bogura, and Chattogram. We collected qualitative data the tabular presentation of which are given below in table no. 1.

**Table 1: Details of Data Collection**

Place	FGD with female students	IDI			KII
		Teacher	Head Teacher	Alumni	
Tangail	3	1 (female)			1 entrepreneur
Barishal	7	1		3	
Bhola	7	1	1	2	
Bogura	6+6	1	1	8 (female)	
Rajshahi					
Chattogram	6				2 entrepreneurs
Cox's Bazar					1 ILO expert
Dhaka	4	1 (female)			6 –1 expert each from ILO, NSDA, BMET, DTE, BETB, and BOESL
Narayanganj			1	2	
9 districts	39	5	3	15	10

Attention needs to be drawn to the fact that all FGD participants were female, 2 teachers out of 5 were female, all 3 head teachers were male, 8 alumni out of 15 were female, finally all the 10 KII participants were male. Forty-nine (68.06%) research participants out of 72 were female. It was not possible to conduct FGD sessions in Narayanganj and Rajshahi as no students were present on both days of data collection despite several attempts to contact them. It should be mentioned that they were contacted before we went to the sites, yet they were absent on different grounds, specifically due to social distancing for COVID-19

pandemic. However, in Bogura, we got 12 interested students and so we decided to put them into two groups and conducted two FGD sessions.

### 3.3 Tools of Data Collection

Qualitative approach is adopted to carry out FGDs, KIIs, and IDIs to collect strategic and qualitative information. Data collection tools are semi-structured and entail open-ended questions addressing each issue and requirement intended under this assignment. FGD is conducted with the learners. Seven Focused Group Discussions with female diploma students were conducted based on different diploma programme. Key Informant Interviews (KIIS) of experts, policy makers at the government and the non-government sectors connected to TVET were interviewed. Syllabus and materials are analysed using document analysis techniques.

Semi-structured interviews of 15 alumni of the diploma program from different sectors were conducted. Interview questions are designed on the basis of Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) framework. The IPR consists of four phases as the following:

Phase 1: Ensuring interview questions aligned with research questions,

Phase 2: Constructing an inquiry-based conversation

Phase 3: Receiving feedback on interview protocols

Phase 4: Piloting the interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016, p.812).

The interview questions focus on:

- family situation, educational background and financial circumstances
- self-evaluation of English proficiency, extent of its use at workplace, opportunities and prospects of improving English language skills
- Knowledge and skills of TVET, need and scope for its use at workplace, its importance for better employment opportunities for women

### 3.5 Methods of data analysis and presentation

The data is analysed using Silvenman's (2006) framework and coded and cartegorised for common pattern of themes. The most prominent themes from the qualitative data analysis are compiled together as per qualitative data analysis. Implications are likely to carry messages regarding the standing of English in TVET, in relation to the women participation and employability, renewal in policy, curriculum, materials, and teaching, and enhancing the

challenges in recruitment both home and abroad for women. Data are presented according to the emerging themes and later on a critical discussion on the findings is provided.

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, the findings from the IDIs, KIIs and FGDs are presented thematically. Later on, the document analysis of the curriculum and the syllabus is presented. The section ends with an overall critical discussion.

### 4.1 Thematic presentation of findings from different tools

#### 4.1.1 The extent of use of English in the classroom

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers (principals or vice principals) and teachers were asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses showed mixed reaction about the use of English. The head teachers said that the books that they used were not originally written in Bangla; rather they translated from English to Bangla. The head teachers were found to agree that English was hardly used in the classes as both teachers and students were more comfortable in Bangla. Teachers did not like to use English in front of the students as it might produce difficulties for the students to understand. The syllabus by technical board prioritized the fluency instead of accuracy and they were trying to emphasize the use of English as a medium of instruction. In this regard, RHT1 commented:

*We do not usually use English. Most of our students get admitted here after passing SSC. Moreover, our students are not very intelligent in terms of their results, I mean, students with low grades get admitted here mostly. So, using only English in delivering lesson can create difficulties for them to understand the subjects. That's reason, even though our teachers are competent to teach in English, they do not use English in the class.*

However, the head teachers believed that the use of English in classroom would help the learners in building their communicative competence and it was necessary as English played an important role in the job field of TVET. In this regard RHT1 said:

*It is good to use in English in the classroom along with Bangla. English is less used in classroom. We use English only for the technical terms. We make questions in Bangla and students answer the questions in Bangla. So, the use of English is rare.*

BgHT1, another respondent, further clarified:

*For technical engineering sector, English is undoubtedly very important because its origin and the terms are in English. So, whenever they are going to work and they need to explain the terms, they need English. And if I consider the foreign context, I think English is even more important than Bangla. From multinational companies to foreign workplace, English is necessary everywhere.*

NHT1 further added:

*However, as the medium of instruction at the B.Sc. level is English, good use of English at the diploma level can help a lot for higher education in future. Moreover, we usually get students with below average standard. Hence, they are usually very poor in English. Sometimes, they don't even understand if we say something in English. Therefore, it would be beneficial for them if they could upgrade their skills in English.*

In this regard, BgHT1 said:

*We have nine departments in total and among them there is Department of Tourism and Hospitality where we are focusing on fluency in English. Here are many students who can communicate well in English. They have more tendencies of speaking in English. For tourism, we have emphasized the communication part instead of making Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry compulsory.*

The teachers were asked the same question and they expressed the similar opinions like the head teachers. Most of the teachers opined that English is hardly used in the classroom as a medium of instruction or in any other form. The new information that they provided was the habit of using mother tongue in the classrooms and lack of interested colleagues and students to converse in English.

The only use of English is in the specific courses of English languages. Both teacher and students were more comfortable in using Bangla in the classroom as students understood better in Bengali. Hence, one teacher (BgT1) strongly recommended the use of English in the classes and books, saying:

*Because the Diploma Engineering course cannot be successfully completed without English, I feel strongly that English is essential in the classroom. Since the available textbooks nowadays are in Bangla, the students are getting disinterested in English day by day. If it is possible to make English compulsory*

*for teaching, learning, and assessing the technical knowledge in this field, the students will use English more effectively.*

In this regard, BhT1 commented:

*Just after passing SSC, the students get admitted to the diploma level. So, students lack right level of language proficiency. For this reason, we cannot even if we wish to use the English language in the classroom that much. We use Bangla to make the students grasp the concepts in the the relevant field learn better. Though most of the books are written in English, we teach students in Bangla.*

TT1 added:

*If we try to make English conversations with our students, often we cannot reach their level because we have students from different backgrounds. Whenever I have tried to speak with them in English, I have received less response from them. Since they are not habituated in speaking English, they do not feel comfortable in using English.*

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the use of English in the classes. They gave a negative picture regarding the use of English in the classes. They regretted the fact that most of the time the use of English was absent in their classes. They also talked about the issues they have to face due to the absence of use of English in classes. The participants expressed their concerns about the unfavourable attitude that they might have to face from the employers (which they came to know about from their alumni) because of their lack of English skills. The importance of speaking skills and practicing of this skill in class was also one of their major concerns. The teachers kept the use of English to a minimum level making the lesson intelligible to the large classroom. Only 15-25% English was used in the classrooms in English classes. The questions mostly resembled the questions of S.S.C level. In other departmental classes, use of English was completely absent. Sometimes the English classes were inadequate in number. In this regard, BhS1 commented, “. . . learning English in the classroom is very important. It will be beneficial for us if we can learn English in our classes. I think English should be taught in every class”. Bg6 pointed out to the sad decline of their English skills due to the lack of its use in the classroom. She said:

*We are using Bangla as the medium of instruction in the Diploma programme, but when we will finally go for higher studies in BSc Engineering, we will have to use*

*English. Because of getting used to use only Bangla in Diploma for a long period of time, our English proficiency suffers. Hence, we face difficulties in coping with the BSc studies which requires better English proficiency.*

DS5 specifically mentioned:

*In our Computer sector, there are different groups including software group, networking group. When we are learning and practicing the tasks, we feel difficulty in understanding the English terms and instructions. It is because our subject is computer which is completely based on English. If my command over English is poor, then it creates a series of problems.*

The usage and necessity of English varied depending on the departments as revealed by BoS7:

*Since Department of Tourism is new, there is no particular book or material available on tourism. We order foreign books based on our syllabus and all these books are written in English. The Basic English and the Communicative English courses that we are taught in the first two semesters cannot provide us with a strong base for our departmental studies. So, we face difficulties in understanding our Departmental text. We require a lot of help from our teachers for translating and understanding the materials.*

It is evident from the responses of the head/teachers and students that English is important for technical education at the diploma level though the students taking admission do not have readiness for that kind of English medium instruction. The use of Bangla is not systematically implemented in textbooks and the lack of English creates a kind of 'divide' among the diploma students and general education background students when they compete for BSc admission. It is also obvious that in certain subjects like networking, softwares, English is mostly needed. Therefore, all subjects should not have similar kind of weightage or credit for English. Needs-based syllabus design for English is called for.

4.1.2 The way English is used in the classroom (including method, materials, medium, tasks, assessment etc.)

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were specifically asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that the use of English was limited to the technical terms only. PowerPoint presentation were designed in English

and lecture on that were delivered in Bangla. Only a few enthusiast teachers used English. BgHT1 said,

*Since the technical terms are in English, our English usage is limited to that. There is use of multimedia projectors. The PowerPoint slides are in English sometimes. But we deliver the lecture in Bangla. So, the terms are in English, but the explanation is in Bangla.*

Teachers also presented similar kinds of findings. English was used only for PowerPoint presentation and in terms of describing any technical terms. Though the books were mostly in English, those were taught by verbally translating the contents. English was used just to make students understand the topic, not to make them communicatively competent. Students only used English for designing the cover page of their assignment and sometimes to write about the technical items (Ex: Input Device, Output Device). In this regard, DT1 commented:

*We use PowerPoint presentations in our class where the slides are mostly in English. But our medium of instruction is mostly Bangla and sometimes mix English terms. The students have the freedom to write in Bangla, or in English or even in Banglish (Bangla and English mixed) in the assigned reports or in the examination scripts. However, maximum students write in Banglish. For example, if a student writes 'input device' or 'output device' in English or in Bangla, I will give marks for both of these, because there is no instruction in particular regarding the language use.*

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses revealed that in English classes, mostly grammatical rules were taught using mostly Bangla as medium of instruction. Pair works, presentations, group works, speaking practices were a rarity. Mostly English was taught at the word level for subjects other than English. DS4 shared an important piece of information as she said:

*There were supposed to be presentation and other activities in our English courses. In the 3rd semester, we had two presentations on pre-discussed topics so that we could be comfortable while speaking in English, and each student was allotted 5-7 minutes for delivering their speech. Teachers used board for writing the topics. After teaching a topic, they tried to assess our learning through written tests.*

However, rarely there were teachers who tried to incorporate communicative techniques in classes. CS1 said, “In our class, we have one teacher who prefer to teach us in English, and he assigned us different tasks in English”. CS2 added, “In English courses of first semester, we are assigned to make banners, festoons on recent issues and have presentations on them. This sort of presentations was completely conducted in English”. Bo7 also talked about one of these rare occasions when roleplay, group work and pair-work were incorporated in their English classes. She said, “In the communicative English classes, we were assigned for role-playing, group work and pair work. English was used as the medium of instruction and in responses during these tasks”.

English was used in a limited way in the classes. Unsystematic use of English and Bangla was also observed. Translation was used heavily in helping students comprehend the concept. Often English was used to understand certain technical concept, not to enhance communicative competence. Explicit teaching of grammar was mentioned and the English classes were not communicative at all. Often unsystematic assessment was also mentioned.

#### 4.1.3 Challenges faced by students while attending classes in English

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked about the challenges faced by students while attending classes in English. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that the main challenge of using English in the classroom was the lack of interest from the students. Most of the students came after completion of SSC and were not so skilled in English. In this regard, BgHT1 comments:

*The main challenge is students' reluctance in communicating in English . . . We cannot conduct the whole class in English because we have students from different background. Almost 95% students came directly from SSC and 1-2% from HSC. So, they have different levels of competency.*

Teachers also expressed the similar opinion. They further added that it became a habit of the teachers as well to use Bangla as the students were more comfortable in Bangla. It was also challenging to lecture in foreign language in a large class of 100 students. Students failed to understand the lecture if the lecture was given in English only. Even if they did not understand the English lectures, they did not admit it at the very moment. But their shallow understanding of that lecture usually affected their performance in the examination. DT1 asserted the same proposition, saying:

*We cannot focus on English because our students are from rural area. So, their base of English already remains weak and the English they learn here is not very rich also. So, they do not understand the lectures delivered in English. You can consider these English courses survival language course.*

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the challenges they face when the classes are conducted in English. Their responses revealed that they had problems in understanding the lessons when it was conducted in English. They also faced difficulties when they were asked to speak in class due to lack of vocabulary. They talked about the problems of having a large classroom with poor logistic support. They also felt mentally intimidated when English was used in class and they presupposed that the lesson would be difficult for them to understand. In this regard, TS1 pointed out, “While teaching a lesson, if the teacher uses English for a long time or if he/she uses English that is a little difficult, the lesson automatically becomes inconceivable for us”.CS3 felt that all of them (the students) were good in writing but they had serious problems with speaking due lack of vocabulary and proper pronunciation. She said, “Along with listening, we all face difficulties when speaking in English due to lack of vocabulary”. BoS12 shared her struggles when the classes were conducted in English:

*When the teachers highlight the use of English in our lessons, we get nervous thinking that we may not know it or understand it. In the communicative English courses, the teacher used English fluently in the class but we could not understand most of his explanations.*

It was found that both taking classes and attending classes in English were challenging due to the lack of teachers’ interest, habit, students’ incapacity to understand, fear, poor logistic support etc.

#### 4.1.4 Necessity of English language in TVET

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers, the teachers and the alumni were asked about the role or necessity of English in TVET. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that without English skill, it was hard to get a technical job in foreign countries as well as in multinational companies within the country. Without English skill, applicants often got rejected from jobs though they possessed good technical skill and job skills. Middle eastern countries were now also emphasizing English, which was Arabic in the last decade. In this regard BgHT1 said:

*I have recently come from Qatar and have observed that English is emphasized everywhere. In the multinational companies, the entry level requirement is fluency in English. The students may have job-related skills and qualifications. But if they lack communication skills and English language skill, they cannot avail themselves of the opportunities. Since English is the international language, it is mandatory for people who are planning to go abroad.*

In the KII session, the interviewee from BAIRA said:

*Labours are the key force. Bangladesh is known as a labour sending country in the world. Labours from other countries can use English as lingua franca but our labours cannot speak in English at all. . . When they are appointed overseas, they get less salary because of their inability to communicate in English. They have to lead odd life. The image of the country is damaged and the flow of foreign currency turns low. Hence, the role of English is important and TVET syllabus should emphasize English. Baira sends TVET diploma students as well. People knowing English are well settled abroad. Baira sends to the Middle East, European countries like Italy and Spain, African countries like Tanzania, Kenya and Sierra Leone”.*

In the IDI sessions, the respondents also said that it happened very frequently that their students did not get a good job just because of poor English skill even in the country though they were good in technical work. NHT1 further added:

*If we talk about the role of English in TVET, I would say that English has little role to play here. Nevertheless, English should be emphasized because most of our reference books are written in English. Knowledge of English makes it easier for the students to read those books and understand them.*

While talking about the same issue, teachers reiterated the similar arguments saying that English was inevitable in TVET as all the technical terms were in English. Original books of TVET were in English. The expert from NSDA, in the KII session, said:

*. . . our textbooks were mostly in English. So, we had to study by translating from English to Bangla. We had some sorts of weakness in English which worked as a barrier against gaining much content knowledge . . . Since the technical*

*knowledge is completely foreign to our country, so knowing English benefits in gaining in-depth knowledge and in the job sector as well.*

One of the KII participants from ILO, Cox's Bazaar commented, "It is not necessary to translate all technical terms into tough Bangla, rather it will be wiser to popularize the English terms".

To export technical human resources into foreign countries, there was no alternative of English. English was mandatory to have a good job even in the multinational companies within Bangladesh. The interviewee from BTEB (KII participant), in similar line of argument, said, "The various terms commonly used in engineering for technical and vocational work are usually available in English and hence it is important to master and use them." Another teacher (BgT1) in the IDI session, in this regard, commented:

*At present situation, for implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the benefits of technical education system should be modernized and enhanced. If we want to cope with the global job market, we need to create competitive students. For accomplishing this task, there is no other alternative to English.*

DT1 commented:

*English is, in a word, inevitable. Wherever they work or will work, they will get English terms because TVET sector is completely English-based. English is necessary not only for foreign jobs but also for national and private sectors. Since technology is updated every day, we need English to cope with the updates. So, there is no alternative to English and our English courses need to be enriched.*

In the IDI sessions, the alumni identified the importance of English in higher education, job interviews, promotion, office communication, etc. In this connection, BaAM3 mentioned that although English was necessary in multifarious ways, it was most important for securing a good job. He further added:

*English is most important in job interviews. Without sound knowledge of English, it is difficult to get a job.*

NAM2 said that English was obviously needed because we had to troubleshoot machines with the help of manuals written in English and Chinese. We needed English to set programs in the machines. The presetting of these machines was in English. Hence, English was

essential for us. In the KII sessions, one of our interviewees from ILO, Dhaka said, “In one word, English is undoubtedly essential in TVET”. He further adds,

*“So, the terms, jargons, process, curriculum development, and implementation- all these things are dependent on English. Though we have translated some parts of it for our convenience, we cannot deny their origin. So, if we want to have better understanding, we need English texts. Besides, we cannot also deny that each and every term cannot be translated easily. Even if we translate, some meanings can still be obscure. So, English texts play a very significant role in producing better outcome.”*

He also drew our attention to government’s priority over competency-based training and assessment and competency-based curriculum in the National Skill Development Policy. He explained three parts in the competency based curriculum: generic skill, sector skill and occupational skill, and clarified how the generic skills included competencies such as language skill, interpersonal skill, problem solving skill, indicating that only work efficiency was not enough for a worker; in fact personal values, ability to work in a team, understanding and respecting foreign cultures (in case a person moves to another country for his work) were also some mandatory qualities of a worker. He went on to say that among these generic skills, one of the most important skills was language skill. Overseas workers were to learn different languages based on the requirement, and it could be English or Arabic or Korean or Japanese or others. For example, in Middle East countries, the drivers must have a thorough understanding of Arabic. He suggested:

*Similarly, you can consider English language skill as a mandatory part also in generic skills. The purpose of English skill here is to enable them to communicate without any difficulty. Owing to the lack of communication skills, our Bangladeshi workers are lagging behind in the competition whereas Indian, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese or Filipino workers are ahead compared to us.*

He also argued that in formal sector English communication skill is needed. It is also needed in IT sector. Again, IT sector is another major sector which is completely English-based, for instance, in an organization named BACCO (Bangladesh Association of Call Center & Outsourcing), English is an occupational skill, not only generic skill, meaning that speaking and transcribing in English is a mandatory skill needed for their occupation.

The interviewee from BTEB expressed the similar view. He said, “It is important to develop English language proficiency for enhancing communication skills.” An expert from BMET commented:

*There has to be a balanced combination of occupational or professional skill and language skill especially for those who migrate to foreign countries for employment; if such combination is not reached, they cannot represent themselves as complete technical worker. That’s why language skills, especially in English are highly important in the field of TVET . . . It will help them gain benefits in promotion, job status, regularization of service etc. So occupational or communicative English is highly important for them.*

The interviewee from NSDA said:

*So, if the English communication of our Diploma engineers is up to the mark, they can definitely do better in job sector. If we cannot communicate, we will not be able to express our expertise. In a study, I have found that the importance of soft skills is much more than that of core skills (also known as hard skills or technical skills). So, English communication skill can undoubtedly benefit the employees.*

However, the interviewee from ILO, Dhaka also talked about the females and said:

*ICT sector has the most female-friendly courses; that may include basic knowledge of computer or any particular short computer course. If we look at the commands of computers, we find all of them in English. So, if my students do not have that basic knowledge of English, they will not achieve proper learning outcome. So English is very significant in female- friendly courses*

Two entrepreneurs in Chattogram who invested in private polytechnic institutes were interviewed. One of them said. “English is really important in TVET as English is mostly used in technical jobs.” The interviewee from BTEB said, “Proficiency in English language is required to prepare reports and understand procedural issues in technical and vocational work with senior and subordinate colleagues”. Another interviewee from DTE in the KII session, said, “The role or necessity of the English language in TVET is highly significant. Without good proficiency in English, it is not possible to fulfill the main purpose of technical and vocational education and training”. Another expert from ILO (Cox’s Bazaar project) commented:

*English is not a language only, it's a technology. English is important for TVET, like other sectors of knowledge. Technology is changing every day and most of them are in English. English is not used inside the country as much as it is used outside but you cannot have two different types of education systems for this reason, like one for overseas and one for home.*

In the FGD sessions, all the participants of the FGDs agreed that English was of central importance for the TVET students. English was necessary for getting good employment opportunities, communicating with potential clients, pursuing higher studies and so on. CS5 opined:

*English has a great role in TVET as TVET is not only a diploma program, it also leads to BSc. in Engineering. In BSc. Programme, all materials are in English. So, it is essential for us to be competent in English.*

It is found that English is essential in participating in TVET programmes as books, technical terms, jargons, implementation etc. are in English. It is also needed for higher education like BSc or MSc. English is needed for getting jobs, promotion, in foreign countries and multinational companies within the country. Often actual meaning is lost in translation and hence the use of translation has been discouraged. English is perceived as something beyond language; it has been called technology and one of the most important soft skills which is needed in any executive job in any sector including TVET. The importance of English as a soft skill has been equated with that of the occupational and professional skills required in TVET sector. Realizing its importance, the government of Bangladesh prioritized in generic skills which include competencies such as language skill.

#### 4.1.5 English for employability

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked about the necessity of English for employment in TVET sector. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that communication skills i.e., listening and reading skills were mostly required for good employment. Trainees needed to have a good command over English for spontaneous communication with their colleagues and many of them might be foreigners. Lack of English skill severely affected the promotion and salary increment of employees in multinational companies. The respondents stated that English was important for the technical trainees of all levels. They said that a diploma engineer should have the skill to work with the BSc engineers at highest level and skilled labour at the lowest level. And for this smooth transition

of information, they had to be good at English. If they try to get a job in foreign countries, then communication in English is a must. In this regard, RHT1 said:

*Learners need English, specially the technical and communicative English; because, when they will make any order list and prepare any quotation, everything must be in English.*

NHT1 said:

*I think especially speaking and listening skills should be focused. As Bangladesh is still dependent on other countries in terms of producing machinery, we need to frequently communicate and deal with foreigners. We also have a lot to learn from them. Therefore, we badly need English.*

While asked the same question, the teachers expressed almost the same views as the head teachers. RT1 pointed towards the importance of English communication skill by stating the position of Bangladeshi trainee in global technical sector. He said:

*Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan- If we look at these four South Asian countries, we see Sri Lankan diploma students holding the first position, they are skilled both technology-wise and communication-wise. Then come India, Pakistan and in the fourth position comes Bangladesh. The students mainly need communication skill in English. They do not really need correct grammar but a minimum skill so that they can express themselves. In Singapore, 11 students of mine accompanied me. They were expert in English. So, the students who are expert in English and technology, are getting good jobs.*

BgT1 asserted that the language of the technical machines was completely in English, without good knowledge of English they would not be able to run those machines properly and would do poor in the job field. He said:

*No doubt that the learners will need English for employment. We have not been able to make machines yet. All of the machines are named and described in English. So, if the students have good skills in English, it will be easy for them to identify and understand the device, to operate and to program the device as well. I think, they need some department-based and machinery-based English and communicative English as well.*

In the IDI sessions, the alumni emphasized the interconnectivity between English skills and gaining professional importance. They agreed that knowledge of English helped to set people apart in a work place. They also agreed on the visible disadvantage which the TVET alumni had to endure due to their lack of English skills. NAM1 revealed how his English skills helped him to gain him extra advantages in the workplace. He said, “English gives me an extra privilege in the workplace. The colleagues respect those who are proficient in English. In fact, everyone respects English skills”. BaAM2 admitted that skills in English helped to gain respect from the coworkers but unfortunately most students passing from the TVET programs did not have adequate skills in English. He commented, “Being skilled in English provides extra privileges in the workplace; however, as we only had few English courses and as the rest of the courses were taught in Bangla, I do not think we possess adequate knowledge of English”. BoAF8 expressed her concern that as the TVET alumni possess poor English skills, their opportunities of work reduced and they had to put in extra effort to learn English and gain professional opportunities:

*In institutions, people with fluency in English are prioritized. Since we did not have proper knowledge of English in diploma and our proficiency level did not match with the job sector, we had to buy books and learn it separately because there is no way to avoid the usage of English. Good English proficiency provides more opportunities for work.*

In the FGD sessions, all the participants of the FGDs realized the necessity of English skills (especially speaking) to properly function in the professional space. They also shared how their English courses failed to provide any reflection of the kind of English they needed in their job sectors. They severely felt the necessity of tailor-made courses that would focus on their professional needs. They perceived the importance of English in dealing with foreign clients, communicating in the professional space and for also getting good jobs abroad. RS6 provided important insights into how far English was necessary for employment in the technical sector:

*In the job sector, there is no doubt regarding the necessity of English. We think, the communication skill is the key part and we need English for communication, at least to present and express ourselves in front of others. For communicating with the foreign clients, we have to use English. From our technical sector, it is comparatively easy for us to go to overseas jobs than general sector. In foreign*

*countries, we have no other alternative to using English because they will not understand Bangla. So, we need Spoken English the most.*

DS1 commented in this regard:

*I think the English lessons in our diploma are pretty similar to the things we studied in Class 9-10. I think, instead of those, if we were trained in speaking and the courses had computer-based English, we would feel less difficulty in next semesters or in job sector.*

BoS4 also agreed with DS1 and also felt the necessity of needs-based English education. She said, “Yes. We need a strong base of our departmental or subject-related English.”

BoS8 admitted that for them English was of greater importance in getting jobs in the technical sector as the technical disciplines were more reliant on English and due to a huge gap in English practice, the TVET students felt mentally traumatized when they had to struggle with English in their professional lives:

*After this huge gap, we feel troubled and pressurized in managing our studies and English language skill equally. From our seniors, we get to know about their trouble in using English for communication. We think, the English-speaking skill is the most important skill for us to achieve.*

It is found that almost all skills of English were important. Communicative English was preferred to the sole teaching of grammatical knowledge of English. Often tailor-made English course or subject oriented English courses were preferred. As machineries and their instructional manuals were written in English, engineers proficient in English were required. The English that was taught at the diploma level was perceived as being below standard (SSC level English). In addition, people knowing good English received respect from coworkers and got extra advantage in the workplace. It also helped them get jobs or training opportunities overseas.

#### 4.1.6 English for further opportunities in the job market

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked about the possibilities of English for creating further opportunities in employment in TVET sector. Most of the head teachers thought that English would contribute to producing more employment opportunity as without English, it was hard to even pass the written examination of any job. Even basic

English was required to understand the question pattern of job examinations designed by Public Service Commission (PSC). English would create more job opportunity as English helped an applicant to apply globally and apart from some local institutions, the national or multinational or private organizations needed people knowing English. In this regard BgHT1 said:

*Without knowing English, the applicant will not be able to pass the written part of the exams for government jobs; without passing it, they will not be called for viva. In short, the applicant will not get the job.*

Teachers were asked the same questions. They provided almost the similar answers like the head teachers. However, they added that without good English skill, it was hard to pass the viva and to get a job. Being good in English helped someone to switch field and get bank jobs, general government jobs up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. TT1 further added, “If you cannot do good in English or show fluency in English at viva board, it is hard to get that job”.

In the FGD sessions, all the participants of the FGDs were found to agree that English could create good employment opportunities. It is necessary for creating good first impression in the viva voce, communication with foreign clients, availing jobs abroad and getting clients in freelancing ventures. Lack of English skills could create serious hindrances in getting good jobs. Sometimes candidates might end up with a job much below their level of technical expertise due to the lack of English skills. BoS6 talked about how English was important for availing freelancing opportunities for the students and how good English skills could create a very good relationship and further opportunities for work:

*Of course, English can add to our better job opportunities. For instance, freelancing is a sector which we can pursue even during our studentship. But all freelancing projects require a certain level of English skill. Besides, if we think about other better jobs, or any foreign projects where we need to work with foreigners, we must need English for communicating with them. So, whether we can get the opportunity or not entirely depends on our English language skills.*

DS2 pointed out that communication was at the heart of business and English was absolutely indispensable for this:

*Definitely, English can contribute to a great extent in creating better employment opportunities. Good English skill provides good job opportunities, good position*

*and high salary. We know that communication is the core component in all business. And here we need English for communication.*

The same participant also provided a particular example regarding how lack of English skills could create a serious problem in availing the job opportunities:

*For example, few days ago, Akij group posted a circular for appointing ISP Supervisors, Assistant Managers etc. Their requirements included good working skill and good English skill. The circular was for appointing 500 people, but they could appoint only 3 candidates because they had good English skill. So, only working skill (technical skills) is never enough to get a good job.*

It is found that knowledge of English can help get government jobs offered by Public Service Commission (PSC) where knowing written and spoken English is very important. English can also help switch job field and get bank jobs, general government jobs up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. It helps to create a positive first impression. It also helps build up career in freelancing and getting good position and high salary.

#### 4.1.7 Future of Use of English in next the ten years: a prediction

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked if English will become more important in next 10 years. Almost of all them opined that English, especially the communication skill, would become more important in next 10 years. In this regard, NHT1 said:

*I think within the next ten years, people will be automatically very skilled in English because as you know there are many tools like google translate or voice translator. People nowadays can easily write and communicate in English with the help of technology.*

In the IDI sessions, the teachers were asked the similar question. They said that the whole world was a global village now and English was the language of that village. In next 10 years, without English skill, it would be impossible to get a job in foreign countries. English would be an essential requirement for promotion, better salary and all other facilities. One of the respondents stated about the small job market for diploma engineers in the country. RT1 said:

*In Bangladesh, the job market for diploma engineers is not really up to the mark. If we think about overseas opportunities, and if you cannot deliver the work order or*

*communication in English, the employers will not increase your salary. You need to solve problems and make other parties understand the solution as well; so if you do not have that communication skill, you will not be able to do that.*

He also asserted, “It does not matter how good engineer you are, if you are not good in English, you have to do the job of a labour”.

In the FGD sessions, all the participants of the FGDs are found to agree that the importance of English in job sector would increase in the coming years. Along with the gradual development of our country, the participants felt that need for English will grow. They also felt that they need to get ready for the challenges ahead and start practicing English from today. TS4 made a comparison between the demand of English before 10 years and now and drew the conclusion that the demand, hence, would increase in the future. She said, “The demand of English in the job sectors were much less 10 years prior to our time and I believe it will increase much more in the next 10 years”.CS3 identified two reasons why English would become more and more important in the coming years. She said, “English will become more important as the medium of instructions in higher education is English. Moreover, as the country is developing, the use of English is also increasing”. BoS8 shared the same opinion and pointed out the evils of not knowing English in the future. She said, “Definitely. If we stay away from practicing English, we will lag behind in the job sectors in future”.

BhS3 stressed on readiness and believed in order to survive in the future job sectors, the TVET students must start practicing English from the present:

*English is used a lot nowadays, and it is normal that the use of the English language will increase in the future. So, it will be beneficial to learn from now. We want to learn English from today. If we can complete our whole diploma in English, we will be benefitted.*

In next 10 years, communication skill will become more important. If someone is a good engineer or not will be decided only if she or he can communicate well. Its importance as the medium of instruction will increase and its use in the developing country will increase. At present English is used a lot and it will increase gradually.

#### 4.1.8 Women’s participation in comparison with male’s participation in Diploma Courses

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked about women’s participation in diploma programmes. They are found to agree that the participation of the females was not

satisfactory though it had increased in last 10 years. The percentage of female in TVET had been 2% in 2009 and now it was around 15%. For encouraging the females, the govt allotted 100% scholarship for females and established one female polytechnic institute in each division. According to the response of RHT1, there were 4569 students in his institutions. Among them only 606 were females, which was around 13%. The main reason behind the less participation of females in TVET sector was the restrictions from the society and families. BgHT1 mentioned that in his institute, the number of female students were only 700 among 4000 in total. The respondents asserted that the situation was changing, and they were taking steps to encourage the learners to come into TVET. In this regard, BgHT1 commented:

*The situation is changing now. Polytechnic Institutes for women have increased and female participation has increased ever than before. To meet the demand, now each division has at least one Polytechnic Institute for women. For involving them and encouraging them, we have 100% stipend system for our female students on the merit basis (previously it was 65%).*

NHT1 reiterated the same thing as he said, “Still, there is a lack of participation of women in TVET. I think this rate should be increased. Therefore, I am not satisfied with this at all.” In the IDI sessions, the teachers were asked the similar question. They were not satisfied with the participation of the women and explained the reasons in their statements presented below.

*I am not satisfied with the female engagement at all. There are several reasons. Firstly, many people think that diploma engineering is not suitable for the female students. For example, Power, Electrical, Mechanical are not for female, but Civil or Computer Science & Engineering suit them. Then, socio-economic background is another major factor behind their less participation. Most of our students are from very poor background. These families usually think that the girl passing SSC is already suitable for marriage. (BhT1)*

In this regard, RT1 says:

*In the departments where the tasks are heavy and rough, there are fewer female participants. The percentage of female participation in the tasks or activities is very low. When male and female students are mixed in a group, female students are seen disinterested in working due to the crowd and chaos.*

This point has also been mentioned by one of KII participants from BTEB, who said, “In the social context of our country, the participation of women is relatively less than that of men in proportion to the population in heavy industries other than garment industry in the workplace”.

The alumni were asked about their satisfaction regarding the women’s participation and gender bias in employment. They identified gender as a barrier in cases like opportunity to work, getting promotion, salary raise and attaining other workplace advantages. They found strong gender discrimination was at work when it came to women pursuing education in engineering. They also found that women were deemed less capable for some areas of work in the technical sector. However, they mentioned that there was a change in attitude among the work places which were focusing more on skills than on gender. In this regard, BhAM1 said:

*Gender discrimination exists in our society. Females get less preference than males. I think there should be no discrimination. And if the women get equal opportunities like men, then they will do better and get a good job. For this reason, I think there should be no discrimination and equal opportunities should be given to women.*

BoAF1 felt that all institutes should not be overgeneralized. She said:

*In some institutions, there is no such gender discrimination; So, the employee is valued based on her skills. But in many other institutions, gender difference is very prominent in various aspects.*

BaAM2, on the other hand, observed that gender discrimination was absent in the modern work place and skills were more important. He said, “At present, we are evaluated based on our work skills not gender”. He also identified family restriction as the main factor behind this scenario and commented, “Due the restrictions from family, the number of female students is low in TVET sector”.BhAM1 opined due to the preexisting gender bias in the society, women were deemed unfit for pursuing a career in engineering. He said, “In families, girls are not considered eligible for the engineering profession. But they are very important for the future”. The same point is highlighted by one of the KII participants from NSDA who said, “We can see fear of Technical education in the context of our country. Perceptions like 'it is not for girls', 'girls cannot do this', 'this job is difficult' are quite prevalent within our mindset”. Another KII participant from ILO, Cox’s Bazar commented, “TVET sector is not

still a popular sector in Bangladesh. People want their children to earn graduation degree in general education”.

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked the same question. They said that very few female students (50:5) participated in this sector. They also mentioned some other factors given below:

- They are discouraged by their parents, guardians and society for availing technical education.
- The employers also have a negative attitude towards women’s technical skills and believe that women are somehow less capable of handling field work.
- Due to this kind of demotivation the women also feel utterly discouraged and suffer from lack of confidence when they pursue technical education.

BaS6 said that the society possessed a very conservative mentality about sending daughter/women in technical education, terming it a ‘men’s job’. BoS3 expressed her extreme dissatisfaction, saying:

*There is a huge difference between the male and female participation. I am not satisfied with the number of female participations. Female participants are less interested in joining technical sector. One reason behind that may be the perception of other people. Some consider ‘Computer’ best suitable for women rather than other subjects like Civil. Our society keeps demotivating us instead of encouraging us to enroll in technical courses.*

According to BoS9, this reason worked behind the gradual dropout of the female students who initially enrolled in Tourism and Hotel Management:

*In the 6th semester in Department of Tourism, we have nine female students though we had around 14-15 at the beginning. The rests have cancelled their admission and enrolled in other Departments. Societal attitude is major factor here as in many people have negative perception about hotels.*

DS2’s comment about the ISP sector summed up the employers’ attitude towards women in all technical sectors:

*In our ISP sector, we work in field with routers, cables etc. The employers think that women are not good at working in the field. For example, Cisco router is a*

*very expensive tool. The employers think the women cannot take care of these instruments. So, they are less interested in employing women.*

One of the KII participants (ILO, Dhaka) clearly expressed, “No, I am not satisfied” with the women’s participation in TVET. He also added. “Statistically, the number of female participants is very few both in academic and management section.” He also said that for emphasizing women’s participation by 2025, the government increased the allotment to 20% from 10% but this step from the government was not enough. Specifically, in the academic section, they have the least participation. He mentioned the reasons by saying,

*. . . most of the courses in TVET sector are not female-friendly because the courses mainly target the male professions. There are some jobs that demand intense physical strength for example, in construction related jobs like masonry, plumbing etc. It is not true that they are completely unable, but these are difficult for them. Moreover, they personally remain disinterested in these kinds of job.*

He said that their participation in IT sector was more but in repairing refrigerators or air conditioners etc. was less. He also pointed at the smaller number of female teachers. Social security was another issue which he mentioned.

Another participant (an entrepreneur) in the KII session shared similar kind of views. He further added. “Women’s participation is so low that most of the time the dedicated reserved seats for females are not fulfilled.” The KII participant from NSDA said:

*The women’s participation in TVET sector in comparison with male participation is not satisfactory. But the govt. has already targeted to increase female participation up to 40% in TVET sector by 2030 and up to 50% by 2040. . . besides, we have undertaken an inclusive strategy and allotted duties among the concerned departments, but still we haven’t received any noteworthy positive outcome.*

One of the KII participants from ILO, Cox’s Bazar commented:

*We are not happy with women’s participation in diploma programs as their participation is less. Culture, environment, physical mobility of women, attitude – are important factors . . . In our country we have contextual limitations. For example, in Philippines, women work in the field of welding but is it possible in Bangladesh? But we should promote them. At ILO, we are trying to promote their*

*participation in non-traditional employment sectors, e.g., in automobile sector, motorbike servicing, electrical etc. And all these courses are developed in English. However, we could develop Bangla language like the Japanese or the Germans”.*

However, there are different opinions as well. The interviewee from BMET was not happy with women’s participation but he was optimistic. He said, “Women’s participation in TVET sector in Bangladesh is still not satisfactory and the society is not ready for it. But it should have happened. However, their participation in recent years in many sectors have increased”. One KII participant from DTE commented:

*I am satisfied with the participation / representation of women in academic courses/ employment sector as compared to men because at present women are much more productive and they are strengthening their position by working in tandem with their male counterparts as well as contributing to the economic development of the country. However, I am hopeful that the participation rate of women in academic courses/ employment sector will increase further in future.*

Another KII participant from BAIRA also expressed satisfaction, saying, “I am happy with women’s participation. 35-45 percent women are working there. This is based on my experience and observation or perception, not specific statistics. BMET teaches English courses in Bangladesh. 40% women come to attend these courses. In our country, women are well employed”.

It is found that despite attempts from the government to promote female participation, women’s participation in TVET sector is low. Societal attitude, family restrictions, nature of work, co-education, gender bias at work place are significant factors, among many. Employers often have negative attitude in recruiting women. This leads to the discouragement of women participating in this sector and breaks their confidence. Often people are found to have negative attitude towards TVET sectors like hotel and tourism sector. Women are also found not interested in menial jobs like masonry, plumbing etc.

#### 4.1.9 Comparison of English skills between male and female students

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked if they noticed any difference in English skills of the males and the females. The head teachers were found to agree that females were equally skilled in English in comparison to males. Females were even

outsmarting the males in some cases. The respondents stated that previously it was evident that males did better in English in comparison to females but nowadays, females were showing equal skills in English. NHT1 said, “Females are hardworking, so they are supposed to be better proficient in English than males.”

Teachers were found to agree that females were slightly ahead in English as they were more serious about study. Males were reluctant about the courses like English and passed more time on social media etc. Females tended to do better as they reached this level fighting against the flow. In this regard, DT1 commented, “We find that our female students are better than our male students in English. The probable reason is the parents sending their daughters in TVET sector are aware”. The same statements were echoed in the voice of RT1, who said, “From our experience, we have seen female students being sincere to their study and male students being more indulged in using Facebook”.

The alumni were also asked the same question. They seemed to have a different perception. Most participants felt that there was no difference. Some participants emphasized getting better in English together and encouraging female colleagues. In some sectors like freelancing women were doing better due to their English skills. NAM1 opined that women were getting extra advantage in the freelancing sector due to their American English skills:

*Nowadays, a trend of American English is going on. I think American English is more stylish than British English. That is why to me, proficient users of American English are one step ahead. However, in my profession (freelance graphics designer), women are better off than men.*

In the FGD, most of the students, in this regard, were found to believe that men and women shared similar proficiency in English. Few participants also felt that women were performing less compared to men in English due to discomfort and reluctance. Often differences in opinions were observed amongst the participants in this regard. CS5 talked about her male friend who possessed comparatively better English skills due to extra training. She said, “*I have a male friend who did some extra English courses, and he is better skilled than me in English. But in general, I will say there is no skill difference between males and females*”. BaS6, on the other hand, pointed out, “Women do better if they get the opportunity, but women hardly receive equal opportunity as men receive”. BoS9 identified serious shortcomings in women’s performance in English compared to her male classmates. She felt

due to reluctance and discomfort, women failed to avail more opportunities that could help to improve their English skills:

*Sometimes, we see that male students perform better than female students. Male students are getting more opportunities and more exposures. First reason behind this condition is our discomfort and reluctance in speaking English. So, when a debate competition is arranged, male participation is spontaneous; or when there is any presentation, they make the first move. Moreover, we have a tendency that we prefer to send the male group-mate to represent our group.*

When the teachers and head teachers were asked to express their perception regarding comparing English skills between males and females, they said that females were better in English as they were serious about the study and the parents were aware of the job market. The alumni saw no difference in English skills between the males and the females. However, they mentioned that females got advantage in freelancing for their polished accent in English. Most students shared that both the males and the females had similar skills in English. However, males got more opportunities and exposures to education and became better in English later.

#### 4.1.10 The role of English in empowering women in terms of women's participation in the programme and their employability in a sustainable manner

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked if they thought English could play a significant role in empowering women's participation in the programme and their employability in a sustainable manner. The head teachers were found to agree on the following issues:

1. Knowing English will help more in private jobs as in private institutions and companies.
2. In technical jobs, most of the officials work such as preparing order list, making quotations are in English, and the names of the machines are in English as well.

Hence, if someone was better in English, it would definitely put him/her one step forward to get the job. However, they did not clarify if the knowledge of or skills in English would give women some extra advantage. They opined English skills would empower anybody, irrespective of gender.

However, the teachers mentioned four ways English can empower women on career development

1. English as general communication skill can be added as an additional qualification to get a job
2. Opportunities for English specified jobs are often found, e.g., for jobs like receptionists, call center operators etc.
3. English may not solely help in recruitment of some complex job but it will surely step them one step forward at least.
4. English opens international career opportunities for TVET

In this regard, BgT1 said, “If they [women] develop their English skill, they will develop themselves and they will develop in workplaces as well and this will enhance their empowerment. As a result, they will be able to upgrade the growth rate of the country”. In the KII session, the participant from BAIRA said:

*English is a kind of second passport in the case of women and also men. Women get more priority and if they know English. Otherwise, all of them have similar degree or diploma. English is the deciding factor in employment. The number of registered women in Bangladesh 5, 51, 22, 223. Their participation is necessary for sustainable development. It is important that they know English. BAIRA encourages women’s participation in overseas employment, though not very systematically or institutionally but agencies encourage them at the individual level. English gets a priority here as well”.*

DT1 further added, “English cannot solely minimize that gap between female participation and employment. However, it is better to say, English along with soft skills is very important”. In the KII session, the participant from NSDA commented:

*The medium of instruction in the job sector is not English, so it is not true that they have less participation due to fear of English. There are some subjects that are traditionally considered suitable for women such as electronics, computer, civil technology, architecture etc. But if you look at mechanical, automobile you can see less participation of female students. So, in these cases, there is a need of awareness development. They should be motivated”.*

The alumni were asked the same question. They were found to agree on the following issues:

- Participants agree that English is essential for getting good jobs, promotion, and is definitely an added advantage to women in the TVET sector
- It is also important to remove gender bias that women are not suitable for technical jobs

NAM1 saw English as an important tool for female Engineers who were working at higher positions, but English skills were almost fruitless when it came to getting a job for women in the technical sector:

*In the TVET sector, women are kind of neglected because of their gender. I know some of my female friends who were denied a job in the engineering field because the employers thought that women are not strong enough to work in this field. Having said that, English matters for female engineers only at the upper-level jobs. In lower or mid-levels, soft skills like English are not that valued. It is only required in the desk-level positions.*

Similar kind of point has been mentioned by The KII participant from ILO (Cox's Bazar), who said:

*English is essential for people holding senior level positions like assistant director or director in any company. He or she, irrespective of gender, has to communicate in oral or written mode in Bangla or English with the investors, donors, NGOs etc. English is one of the competencies. Competencies in other areas and languages like Bangla are also needed. Many people cannot communicate in Bangla properly.*

BaAF1 further elaborated that English could unlock door to new professional opportunities for women and consequently empower them in the process. He said, "English always helps to get a better job abroad even in multinational companies of the country. Hence, English will obviously help in women empowerment if they are skilled in English". BoAF5 realized the interconnectivity between women empowerment and English skills. She said, "If we know English, we will get additional opportunities and recognition in our institution. Thus, in workplaces we can be empowered". In the KII session, the participant from BMET expressed the similar opinion. He said, "It is important for the women, like the men, to know English, occupational or communicative English. It will give extra advantage". In the FGD sessions, the students, in this regard, were found to agree on the following issues:

- English could provide an extra advantage for women to get better jobs
- In the government sector women were doing better due to their academic endeavour and proficiency in English
- English is one of the most important tools for sustainable employment and women's empowerment

RS4 provided examples of how English skills can remove gender discrimination in the job sector, though she expressed her apprehension regarding the mindset of people:

*Being a female, if I speak English well, I will be prioritized. In the government jobs, we have found more women clearing the job examinations because they usually have high CGPA or first class as in CGPA 3 out of 4 and they are usually sincere in their academic life. In viva or other examinations, female students can respond well. In the interview board, the presentation skill is judged instead of technical skill and female students perform better in presentation. English can reduce this discrimination to a great extent. But first of all, the mind-set of people needs to be changed.*

One of the KII participants (ILO, Dhaka) said that English was needed in academic and professional sectors, particularly in international sectors like international organization or foreign jobs. English might not be necessary in national sectors in in-house jobs but in the case of MOU or meetings with foreign companies, it was a must. He said, "These kinds of meetings or communication are usually conducted in English everywhere, even in the national sectors." Another KII participant (entrepreneur) said:

*English will help in women's empowerment in sustainable development as when anyone has a good command in English, it becomes easier for him/her to get a job. Hence, if women have a good command over English, they will have better employment.*

The KII participant from BTEB said:

*It is very easy to understand that in the light of global demand, it is very important to acquire skills in any one language. In this case, it seems to be helpful for women to enter the labor market by acquiring proficiency in English in technical and vocational education and training.*

The head teachers said that the knowledge of English definitely gave someone extra benefits but they did not clarify if it benefitted women particularly. Teachers said that skills in English could empower women by getting jobs suitable for women like call operator, receptionist etc. Thus, it could reduce gap in their participation in academia and employment. The alumni opined that skills in English gave women an extra advantage and helped in reducing gender discrimination. According to them, English helped women working at higher positions more than at lower positions. Often being women is the only reason, the candidates did not get jobs as it was thought certain jobs were not suitable for them. Almost all the students agreed that English empowered women to get better jobs, especially women did well in the government sectors and it was one of the most important tools for sustainable employment and women's empowerment. In the KII, it was found that some of them thought that English could empower any candidate get a good job though they did not specifically clarify or explain how women with good English could get some extra advantages.

#### 4.1.11 The role of English in reducing the gap in women's participation and employability

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers were asked about role of English in reducing the gap in women's participation and employability. They provided a very general kind opinion saying if the women faced discrimination in workplace, English might help them overcome discrimination. NHT1 said, "Actually, this is an overall and national phenomenon actually. Since English a tool of communication, it has an important role to play in this circumstance". However, the teachers, in this regard, were found to agree on the following issues:

- English helps to produce a good first impression in job viva
- When the technical skills of males and females are almost same, a major difference is created by the soft skills like English to get an employment
- In many jobs, English itself is considered a major requirement

In this regard, DT1 said:

*When the technological skill of both male and female students is more or less same, a major difference is drawn between selected and rejected candidates by soft skills. And English is one of the major soft skills which plays a crucial role in accepting/rejecting a candidate.*

In the KII session, the participant from DTE said:

*Knowledge of English can play an important role in reducing the disparity in women's participation in the TVET sector and in employment. Because in the current era of globalization, there is no alternative to knowing English and having a good grasp of it if you want to keep yourself competitive.*

Another KII participant from BAIRA said, “Women knowing English are less harassed as people think twice before harassing them and they often are respected for knowing English”. The same participant further commented, “Maternity leave is an issue and many companies do not want to recruit them for this. English skill is an ornament for them and they are less victimized. Companies usually do not want to fire women who know English”. In the KII sessions, Entrepreneur 2, in reply to the same question, stated:

*English will help to reduce discrimination in women's participation in employment as knowing English will empower them and they will be equally qualified as other English knowing males.*

In the FGD sessions, the students, in this regard, were found to agree on the following issues:

- English can provide them with confidence to fight the negative attitudes from society
- English can help them earn respect from their colleagues

CS1 observed that workplace discrimination could be significantly reduced by learning English. She said, “Whoever it is, male or female. If they are good in English, they will easily get a good job. And if the females are skilled in English, it will really help to reduce workplace discrimination”. In the KII session, the participant from BMET reiterated the same argument:

*Knowing English is an added advantage for both men and women. Sometimes in some sectors, men get priority but women with the knowledge of English can get special consideration in employment. In such cases, women should acquire extra competencies in language or in some other areas to be able to compete.*

BaS6 made a very interesting observation. She revealed that English was connected with respect. She said, “A person with good proficiency in English is revered by his/her colleague. Therefore, if women are good in English, they will receive more respect from their colleagues and this will automatically reduce discrimination in the workplace”.

DS6 on the on other hand disagreed with the proposition that English could help reduce the discrimination between men and women in the workplace. She said:

*I think English can help us in getting good jobs and good salary consistent with our qualification. But English will not help much in reducing the gender discrimination. Actually, changing the mind-set is the most important factor for eradicating this discrimination. Our family and society should be considerate and aware.*

The similar opinion was expressed in the KII session by the participant from ILO (Cox's Bazar) who said,

*Only a single parameter or factor like English cannot reduce gender discrimination. Usually, people knowing English get extra advantage and they also have wider understanding of things because of their ability to access the wider field of knowledge. . . Our social and cultural environment could not ensure security for women which the western world could. But we need to popularize, promote and conduct awareness raising campaigns regarding increasing women's participation. We need to begin with families as most families want their sons and daughters to join blue collar jobs like those of an engineer, or a doctor or a teacher or a BCS cadre.*

BoS3 believes that English gave confidence to women, which was the most vital weapon to fight the discriminatory attitude women had to endure from society. She said:

*Of course, we think English plays a significant role in women empowerment. In this present world, English is everywhere. Even if we want to use a mobile phone, we need knowledge of English. Even in the new arrival of technologies, Bangla is nowhere. Then in the job sectors of TVET or academy, the use of English is a must.*

BoS1 further added:

*It is written in the job circular that one has to be skilled in English. Moreover, sometimes the medium of the question paper is English. If we do not know English, we will not be able to express ourselves in those examinations or job sectors.*

In the KII session, the participant from NSDA said that English is important for all, irrespective of gender. He commented:

*A TVET graduate whether it is a male or a female becomes different if he or she has the English communication skill. Due to this difference, her promotion or salary increment or scholarship opportunity- everything opens up. . . Thinking of the present female percentage which is still only 24%, 'female participation' itself is a special quality. When we are asked to ensure a certain number of female participants in the foreign training programs, we are not even able to ensure that certain number. So, it is an important concern for a female to be in the TVET sector. Additionally, if she has English communication skill, she will get benefitted for it, no doubt.*

However, In the KII session, the participant from BAIRA presented a different picture as he said:

*Women's participation in some sectors like Nursing, house maid, hotel and tourism, air hostess, reception, front desk office, beauty parlour, are noteworthy. Nursing is a second-class job. Salary is good here. In these fields, rather men are discriminated. English can empower them more in these sectors.*

In fact, it was found that most of the replies reveal how the knowledge of English can empower the candidates in the job market irrespective of gender because whatever advantages females can get for knowing English will be the same for the males knowing English. However, one head teacher said that English was tool for communication and it can help women overcome the discrimination. Students mentioned that English can help them build up confidence but cannot really reduce gender gap. Women are often discriminated for issues like maternity leave but the knowledge of English can secure their recruitment and also offer security. English alone cannot reduce gender discrimination; concerted efforts to raise awareness regarding gender disparity are needed.

#### 4.1.12 Miscellaneous issues

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and the teachers were asked if they wanted to add anything else regarding the role of English in women empowerment and employability in TVET sector. Diverse issues came up. They are detailed below.

BgHT1 asserted that the authority might encourage the female students to answer their examination scripts in English by rewarding or arranging motivational sessions. Moreover, another NHT1 thought that English should be compulsorily learnt as a second language.

In reply to the same question, the teachers suggested creating mass awareness among the common people about the prospects of this sector to attract both male and female students and encourage parents about sending their daughters to technical education. They all stated that there was no alternative of English in TVET sector and only classroom teaching was not enough for developing communication skill in English. They suggested creating some sort of English language club in technical institution for the betterment of the students. They also stated that the trainers needed training of English as well. BgT1 says:

*I think, first of all, we, the trainers, need to be trained up more. We need to understand the importance of English. We need to practice even if we make errors at first attempts because we can be developed through error and practice. But we are reluctant to initiate that.*

In the IDI sessions, most of the alumni, in this regard, proposed changes in English curriculum. They feel more English courses should be added to the TVET curriculum and focus should be shifted to communicative English. BhAM1 said, “We need communicative English. English which helps to be skilled in presentation and assignment”. BoAF5 emphasized the necessity of incorporating the English in every semester of TVET. She said:

*I think, English should be there in all the eight semesters so that we are not detached. Moreover, it will be beneficial to us getting the textbooks in simple wordings of English so that we can at the same time read the original concept easily and have a continuous practice in English.*

In the FGD sessions, students also shared their thoughts. DS5 suggested increasing the institutes where they could pursue their BSc. RS2 expressed her dissatisfaction regarding the use of English in the government sector. She pointed out the students of private polytechnic institutes were getting more opportunities:

*In the private Polytechnic Institutes, first three semesters are taught in English medium; they need to read and write in English. But after third semester, they are to use Banglish books like us. Due to those three semesters in English, the students from Private Polytechnic Institutes have better knowledge in English than us.*

BaS5 further added:

*In today's world, English is not only a subject anymore, but an essential life skill required to lead the life.*

In the KII sessions, one participant (ILO, Dhaka) shared his enlightening observation. He found an interlink between less participation of females in academia and less participation in employment. He mentioned that in foreign jobs, women employment was mostly observed in Pre-Voc 1 and Pre-Voc 2 (considered as elementary level) levels which included the jobs of housekeeping or domestic help. He expressed his dissatisfaction over female participation in level 1 to level 6 (also known as National Technical, Vocational Qualification framework 1 to 6). However, he confidently denied the presence of any kind of discrimination in recruiting women from the governmental or non-governmental offices. He rather stated that there were plenty of posts vacant due to the lack of suitable female candidates. He appreciated government's initiatives to allow them quick promotion and increments for encouraging them to participate in this field. He also suggested some ways and means of solving these problems. He drew attention to creating 'overall female-friendly environment' including 'infrastructure and socio-cultural issues', providing 'hostel facilities' to ensure their security as they had to attend lab work after 5 pm, and offering 'female-friendly courses', as determined by the job-market, not the institute. He further added,

*The textbooks are mostly in Bangla which is right because it depends on the level of education. For example, I cannot teach a student completely in English who has class-five-level competence. But the important point here is that the instructor must have sound knowledge of TVET terms and jargons in English. Only knowing the terms and meaning is not at all sufficient for him, rather he needs to achieve a deep learning. If she herself does not know well, she will not be able to teach better. If CBTA (Competency Based Training and Assessment) is spread all over Bangladesh, this problem will be reduced to a great extent. So, English is a must for the instructor here besides other knowledge like numeracy knowledge, language knowledge etc.*

Another KII participant from ILO (Cox's Bazar) also commented on the educational materials used for teaching English at TVET sector. He said, "We are dependent on English to a large extent though guidebooks have simplified the matter at the diploma level where

every student read guidebooks, not the textbooks. So, they cannot develop competencies in English”.

ILO expert from Dhaka talked about certain fields where women are more interested e.g., garments, ICT, leather etc. He then commented;

*But we want to ensure their participation in high-tech jobs or the jobs that require more of their participation. If we want to ensure their participation, for example, in construction, electrical, electronic, ship-building, we definitely need the social, infrastructural and cultural changes.*

He again appreciated the government’s standpoint in this regard and ended his observation, saying,

*Again, if I analyze the government’s standpoint, I find it very positive. Because so far, I have seen, in TVET institutions, TTCs, female teachers are very much encouraged. They are getting benefitted and promoted based on their working skills. One negative thing is, as I have mentioned earlier, the infrastructural facilities. Again, I suggest incentives or additional stipends not only for females but also for PWDs or workers from hard-to-reach-geographical areas; it may be an option.*

Another KII participant (entrepreneur 1) added, “The number of training center and courses should be increased focusing the empowerment of females.” Entrepreneur 2 also remarked, “I believe the teacher should motivate the female learners more to learn English.”

It is found that suggestions were given to maximize the use of English. Awareness raising activities among the people by the government and establishment of language clubs and other extracurricular activities related to language. English curriculum needs to be updated and it has to be taught in all 8 semesters. Communicative English and English for Occupational Purposes needs to be included and subject specific English courses need to be designed. Government polytechnic institutes, like the private ones, should emphasize English. English should be considered a life skill, not a subject or language only. Less number of female students in the academia leads to a smaller number of skilled females in employment sector. Specific measures are to be taken aiming the increased enrolment of women in TVET sector. Instructors of English need to be trained to teach English to diploma students. Specific work

strategies should be taken to promote females' participation in the technical and vocational education and employment.

#### 4.2 Document analysis and Impressionistic evaluation of the syllabus of English

The present syllabus of English for diploma programme has been in effect according to the 4-Year Diploma Program Syllabus (*Probidhan-2016*) Regulations-2016 (<http://www.bteb.gov.bd/>).

Two hundred marks has been allotted for two papers of English. In the first paper, the syllabus objectives include reading, listening, accuracy, creative writing and grammatical items. However, no separate books are written for the diploma students. The shortened and selected units and items from the English books (*English for Today* (For classes 11 & 12) used in the mainstream education are suggested for teaching. Even though four skills of language have been highlighted in a specific manner, explicit teaching of grammar has been suggested. Writing section includes dialogue writing, report writing, personal or official letters, CV writing and paragraph writing. Forty marks has been allocated for continuous assessment, and 60 marks has been allotted for summative assessment.

The second paper of English is called Communicative English. The theory part has 50 marks and the practical part has 50 marks, thus a total of 100 marks. In some departments, e.g., Tourism and Hospitality, 150 marks is allotted though the syllabus remains the same. The syllabus truly includes situations and communicative activities.

#### 4.3 A critical analysis of job advertisements

In this section, two advertisements are attached to critically examine and explain the perception regarding the requirements of English in TVET sector.

**বাংলাদেশ ওভারসিজ এমপ্লয়মেন্ট অ্যান্ড সার্ভিসেস লিমিটেড (বোয়েসেল)**  
(একটি রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন কোম্পানি)  
প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ভবন (৫ম তলা), ৭১-৭২, ইন্সটন গার্ডেন, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০  
ফোন: +৮৮-০২-৯৩৩৬৫০৮, ৮৮৩১৯১২৫, ৮৮৩১৭৫১৫ (পিএবিএক্স)  
ওয়েব : [www.boesl.gov.bd](http://www.boesl.gov.bd)

সূত্র নং: ৪৯.০২.০০০০.০৪.২৮.০০১.২০/৩০ তারিখ: ১৭.০১.২০২১ খ্রি.

**বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

**বাংলাদেশ হতে যোগ্য পেশাজীবী কর্মী অফ্রেলিয়াতে নিয়োগ**

অফ্রেলিয়ার সনামধন্য কোম্পানিতে জরুরী ভিত্তিতে নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে কিছু সংখ্যক যোগ্য কর্মী নিয়োগ প্রদান করা হবে। সংশ্লিষ্ট পদে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের আগামী ১৮/০৩/২০২১ খ্রি.তারিখের মধ্যে প্রদত্ত লিংক এর মাধ্যমে আবেদন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। আবেদন লিংক:- <https://forms.gle/YtpdbPvQxgHxX2cT6>  
বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্যে বোয়েসেল- এর ওয়েবসাইটে ভিজিট করুন-[www.boesl.gov.bd](http://www.boesl.gov.bd)

S.I	Post	Educational Qualification	English Language Requirements	Work Experience	Numbers
01	Mechanical Fitter	Diploma or Higher Degree on specific trade	Overall 5.5 Not less than 4.5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
02	Welder	Diploma or Higher Degree on specific trade	Overall 5.5 Not less than 4.5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
03	IT Developers	Bachelor or Higher Degree on related subject	Overall 6.0 Not Less than 5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
04	Software Engineer	Bachelor or Higher Degree on related subject	Overall 6.0 Not Less than 5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
05	Cyber Security specialist	Bachelor or Higher Degree on related subject	Overall 6.0 Not Less than 5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
06	Nurse	Nursing diploma or Higher qualification	Overall 6.0 Not Less than 5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
07	Doctors	Bachelor or higher degree	Overall 6.0 Not Less than 5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
08	Aged Care	Diploma or higher degree in related subject	Overall 5.5 Not less than 4.5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30
09	Social worker	Diploma or higher degree in related subject	Overall 5.5 Not less than 4.5 each band	2-4 Years related work experience	30

উল্লেখ্য, প্রার্থীর বয়স ১৮-৪৫ বছরের মধ্যে হতে হবে এবং বেতন আলোচনা সাপেক্ষে। কোম্পানি সচিব।

**Figure 1: BOESL Advertisement**

Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) is a government company sending skilled professionals abroad. In this advertisement, eligible professionals interested to work in Australia are invited to apply. It is found that requirements for English proficiency are stated using the IELTS band scores. It indicates they need people who have proficiency in all the four skills of English including speaking, listening, reading and writing. The level of proficiency varies across the professions.

In the following advertisement (See Figure 2), applications are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for an ILO supported project. For all the posts basic communication and writing skill in Bangla and English are sought for. It needs to be mentioned that they will be posted in Jamalpur in Bangladesh; yet proficiency in English is wanted. These two randomly found advertisements provide examples of how the demand of English is increasing in service

sectors and how proficiency in English can ensure better employment and career opportunities.

**Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Principal  
Jamalpur Technical school & College, Bazrapur, Jamalpur  
Website: www.jamalpurtschool.gov.bd  
E-mail: jamalpurtschool@gmail.com

Memo number: 57.03.3936.507.02.001.21-03 Date: 25/04/2021

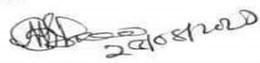
## Re-recruitment Notice

Applications are invited from the Bangladeshi citizens for the following positions of ILO Supported SKILLS-21 project.

Sl. No.	Position	Qualification & Experience
01	CBT & A Trainer a) Electrical-01 b) Graphic Design-01 c) Welding & Fabrication-01 d) Car Driving-01 Salary: BDT 20000-25000/- (Negotiable)	i) Must have Diploma or Bachelor's Degree in relevant area having certificate level-IV in CBT & A course as required by BTEB. ii) 3 years for diploma & 2 years for Bachelor's degree working experience in TVET Institute/ NGO/ Community Organizations/ Industries. iii) Experience for industry will get preference. iv) Having basic communication and writing skills in English and Bangla.
02	Programme Coordinator (post-01) Salary: BDT 30000-40000/- (Negotiable)	i) Must have Bachelor's degree preferable in TVET sector. ii) Certificate level IV in competency Based Training and Assessment Certified by BTEB will get preference. iii) Must have at least 5 years of relevant experience in managing Skills Training programme in TVET Institutions/NGOS/Community Organizations. iv) Must have computer literate in word processing, spreadsheet and presentation application software. v) Must have communication and writing skills in English and Bangla.
03	Industry linkage and job placement officer (Post-01) Salary: BDT 30000-40000/-	i) Must have Bachelor's degree preferably in TVET sector. ii) Certificate level IV in competency Based Training and Assessment Certified by BTEB will get preference. iii) Must have at least 5 years of relevant experience in managing job placement activities in Skills development system with private/ public/ NGO sector. iv) Must have computer literate in word processing, spreadsheet and presentation application software. v) Must have communication and writing skills in English and Bangla.

**Terms and Conditions:**

- Candidates may send their soft copy of CV with necessary documents in E-mail: jamalpurtschool@gmail.com by 20/05/2021 before 05:00 p.m.
- Candidates must send their hard copy of application with all necessary documents by 20/05/2021 before 05:00 p.m. No application will be accepted after the schedule time.
- Age limit: 35 years (Relaxed for experienced person).
- The selected candidates will be recruited only for the project period.

  
**(Dr. Eng. Md. Abul Hashem)**  
Principal  
Jamalpur Technical School & College, Bazrapur, Jamalpur-2000.  
Tel: 0981-63454

**Figure 2: ILO Project Advertisement**

#### 4.4 Overall Discussion

The role of English is important for participating in diploma programmes though its treatment is not systematically incorporated. Almost all subjects of TVET at the diploma level are perceived in a homogenous way and similar kind of English is offered to the students of those

departments. In fact, students in the technical field need more English and a different kind of English that will empower them occupationally but the English taught to them is far from the reality.

English is taught in Bangla in most of the classes. Translation is used in an unprincipled way. Communicative competence is not targeted. Assessment also does not follow communicative principles. Using English in classes is challenging for both the teachers and the learners as there is a lack of culture, capacity and adequate logistic support.

However, the importance of English in TVET is properly realised by the government. Its necessity is inevitable in building skilled manpower, capable of participating in higher education, getting jobs overseas and good positions in multinational companies.

Both Communicative English (English for General Purposes) and subject oriented Occupational English (English for Specific Purposes) are required for diploma students to produce efficient workforce, capable of dealing with machinery mostly made in foreign countries.

Social attitude towards English is positive and this needs to be reflected in the curriculum and syllabus. Knowledge of English also broadens career options, giving the candidates extra advantage.

In next 10 years, communication skill will become more important. If someone is a good worker or not will be decided only if she or he can communicate well. Its importance as the medium of instruction will increase and its use in the developing country will increase. At present, English is used a lot and it will increase gradually.

Despite the government's attempts to promote female participation, their participation in TVET sector is low due to societal attitude, family restrictions, nature of work, co-education, gender bias, lack of security at work place. People, especially women, perceive this sector more suitable for men.

Despite all challenges and negative perceptions, women are reported to be more serious in their work place; males outsmart them because of getting more opportunities and exposure to education, particularly in English.

Knowledge of English benefits anyone who has it, irrespective of gender. However, women with good English get some advantage in particular jobs. Thus, it could reduce gap in their

participation in academia and employment. Women at higher positions get more advantages if they are proficient in English and it helps in government jobs as well. However, a connection between English and women empowerment could hardly be established. Knowledge of English helps develop confidence among women.

Even though participants often criticized the syllabus of English for being much below their level, and for not being communicative, it was found in the document analysis that the second paper was completely communicative, and was on a par with the intermediate level; the first paper had inconsistencies regarding the communicative approach. It seems the problem lies with the use of right teaching technique to teach English communicatively in a relatively large class. The teacher needs the right equipment, classroom facilities and proper training to teach English for the Diploma students. The idea of using the selected units and lessons from the book written for the mainstream students did not seem to be convincing as well. It was also not a good idea to offer the same syllabus to all streams of diploma courses.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, we would first like to present brief answers to the research questions mentioned in the study. Next, the chapter presents a set of suggestions regarding the research issues addressed in the study. The chapter ends with implications for future studies.

### 5.1 Brief answers to the research questions

5.1.1 What is the nature of interaction between English and women empowerment in TVET participation and employability?

Based on the data presented especially in sections 4.1.8 - 4.1.11, it can be surmised that English is an essential tool for empowering the large population to turn into a powerful workforce. It is found that women, for being women, encounter specific gender-related discrimination originating from the deep-rooted male-chauvinistic cultural and social norms, and individual and collective psyche. Women are, hence, discriminated in availing access to both TVET education and employment, and are victimised. Their competence in English, a global lingua franca, the language of modern science and technology, and also a language, perceived in such high esteem within the country, is most likely to offer them an upper hand in the matter of education and employment. English may not be the sole deciding factor but it is one of the most important factors.

5.1.2. To what extent can English ensure women's active participation in TVET and employability in a sustainable manner?

Data reveals that women feel shy of participating in classwork because of their weakness in English. Many female students do not have or get the opportunity to enrich their English; hence, they face problems in comprehending the concepts taught in the classes. Competence in English can build confidence in them. As for jobs, women, good in English, are doing better in freelancing, government jobs, specific TVET jobs like hotel receptionist, garments sector etc., and especially in the mid and higher level official and executive positions. English also helps them get jobs with more job security, e.g., the less chance of being fired, the chance to get maternity leave, the scope of getting respect from colleagues and employers, and finally the less chance of being harassed. In such sense, English empowers them in service sectors in a sustainable manner, securing their job status, benefits, and wellbeing.

### 5.1.3. How far can English address the gender inequality in employability in TVET?

It is clearly mentioned by the participants that English can increase women's participation in TVET and employability to a significant extent but it alone cannot remove fundamental factors responsible for gender inequality in a sustainable manner. They emphasised changing people mindset, value systems prevailing in the society and expressed the necessity for awareness raising activities by the government and concerned body to eradicate gender discrimination in TVET and employability.

## 5.2 Suggestions and recommendations

Some of the suggestions and recommendations presented here are directly mentioned by the research participants while, the others are based on the inferences from the data collected.

1. The use of English needs to be maximized in academic activities in appropriate way, keeping in consideration the demands of the industries, job markets, global demands and subject requirements. It is found that all streams of TVET are homogenously perceived and similar kind of English is offered to them.

2. For TVET diploma students, both Communicative English (English for General Purposes) and subject oriented Occupational English (English for Specific Purposes) are required for students to produce efficient workforce, capable of dealing with machinery mostly made in foreign countries. Hence, specific textbooks need to be written and teachers need to be trained so that they can teach the books accordingly. English books written for general stream education should not be used in TVET curriculum as their needs are separate. In fact, students in the technical field need more English and a different kind of English that will empower them occupationally but the English taught to them is far from the reality. Hence innovation needs to be brought about both in syllabus, textbooks, teaching methods and assessment systems. English needs to be taught as a medium of instruction and more credits and credit hours need to be assigned. Social attitude towards English is positive and this needs to be reflected in the curriculum and syllabus. Knowledge of English also broadens career options, giving the candidates extra advantage.

3. Monitoring and evaluation needs to be ensured to check if the books are taught properly, as suggested, and teachers are implementing their training based-knowledge in teaching English to the TVET students. Appropriate measures need to be taken to recruit qualified teachers in

this sector as well. Appropriate logistic support including classroom facilities, language laboratory, and scope for extracurricular activities in English need to be ensured.

4. The use of Bangla and translation needs to be done in a principled way. The use of low-quality translated books in Bangla needs to be discouraged, if possible, banned. Low quality English is taught in Bangla in most of the classes. Translation is used in an unprincipled way. Communicative competence is not targeted.

5. Awareness raising activities among the people regarding women's participation needs to be increased. Despite the government's attempts to promote female participation, their participation in TVET sector is low due to societal attitude, family restrictions, nature of work, co-education, gender bias, lack of security at work place. People, especially women, perceive this sector more suitable for men. The government has taken many effective measures like offering free education, quota for the female students. The importance of English in TVET is properly realised by the government. Its necessity is inevitable in building skilled workforce, capable of participating in higher education, getting jobs overseas and good positions in multinational companies. However, it is observed that often people hardly know about them.

It was found that there was a relation between a smaller number of female students and a smaller number of skilled females in employment sector. Despite all challenges and negative perceptions, women are reported to be more serious in their work place; males outsmart them because of getting more opportunities and exposure to education, particularly in English. Hence, more steps to encourage women in this field needs to be taken. Specific work strategies need to be taken to promote females' participation in the technical and vocational education and employment, offering them better opportunities and security of all sorts.

### 5.3 Implications for further research

The field of TVET is diverse both in sense that it has many streams, courses are of different lengths, courses are taught by different institutes, and these institutes are governed or administered by different bodies and ministries. It seems there is a lack of coordination among these bodies. People seem to be unaware of the opportunities in this sector; rather, they seem to have a negative notion towards TVET. In many Asian countries like Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Philippines, women are in a more privileged position in TVET sector. Since there are a lot of similarities among the Asian nations in terms of cultures and value systems, further research is needed to find out why women in Bangladesh are lagging behind in this

sector. Research also needs to be conducted to find out if streamlining different authorities controlling TVET sectors will bring about would maximum benefits for the nation or not. Research also needs to be conducted to reveal what contributed to the formation of negative attitude towards TVET among the people and how to change it towards positivity.

The present research, conducted during the pandemic, can be replicated in even larger scale when normalcy returns and it can be replicated in other fields like vocational secondary education or higher secondary education, to get a more comprehensive picture. Research based informed knowledge would ensure utmost benefits to the stakeholders of TVET.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Gender Equality and English in TVET: An investigation into women's participation and employability

#### IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE (IDIs) with teachers, head teachers and administrative staff at Training Institutes

**General Information [Participant identity will not be revealed under any circumstances. Information will be anonymized and used for research purpose only.]**

1. Designation:
2. Institution:
3. Age group    a. less than 35 years    b. 36 to 45 years    c. Over 46 years
4. Qualification (Technical and Vocational):
5. Name of the Institute graduated:
6. Duration of course: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Any other training on TVET:

	Name	Duration	Place
1			
2			

#### Question on English skills in TVET

8. What do you think about using English in the classes?
9. How much English do you use in your work place (speaking, reading, writing)?
10. To what extent English is used in the classroom? (Mention number of classes, hours etc.)
11. How is English used in the classroom? (Comment on method, materials, medium, tasks, assessment etc.)
12. Mention the challenges faced by you while taking classes in English (if there is any)
13. Mention the challenges faced by students while taking classes in English (if there is any)
14. How would you comment on the role or necessity of English language in TVET?
15. Do they think the students will need English for employment? If so, what kind of English skills do they think they might need to use?
16. Do they think English might contribute towards further opportunities in employment?
17. Do you think the use of English will become more common / important at work in the next ten years? How?

#### • Question on Gender Issues in TVET

18. Are you satisfied with women's participation in the course in comparison with male participation? Why?
19. How do you compare the English skills of your male and female students? Do they make a difference in performance?

20. Do you think English can play a significant role in empowering women in terms of women's participation in the programme and their employability in a sustainable manner? If yes/ no why do you think so? Please elaborate with examples?
21. To what extent can English play a significant role in reducing the gap in women's participation and employability?
22. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the role of English in women empowerment and employability in TVET sector?

## Appendix 2: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE with the relevant stakeholders

**General Information [Participant identity will not be revealed under any circumstances. Information will be anonymized and used for research purpose only.]**

1. Designation:
2. Institution:
3. Age group    a. less than 35 years    b. 36 to 45 years    c. Over 46 years
4. Qualification (Technical and Vocational):
5. Name of the Institute graduated:
6. Duration of course: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Any other training on TVET:

	Name	Duration	Place
1			
2			

8. How would you comment on the role or necessity of English language in TVET?
9. Are you satisfied with women's participation/ representation in the academic courses/ employment sectors in comparison with male participation/ representation? Why?
10. Do you think English can play a significant role in empowering women in terms of women's participation in the programme and employability in a sustainable manner?
11. To what extent can English play a significant role in reducing the gap in women's participation and employability?

## Appendix 3: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION(FGD) SCHEDULE –STUDENTS (6-8 IN EACH GROUP)

**General Information [Participant identity will not be revealed under any circumstances. Information will be anonymized and used for research purpose only.]**

**Notes for Interviewer:**

**Demographic profile of the students: (number of students in a group: )**

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**This focus group has the following issues:**

#### Question on English skills in TVET

1. What do you think about using English in the classes?
2. To what extent English is used in the classroom? (Mention number of classes, hours etc.)
3. How is English used in the classroom? (Comment on method, materials, medium, tasks, assessment etc.)
4. Mention the challenges faced by you while attending classes in English (if there is any)
5. How would you comment on the role or necessity of English language in TVET?
6. Do you think that you will need English for employment? If so, what kind of English skills do you think you might need to use?
7. Do they think English might contribute towards further opportunities in employment?
8. Do you think the use of English will become more common / important at work in the next ten years? How?

#### • Question on Gender Issues in TVET

9. Are you satisfied with women's participation in the course in comparison with male participation? Why?
10. How do you compare your English skills with your male classmates? Do they make a difference in performance?
11. Do you think English can play a significant role in empowering women in terms of women's participation in the programme and their employability in a sustainable manner? If yes/ no why do you think so? Please elaborate with examples?
12. To what extent can English play a significant role in reducing the gap in women's participation and employability?
13. Is there anything else you want to add regarding the role of English in women empowerment and employability in TVET sector?

#### Appendix 4: Gender Equality and English in TVET: An investigation into women's participation and employability

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE for TVET Alumni

**General Information [Participant identity will not be revealed under any circumstances. Information will be anonymized and used for research purpose only.]**

1. Designation:
2. Institution:
3. Age group    a. less than 35 years    b. 36 to 45 years    c. Over 46 years
4. Qualification (Technical and Vocational):
5. Name of the Institute graduated:

6. Duration of course: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Any other training on TVET:

	Name	Duration	Place
1			
2			

### Specific Question

10. Would you please describe the major responsibilities and duties of your present job?

11. How do you consider the role of English and gender in the present job performance? If it plays an important role, would you please provide examples from your daily assignments where you consider the skill of English enhances job performance significantly?

### Question on English skills in TVET

12. Do you consider English as an important skill for TVET sector?
- a. If yes, could you please elaborate how English skills may play role in the following issues
    - I. In job application/in Job interview
    - II. Getting better salaried job
    - III. Promotion
    - IV. Others
  - b. If No, why do you think so? Please elaborate with examples
13. Do you consider English skills as a significant requirement to achieve National technical and vocational qualification Standard?
- a. If yes, Please elaborate with examples
  - b. If no, Please elaborate with examples
14. Do you think people in your workplace value your skills in English? How do you feel about your ability to use English in your workplace?

### Question on Gender Issues in TVET

15. Do you think people in your workplace judge you based on your gender? Do you feel that your performance is valued merely based on skills not on gender identity?
16. Do you think gender plays an important issue for TVET sector?
- a. If yes, please elaborate with the following areas of your job
    - I. In promotion
    - II. In salary raise
    - III. Benefits/Privileges
    - IV. others
  - b. If no, why do you think so?

17. How do you compare the English skills of your male and female colleagues? Does it make a difference in performance?
18. Do you think English skills can empower women TVET staff? If yes/ no why do you think so? Please elaborate with examples?
19. What difference do you think this might make for you, say, in 10 years' time? Is there anything else you want to add regarding the role of English in women empowerment and employability in TVET sector?

**Thank you very much for your time.**

#### **Appendix 5: Document Analysis of syllabus, and materials**

Evaluation of educational documents including syllabus, and impressionistic evaluation of selected units and lessons from the English textbook