



Uncertainty after Graduation: A Deep Dive into the Present Scenario of Graduate Unemployment Problem in Bangladesh

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Youth are considered to be the most valuable asset for any nation. They are going to lead the future. But without their active participation in the economy, a nation will remain in the domain of despair. One of the main hindrances towards development in Bangladesh is its increasing unemployment among graduates. Joblessness is becoming very acute among graduates who will eventually take a devastating shape for the entire economy in the future. This study has been made to analyse the current graduate employability and find out various reasons behind unemployment. This is an analytical study. Data were collected from secondary sources, including previous research on this issue, newspaper articles, journals, survey reports, etc. This study concluded that elevating students' competencies alone cannot solve this problem through a scrutinizing analysis. The students and their parents, the institution, and the government, need to work together to handle this situation. Only then graduates will be able to bring prosperity and growth to their individual life and their country.

Keywords: Joblessness, Unemployment, Prosperity, Graduates

Introduction

Like other nations throughout the world, Bangladesh is currently experiencing a difficult period because of the Covid-19 epidemic, which is affecting people of all ages physically, emotionally, financially, and so on. Without a doubt, this epidemic will have a negative impact on Bangladesh's enormous jobless youth population. Bangladesh's unemployment rate is 4.37 per cent, which is comparable to that of the United States, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). At this rate, university graduates will make up around 46% of the entire jobless young in 2020. As a result, the number of job applicants in the post-Covid-19 era will almost certainly exceed the number of available positions ^[1]. According to the latest labour force survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the unemployment rate among the educated people in the country will be 47 per cent in 2021^[2]. Besides, one in three graduates is unemployed in Bangladesh. The high incidence of prolonged unemployment among graduates raises concerns about the readiness and relevance of skills that tertiary education institutions in Bangladesh impart to their students"-World Bank in its latest report ^[3]. Every year almost 5 million people graduate from public and private universities in our country and enter the job market ^[4]. They come here with the hope of returning support and service to their families, societies, and eventually for a better and respectful life. But due to the crisis in the job market, their

dream remains a dream, and they start fighting for their survival. Being a graduate but still unemployed is a usual occurrence in this country. So, it is high time to take serious strides towards solving this problem; otherwise, this country will remain far behind the development. Therefore, this problem must be brought under critical consideration. Now, we all know unemployment is a macroeconomic issue that is not easy to deal with. It is quite hard to fight the unemployment problem but not impossible, and this is the fact that this research paper aims to explore. In this paper, the researcher made an insightful analysis of the current employability scenario of graduates in our country. A deep investigation had been made to find out the reasons behind graduate unemployment, and an attempt had been to develop suggestions that could solve this problem. There are very few research that have been done on this issue, although this is one of the pressing matters of our economy. This is such a widespread problem that requires every responsible party's active and unique participation. But previous research on this issue had failed to demonstrate and accumulate the duties and actions of every individual unit in charge at the same time. This research has drawn some possible initiatives to tackle this grave situation to integrate those responsibilities that every party needs to carry out.

Objectives of the Study

Graduate unemployment has become a widespread phenomenon across the country. So, the primary focus of this

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research is to analyze the present scenario of the rising graduate unemployment problem in Bangladesh and develop suggestive measures to enhance employability. Apart from these, these are the

- I. Various reasons behind the unemployment problem in our country.
- II. Evaluation of the tertiary education system of our country.
- III. Appropriateness of university program with the current job market.
- IV. Investigation into corporation's preference towards hiring overseas personnel.
- V. Identification of possible areas where development is essential.

Significance of the Study

For a variety of reasons, unemployment is an essential macroeconomic metric. The level of unemployment reflects the health of our economy. Bangladesh, as a populous country, has several challenges. A significant portion of the population is either unemployed or self-employed. Furthermore, many recent graduates are unemployed. They are unable to become self-employed to support their family. We are generating around one million new graduates every year to our already large unemployment population is exacerbating the problem^[5]. As a result, higher education is critical for any country's socioeconomic growth in which the young force may make a significant contribution. This is why graduate unemployment reasons must be revealed to create more employment opportunities.

Literature Review

The unemployment problem has become a burning issue for our country. The whole process of graduation, from school to university, consists of years of perseverance, expenses, dreams, expectations, sacrifices. Still, due to the crisis in the job market, a graduate's life is becoming difficult more than ever before. BIDS (2018), this study showed a dismal phenomenon of graduate employability in our country. They found out that the unemployment rate among graduates is 38.5%^[6]. According to this study, the gap between university programs and the job market, lack of information among graduates, and mismatch between demand and supply are the main reason behind unemployment. To explore more about this issue, they interviewed 975 graduates of different public and private universities. They found out that work ethics, communication in English, time management, computer skills, and handling pressure are the five qualities that graduates consider essential in the job market. Later, this study found out an interesting factor that parents' education is highly correlated with graduates' employability as 40% of the graduates get jobs after completing their education whose parents have master's degrees. As solutions, this study focuses on acquiring cognitive skills, establishing co-relation between

university-industry, developing university job support services, and especially maintaining a graduate tracer study to access competencies of graduates. Like BIDS, other researchers also addressed the current scenario of graduate employability to be alarming in our country. For example, Nahian (2018) stated that a vast number of graduates with a degree remain unemployed. They also showed their concern for the higher education system of our country as memorizing and lecture sheet method teaching is widely practised here^[7]. Along with the suggestions that BIDS mentioned, this research considers proper grooming and unconventional thinking towards a career to add up to graduates' employability. If we want to increase graduate employability, we will have to start from the root level, which is our tertiary education system. Nahian stated some shortcomings of our educational system. This concept was further developed by KHALID (2019). He proposed some strategies while conducting educational planning. He said that we need to adopt a workforce planning approach as it is the most effective approach to educational planning^[8]. The workforce approach is an optimum way to produce capable students for the job market. This study demonstrated some other aspects of unemployment in our country, such as – as our students are failing to meet the market demand, corporations are hiring overseas personnel at a large rate. An estimated 85,486 foreigner's work in the country, and 70% of the managerial post of organizations of the plastic industry are in the dominance of foreign nationals. He suggested that job-oriented curricula, skill-based training, are inevitable for development in this sector. Increasing employability largely depends on the university itself. So KAZI (2008) suggested universities should provide their students with relevant and marketable skills and introduce a work-based education system^[9]. Then it should also consider developing university infrastructure facilities to tackle this serious problem that our students are going through. The graduate employability situation is worsening day by day. SHEIKH (2019), this research came out with the shocking news of all; 46% of the total unemployed youth are university graduates^[10]. Almost 2 million young people are entering the job market with employment uncertainties. This study draws attention towards solving this problem in a very effective and powerful way. Government is the source of vast power in a democratic country, so if the government takes initiatives to solve problems, it will be the most beneficial of all the suggestive measures. He stated that establishing a separate ministry for human resources rather than accessing industry needs and formulating comprehensive policy to utilize human resources to fulfil the needs can be a point-to-point, effective solution to tackle this situation from 'worse' to 'worst'. Educated youth are the main impetus for any nation. Keeping them inactive or unproductive can never bring betterment for any nation. Joblessness among graduates in our country has already crossed the level of worse. So serious, urgent concentration

on this matter is inevitable. All previous research studies have tried to find out the reasons behind this issue and suggested solutions. The unemployment problem is such a problem that cannot be decreased by the contribution of anyone party only among universities, students, or the government. None of the previous researchers mentioned every party's contribution at the same time to solve this problem. However, further research is needed to categorize each sector's challenges that must be met to solve the problem together and move towards prosperity.

Research methodology

This research is qualitative, and as being descriptive, secondary methods have been used to gather data and information. To conduct this research, different published articles, journals, and articles from various research organizations have been collected online, thoroughly studied, reviewed, and examined.

Reasons behind the unemployment problem in our country

In application of the international definition adopted in 1982 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), an unemployed person is a person of working age (15 or over) who meets three conditions simultaneously: Firstly, being without employment, meaning having not worked for at least not one hour during the reference week, Secondly, Being available to take up employment within two weeks and Thirdly, having actively looked for a job in the previous month or having found one starting within the next three months^[11]. Sharmin Sultana (2019), in his study, claims that with the higher level of education, people's chances of getting employment get lower here in Bangladesh, and it mentioned the specific reasons behind this scenario; one is the Labour market condition which is 85% of labour market belongs to the informal sector, but growth has been stalled here for a long time. A formal industry can only provide jobs to ¼ of job seekers entering every year in the Labour market. Other is the absence of quality education: our curriculum does not focus on value-based learning. As a result, graduates are in lack of skills to meet the market demand^[12]. Sheikh (2019), according to this study, the following are the main reasons for unemployment explored as the lack of motivation among graduates, their confidence level is very low, poor skill development initiatives from government, irrelevant degrees, attraction towards BCS / government sector job colonial mindset, the huge gap between industry– universities and shyness or prejudice regarding jobs^[13]. Another study in assignment point revealed that the reasons for being unemployed in Bangladesh are huge population growth. Career facilities cannot keep pace with growing population, less chance of vocational training, students have a negative sense of prestige sense to be officers and lack of competent^[14].

Evaluating Tertiary Education System of Our Country

Tertiary education, also referred to as third level, third stage or postsecondary education, is the educational level following a school providing secondary education. The world Bank, for example, define tertiary education as including universities as well as trade school and colleges^[15]. According to World Bank, tertiary education in Bangladesh comprises two categories of institutions, degree-awarding universities and colleges affiliated to the national university (NU)^[16]. A study was concluded by the World Bank that shows the several scenarios of the tertiary education system of our country- In terms of quality issue, Low quality, particularly in some of the newer private universities and in the affiliated colleges, difficulties in recruiting, retaining, and offering adequate professional development to academic staff, lack of internal and external quality assurance measures. In terms of relevant issues, the absence of a national strategy for research, the link between university and industry are weak, lack of information on graduate employment. Fakhru Islam (2008):^[17] This study made a rigorous evaluation of the higher education system's demand, problem, and trend. It came out with many shortcomings – Firstly, easy access to educational institutions. There remains an astonishing limitation in student enrolment capacity in higher educational institutions. In 2008, among 275000 HSC passed students, only less than 100000 got admission in those institutions. Quality had been mentioned as a critical issue of higher education and inadequate relation between research and classroom teaching, unsuitable educational environment, want of educational implements, the unsatisfactory teacher-student ratio, and the main hindrance to acquiring quality education. Establishing good governance within the institution is a tough challenge, and the current scenario of the governance system in higher educational institutions includes -severe administrative and financial irregularities, lack of transparency, and non-compliance of conditions set for them by UGC and the ministry of education. There is no relevance between national needs and problems with our higher education program as it still follows traditionalism. This situation indicates a lack of effectiveness and relevance to absorb appropriate jobs. Rayhan (2019):^[18] in this paper, the researcher mentioned the drawbacks of our educational system regarding the classroom environment is not favourable at all. Overcrowded, scarcity of teachers is quite common everywhere, traditional lecture method in teaching, out of date syllabus and the universities have inward outlook (having little or no interaction with global community). Shahreen (2019):^[19] Apart from the areas where Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success, this study also demonstrated the current status and distress over our educational system that is going rack and ruin. It indicated a report that said that "Bangladeshi universities are not performing well in any reputed international ranking system,

which has become increasingly important both locally and internally as an indicator of quality". The shortcomings of the tertiary education system aroused by this study include the absence of essential multimedia, inadequate and outdated teaching facilities, the teacher-student ratio is very high, lessons don't emphasize the development of critical thinking, and problem-solving, soft skills, and communication skills, supply of quality teacher is another major concern. Private universities are largely unregulated, and constantly, there are doubts cast over the transparency of the teacher recruitment process. Research output is low. Bangladesh ranks 131 out of 140 countries for university-industry collaboration R & D. Access to tertiary education is not equitable. Bangladesh's overall GER (Gross Enrolment Rate) is 16% (2016) in tertiary education which is much lower than neighbouring countries (India 27%, Sri Lanka 19%). There is a huge difference in female participation in higher education even with not enough financing options. There is no national student loan scheme to enable more people to enrol in tertiary education. Many students borrow money from relatives to finance their tertiary education.

Investigating Corporation's Movement towards Hiring Overseas Personnel

Refayet (2015), This study had alluded that most of the top posts in the garment sector of our country are in the ascending of the foreign nationals as we lack a skilled workforce to handle those positions. It also mentioned that in 2014 about \$5 billion money was taken by those employees to their home countries, and their number is increasing rapidly day by day [20]. Dr Mir. Obaidur Rahman (2018), Bangladesh is experiencing a reverse flow of considerable funds to several countries through foreign personnel every year. Currently, over 85000 foreign workers remit over 2 billion each year. Among them, workers from India and China constitute 60%. Researchers reflected on the shortage of skills among graduates as they hanker after good grades, not towards skill-building approach, and that's why there remains a considerable skill mismatch between demand and supply of labour in our country? That is why corporations are moving towards hiring overseas personnel [21]. Jahidul Islam (2019), about 66 lakh people are unemployed in our country right now. On the other side, more than 2 lakh foreign people are enjoying the fruit of our economy. This study mentioned a recent report by our home ministry that a total of 85,486 people is employed in our country from 44 countries, taking almost \$6 billion each year. Intellectual figures of our country showed their concern that the skills of human resources of our country must be upgraded to become employable both in foreign and domestic industries. Corporations that have a record of hiring foreign employees are hiring more than ever before. Owners of corporations, when asked about their tenancy towards hiring overseas employees, they expressed that the local labour market most of the time does not have

know-how regarding the product they are producing. That's why they are hiring overseas personnel [22].

Recommendation and Conclusion

Unemployment doesn't bring sorrow for the graduates only and the entire country, for the whole economy. This unanticipated situation leads youths towards mental health issues, including depression, low self-esteem, anxiety, most of the time. They ended up committing various crimes due to frustration. To tackle this situation, the Government, educational institutions, students, and their families must work in a firm hand. Without these units' active participation, it is impossible to deal with this situation. According to this study, every individual unit might be helpful if they executed their duties and responsibilities correctly. One of them is the government must bring issues under serious consideration and take initiatives to transform youths into human resources. This authority should adopt every possible means to utilize their potentials, adopt different training facilities to make the students competent, facilitate loan opportunities for students, encourage an innovative mindset, and provide financial support.

On the other hand, institutions, both public, private, NGOs, and other financial organizations, need to perform their duties too to work continuously to build a bridge between job market demand and their credit programs and government initiatives. Train students to improve their non-cognitive skills, build partnerships with organizations and enterprises, assess industry needs and furnish its student according to that, modify their curriculum in consultation with employers, develop the condition of affiliated colleges, Initiatives to develop teacher's teaching skills and facilitate support for finding a job could be the primary actions to develop our youth more skilled. But the utmost truth is that students must be more focused besides these institutions to change their mindset to develop job-required soft skills. They must be remained up to date in terms of knowledge to keep pace with the fast-moving world and gather adequate knowledge about the job market. Apart from academic studies, the focus should be on extracurricular activities, gaining proficiency in English and basic computer skills. An action-oriented mindset must be developed regarding career goals. First, students as individuals families, being supportive to children, provide continuous motivation to students. Rigid preferences towards traditional jobs must be changed, and they must pay attention to value-based learning rather than result-based. Overall, they should also encourage an entrepreneurial mindset instead of job seeking only.

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