

Labour Market Assessment 2024

Kishoreganj District

Khondaker Golam Moazzem
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Save the Children



সেন্টার ফর পলিসি ডায়ালগ (সিপিডি)
Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)



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Executive Summary

The Kishoreganj district is characterised by its predominantly agricultural economy, growing service sector, and emerging industrial opportunities. Despite these economic activities, young women in the region face significant barriers to employment due to traditional gender norms, limited mobility, and inadequate vocational training. Recognising these challenges, this study focuses on understanding the local economic landscape, identifying employability gaps, assessing the gender barriers to undertaking skills and participation in the labour market and providing targeted recommendations to stakeholders, including policymakers, training institutions, and community leaders.

Specifically, the assessment aims to identify key economic sectors, analyse labour market conditions, evaluate gender-specific barriers, and assess the demand for technical and soft skills. Additionally, the study evaluates the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational training programmes while exploring market linkages and value chain opportunities. By addressing these areas, the assessment pursues to promote a more inclusive and gender-sensitive labour market.

The study employs a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection. Twelve focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with adolescent girls and young women across six upazilas, complemented by 9 key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholders such as teachers, employers, and government officials. A quantitative survey of 1,728 respondents was carried out across 13 upazilas, ensuring representation from different economic and geographic contexts. The analysis focuses on demographic trends, skill gaps, and barriers to employment, providing a comprehensive overview of the labour market in Kishoreganj.

The demographic characteristics of adolescent girls (13–16) and young women (17–26) suggest that they constitute nearly 30 per cent of the total female population in Kishoreganj. The average household size for this demographic is 5.5 members, with 97 per cent owning their homes. However, limited access to additional land and space constraints challenges young women's ability to engage in home-based work or entrepreneurial activities. Literacy rates are high among adolescent girls (98 per cent), but educational attainment drops significantly beyond secondary education for young women, primarily due to marriage and economic pressures.

Agriculture dominates female employment, accounting for 75 per cent of jobs, particularly in Haor upazilas like Itna and Austagram. The service sector is growing but remains underdeveloped, contributing 21.6 per cent of female employment. Industrial opportunities are concentrated in Bhairab, which offers low-wage factory jobs in sectors like shoemaking, ice cream, and candle production. However, these roles are often unattractive to women from middle to higher socio-economic backgrounds. Home-based earning opportunities, such as tailoring and online businesses, are gaining popularity among young women seeking to balance household responsibilities with income generation.

The study identifies a mismatch between vocational training and labour market demands. Young women lack access to market-relevant technical and soft skills, such as computer literacy, tailoring, and digital marketing. Only 30 per cent of employed young women reported getting training prior to their current jobs. Employers also cite a shortage of skilled workers as a key challenge.

Socio-cultural norms, including restrictions on women's mobility and preferences for home-based work, significantly limit economic participation. Early marriage further curtails educational and employment opportunities. Families often discourage young women from pursuing work that requires travel or extended hours. Additionally, many young women lack access to financial resources, infrastructure, and entrepreneurial support, which hampers their ability to start or sustain businesses.

Remittances play an important role in household income, with 11 per cent of families in Kishoreganj relying on migration-based earnings. However, interest in overseas work is low among young women, with only 9 per cent expressing a willingness to migrate for employment. The primary barriers include cultural attitudes, safety concerns, and insufficient access to pre-departure training. Among those who do migrate, Middle Eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are the most common destinations where garments and housekeeping-related jobs are available to women.

Training programmes should prioritise skills that align with both local and global market demands, such as tailoring, computer literacy, and digital marketing. Partnerships with local industries can ensure the relevance of training curricula while enabling job placements for participants. By tailoring the training to market needs, young women can acquire skills that improve their employability and long-term economic prospects.

Community-based training centres and mobile learning platforms offer practical solutions to address mobility constraints, particularly for young women. Financial support, such as scholarships and stipends, should be made available to encourage their participation in vocational programmes, ensuring that economic barriers do not impede access to these opportunities.

Entrepreneurial support is another critical component of empowering young women. Business planning workshops, seed funding, and access to necessary equipment can

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Acronyms

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMA	Labour Market Assessment
POWER	Promotion of Women's Empowerment and Resilience building
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The labour market in Bangladesh has been rapidly evolving, presenting both challenges and opportunities for diverse segments of the population, including adolescent girls and young women. As Bangladesh progresses towards sustainable economic growth, the inclusion and empowerment of young women within the labour force become critical. However, in many regions, including the Kishoreganj district, socio-cultural barriers, limited skill diversity, and accessibility issues challenge young women's full economic participation. Recognising these challenges, this labour market assessment aims to evaluate the employability and vocational skills gaps of adolescent girls and young women, while also examining gender responsiveness within the local job market.

This assessment focuses on the Kishoreganj district, a region characterised by both traditional agricultural practices and emerging service and industrial sectors. The study aims to understand the local economic landscape, explore training and employment opportunities, and highlight challenges faced by young women. Through a detailed analysis of demographic data, skill demand, and supply gaps, the study provides actionable insights into strengthening the vocational and economic integration of young women in Kishoreganj. The study has been conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in partnership with the Save the Children under the project titled 'Promotion of Women's Empowerment and Resilience building (POWER)'.

1.1 POWER Project initiatives

The POWER project aims to empower adolescent girls and young women (aged 13-25) in Kishoreganj, Bangladesh, by addressing gender barriers and enhancing their economic opportunities through skills training and education. Over three years, the project targets 22,000 participants, focusing on building their skills, assets, and agency while fostering a supportive environment within families, communities, and institutions.

Key outcomes include developing participants' resilience and readiness for decent work and adulthood and equipping them with gender-responsive, market-relevant skills for economic opportunities.

Interventions include technical and employability skills training, digital and social-emotional learning, entrepreneurship support (e.g., business planning, seed funding, and equipment access), mentorship, leadership development, and networking opportunities. The project specifically addresses the needs of a remote, disaster-prone, and economically disadvantaged area to create inclusive and sustainable change.

By aligning with key frameworks on employability and skills development, the study contributes to policy and programmatic recommendations that support gender-responsive economic inclusion. The insights generated from this assessment are intended to guide stakeholders, including policymakers, education providers, and community leaders, in creating a more inclusive, accessible, and gender-sensitive labour market environment for young women in Kishoreganj.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this assessment is to analyse the employability and vocational skills gap of adolescent girls and young women and evaluate the gender responsiveness of the labour market. The specific objectives include:

- a. To identify the key economic sectors and industries prevalent within the communities, including both formal and informal sectors.
- b. To analyse the labour market conditions, including employment trends, wage levels, and types of available jobs suitable for adolescents and youth.
- c. Analysing the gender-specific barriers and biases in the Kishoreganj labour market.
- d. Identifying the key employability skills required by the labour market in Kishoreganj district:
 - l. Assess the demand for specific skills and qualifications within the local job market, considering both technical and soft skills required for various livelihood opportunities.
- e. Assessing the current vocational skills and educational qualifications of adolescent girls and young women.
- f. Evaluating the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational training programmes.
- g. Evaluate market linkages and opportunities for value chain development, including potential partnerships with local businesses, suppliers, and markets.
- h. Identify barriers and challenges hindering access to economic opportunities for adolescents and youth, including socio-cultural factors, gender disparities, and legal/regulatory constraints.
- i. Providing actionable recommendations for increasing employability and promoting gender-responsive policies.

2. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

A labour market assessment follows a non-linear process, with simultaneous analysis in various areas. The modules below (figure 1) are interlinked, and any single component cannot address labour demand issues without investigating supply issues, for example, labour market actors, institutions, customs, and regulations.

The framework begins by analysing the factors influencing employment and skills demand (Economic Context) and progresses to specific Skill Demand considerations. Simultaneously, it evaluates aspects related to skill supply within an economy, the overarching system and its stakeholders, and policy. The study encompasses six modules, where understanding the demographics, demand and supply of skills, role of the stakeholders, policies and alignment or interlinking those.

Module 1 focuses on understanding the key demographic, economic, and human capital trends within a country. For adolescent girls and young women in Bangladesh, this involves examining factors such as population growth, age distribution, and educational attainment levels. Identifying economic sectors that may provide employment opportunities is crucial, considering both current trends and future projections. This module helps to highlight sectors where young women can potentially find

employment, thereby guiding policy and programme development to align with these opportunities. Understanding these trends also involves recognising barriers specific to young women, such as socio-cultural constraints and limited access to certain sectors.

In Module 2, the assessment examines into the current and potential demand for specific skills, knowledge, and qualifications across economic sectors. For adolescent girls and young women, this module helps identify the skills that are most in demand and where there are gaps between what the labour market requires and what young women currently possess. Employers can communicate their needs more effectively, helping education and training institutions tailor their programmes to better meet these demands. Additionally, donors, implementers, and researchers gain insights into where to focus their efforts to support young women in acquiring market-relevant skills.

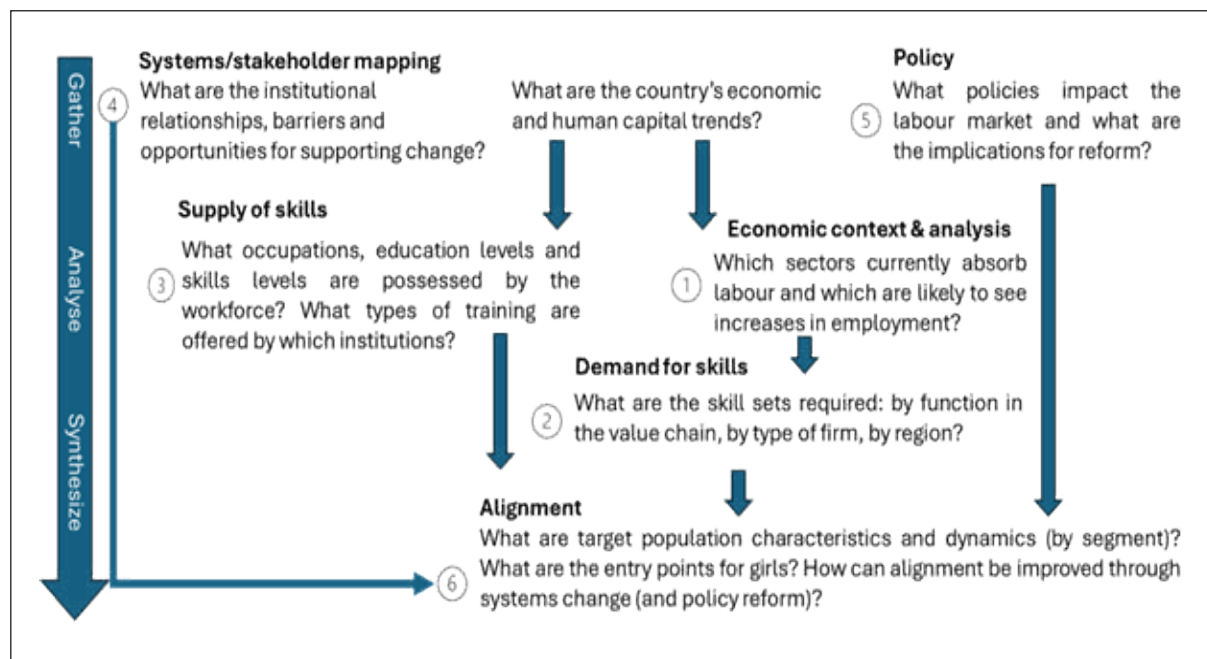
Module 3, examines the current state of an economy's human capital, focusing on how it is evolving and being utilised. For adolescent girls and young women, this means assessing their educational qualifications, vocational training, and other skill sets. This module helps employers visualise the talent pipeline and understand the potential of young women entering the workforce. It also provides insights into additional education and training options that could enhance their employability. Education and training institutions can observe where students, particularly young women, are leaving the educational system and how these trends impact labour market dynamics. This understanding helps in adjusting educational offerings to be more relevant and adequate for the labour market needs of young women.

Understanding the broader labour market system and the larger systems within which it functions is the focus of Module 4. This module involves analysing the roles of various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, employers, and community organisations. By understanding these interactions, strategies can be developed to improve coordination and support for young women entering the labour market.

Module 5 investigates key policies, regulations, and institutions impacting the labour market. For young women in Bangladesh, this module explores how existing policies and regulations affect their employment opportunities and identifies areas where policy changes could promote greater gender responsiveness. Understanding the policy landscape helps in advocating for changes that support the economic participation of young women. This module also examines how different policies interact and their cumulative impact on young women's ability to access and thrive in the labour market.

The final module, Module 6, guides synthesising the analysis from the previous modules and offers examples of how this synthesis can be utilised. For adolescent girls and young women, this involves integrating insights from the assessment to develop actionable recommendations that enhance their employability and economic participation. Relevant actors, including policymakers, educational institutions, employers, and community organisations, can use this information to understand their roles in directing the analysis into action. This module ensures that the findings of the labour market assessment are effectively implemented, fostering collaboration among stakeholders to address the challenges and opportunities for young women in Bangladesh's labour market.

Figure 1: Workforce Connections LMA Framework: LMA modules & questions



Source: Author’s analysis based on USAID (2018) and other labour market assessment reports.¹

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

3.1 Methodology of the Study

Qualitative Issues

The study follows a mixed method where qualitative and quantitative information were used. A total of 12 FGDs were conducted with adolescent girls and young women across six selected Upazilas in Kishoreganj district: Bhairab, Bajitpur, Kishoreganj Sadar, Karimganj, Hossainpur, and Mithamain. To gather deeper insights, these FGDs were divided evenly, focusing on adolescent girls and the remaining six to record the views of young women. Additionally, 9 KIIs were carried out in three of the selected Upazilas—Bhairab, Bajitpur, and Kishoreganj Sadar. The KIIs involved key stakeholders including teachers and trainers (representing the supply side), employers (representing the demand side), and government officials (addressing policy issues) to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by adolescent girls and young women in these areas.

Quantitative Issues

Composition of family: The total female population in the Kishoreganj district is 1.7 million, of which 8 per cent are adolescent girls and 21 per cent are young women (Table 1). Thus, this study targets nearly

30 per cent of women in the Kishoreganj district to identify features related to their demographic, employment, income, skills, training, education, etc. Kishoreganj Sadar has the largest girl's population aged 13-26 years old followed by Bhairab and Katiadi.

Table 1 Adolescent girls and young women population in Kishoreganj district

Upazila	13-16 Years		17-26 Years		Total (13-26 Years)	
	Population	Per cent of total female	Population	Per cent of total female	Population	Per cent of total female
Austagram	6267	7.9	15587	19.7	21854	27.6
Bajitpur	11383	8.2	29761	21.3	41144	29.5
Bhairab	15925	8.5	42986	23.0	58911	31.5
Hossainpur	8893	8.4	21626	20.4	30519	28.8
Itna	6290	7.5	16530	19.7	22820	27.2
Karimganj	13316	7.8	34979	20.5	48295	28.3
Katiadi	15121	8.1	38668	20.7	53789	28.8
Kishoreganj Sadar	21007	8.1	57569	22.3	78576	30.4
Kuliarchar	8962	8.4	22535	21.2	31497	29.6
Mithamain	5130	8.0	12058	18.9	17188	26.9
Nikli	5878	7.9	14807	20.0	20685	27.9
Pakundia	12034	8.0	30635	20.3	42669	28.3
Tarail	6617	7.6	17840	20.4	24457	27.9
Kishoreganj	136823	8.1	355581	21.0	492404	29.1

Source: BBS (2023).

A quantitative survey distribution was drawn from table 1. Total responses were collected from 1,728 respondents—comprising 845 adolescent girls and 883 young women—across 108 unions within the 13 Upazilas of Kishoreganj district (table 2). This approach ensured representation from each group across all locations, using a random stratified sampling method to distribute the sample effectively across the study area. Upazila and union-wise populations were selected based on the number of populations in those regions. Population weight was applied to determine the sample population.

Table 2 Survey distribution in Kishoreganj district by age group and upazila

Upazila	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Austagram	34	37	71
Bajitpur	83	82	165
Hossainpur	40	46	86
Itna	66	68	134
Karimganj	71	80	151
Katiadi	78	80	158
Kishoreganj Sadar	118	128	246
Kuliarchar	52	53	105
Mithamain	58	58	116
Tarail	48	47	95

(Table 2 contd.)

(Table 2 contd.)

Upazila	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Pakundia	70	73	143
Nikli	46	48	94
Bhairab	81	83	164
Total	845	883	1,728

Source: Author's design for field survey 2024.

Due to the representation of the labour market scenario of the Kishoreganj district, particularly its demographic characteristics impacted by Haor or mainstream areas a large-scale quantitative survey was conducted. Therefore, increasing the coverage at the union level gave a better representation of adolescent girls and young women, their demands, labour market characteristics, etc.

3.2 Demographic Information from Survey and National Data

In labour market assessments, demographic information plays an important role, as demographic indicators significantly influence the capacity and decision-making of household members, particularly women. The following tables in this section present various socio-economic factors relevant to understanding the status of adolescent girls and young women in the Kishoreganj district, including education, wealth, and access to services. These factors shape their decision-making abilities, confidence, and resilience in facing real-life challenges and problem-solving.

Family Size: The average household size for adolescent girls (5.6 members) and young women (5.4 members) indicates a slightly larger family structure (Table 3). Among the households of adolescent girls, the highest average household size is in Bhairab (6.1 members), a business hub, followed by Mithamain, a haor region, with an average of 6 members. The highest average household size of a young woman is found in Mithamain (6.1 members), followed by Bhairab (5.8 members). This may reflect extended family living arrangements, which could influence young women's autonomy in decision-making and their economic contributions.

It is important to note that, from each household, only one girls were interviewed.

Table 3 Total number of members in the house

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	No of respondents	Average member	No of respondents	Average member
Overall	845	5.6	883	5.4
Austagram	34	5.3	37	5.5
Bajitpur	83	5.8	82	5.5
Bhairab	81	6.1	83	5.8
Hossainpur	40	5.4	46	5.4
Itna	66	5.8	68	5.3
Karimganj	71	5.6	80	5.3
Katiadi	78	5.1	80	5.2
Kishoreganj Sadar	118	5.6	128	5.6

(Table 3 contd.)

(Table 3 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	No of respondents	Average member	No of respondents	Average member
Kuliarchar	52	5.5	53	5.4
Mithamain	58	6.0	58	6.1
Nikli	46	5.7	48	4.9
Pakundia	70	5.4	73	5.3
Tarail	48	5.7	47	4.8

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Additionally, with an average of 2.6 rooms per household (Table 4), space constraints may affect adolescent girls' and young women's educational and employment opportunities, limiting their capacity to engage in home-based activities or remote work.

This has important implications for designing a training curriculum tailored to self-employment activities, as household structure significantly influences these girls' self-employment prospects. This constraint also explains why many women, despite completing training, are unable to start a venture and ultimately drop out of the workforce. The KIs with various entrepreneurs in Kishoreganj revealed that only 2-3 per cent of girls trained with them in self-employment-related trades were able to start their own business ventures, while the majority remained idle. For those who managed to start ventures independently or with family support, access to capital and infrastructure was minimal. The lack of available rooms in overcrowded households further limits these girls' ability to engage in home-based activities or remote work.

Table 4 Number of rooms in the house by age group and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years) Household		Young Women (17-26 Years) Household	
	No of respondents	Average room no	No of respondents	Average room no
Overall	845	2.6	883	2.6
Austagram	34	2.2	37	2.7
Bajitpur	83	2.7	82	2.7
Bhairab	81	3.0	83	2.8
Hossainpur	40	2.9	46	3.1
Itna	66	2.4	68	2.5
Karimganj	71	2.5	80	2.5
Katiadi	78	2.4	80	2.4
Kishoreganj Sadar	118	2.5	128	2.7
Kuliarchar	52	3.1	53	2.9
Mithamain	58	2.9	58	3.0
Nikli	46	2.2	48	2.0
Pakundia	70	2.7	73	2.6
Tarail	48	2.2	47	2.1

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Homeownership is remarkably high, with nearly all respondents (97 per cent) representing their household owning their homes and very few indicating reliance on rented or sheltered accommodations (table 5). This high rate of homeownership may positively influence the socioeconomic conditions of families. However, variations across upazilas, such as a slight increase in reliance on sheltered arrangements in Austagram (3 per cent among young women), highlight existing vulnerabilities. It is important to clarify that ‘sheltered’ refers to situations where the girls reside with their relatives, either on their maternal or paternal side.

Table 5 Home ownership type by age and upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)				Young women (17-26)			
	Own	Rented	Shelter	Total	Own	Rented	Shelter	Total
Austagram	100	0	0	100	97	0	3	100
Bajitpur	95	2	2	100	99	1	0	100
Hossainpur	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	100
Itna	95	2	3	100	96	1	3	100
Karimganj	97	3	0	100	98	0	3	100
Katiadi	96	3	1	100	93	6	1	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	99	0	1	100	95	5	0	100
Kuliarchar	100	0	0	100	100	0	0	100
Mithamain	98	2	0	100	97	3	0	100
Tarail	94	4	2	100	94	2	4	100
Pakundia	99	1	0	100	99	1	0	100
Nikli	96	4	0	100	94	4	2	100
Bhairab	96	4	0	100	95	5	0	100
Total	97	2	1	100	96	3	1	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

As previously illustrated in Table 5, the majority of households own their homes. However, as indicated in Table 6, only 57 per cent possess homesteads without any additional land, while 38 per cent own land designated for agricultural or commercial purposes. Furthermore, 4.6 per cent of households do not own either a homestead or any associated land. This data suggests that approximately 38 per cent of adolescent girls and young women have moderate to high levels of immovable property, positioning them more favourably within society in terms of wealth. They are able to access quality education, training, and services due to their financial capacity.

Contrarily, those who possess only homesteads without any additional land are indicative of vulnerability, which restricts their opportunities for capital generation and the initiation of future business ventures.

Table 6 Immovable property owned by household members by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)				Young women (17-26)			
	Homestead	Land with homestead	No	Total	Homestead	Land with homestead	No	Total
Austagram	71	21	9	100	68	27	5	100
Bajitpur	57	37	6	100	49	49	2	100
Hossainpur	55	45	0	100	52	48	0	100
Itna	65	30	5	100	54	37	9	100
Karimganj	66	30	4	100	54	45	1	100
Katiadi	65	28	6	100	49	44	8	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	63	31	7	100	61	34	5	100
Kuliarchar	63	37	0	100	74	26	0	100
Mithamain	41	52	7	100	48	43	9	100
Tarail	42	46	13	100	47	51	2	100
Pakundia	51	47	1	100	48	52	0	100
Nikli	78	17	4	100	52	40	8	100
Bhairab	64	33	2	100	54	41	5	100
Total	60	35	5	100	54	41	4	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Households with female members highlight distinct differences regarding the determination of the household head. In majority of cases involving adolescent girls, the father is identified as the head of the household (81 per cent). This pattern also holds for young women, though at a significantly lower rate of 45 per cent (table 7). In instances where the father is absent, the mother assumes the role of household head for adolescent girls. Only 1-2 per cent of cases indicate that the mother is the head of the household, even in the presence of the father. For young women, following the father, the husband takes on the role of household head. Notably, no respondents within the young women's group were identified as the head of their household.

This situation suggests that if a young woman wishes to pursue training, start a business venture, or apply for employment, she cannot make these decisions independently and remains reliant on her family members. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) revealed that in-law household members are eager to allow young women in self-employment activities that demand minimal time and attention, enabling them to engage in such tasks after completing household chores. Additionally, families—both maternal and in-law—prefer that their daughters or daughters-in-law refrain from participating in economic activities that necessitate travel outside their homestead. This preference represents a fundamental barrier to the low participation of girls in skills training programmes.

Table 7 Head of the house and responsible for making decisions: By age and Upazila

Head of the house and responsible for making decisions	Adolescent girls (13-16)	Young women (17-26)
Father	81	45
Mother	11	6
Brother/ sister	3	3
Husband	2	36
Father-in-law/ mother-in-law	1	8
Maternal/ paternal relatives	1	0
Grandfather/ Mother	0	
Myself		0
Brother-in-law		0
Total	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Approximately 59 per cent of young women are reported to be married, with certain upazilas, such as Bhairab, exhibiting marriage rates as high as 78 per cent (table 8). Unfortunately, the phenomenon of child marriage persists in every upazila, with the exception of Kuliarchar, where no instances of child marriage were reported among respondents. Nikli Upazila has the highest incidence of child marriage at 13 per cent, followed by Bajitpur at 7 per cent. However, it is important to note that government statistics show 50 per cent of child marriages within the ages of 15 to less than 18. Since its public acknowledgement may lead to legal disputes, the respondents may have intentionally hidden this information.

Table 8 Current marital status: By age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)			
	Married	Unmarried	Total	Married	Unmarried	Divorced	Total
Austagram	3	97	100	38	62	0	100
Bajitpur	7	93	100	56	44	0	100
Hossainpur	3	98	100	57	43	0	100
Itna	5	95	100	50	49	1	100
Karimganj	6	94	100	64	35	1	100
Katiadi	3	97	100	55	44	1	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	6	94	100	57	41	2	100
Kuliarchar	0	100	100	62	38	0	100
Mithamain	3	97	100	50	50	0	100
Tarail	2	98	100	66	34	0	100
Pakundia	3	97	100	63	37	0	100
Nikli	13	87	100	60	40	0	100
Bhairab	5	95	100	78	20	1	100
Total	5	95	100	59	40	1	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Although disability rates are low at 1 per cent, recognition of disabilities by the government is notably higher among the adolescent population (table 9). This suggests gaps in accessibility to disability certifications and related services, particularly for young women in regions such as Katiadi. Recognition is important for girls to access various forms of support specifically designed for individuals with disabilities.

Table 9 Do you have physical disabilities? by age and upazila

Age group	Indicators	Physical disability	Certified or not
Adolescent girls (13-16)	Yes	1	80
	No	99	20
	Total	100	100
Young women (17-26)	Yes	1	57
	No	99	43
	Total	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The table 10 presents census data to match with the survey data. According to the Population and Housing Census 2023, a total of 20,365 females in Kishoreganj district are reported to have a disability, constituting 1.02 per cent of the total female population in the district. The highest disability number is observed in Kishoreganj Sadar, while the lowest numbers are found in Itna, Mithamain, and Nikli, all of which are Haor regions.

Table 10 Persons with disabilities at Kishoreganj in 2022

Upazila	Female	Per cent of total female
Austagram	1390	1.8
Bajitpur	1469	1.1
Bhairab	1745	0.9
Hossainpur	1154	1.1
Itna	829	1.0
Karimganj	2406	1.4
Katiadi	2288	1.2
Kishoreganj Sadar	2972	1.1
Kuliarchar	1094	1.0
Mithamain	837	1.3
Nikli	897	1.2
Pakundia	2197	1.5
Tarail	1087	1.2
Kishoreganj District Total	20365	1.2

Source: BBS (2023).

Adolescent girls (ages 13-16) generally show high literacy, with percentages reaching 100 per cent in most upazilas and only small declines observed in Nikli (93 per cent), Kishoreganj Sadar, Hossainpur, and Itna. Young women (ages 17-26) also show higher literacy rates, yet with slight decreases compared

to the adolescent cohort (table 11). While literacy rates for young women remain above 90 per cent in each upazila, Austagram shows the lowest at 89 per cent followed by Itna (92 per cent), suggesting a potential decline in educational continuity beyond adolescence in certain areas. These disparities may indicate socio-economic or educational barriers that disproportionately affect young women's access to sustained literacy development. Overall, literacy in Kishoreganj appears robust across both age groups, although subtle variations by upazila imply that region-specific challenges may still exist.

Table 11 Ability to read and write by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	100	0	100	89	11	100
Bajitpur	100	0	100	99	1	100
Hossainpur	98	3	100	98	2	100
Itna	97	3	100	91	9	100
Karimganj	99	1	100	96	4	100
Katiadi	99	1	100	96	4	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	97	3	100	100	0	100
Kuliarchar	100	0	100	98	2	100
Mithamain	100	0	100	98	2	100
Tarail	100	0	100	96	4	100
Pakundia	100	0	100	100	0	100
Nikli	93	7	100	92	8	100
Bhairab	98	2	100	95	5	100
Total	98	2	100	97	3	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 12 highlights the educational participation rates among adolescent girls and young women, reflecting both current attendance and dropout patterns. Among adolescent girls, the majority in each upazila are currently enrolled in educational institutions, with notable exceptions in Nikli, Hossainpur and Sadar, where dropout rates are slightly higher in Nikli (20 per cent), Karimganj (14 per cent) and Bhairab (10 per cent). In contrast, young women's attendance highlights a succinct variation, with a higher prevalence of leaving education either as dropouts or graduates. For instance, 66 per cent of young women in Bhairab and 57 per cent in Bajitpur have dropped out, which is mainly due to the surge in tourism, socio-cultural or economic factors limiting long-term educational engagement for this demographic. This drop-off trend in young women's education across upazilas may signal an early exit from schooling due to external pressures such as marriage, work, or family responsibilities, with potential implications for skill development and future employability.

Table 12 Ever been to an educational institution by age and Upazila

Upazila	Have never gone	Have gone in the past but education completed	Have gone in the past but dropped out	Currently going	Total
<i>Adolescent girls (13-16)</i>					
Austagram	0	0	12	88	100
Bajitpur	0	5	8	87	100
Hossainpur	3	0	3	95	100
Itna	0	0	12	88	100
Karimganj	0	1	14	85	100
Katiadi	1	4	9	86	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	2	3	9	86	100
Kuliarchar	0	0	8	92	100
Mithamain	0	0	9	91	100
Tarail	0	0	8	92	100
Pakundia	0	6	1	93	100
Nikli	4	9	20	67	100
Bhairab	0	5	10	85	100
Total	1	3	9	87	100
<i>Young women (17-26)</i>					
Austagram	5	11	24	59	100
Bajitpur	0	6	57	37	100
Hossainpur	2	24	33	41	100
Itna	9	1	34	56	100
Karimganj	0	13	46	41	100
Katiadi	3	9	46	43	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	0	13	48	40	100
Kuliarchar	2	0	51	47	100
Mithamain	0	0	47	53	100
Tarail	4	13	38	45	100
Pakundia	0	22	29	49	100
Nikli	2	17	52	29	100
Bhairab	2	7	66	24	100
Total	2	10	46	42	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The educational qualifications attained by adolescent girls and young women show marked differences. For adolescent girls, the majority attain secondary-level education, with about 66 per cent overall in this category. Only a minority progress to higher secondary education, as seen in Pakundia (13 per cent) and Itna (6 per cent). Among young women, however, the data reveal a wider range of qualifications, with some progressing to tertiary education, including graduates and postgraduates, though these percentages remain relatively low (14 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively) (table 13). The upazilas with the highest rates of tertiary attainment include Pakundia, and Nikli reveals one of the findings

from KII that the girls located in remote upazila are supported by their families for higher education so that they can get married to well-off families. However, the drop in higher educational attainment from secondary to post-secondary levels indicates challenges related to access to higher educational facilities as well as associated challenges.

Table 13 Highest educational qualification? by age and Upazila

Upazila	Primary	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma	Graduate	Post-graduate	Total
<i>Adolescent girls (13-16)</i>							
Austagram	29	71	0	–	–	–	100
Bajitpur	27	71	2	–	–	–	100
Hossainpur	10	90	0	–	–	–	100
Itna	29	65	6	–	–	–	100
Karimganj	30	63	6	–	–	–	100
Katiadi	39	56	5	–	–	–	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	38	60	2	–	–	–	100
Kuliarchar	31	65	4	–	–	–	100
Mithamain	19	78	3	–	–	–	100
Tarail	38	56	6	–	–	–	100
Pakundia	13	74	13	–	–	–	100
Nikli	45	52	2	–	–	–	100
Bhairab	30	70	0	–	–	–	100
Total	30	66	4	–	–	–	100
<i>Young women (17-26)</i>							
Austagram	11	37	31	6	14	0	100
Bajitpur	20	40	27	1	11	1	100
Hossainpur	4	40	42	0	9	4	100
Itna	13	32	37	2	15	2	100
Karimganj	13	43	28	3	9	6	100
Katiadi	12	38	40	1	5	4	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	16	44	23	2	13	2	100
Kuliarchar	17	37	35	0	10	2	100
Mithamain	16	34	40	2	9	0	100
Tarail	11	38	27	0	24	0	100
Pakundia	0	26	38	4	29	3	100
Nikli	30	32	17	2	13	6	100
Bhairab	19	48	22	1	9	1	100
Total	14	38	30	2	13	3	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

4. MAJOR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES IN KISHOREGANJ: FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

In Kishoreganj district, female employment is primarily driven by the agricultural sector (75 per cent). This heavy dependence on agriculture highlights the need for diversification in skills as well as economic opportunities. While the service sector's employment is growing, contributing to over 21.6 per cent of female employment, it still lags behind in providing significant job opportunities for women. The industrial sector, being the smallest, offers limited female employment, thus highlighting the necessity for industrial and skills development and investment to create a more female-friendly job market, particularly for girls (for skills development) and young women.

In the four regions of Haor upazila—Itna (85.6 per cent), Mithamain (81.1 per cent), Austagram (79.6 per cent), and Nikli (76.7 per cent)—the highest employment is found in agriculture, whereas the service sector has the lowest employment rates: Itna (10.4 per cent), Mithamain (16.7 per cent), Austagram (18.3 per cent), and Nikli (18.3 per cent). Industrial employment remains limited, with the highest levels recorded in Bhairab (10.3 per cent), Bajitpur (5.1 per cent), and Kuliarchar (5 per cent). Kishoreganj Sadar has the highest contribution to employment in the services sector, accounting for 43 per cent, followed closely by Bhairab at 41 per cent (table 14).

Table 14 Employed Population Aged 5 Years and above by Sector

Upazila	Agriculture	Industry	Service	Total
Austagram	79.6	2.2	18.3	100
Bajitpur	67.5	5.1	27.4	100
Bhairab	48.4	10.3	41.3	100
Hossainpur	75.0	2.3	22.7	100
Itna	85.6	4.0	10.4	100
Karimganj	73.9	3.3	22.8	100
Katiadi	74.4	2.5	23.1	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	53.6	3.4	42.9	100
Kuliarchar	65.9	6.9	27.1	100
Mithamain	81.1	2.2	16.7	100
Nikli	76.7	5.0	18.3	100
Pakundia	72.7	2.1	25.2	100
Tarail	75.3	3.1	21.6	100

Source: BBS (2023).

4.1 Available sectors and industries

The key economic sectors in the Kishoreganj district include shoemaking, coil manufacturing, small-scale industries, agriculture, and tailoring. High-demand job positions in these sectors are machine operators, assemblers, technicians, quality control staff, and packers.

Economic activities in the Bhairab and Bajitpur of Kishoreganj district are dominated by factory work, particularly in shoe factories, as well as labour-intensive jobs in other industries like ice cream, candle,

and soap factories. These sectors are important to the local economy, but they often offer low-wage, low-dignity jobs that are not appealing to women from better financial backgrounds. However, home-based earning opportunities, such as tailoring, freelancing, or online businesses, are becoming more popular among women seeking to balance household responsibilities with income generation.

Table 15 illustrates that Kishoreganj district is predominantly agro-based, with industrial activities primarily centred on agriculture, including vegetable, crop, and fish cultivation and Annex 1 to 3 shows the skills required for working in those sectors. Haor areas are mostly engaged in fishing businesses where the female members are heavily engaged to cut and process those. Bhairab serves as the industrial hub of Kishoreganj, featuring a wide range of successful industrial setups. In contrast, Hossainpur and Bajitpur predominantly host agro-based industries. The service sectors include information technology (IT), freelancing, nursing, and customer care services.

Table 15 List of successful sectors in selected upazila in Kishoreganj

Upazila	Agriculture	Industry	Service
Hossainpur	1. Vegetable farming business 2. Fish cultivation	1. Confectionary 2. Cloth-making business 3. Poultry farm	
Bhairab	Cheese	1. Food and Beverage 2. Textile and Fabric 3. Ice cream factory 4. Cigarette factory 5. Shoe factory 6. Metal factory 7. Thread mills 8. Candle mills 9. Jute mills 10. Coil factory	
Karimganj	crop and fish cultivation	1. Garment 2. Brick-making 3. Rope making 4. Rice mill	
Mithamain	crop and fish cultivation	1. Cloth making 2. Ice Cream 3. Brick Fields 4. Shoe Factory 5. Food and beverage Factory	
Kishoreganj Sadar		Agro-based SME	1. Technology and IT 2. Digital marketing and freelancing 3. Health and wellness (Clinics, nursing) 4. Retail and customer service
Bajitpur		1. Baking factories 2. Ice cream factories 3. Shoe factories	
Kuliarchar	Dried fish processing Fishing Fish bidding market (wholesale)		

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

This observation is supported by survey data presented in Table 16, which indicates that agriculture remains the predominant economic activity in most upazilas, particularly in Austagram and Hossainpur. However, the service sector also plays a significant role in certain areas, such as Kishoreganj Sadar and Nikli.

In addition to these primary economic sectors, remittances constitute an important source of household income. The migration rate in Kishoreganj was 3.4 per cent in 2023 (BMET, 2024²), with 11 per cent of households relying on remittances for their income. Among the upazilas, the highest number of households in Pakundia, Bhairab, and Bajitpur are dependent on remittance-based income.

Table 16 What is the main source of household income? by age and Upazila

Age group	Upazila	Agriculture	Industry	Service	Remittance	Others	Total
(Adolescent girls: 13-16)	Austagram	56	6	29	6	3	100
	Bajitpur	33	17	22	14	14	100
	Hossainpur	63	5	18	3	13	100
	Itna	48	9	21	3	18	100
	Karimganj	45	13	28	4	10	100
	Katiadi	42	9	24	12	13	100
	Kishoreganj Sadar	30	13	41	6	11	100
	Kuliarchar	40	21	31	2	6	100
	Mithamain	43	7	31	5	14	100
	Tarail	40	6	35	10	8	100
	Pakundia	36	14	20	20	10	100
	Nikli	35	15	35	4	11	100
	Bhairab	23	20	26	19	12	100
	Total		39	13	28	9	11
(Young women: 17-26)	Austagram	49	11	35	3	3	100
	Bajitpur	37	12	23	12	16	100
	Hossainpur	48	11	20	13	9	100
	Itna	60	9	13	4	13	100
	Karimganj	44	13	31	6	6	100
	Katiadi	35	15	26	18	6	100
	Kishoreganj Sadar	22	16	41	8	13	100
	Kuliarchar	25	19	32	17	8	100
	Mithamain	50	2	26	7	16	100
	Tarail	36	13	38	4	9	100
	Pakundia	32	14	16	26	12	100
	Nikli	21	19	42	15	4	100
	Bhairab	16	19	23	34	8	100
	Total		35	14	28	13	10

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The economic conditions in Kishoreganj reflect modest household incomes, averaging about BDT 19,974 for adolescent girls and slightly higher for young women at BDT 21,177. The highest family income is observed in Hossainpur, indicating an average monthly income of BDT 23,350, while the lowest is noted in Nikli with BDT 15,761. The consistency of income across age groups in each upazila may reflect similar socio-economic conditions affecting family earnings.

Table 17 Monthly total income of family members by upazila and age group

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	No of respondents	Average income	No of respondents	Average income
Overall	845	19974	883	21177
Austagram	34	18529	34	18529
Bajitpur	83	22663	83	22663
Bhairab	81	21216	81	21216
Hossainpur	40	23350	40	23350
Itna	66	16742	66	16742
Karimganj	71	21521	71	21521
Katiadi	78	17833	78	17833
Kishoreganj Sadar	118	20394	118	20394
Kuliarchar	52	17500	52	17500
Mithamain	58	19862	58	19862
Nikli	46	15761	46	15761
Pakundia	70	21129	70	21129
Tarail	48	21208	48	21208

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 18 indicates a notable willingness to work outside their own upazila, especially in Pakundia for both age groups. The overall trend suggests that about half of the respondents across upazilas are open to working outside their locality. This flexibility indicates young women, and adolescent girls are showing increasing openness to mobility within the region for work opportunities.

Table 18 Interested in doing work outside your upazila by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	44	56	100	49	51	100
Bajitpur	61	39	100	46	54	100
Hossainpur	65	35	100	35	65	100
Itna	48	52	100	49	51	100
Karimganj	44	56	100	35	65	100
Katiadi	44	56	100	46	54	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	37	63	100	46	54	100
Kuliarchar	71	29	100	58	42	100
Mithamain	50	50	100	59	41	100
Tarail	48	52	100	43	57	100

(Table 18 contd.)

(Table 18 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Pakundia	66	34	100	62	38	100
Nikli	54	46	100	52	48	100
Bhairab	47	53	100	34	66	100
Total	51	49	100	47	53	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

4.2 Formal and informal sectors/activities

In Sadar Upazila, young women and adolescent girls participate in both formal and informal sectors. Many are interested in pursuing roles in healthcare, education, freelancing, and garment industries. Informal activities, such as tailoring, beautification, and home-based businesses, are popular among young women who seek flexibility. In Bhairab, the economic landscape includes low-wage jobs in factories (shoe, ice cream, candle, soap) and informal work like freelancing and online businesses. Mithamain girls engage less in formal economic activities, but some express aspirations for careers in teaching, medicine, or law, reflecting a strong interest in public service and societal contribution.

4.3 Market linkages

Market linkages for these women include local marketplaces for selling handmade items, online platforms for freelancing, and connections to factory work. For instance, those in tailoring, clothing, and boutique businesses sell products directly to local customers and occasionally through online platforms, connecting them to a broader market beyond their immediate locality. The online market has been particularly instrumental for young women aiming for self-employment, allowing them to bypass physical marketplace constraints and family obligations that might limit mobility.

4.4 Product sales

Adolescent girls and young women's perspective: Adolescent girls and young women are involved in self-employment, like tailoring or online businesses, and they market their products within their communities or through online channels. Items such as handcrafted clothing, cosmetics, and boutique goods are the primary products sold, often tailored to meet local preferences. Those with limited internet access sell to friends, family, and local acquaintances, while some use social media to reach a broader audience.

Employer's perspective: The market and monitoring systems in our country face significant challenges, including market instability, ineffective government oversight, and the profit-driven mentality of large businesses. These issues are further compounded by a shortage of skilled and efficient sales personnel, as well as unstable, unregulated, and unfair competitive market practices, which hinder sustainable business growth. Additionally, the high cost of raw materials—such as flour, edible oil, and chicken feed—has severely impacted production and strained industries like food and poultry. Employers note that, despite these challenges, the growing population is driving increased demand for products and services. The workforce is also expanding and becoming more skilled, contributing to improved productivity. However,

company profits have declined over the past five years, largely due to the effects of COVID-19 and the volatility of raw material prices. The lack of government intervention in ensuring accountability, excessive pressure on businesses, and lack of promoting a cooperative business environment that encourages ethical practices, and innovation continues to hinder progress in these sectors.

4.5 Source of raw materials

The source of raw materials varies across Upazilas. In Sadar upazila, raw materials for tailoring, beautification, and online businesses are sourced locally or purchased online, supporting women entrepreneurs. In Bhairab, where shoe and candle manufacturing are common, materials are sourced through factory supply chains, providing limited independence to the workers. Mithamain entrepreneurs primarily rely on local markets for raw materials related to small-scale businesses, with limited access to external resources for expanding their businesses.

4.6 Self-employment activities

Self-employment is a significant focus for young women in these areas. Employment opportunities for girls in the community include beautification, dressmaking, and computer-related jobs. In Sadar, self-employment includes tailoring, online businesses, and beautification services, supported by training in skills like sewing, boutique work, and computer operation. Bhairab participants, although constrained by limited resources, show an interest in freelancing and running home-based businesses in tailoring and beauty care. Mithamain participants also express aspirations for self-employment, especially in areas like tailoring, with a strong desire to balance home responsibilities with income-generating activities.

4.7 Working abroad

This table examines the presence of household members working abroad. Pakundia and Bhairab report the highest proportions of families with members working overseas. Conversely, Itna and Tarail show lower instances, indicating a limited number of family members working abroad from these areas. This highlights varying regional migration trends potentially linked to local employment opportunities and family financial needs influencing the decision to migrate.

Table 19 Household members abroad for work by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	15	85	100	16	84	100
Bajitpur	28	72	100	23	77	100
Hossainpur	10	90	100	24	76	100
Itna	5	95	100	6	94	100
Karimganj	17	83	100	14	86	100
Katiadi	18	82	100	31	69	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	11	89	100	13	88	100
Kuliarchar	8	92	100	28	72	100

(Table 19 contd.)

(Table 19 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Mithamain	14	86	100	16	84	100
Tarail	10	90	100	6	94	100
Pakundia	30	70	100	33	67	100
Nikli	7	93	100	17	83	100
Bhairab	32	68	100	36	64	100
Total	17	83	100	21	80	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 20 outlines the average cost incurred by households for migration purposes. Especially, migration expenses are highest in Austagram for families of adolescent girls, with an average expenditure of BDT 500,000. Comparatively, lower migration costs are seen in Bajitpur and Pakundia.

Table 20 Money spent for migration purposes by a household member who migrated by age group and upazila

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	Observations	Average cost	Observations	Average cost
Overall	141	336000	181	334000
Austagram	5	500000	6	385000
Bajitpur	23	278478	19	262368
Bhairab	26	427500	30	324167
Hossainpur	4	410000	11	504545
Itna	3	466667	4	400000
Karimganj	12	315833	11	360000
Katiadi	14	345714	25	306720
Kishoreganj Sadar	13	161154	16	303125
Kuliarchar	4	420000	15	440000
Mithamain	8	323125	9	320000
Nikli	3	390000	8	370625
Pakundia	21	316429	24	264375
Tarail	5	306000	3	333333

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

This table summarises the years in which individuals from a household went abroad, showing a marked increase in migration from 2021 to 2024, accounting for 54.3 per cent of migrations. This recent increase in migration can be explained by the larger demand from the destination countries after the COVID-19 pandemic due to the labour shortages in those countries and the rise in global demand for goods and services after lifting the lockdown globally.

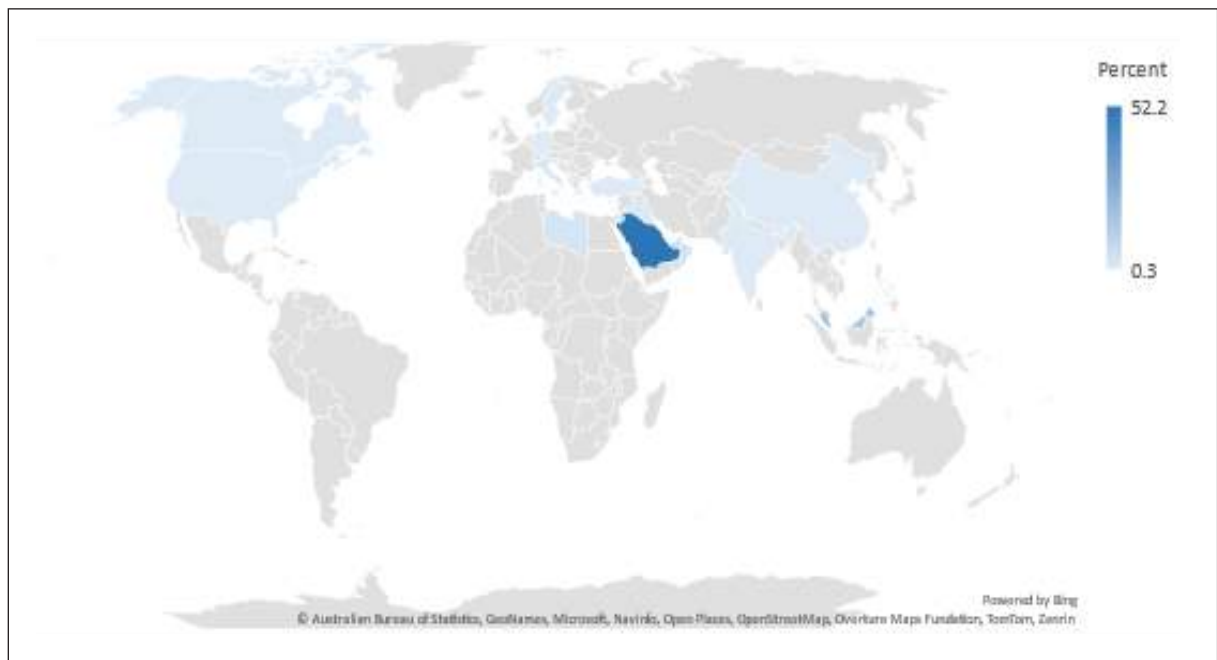
Table 21 The year did the person go abroad

Year	Per cent
1995-2000	1.2
2001-10	7.1
2011-20	37.3
2021-24	54.3
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The persons who migrated earlier are mostly located in Middle Eastern countries (71 per cent) followed by Asian countries (Singapore, Maldives, Malaysia, China, etc.: 22.4 per cent). The most popular destinations are Saudi Arabia (52 per cent), Malaysia (17 per cent) and UAE (7.5 per cent) (figure 2).

Figure 2: Name of the country where the person working



Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 22 presents the percentage of individuals who received training before migrating abroad. Itna shows a high training rate for adolescent girls' households, while Kuliarchar and other areas show a much lower training uptake among both age groups. This variation may be linked to differing access to vocational training facilities, awareness of training programmes, or financial resources available to families in each upazila.

Table 22 Any person who has gone abroad with training from a household by age and upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)	Young women (17-26)
Austagram	20	83
Bajitpur	35	16
Hossainpur	0	0
Itna	67	50
Karimganj	33	18
Katiadi	14	20
Kishoreganj Sadar	54	31
Kuliarchar	25	13
Mithamain	38	33
Tarail	20	33
Pakundia	29	17
Nikli	67	63
Bhairab	23	23
Total	31	24

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

This table reveals the willingness of adolescent girls and young women to work abroad. Across all upazilas, interest in working abroad remains modest, with the highest inclination noted in Pakundia for adolescent girls. The generally low percentage may be influenced by local job availability, family preferences, cultural attitudes towards migration, or perceived barriers to working abroad for young women and adolescent girls.

Table 23 Girls willing to go abroad for work by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	3	97	100	5	95	100
Bajitpur	11	89	100	9	91	100
Hossainpur	10	90	100	7	93	100
Itna	3	97	100	9	91	100
Karimganj	14	86	100	10	90	100
Katiadi	12	88	100	11	89	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	7	93	100	9	91	100
Kuliarchar	10	90	100	8	92	100
Mithamain	14	86	100	12	88	100
Tarail	8	92	100	13	87	100
Pakundia	14	86	100	10	90	100
Nikli	0	100	100	4	96	100
Bhairab	11	89	100	8	92	100
Total	9	91	100	9	91	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The table 24 outlines the types of work young women and adolescent girls are interested in pursuing abroad. Studying overseas is the most popular choice, followed closely by any available job, including labour. A smaller proportion shows interest in specific jobs like nursing, driving, or work in the garments sector. The diversity in preferences suggests that some seek migration as a pathway to educational advancement, while others view it primarily as a means of employment.

Table 24 Types of trade/work are the girls interested in doing abroad

	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
For higher study	46.8	26.6	36.7
Job/Any type of job/Labor job	31.7	30.4	31.0
Garments job	2.5	7.6	5.1
Driving job	1.3	10.1	5.7
Doctor/Nursing/Medical job	10.1	8.9	9.5
Permanent Residence	0.0	2.5	1.3
Others (Travel, Perform Hajj/Umrah)	7.6	13.9	10.8
Total	100	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 25 lists the countries that adolescent girls and young women aspire to migrate to, with Saudi Arabia being the most desired location, possibly due to existing family ties or job accessibility. Other popular destinations include Canada, the USA, South Korea, and Italy, indicating varied preferences across both Western and Middle Eastern countries, likely driven by employment prospects or migration networks.

Table 25 Country that girls are interested in migrating

Destination Country	Per cent
Australia	1.3
Canada	12.7
Italy	10.8
Europe (any country)	7.6
Japan	5.1
Jordan	3.8
South Korea	10.8
Kuwait	2.5
Malaysia	5.7
Saudi Arabia	28.5
USA	10.1
UK	6.3
UAE	1.3
India	0.6
Nepal	0.6

(Table 25 contd.)

(Table 25 contd.)

Destination Country	Per cent
Maldives	3.2
Oman	1.3
Cambodia	0.6
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

4.8 Overall findings

Female employment in Kishoreganj district is heavily reliant on agriculture (75 per cent), with the highest rates in Haor regions like Itna and Austagram. The service sector, though growing, remains limited, contributing about 21.6 per cent to female employment. Industrial opportunities are scarce, and Bhairab, an industrial hub, mostly offers low-wage factory jobs in sectors like shoes, ice cream, and candles. Many women seek home-based work, such as tailoring and online businesses, to earn alongside of household duties. Remittances are a key income source, with Pakundia, Bhairab, and Bajitpur having the highest reliance. Migration costs and rates are high, mainly for Middle Eastern countries, though being trained prior migration varies across regions. Young women show a limited interest in working abroad, with the highest demand for overseas education and flexible jobs aligning with local needs and family obligations. Self-employment, supported by training, is an emerging trend, especially in tailoring and online businesses.

5. LABOUR MARKET CONDITION IN KISHOREGANJ: FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

5.1 Employment trend

Approximately 34 per cent of young women are actively looking for jobs. Areas such as Pakundia show a higher interest in employment-seeking (47 per cent), contrasting with Bhairab, where only 17 per cent are on-job (table 26). Since Bhairab is a business hub and offers more job opportunities to job-seekers, therefore the number of job seekers is perhaps low compared to others. The highest employment rate is found in Mithamain, which indicates that this employment is mostly part-time employment since Haor areas have limited economic opportunities. Job-seeking rates are higher in almost all upazilas except for Bhairab and Hossainpur, where the rate is significantly lower.

Table 26 Young women seeking jobs and on job

Upazilla	Seeking Job	On job
Austagram	41	14
Bajitpur	37	21
Hossainpur	22	7
Itna	43	28
Karimganj	35	5

(Table 26 contd.)

(Table 26 contd.)

Upazilla	Seeking Job	On job
Katiadi	34	9
Kishoreganj Sadar	38	6
Kuliarchar	32	9
Mithamain	36	55
Tarail	32	28
Pakundia	47	15
Nikli	29	23
Bhairab	17	23
Total	34	17

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The girls who joined for apprenticeship were found to have an average duration of 28 days, with regional disparities. Upazilas such as Karimganj report lower averages (11 days), while Katiadi shows prolonged apprenticeships (53 days) (table 27). This is perhaps due to the nature of the different training interventions in different upazilas or following different curricula.

Table 27 How long was the apprenticeship period by age group and upazila

Upazila	Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	Observations	Average days
Overall	148	28
Austagram	5	16
Bajitpur	15	18
Bhairab	13	35
Hossainpur	10	33
Itna	7	44
Karimganj	13	11
Katiadi	15	53
Kishoreganj Sadar	23	23
Kuliarchar	6	33
Mithamain	12	17
Nikli	6	38
Pakundia	17	27
Tarail	6	17

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The table 28 outlines that young women largely work in the service sector (84 per cent), in areas like Tarail, it was found that most of the employed girls are located there (31 per cent). These service sector employments are mostly self-employment activities and are operated through online platforms. Later discussions in section 7 reveal that these women work mostly in food, handicraft and clothing businesses through online platforms.

Table 28 Engaged in economic sectors: by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)			
	Agriculture	Industry	Service	Total
Austagram	0	0	100	100
Bajitpur	12	0	88	100
Hossainpur	0	0	100	100
Itna	11	0	89	100
Karimganj	0	25	75	100
Katiadi	0	29	71	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	0	25	75	100
Kuliarchar	0	0	100	100
Mithamain	6	9	84	100
Tarail	0	31	69	100
Pakundia	0	18	82	100
Nikli	0	9	91	100
Bhairab	5	11	84	100
Total	5	11	84	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 29 highlights where the young women in Kishoreganj district are employed most and what types of products their organisation produces. Young women engage in different occupational roles, with the largest group employed as workers/co-workers (25 per cent) or supervisors (27 per cent). Tailoring and teaching are common, possibly available career options within the local context.

Table 29 Products or services produced or provided by a girl's organisation where she works or owns

Output	Per cent
Dress making/ Cloth sewing/ Tailoring	29.8
Teaching students/ Knowledge providing	23.9
Bag making	0.5
Agriculture product (Rice/ Vegetable/ Fruits)	4.1
Shoe making	0.9
Parlour/ Beautification	0.9
Bricks	0.5
Cloth/ Yarn	1.8
House construction	0.9
Making Cake/ Bakery items	1.4
Liquid milk	0.5
Medicine	0.5
Provide health service/ Medical service	4.1
Handicraft (Nakshi Kantha/ Cane products)	1.4
Yogurt, Sweets	0.5

(Table 29 contd.)

(Table 29 contd.)

Output	Per cent
Undergarments	0.5
Sweater	0.5
Serving people	1.8
Remittance	0.5
Product manufacture	2.8
Parts/Industrial services	0.9
Videography	0.5
Visa processing	0.5
Furniture items	0.9
Cosmetics	0.9
Hair cap	0.5
Electronic items	0.5
Computer training/items	1.4
Book	1.4
Cloth	7.3
Animal husbandry	0.9
Insurance	0.5
No	6.4
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

On average, about 30 per cent of young women currently in employment received training prior to joining their organisations (table 30). This indicates that skills training is not widely pursued, reflecting a common belief that training is unnecessary before employment. Industries, in turn, often recruit these young women without prior training and assign them to lower-paying roles. Consequently, many young women are less motivated and are increasingly considering switching jobs in pursuit of better opportunities.

Table 30 Received any special training before joining the current job by age and upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	40	60	100
Bajitpur	29	71	100
Hossainpur	33	67	100
Itna	26	74	100
Karimganj	0	100	100
Katiadi	29	71	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	50	50	100
Kuliarchar	40	60	100
Mithamain	16	84	100

(Table 30 contd.)

(Table 30 contd.)

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Tarail	62	38	100
Pakundia	27	73	100
Nikli	18	82	100
Bhairab	32	68	100
Total	29	71	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Tailoring/sewing (16.1 per cent) and computer skills (16.1 per cent) are high-demand areas, with some young women also seeking educational qualifications (7.3 per cent) to improve career prospects.

Table 31 highlights that job satisfaction among young women reaches 89 per cent, yet Hossainpur shows a higher dissatisfaction rate (33 per cent). Although these women express satisfaction with their current occupations, a significant portion aspire to advance their careers or engage in activities that allow them more financial autonomy, particularly through skill development and better job opportunities.

Table 31 Job satisfaction: by age and upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	80	20	100
Bajitpur	94	6	100
Hossainpur	67	33	100
Itna	95	5	100
Karimganj	75	25	100
Katiadi	100	0	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	100	0	100
Kuliarchar	100	0	100
Mithamain	88	13	100
Tarail	69	31	100
Pakundia	100	0	100
Nikli	82	18	100
Bhairab	89	11	100
Total	89	11	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

A moderate share of young women (47 per cent) is planning to change jobs, with upazilas like Hossainpur (33 per cent) and Kishoreganj Sadar (13 per cent) having the lowest intention to change (table 32). This indicates more job stability, perhaps due to higher responsibilities or satisfaction with their current work.

Table 32 Plans to change current job in the near future: by age and upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	80	20	100
Bajitpur	41	59	100
Hossainpur	33	67	100
Itna	63	37	100
Karimganj	75	25	100
Katiadi	29	71	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	13	88	100
Kuliarchar	20	80	100
Mithamain	44	56	100
Tarail	23	77	100
Pakundia	73	27	100
Nikli	45	55	100
Bhairab	63	37	100
Total	47	53	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The proportion of young women involved in unpaid work remains low at 8 per cent, indicating a trend towards paid employment in these areas.

Table 33 Currently engaged in any work or business without salary/ wages by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	8	92	100
Bajitpur	5	95	100
Hossainpur	0	100	100
Itna	7	93	100
Karimganj	5	95	100
Katiadi	4	96	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	2	98	100
Kuliarchar	6	94	100
Mithamain	19	81	100
Tarail	15	85	100
Pakundia	4	96	100
Nikli	17	83	100
Bhairab	18	82	100
Total	8	92	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

About 20 per cent of the young women received cash/ kind from their job (table 34). The ratio is higher in Itna (57 per cent) following Austagram (40 per cent) and Hossainpur (40 per cent). Respondents in Pakundia and Tarail did not receive any payment.

Table 34 Get paid in cash or in kind for the job by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)			
	Yes, in cash	Yes, in kind	No payment received	Total
Austagram	40	0	60	100
Bajitpur	7	7	87	100
Hossainpur	40	0	60	100
Itna	57	0	43	100
Karimganj	15	0	85	100
Katiadi	7	0	93	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	17	0	83	100
Kuliarchar	33	0	67	100
Mithamain	17	0	83	100
Tarail	0	0	100	100
Pakundia	0	0	100	100
Nikli	17	0	83	100
Bhairab	38	0	62	100
Total	19	1	80	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

5.2 Occupation

Most of the young women are employed in a supervisory role (27 per cent) following worker (25 per cent), owner (20 per cent) and teacher (10 per cent). Nearly 40 per cent are engaged in labour positions jobs whereas 10 per cent are engaged in teaching positions and 30 per cent in mid-level positions (table 35).

Table 35 Job position in that organisation by age and Upazila

Position and job place	Young women (17-26)
Junior Executive	27
Worker/ Co-worker/ Employee	25
Owner	20
Teacher	10
Helper	9
Tailor	4
Mid-level officer	3
Delivery man	1
Housekeeper	1
Nurse	1
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Eighty per cent of young women have been in their current job for less than one to two years (table 36). This suggests that, after working for one to two years, they are either promoted to a new position,

move to another organisation, leave the job market, or have recently joined within the past year. These dynamics indicate required targeted skills intervention so that the young women can build their career and contribute to the organisation.

Table 36 For years working in this position

Duration	Per cent
Less than 1 year	14.2
1 Year	37.2
2 Year	28.0
2.5 Year	0.9
3 Year	6.0
4 Year	4.1
5 Year	5.0
6 Year	1.8
7 Year	0.9
8 Year	0.5
9 Year	0.5
10 Year	0.9
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Twenty-three per cent of young women are engaged in full-time job opportunities whereas Kuliarchar offers 40 per cent full-time jobs followed by Tarail and Sadar upazila (38 per cent). Austagram shows no full-time opportunity for young women (table 37).

Table 37 Fulltime or part time work status by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Full time	Part Time	Total
Austagram	0	100	100
Bajitpur	24	76	100
Hossainpur	33	67	100
Itna	16	84	100
Karimganj	25	75	100
Katiadi	29	71	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	38	63	100
Kuliarchar	40	60	100
Mithamain	19	81	100
Tarail	38	62	100
Pakundia	36	64	100
Nikli	18	82	100
Bhairab	16	84	100
Total	23	77	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 38 highlights that 16 per cent of young women received training outside of work. Upazilas like Kuliarchar report higher training rates (40 per cent), while others, such as Hossainpur and Nikli for young women, show no external training (0 per cent). This underscores unequal access to supplementary skill development training.

Table 38 Taken training outside of work to improve skills for current job position by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	20	80	100
Bajitpur	18	82	100
Hossainpur	0	100	100
Itna	5	95	100
Karimganj	25	75	100
Katiadi	14	86	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	38	63	100
Kuliarchar	40	60	100
Mithamain	6	94	100
Tarail	31	69	100
Pakundia	18	82	100
Nikli	0	100	100
Bhairab	21	79	100
Total	16	84	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Tailoring/sewing is the predominant skill (50 per cent among young women), suggesting a demand for textile-related skills (table 39). However, only 17 per cent of young women have computer training, indicating limited digital skill acquisition and potential challenges in accessing different job markets that require technological proficiency.

Table 39 Name of the training by age and Upazila

Training title	Young women (17-26)
Teaching	8
Tailoring/ Sewing work	50
Parlour/ Beautification	8
Computer	17
Diploma in Nursing	8
Bakery/ Baking items	4
Electronic	4
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Fifty-eight per cent of young women believe that the female employees in their organisation are higher than the male employees, which indicates a female dominating economy. However, from the job positions, it was identified that these positions are low-paying. The ratio is 30 per cent in mid-level and executive roles, which is commendable (table 40).

Table 40 Female employees number comparison with male employees by age and Upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	60	40	100
Bajitpur	53	47	100
Hossainpur	100	0	100
Itna	68	32	100
Karimganj	25	75	100
Katiadi	43	57	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	63	38	100
Kuliarchar	100	0	100
Mithamain	50	50	100
Tarail	46	54	100
Pakundia	73	27	100
Nikli	64	36	100
Bhairab	58	42	100
Total	58	42	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Fifty-one per cent of young women believes that all the employees are local that are engaged in local economic activities (table 41). This emphasis on the skilled young women for local economic sectors where demand is high and can be accessible and convenient for young women and their families.

Table 41 Workers come from outside this upazila by young women group and Upazila

Upazila	No one	A few	About half	Most of them	Don't know	Total
Austagram	40	0	20	0	40	100
Bajitpur	47	6	6	6	35	100
Hossainpur	100	0	0	0	0	100
Itna	42	11	11	5	32	100
Karimganj	50	50	0	0	0	100
Katiadi	43	29	0	0	29	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	75	0	0	13	13	100
Kuliarchar	80	20	0	0	0	100
Mithamain	53	13	0	3	31	100
Tarail	23	8	15	15	38	100
Pakundia	36	18	18	0	27	100

(Table 41 contd.)

(Table 41 contd.)

Upazila	No one	A few	About half	Most of them	Don t know	Total
Nikli	55	45	0	0	0	100
Bhairab	63	16	5	5	11	100
Total	51	15	6	5	24	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Young women in Kishoreganj district believe that 23 per cent are low-skilled, 68 per cent are semi-skilled, and 10 per cent are highly skilled (table 42). This indicates the scarcity of skilled workers and employees in the local areas. According to the employers, they prefer to recruit low-semiskilled workers due to the labour-intensive tasks and less technological set up. Kishoreganj district has very few large production capacity industries and is mostly small-scale, with workers and employees being less than 20. This explains the size of the firms and their financial capacities, and the reason behind recruiting low-semiskilled workers.

Table 42 Skill level of employees in a company by young women age group and upazila

Upazila	Young women (17-26)			Total
	Most cannot do the job well	Can get the job done	Everyone is very good at work	
Austagram	100	0	0	100
Bajitpur	0	100	0	100
Hossainpur	0	100	0	100
Itna	0	75	25	100
Karimganj				
Katiadi	100	0	0	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	50	50	0	100
Kuliarchar	0	0	100	100
Mithamain	14	71	14	100
Tarail	0	100	0	100
Pakundia	50	50	0	100
Nikli				
Bhairab	33	67	0	100
Total	23	68	10	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Skills level are related to the wages of the worker whereas an unskilled young woman in the Kishoreganj district can currently earn BDT 8,000–9,000 per month, whereas a skilled woman can earn BDT 10,000–30,000 per month, depending on her expertise.

5.3 Overall findings

Approximately 34 per cent of young women in Kishoreganj are actively seeking employment, with Pakundia showing the highest interest (47 per cent) and Bhairab the lowest (17 per cent). Although Mithamain has the highest employment rates, these positions are typically part-time due to limited local economic opportunities. Many young women work in the service sector, primarily in self-

employed roles via online platforms, focusing on food, handicrafts, and clothing. Despite 89 per cent job satisfaction, 47 per cent plan to change jobs, with most currently in executive, worker, or teaching roles. Skills training is limited, with only 30 per cent trained prior to employment and few receiving further external training. Predominant skills include tailoring and sewing, though demand exists for digital skills. Employers favour semi-skilled workers for labour-intensive roles in small local firms, which are less reliant on advanced technology, limiting young women's advancement prospects in Kishoreganj's female-dominated, yet lower-paid, economy.

6. GENDER-SPECIFIC BARRIERS FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN KISHOREGANJ: FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

The challenges in accessing education and skill development are connected to social, economic, and cultural barriers. For many women, societal expectations regarding dress codes and gender roles can limit their educational pursuits. Additionally, economic constraints, such as the inability to afford continued education or training, play a significant role. Some individuals face criticism and negative comments from their communities, which further erodes their confidence. Family issues, including a lack of attention to education and religious constraints, also contribute to lower educational outcomes for some.

Social and familial constraints often limit the mobility of girls, preventing them from working outside the home. Additionally, the lack of a proper marketing system for their products frequently leads to financial losses. The local DYD office believes that this financial hardship can be addressed by a loan programme with minimal interest rates to support small businesses.

6.1 Challenges concerning not in education, employment and training

The following table highlights surprising inferences about girls in the Kishoreganj district. Fifty-five per cent of girls in the 15-24 age group are found to be NEET, which is higher in Sadar, followed by Bhairab and Katiadi. Interestingly, among the 20-24 years girl's group, the NEET is 73 per cent out of the total population of 20-24 (table 43). This age stage is the most important age bracket as, during this age duration, a human being completes higher education and pursues economic activities. However, the table shows that this 20-24 age group refrain themselves from education, training and employment and it accounts for 115,960 girls which is the census data reported by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This more than one lac girls being NEET can indicate that they are either married or engaged in domestic unpaid work, which is a significant loss for the local economy as well as the national economy. With many young girls not engaged in education or training, there is a growing mismatch between the skills available in the labour market and the skills needed by employers.

Table 43 Population Aged 15-24 Years Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Upazila	15-19	Per cent	20-24	Per cent	15-24	Per cent
Austagram	3654	5.2	5150	4.4	8804	4.7
Bajitpur	6695	9.6	9510	8.2	16205	8.7
Bhairab	9170	13.1	14743	12.7	23913	12.9

(Table 43 contd.)

(Table 43 contd.)

Upazila	15-19	Per cent	20-24	Per cent	15-24	Per cent
Hossainpur	3407	4.9	6909	6.0	10316	5.5
Itna	3660	5.2	5654	4.9	9314	5.0
Karimganj	6649	9.5	11639	10.0	18288	9.8
Katiadi	8077	11.5	13250	11.4	21327	11.5
Kishoreganj Sadar	9311	13.3	16406	14.1	25717	13.8
Kuliarchar	4733	6.8	7602	6.6	12335	6.6
Mithamain	2888	4.1	4313	3.7	7201	3.9
Nikli	3421	4.9	4901	4.2	8322	4.5
Pakundia	4956	7.1	10008	8.6	14964	8.0
Tarail	3367	4.8	5875	5.1	9242	5.0
Total NEET	69988	100	115960	100	185948	100
Total Population (15-24)	180465	38.8	159067	72.9	339532	54.8

Source: BBS (2023).

Adolescent girls (13-16) and young women (17-26) have different average time spent on household chores, with younger women tending to have a higher average hour. Upazilas like Kuliarchar and Kishoreganj Sadar show lower average hours for adolescent girls, possibly indicating limited household activities for younger individuals (table 44).

Table 44 Time spent on household chores every day by age group and upazila

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	No of respondents	Average hour	No of respondents	Average hour
Overall	845	2.7	883	4.0
Austagram	34	2.9	37	3.5
Bajitpur	83	2.7	82	3.6
Bhairab	81	2.6	83	4.2
Hossainpur	40	2.6	46	4.5
Itna	66	3.1	68	4.0
Karimganj	71	2.8	80	4.0
Katiadi	78	2.9	80	4.2
Kishoreganj Sadar	118	2.5	128	4.4
Kuliarchar	52	2.3	53	3.5
Mithamain	58	2.9	58	3.8
Nikli	46	2.9	48	4.1
Pakundia	70	2.4	73	3.5
Tarail	48	2.7	47	4.4

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The data highlights that marriage has a variable impact on work participation among young women. For example, in Kuliarchar, 30 per cent of young women feel marriage prevents them from working, while in Hossainpur, this figure drops to just 5 per cent (table 45).

Table 45 Does marriage in any way prevent a girl from attending works

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	26	74	100
Bajitpur	11	89	100
Hossainpur	5	95	100
Itna	15	85	100
Karimganj	18	82	100
Katiadi	9	91	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	13	87	100
Kuliarchar	30	70	100
Mithamain	7	93	100
Tarail	13	88	100
Pakundia	22	78	100
Nikli	16	84	100
Bhairab	24	76	100
Total	15	85	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Both parents and young women in certain upazilas place a high importance on employment before marriage. Upazilas like Pakundia (70 per cent) and Mithamain (69 per cent) show the highest proportions of parents prioritising job participation of their girls before marriage (table 46-47). This indicates a shift towards valuing economic independence for women before they marry.

Table 46 Parent's give importance of girl's getting a job before marriage

Upazila	High priority	Medium priority	Neutral	Fairly low priority	Very low priority	Total
<i>Young women (17-26)</i>						
Austagram	61	30	4	0	4	100
Bajitpur	53	39	3	6	0	100
Hossainpur	50	40	5	0	5	100
Itna	52	39	9	0	0	100
Karimganj	21	57	7	11	4	100
Katiadi	57	34	9	0	0	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	33	54	10	0	4	100
Kuliarchar	50	35	15	0	0	100
Mithamain	69	28	3	0	0	100
Tarail	50	38	0	6	6	100
Pakundia	70	19	7	0	4	100
Nikli	42	47	11	0	0	100
Bhairab	47	41	0	6	6	100
Total	50	39	7	2	2	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 47 Girl's give importance of getting a job before marriage

Upazila	High priority	Medium priority	Neutral	Fairly low priority	Very low priority	Total
Young women (17-26)						
Austagram	57	30	13	0	0	100
Bajitpur	56	36	3	6	0	100
Hossainpur	40	40	10	5	5	100
Itna	61	27	12	0	0	100
Karimganj	29	57	7	7	0	100
Katiadi	60	31	9	0	0	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	48	38	12	0	2	100
Kuliarchar	55	25	15	5	0	100
Mithamain	72	24	3	0	0	100
Tarail	69	25	0	6	0	100
Pakundia	70	22	7	0	0	100
Nikli	42	42	16	0	0	100
Bhairab	59	29	0	12	0	100
Total	55	34	8	3	1	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

6.2 Job market challenges

Financial issues are the most significant barrier (39.7 per cent) for young women in achieving their aspirations, with family and social problems also playing a role (table 48). Notably, 40.6 per cent reported facing no issues, indicating regional variations in the perception of barriers.

Table 48 Types of problems girls will face in the future in fulfilling their dreams

Issues	Per cent
Financial problem	39.7
Social problem	3.9
Family barriers	8.7
Social barriers	0.1
Problems in married life	2.4
Restrictions on mobile use	0.1
Transportation problems	0.2
Lack of job opportunities	0.7
Lack of training	0.1
Lack of funding disrupts education	0.8
Lack of skills	0.6
Lack of support	0.3
Interrupted by in-law	0.2
Physical disabilities	0.2

(Table 48 contd.)

(Table 48 contd.)

Issues	Per cent
Problems at workplace	0.2
Others	0.3
No problem	40.6
Don't know	4.4
Total	100.0

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The majority of respondents lack a concrete strategy to overcome their challenges, with 51.3 per cent reporting no idea of how to do so (table 49). Among those with strategies, earning money and seeking cooperation are common approaches.

Table 49 Strategy to counter the problems

Strategy	Per cent
Earning money	12.8
Taking support from all/With cooperation	8.0
To reason with the family	2.5
Earning money through tuition	0.8
Through own effort/Through hard work	8.6
Getting employed	5.2
Studying	3.9
Through training	0.5
To be entrepreneur	0.6
To take loans or financial support	3.1
To manage a part time job	0.9
With family support/parental support	1.0
Improving skills	0.6
To sell land	0.1
To understand the situation	0.2
Avoid social barriers	0.5
Getting married	0.5
Others	0.8
No idea	51.3
Total	100.0

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

6.3 Aspirations

Marriage is the primary reason for discontinuing education (53.6 per cent), indicating that traditional expectations play a major role in limiting educational opportunities for young women.

Women in this district face significant challenges when it comes to pursuing education and career opportunities. Marriage, child-rearing, and family responsibilities are commonly cited barriers. Additionally, lack of experience, communication challenges, and insufficient family support further obstruct their participation in the workforce. Cultural factors, such as restrictive in-laws, also play a role in limiting women's career aspirations.

Despite these challenges, women demonstrate resilience and a desire to overcome these obstacles. For instance, many suggest that home-based work opportunities could allow them to earn an income while managing household duties. There is a need for more supportive programmes that address the specific barriers women face, including affordable childcare, flexible work arrangements, and training opportunities that can be pursued from home or within the community.

Table 50 Reason for not continuing studies among dropped-out girls

Reasons	Per cent
Financial problem	28.5
Family problem	12.9
Being married	53.6
Being a mother	1.5
Personal problem	1.7
Study was stopped after failing	0.8
Feeling stressed/lost interest	2.3
Parent died	2.1
Covid situation	0.8
Husband interrupts	0.2
Due to change of residence	0.2
Disability	0.6
Total	100.0

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 51 indicates that a lower percentage of young women participate in school programmes. About 38 per cent participated and 28 per cent have the experience to organise and leading the management related issues. This low percentage of participation indicates that not every school organise such kinds of programmes or that girls are less inclined to attend.

Table 51 Adolescent girls participated and organise programmes at school

Upazila	Ever participated in an annual or any programme at school			Ever organised an annual or any programme at school		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	18	82	100	33	67	100
Bajitpur	41	59	100	24	76	100
Hossainpur	41	59	100	25	75	100
Itna	42	58	100	32	68	100
Karimganj	30	70	100	38	62	100

(Table 51 contd.)

(Table 51 contd.)

Upazila	Ever participated in an annual or any programme at school			Ever organised an annual or any programme at school		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Katiadi	39	61	100	27	73	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	34	66	100	28	73	100
Kuliarchar	38	62	100	20	80	100
Mithamain	45	55	100	12	88	100
Tarail	44	56	100	19	81	100
Pakundia	43	57	100	50	50	100
Nikli	34	66	100	20	80	100
Bhairab	38	62	100	35	65	100
Total	38	62	100	28	72	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Among those who participated and organised are related to the cultural programmes (56 per cent), annual function (12 per cent), sports activities (24 per cent), scouts and girls guide (16 per cent) (table 52). Cultural programmes and annual functions improve public speaking, confidence, and creativity, all of which are important for roles requiring communication and innovation skills. Participation in sports promote teamwork, leadership, and time management, which are invaluable in collaborative work environments. Volunteering experiences further encourage empathy, problem-solving, and organisational skills, foundational for service-oriented and management roles. Similarly, involvement in Scouts or Girls Guide activities promote leadership, resilience, and cooperation, benefiting roles involving responsibility and team-based projects. Picnics, meanwhile, promote social interaction and planning abilities, particularly useful in customer service and event management. Finally, extracurricular activities strengthen critical thinking, time management, and collaboration, important skills across all professional fields.

Table 52 Name of the school programmes girls were involved in

Name of the school programmes	Per cent
Cultural programmes	56.3
Annual function	12.6
Sports	24.6
Volunteer	4.2
Scouts/ Girls Guide	16.2
Picnic	0.6
Curriculum activities	3.0
Total	100.0

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

A large share of both age groups has limited experience with travelling alone, with most never visiting outside their district (table 53). This suggests a restriction on mobility, potentially due to safety concerns or societal norms. Surprisingly, mobility within the own district is also lower which validates the earlier

findings that parents and relatives of girls prefer more home-based economic opportunities rather than visiting outside of home even for receiving training.

Table 53 How far have you travelled alone without family members

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)				Young women (17-26)			
	Far away within the own district	Far away outside the own district	Never have gone	Total	Far away within the own district	Far away outside the own district	Never have gone	Total
Austagram	9	12	79	100	16	14	70	100
Bajitpur	2	12	86	100	4	16	80	100
Hossainpur	0	8	93	100	11	11	78	100
Itna	2	18	80	100	13	26	60	100
Karimganj	10	17	73	100	9	8	84	100
Katiadi	3	21	77	100	13	9	79	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	2	5	93	100	9	18	73	100
Kuliarchar	6	13	81	100	15	17	68	100
Mithamain	9	14	78	100	19	21	60	100
Tarail	2	10	88	100	13	15	72	100
Pakundia	6	14	80	100	15	25	60	100
Nikli	2	9	89	100	13	13	75	100
Bhairab	6	11	83	100	8	13	78	100
Total	4	13	83	100	11	16	73	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The career aspirations of young women in Kishoreganj highlight a mix of traditional and emerging interests. A significant share, 24.3 per cent, aspire to roles in teaching, while 12.9 per cent are interested in healthcare, indicating strong leanings towards service-oriented professions (table 54). Additionally, some young women show aspirations in business, freelancing, and entrepreneurship (5.3 per cent), signalling a shift towards self-employment and independent career paths, particularly within digital fields.

Private sector, government, and defence roles appeal to 14.5 per cent of respondents, showing a preference for stable, structured employment. Creative and technical careers, including tailoring, engineering, and ICT, also attract interest, suggesting an openness to careers that combine technical and practical skills. Nonetheless, 6.9 per cent remain uncertain about their future career paths, while 14.2 per cent focus on traditional domestic roles such as homemaking.

These career preferences underscore the diverse aspirations within the young female population in Kishoreganj, from traditional roles to roles requiring specialised technical skills. The data reflects a labour market potential shaped by both conventional job roles and a growing inclination towards independent, skills-based work.

Table 54 What is your dream/what do you want to be when you grow up?

What is your dream/what do you want to be when you grow up?	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Job (Private)	7.5	11.7	9.6
Govt Job	1.9	1.6	1.7
Defence job	1.7	0.7	1.2
Banker	0.0	0.7	0.4
Business	1.1	3.2	2.1
Doctor	22.6	3.6	12.9
Engineer	1.2	0.2	0.7
Entrepreneur/Freelancer	1.8	4.5	3.2
Go abroad	1.1	1.0	1.0
Islamic scholar/ Hafez	3.4	0.3	1.9
Teacher/Professor	27.2	21.5	24.3
Lawyer	1.7	1.0	1.3
Farming	0.1	0.8	0.5
Nurse	8.6	6.7	7.6
Police	6.8	2.4	4.5
Model/Actor/Singer/Dancer	0.7	0.2	0.5
Tailor/Skilled in sewing/Handicraft	1.5	4.4	3.0
Youtuber	0.2	0.0	0.1
Journalist	0.2	0.0	0.1
Pilot	0.4	0.1	0.2
Beauty Parlour	0.0	0.3	0.2
Social worker	0.2	0.5	0.4
To be educated	1.0	0.5	0.7
Computer training	0.4	0.1	0.2
Build a home	0.0	0.5	0.2
Do something yourself	0.0	0.7	0.4
Housewife/Good mother/Family maintaining	3.9	24.0	14.2
Do not know	5.0	8.8	6.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The table 55 presents the perceived way forward by which young women in Kishoreganj aspire to achieve their career goals, highlighting different approaches to employment and life ambitions. A large majority (62.4 per cent) identify education and learning as important steps towards their aspirations, underscoring their inclination towards formal education. A smaller segment (4.5 per cent) highlights training and skill development as important, which, combined with another 5.7 per cent citing structured training programmes, indicates a moderate recognition of vocational skills as important to career development.

For some, self-driven approaches like hard work, personal effort, and perseverance are significant, with 6.5 per cent valuing these attributes. Notably, 7.9 per cent see marriage or becoming an 'ideal housewife' as a primary life goal, while 2.3 per cent focus on family maintenance, indicating a traditional orientation within this demographic.

Only a small proportion view direct employment opportunity (1.2 per cent) or business entrepreneurship (0.9 per cent) as viable means of achieving their ambitions, and an additional 2 per cent value financial earnings as important. Another 7.8 per cent are uncertain of the means to achieve their goals. These varied pathways reveal a labour market preference strongly skewed towards education, with lesser emphasis on entrepreneurship or direct entry into employment, shaping a distinctive landscape of career expectations among young women in the region.

Table 55 Plan to fulfill the dream

Activities	Per cent
By education/Learning	62.4
By training/skill development/skill enhancement	4.5
By hard working/own effort/Struggle	6.5
By doing job/Get opportunity/Get chance	1.2
Experience/Learning through work	1.9
Parents support	0.1
To opening a shop/Start own business/Entrepreneur	0.9
Earn money/making money	2.0
By taking loans	0.1
By taking Job Preparation	0.1
Expertise in field	0.3
Family maintenance	2.3
By knowledge about business	0.2
By honest activities	1.6
Being an ideal housewife/Get married	7.9
By acquiring religious knowledge	0.1
By travelling/Blogging	0.2
Following the Islamic path	0.2
Going abroad	0.2
Practice	0.2
Through training programs	5.7
By husband/Family support	0.1
By helping the local people	0.1
Don't know/No idea	7.8
Total	100.0

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

6.4 Decision-making

Decision-making autonomy among adolescent girls and young women in Kishoreganj is generally constrained, with notable differences by age group. Only 23 per cent of adolescent girls feel able to make decisions in their lives, compared to 51 per cent of young women, indicating some increase in autonomy with age (table 56). However, a significant portion of decisions about girls' lives are made by elder women, primarily concerning education, marriage, and health. The majority of families (56 per cent for adolescent girls and 58 per cent for young women) retain control over 'all aspects' of the girls' decisions, particularly in critical areas like marriage and education, with only 18-20 per cent indicating no female decision-making authority.

Table 56 Elder women make decisions about

Upazila	All about girls	Only about girl's education	Only about girl's marriage	Only about girl's health	Women do not make any decisions	Total
<i>Adolescent girls (13-16)</i>						
Austagram	50	3	3	24	21	100
Bajitpur	63	12	1	4	20	100
Hossainpur	35	13	0	15	38	100
Itna	59	8	0	15	18	100
Karimganj	51	10	6	13	21	100
Katiadi	64	3	4	10	19	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	50	8	3	27	12	100
Kuliarchar	62	17	0	2	19	100
Mithamain	43	9	0	24	24	100
Tarail	54	13	0	25	8	100
Pakundia	69	13	1	9	9	100
Nikli	65	0	0	20	15	100
Bhairab	56	9	0	21	15	100
Total	56	9	2	16	18	100
<i>Young women (17-26)</i>						
Austagram	57	11	3	19	11	100
Bajitpur	68	4	2	5	21	100
Hossainpur	50	11	2	11	26	100
Itna	50	3	3	22	22	100
Karimganj	50	8	0	8	35	100
Katiadi	64	9	1	10	16	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	53	5	2	19	21	100
Kuliarchar	62	4	4	2	28	100
Mithamain	50	3	2	21	24	100
Tarail	47	13	2	19	19	100

(Table 56 contd.)

(Table 56 contd.)

Upazila	All about girls	Only about girl's education	Only about girl's marriage	Only about girl's health	Women do not make any decisions	Total
Pakundia	74	8	0	5	12	100
Nikli	67	0	2	27	4	100
Bhairab	61	2	0	20	16	100
Total	58	6	2	14	20	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 57 Can girls make any decisions in their life? by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	26	74	100	43	57	100
Bajitpur	22	78	100	48	52	100
Hossainpur	10	90	100	46	54	100
Itna	26	74	100	60	40	100
Karimganj	28	72	100	38	63	100
Katiadi	27	73	100	41	59	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	8	92	100	45	55	100
Kuliarchar	19	81	100	62	38	100
Mithamain	26	74	100	43	57	100
Tarail	27	73	100	62	38	100
Pakundia	29	71	100	74	26	100
Nikli	28	72	100	58	42	100
Bhairab	33	67	100	54	46	100
Total	23	77	100	51	49	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

While young women have somewhat greater control, decisions on significant personal matters remain limited: only 28.5 per cent feel able to decide on travelling alone, and just 0.8 per cent feel they can make decisions independently across all areas (table 58).

Table 58 What matters can girls decide for themselves

Destinations	Per cent
Going alone somewhere far away	28.5
Going somewhere far away with friends	33.0
Staying away from home at a relative's house for more than a day	69.4
Organising an event at home	23.6
Participating in extracurricular activities	28.2
About everything	0.8
Go to parents' home	0.8

(Table 58 contd.)

(Table 58 contd.)

Destinations	Per cent
Decisions about my own affairs	0.6
Family purpose	0.3
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

A majority of families support the dreams of young women, but the emphasis remains on traditional roles like marriage and family maintenance (41.2 per cent) (table 59). This highlights a gap between individual aspirations and familial expectations.

Table 59 Family agreement with this dream of girls by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)				Young women (17-26)			
	Yes	No	Do not know	Total	Yes	No	Do not know	Total
Austagram	85	9	6	100	92	5	3	100
Bajitpur	99	0	1	100	91	1	7	100
Hossainpur	90	3	8	100	89	2	9	100
Itna	89	5	6	100	85	7	7	100
Karimganj	90	1	8	100	76	3	21	100
Katiadi	90	6	4	100	94	3	4	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	83	6	11	100	80	1	20	100
Kuliarchar	94	0	6	100	91	0	9	100
Mithamain	95	5	0	100	84	12	3	100
Tarail	94	6	0	100	94	4	2	100
Pakundia	97	0	3	100	95	5	0	100
Nikli	85	9	7	100	90	6	4	100
Bhairab	94	4	2	100	86	6	8	100
Total	91	4	5	100	87	4	9	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Furthermore, a strong emphasis on traditional roles such as marriage and household responsibilities reflect a cultural expectation, with 41.2 per cent of families imagining these roles for their daughters (table 60), creating a divergence from individual aspirations. The data suggests limited decision-making autonomy for young women, where societal expectations heavily influence personal freedoms, likely impacting career and life choices. This underscores potential challenges within the labour market, as personal and familial expectations affect women's career participation and development.

Table 60 Dreams of the parents about their girls

Parent's aspirations about girls	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
To study	21.2	22.9	22.1
Teacher	3.0	2.9	2.9
Job	6.1	0.0	2.9

(Table 60 contd.)

(Table 60 contd.)

Parent's aspirations about girls	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Govt. Job	6.1	0.0	2.9
Engineer	3.0	0.0	1.5
Marriage & family maintain/ Housewife	36.4	45.7	41.2
Nurse	0.0	2.9	1.5
Something to do	6.1	0.0	2.9
Fullfill my dream	0.0	2.9	1.5
Nothing	3.0	17.1	10.3
Do not know	15.2	5.7	10.3
Total	100	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

6.5 Overall findings

In Kishoreganj, women's access to education and skill development is challenged by socio-cultural expectations, economic constraints, and familial priorities. High NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates, particularly among young women aged 20-24 (73 per cent), indicate that many are married or engaged in unpaid domestic work, resulting in a labour market mismatch. Cultural expectations restrict mobility, as most young women have limited travel experience, impacting their career prospects. While many aspire to teaching, healthcare, and emerging sectors like entrepreneurship, traditional roles and financial barriers often limit career development. Despite some autonomy, family-dominated decision-making persists, especially around marriage, education, and employment. Although families generally support women's dreams, they often emphasise traditional roles, leading to a gap between aspirations and realities. To address these challenges, accessible childcare, flexible work, and home-based training could enhance economic participation and align with the women's goals and local labour demands.

7. EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS IN KISHOREGANJ: FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

7.1 Supply of skills

This section assesses young women's vocational background, highlighting a modest engagement in structured training programmes and a lack of advanced vocational skills beyond traditional domains. This section mirrors this, noting that while some young women have received training (mainly from private institutions), these programmes are often limited in scope and predominantly focused on low-skill areas. Additionally, soft skill proficiency is generally moderate, with gaps in leadership, decision-making, and conflict resolution—skills important for developing in diverse work environments.

7.1.1 Government Training Programmes

One of the major skill development sources is the TVET institutions in Bangladesh. These institutions report that most female seats remain vacant due to the lack of eagerness, mobility, distance, etc. The parents of the girls also discourage them from vocational educational pursuits.

Employment Opportunities and Skills in Demand: Forty-two different training programmes offered by government organisations like DYD and MoWCA are in Kishroeganj district. These programs include leather product manufacturing, paper bag production, confectionery, cooking, fruit cultivation, shrimp farming, poultry rearing, and more.

Club Activities for Adolescent Girls: The MoWCA works with women and children, particularly adolescents aged 13-16 years. It operates adolescent clubs at the union and upazila levels. Each club consists of 20 adolescent girls and 10 adolescent boys. These clubs host various activities, including songs, poems, and karate training, and are led by trained teachers who receive a daily allowance. The clubs maintain a structured schedule but remain closed on Saturdays and Sundays. Gender promoters manage the sessions, dividing them into two classes. Additionally, there are 8 clubs equipped with sports equipment, hosting annual competitions and providing snacks for children. Nationwide, there are 4,883 clubs under the Directorate General of Women and Children Affairs, functioning as part of government projects.

Available Training Programmes: The DYD currently offers training in computer skills, boutique work, batik, sewing, designing, handicrafts, poultry farming, and vegetable farming. These programmes are primarily provided by the government, with no involvement from NGOs or private sector organisations. Training focuses on practical skills, targeting adolescent girls and young women who are still studying. Most programmes last between 15 and 30 days and are conducted in classroom settings. It is important to note that computer training programmes are highly popular among the youth at the upazila level. However, it is only available at the district level.

Emerging Training Programmes: The trainers believe that the demand for training programmes in computers, automobile engineering, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, dressmaking, shoemaking, driving, and farm machinery is expected to grow, while no programmes are anticipated to become obsolete in the near future.

Training Provided by Technical School and College: The courses cover a wide range of disciplines, including lathe machine operation, milling machine operation, grinding machine operation, drill machine operation, automobile engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, welding, and more. This organisation focuses primarily on teaching automobile technology.

Participant Selection and Support by Government Organisations: Training programmes are available to girls aged 18–35, with priority given to educated and motivated individuals. Courses such as computer skills, boutique work, sewing, and livestock farming often attract participants with prior work experience. All programmes are government-funded, and participants receive transportation allowances; however, no additional support services like childcare or financial aid are provided.

Challenges in Implementation and Operations of Training: Key challenges include a lack of budget, logistical support, and qualified trainers, particularly in rural and remote areas. Societal norms often discourage women from participating in training programmes. Budget constraints, with inadequate daily allowances for trainers, further hinder the recruitment and retention of skilled trainers. Operational challenges also include insufficient infrastructure, such as training rooms, computers, and projectors.

7.1.2 Skills composition

The tables (61-63) provide empirical data on the current state of skill acquisition, training engagement, and soft skill proficiency among adolescent girls and young women in Kishoreganj. Participation in skill development programmes is relatively low, with a higher percentage of training in areas like tailoring and computer skills. Training is primarily offered through private institutions.

Table 61 Have you taken any technical or soft skills training? by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	12	88	100	14	86	100
Bajitpur	2	98	100	18	82	100
Hossainpur	15	85	100	22	78	100
Itna	2	98	100	10	90	100
Karimganj	11	89	100	16	84	100
Katiadi	15	85	100	19	81	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	7	93	100	18	82	100
Kuliarchar	0	100	100	11	89	100
Mithamain	12	88	100	21	79	100
Tarail	8	92	100	13	87	100
Pakundia	14	86	100	23	77	100
Nikli	4	96	100	13	88	100
Bhairab	6	94	100	16	84	100
Total	8	92	100	17	83	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The tables (62-63) reveal limited participation in formal training programmes, with only a small percentage of adolescent girls (13-16 years) and young women (17-26 years) engaged in skill development. In areas such as tailoring and computer skills, participation remains uneven across Upazilas, with most showing poor involvement rates. This lack of engagement in training highlights a significant supply-side gap, which reduces the human capital development potential among these young women. Furthermore, the concentration of training in a few areas in skill development programmes likely contributes to the skills mismatch in demand for more diversified skills across sectors.

Table 62 Training received

Training areas	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Tailoring/ Sewing/ Embroidery	73.9	58.1	63.1
Computer training	20.3	28.4	25.8
Handicraft/ Hand paint	1.5	5.4	4.2
Livestock rearing/ farming/ Poultry	0.0	3.4	2.3
Beauty parlour/ Beautification	1.5	0.7	0.9
Baking item/ Food Making	0.0	1.4	0.9
Ansar-VDP Training	0.0	2.7	1.8
Others	2.9	0.0	0.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Training received from private institutions is higher than that received by public, NGO, and other types of intervention. This perhaps can explain the concentrated skills intervention in the selected upazila of Kishoreganj.

Table 63 Training received from types of institution

Institution type	13-16 Years	17-26 Years	Total
Public	11.6	31.1	24.9
Private	52.2	52.0	52.1
NGO	2.9	2.0	2.3
From abroad	0.0	0.7	0.5
Joint (government and private)	1.5	0.0	0.5
From family (Father/Mother/Sister)	18.8	5.4	9.7
From Relative	2.9	3.4	3.2
From Neighbour	1.5	2.0	1.8
Known person	8.7	3.4	5.1
Total	100	100	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The tables detailing the nature of the training received highlight a predominant focus on tailoring/ sewing (63.1 per cent) and a substantially lower engagement in high-demand sectors like computer training (26.7 per cent). Training provision is primarily sourced from private institutions (52.1 per cent) rather than public or NGO sources. This reliance on private institutions not only limits accessibility due to potential cost barriers but also suggests an uneven distribution of training resources that may not fully align with the region's economic development needs, as mentioned in section 4.

7.1.3 In training or not

While current enrolment in training programmes is low, there is a significant interest in skill improvement, especially in tailoring and computer skills.

Table 64 Currently enrolled in training programme by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	6	94	100	3	97	100
Bajitpur	0	100	100	1	99	100
Hossainpur	3	98	100	0	100	100
Itna	0	100	100	0	100	100
Karimganj	4	96	100	0	100	100
Katiadi	4	96	100	0	100	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	2	98	100	2	98	100
Kuliarchar	0	100	100	0	100	100
Mithamain	0	100	100	2	98	100
Tarail	0	100	100	2	98	100
Pakundia	0	100	100	5	95	100
Nikli	2	98	100	0	100	100
Bhairab	1	99	100	2	98	100
Total	2	98	100	1	99	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

However, the traditional skills-based training set is found to be the most available skill training in the Kishoreganj district. This set is not related to local economic activities but rather self-employment activities. At the same time, young women prefer these traditional skills, as mentioned in Table 70, which are less required by local employers.

Skills that are high in demand among young women include (a) Nakshi Kantha handwork; (b) Boutique and batik techniques; (c) Sewing & Embroidery; (d) Beautification; (e) Poultry farming; (f) Vegetable farming; (g) Livestock rearing; and (h) Computer and freelancing.

7.2 Demand for skills

Both groups of girls show a high interest in learning new skills and improving existing ones (table 65). Their preferred training areas are tailoring, computer skills, handicrafts, and beauty parlour services. These are traditional, female-dominated sectors (except computer training), which may limit opportunities for future exploration in other economic activities.

Table 65 Open to learning new skills and improving existing ones by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	74	26	100	59	41	100
Bajitpur	72	28	100	76	24	100
Hossainpur	65	35	100	48	52	100
Itna	71	29	100	62	38	100

(Table 65 contd.)

(Table 65 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Karimganj	82	18	100	79	21	100
Katiadi	65	35	100	66	34	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	60	40	100	68	32	100
Kuliarchar	87	13	100	81	19	100
Mithamain	67	33	100	76	24	100
Tarail	67	33	100	64	36	100
Pakundia	70	30	100	68	32	100
Nikli	65	35	100	56	44	100
Bhairab	67	33	100	63	37	100
Total	69	31	100	68	32	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Computer training, however, is an area where women's interest is particularly high, as evidenced by their interest in freelancing (table 66). This strong desire for further training reflects a latent demand for skill development opportunities, supporting the assertion of the potential within the human capital of young women in Kishoreganj. Nevertheless, the focus on traditionally gendered skills like tailoring suggests socio-cultural influences that could restrict women's broader employability and economic mobility.

Table 66 Types of training willing to undertake

Training type	Per cent
Tailoring/Sewing/Embroidery	63.9
Computer training	53.5
Handicraft/Hand paint	6.8
Livestock rearing/farming/Poultry	0.9
Beauty parlour/ Beautification	5.1
Baking item/Food Making	0.4
Ansar-VDP Training	0.1
Nursing/Caregiver/Hospitality	0.6
Freelancing	5.1
Mobile service	0.1
English language	1.2
Driving	0.7
Art and design	0.6
Online business	0.1
Marketing	0.2
Karate	0.2
Industrial training	0.1
Graphics design	0.1

(Table 66 contd.)

(Table 66 contd.)

Training type	Per cent
Electric work	0.1
Any suitable training	0.3
Others	0.1
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The demand analysis suggests a need for practical and sector-specific skills in areas like tailoring, computer skills, and specific vocational roles in Kishoreganj. Employers seek proficiency in both technical and soft skills, such as problem-solving, adaptability, and communication. While there is interest in learning, skill acquisition among young women is limited, especially in technical areas outside traditional vocations like tailoring. This gap indicates a disconnect between the skills desired by employers and the skills that young women are currently acquiring, underscoring the need for targeted skill development in non-traditional fields and high-demand sectors.

According to local employers, finding skilled workers in the industrial and tourism sectors in Kishoreganj district is challenging. Moreover, the required skills set are low-paying jobs which does not attract the local women. This explains why young women prefer self-employment over low-paying jobs in an industrial setup.

Table 67 More difficult jobs to find skilled workers in Kishoreganj district

Construction	Manufacturing	Tourism/Hospitality
Plumbers	Assemblers	Cleaners
Site managers	Cobblers	Laundry workers
	Food preparers and makers	Kitchen helpers
	Food tasters and graders	Translators

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Employers in the food processing and poultry industries in the Kishoreganj district express that while they expect semi-skilled workers capable of operating institutional equipment, they often encounter low or unskilled workers during recruitment. These employers estimate that approximately 70-90 per cent of their current workforce is semi- to highly-skilled, largely due to on-the-job training and work experience. Despite this, they face challenges in finding skilled workers when hiring. However, the employers argue that the real issue lies not in the scarcity of skilled workers but in the workers' lack of willingness, professionalism, and interest in learning new techniques. They note that the misconception of simply operating equipment as a measure of skill needs to be addressed and corrected.

Employers in Kishoreganj district project a high demand for both low- and high-paying jobs in the near future, including roles for labourers, engineers, and managerial-level positions. These occupations offer competitive salaries and hefty benefits as observed in industrial clusters of Bangladesh. Employers attribute the expected demand to the ongoing expansion of the BSCIC industrial zone and the local economic growth. Within 3–5 years, they expect the industrial zone to be fully developed; currently, about 400 industries have already acquired plots for business setup. For instance, each factory employs

a minimum of 20 workers. In that case, it will create at least 8,000 jobs in Kishoreganj, potentially driving further economic growth by encouraging the development of numerous supporting manufacturing and service-oriented industries. Given this prospective employment boom, preparing the local youth—especially young women—as a skilled workforce could significantly benefit the district. However, it was observed from the employers that the BSCIC is not playing an active role in promoting entrepreneurship and employment, and the organisation needs to be more supportive towards female entrepreneurs.

Table 68 Jobs expected to be in higher demand in the future

Construction	Manufacturing	Tourism/Hospitality
General labourers	Electronic mechanics	Sales
Electricians	Technicians	Drivers
Carpenters	Engineers	Supervisors
Engineers	Shoemakers	Reception staff
Drivers	Quality control staff	
Wielders	Packers	
Site managers	Textile handicraft workers	
	Sewing machine operators	
	Shoemakers	
	Food preparers and makers	
	Food tasters and graders	

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

7.2.1 Qualifications for local job

Awareness of the job market is limited among both age groups, with a larger percentage of young women being unaware of job opportunities. The limited awareness of job search practices and current employment opportunities, especially among young women aged 17-26, who show a lower percentage of engagement in job market skills such as resume writing and interview preparation (table 69-70). This knowledge gap likely constrains their capacity to effectively enter the workforce. The insights into the demand for market-oriented skills, there is a need for career counselling and job readiness programmes to bridge the existing gap between training outcomes and the labour market's requirements.

Table 69 Experience with job searching, resume writing, and job interviews by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	74	26	100	27	73	100
Bajitpur	72	28	100	21	79	100
Hossainpur	65	35	100	17	83	100
Itna	71	29	100	19	81	100
Karimganj	82	18	100	15	85	100
Katiadi	65	35	100	15	85	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	60	40	100	20	80	100

(Table 69 contd.)

(Table 69 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Kuliarchar	87	13	100	17	83	100
Mithamain	67	33	100	19	81	100
Tarail	67	33	100	19	81	100
Pakundia	70	30	100	29	71	100
Nikli	65	35	100	27	73	100
Bhairab	67	33	100	14	86	100
Total	69	31	100	20	80	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 70 Aware of the current job market and employment opportunities by age and Upazila

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	21	79	100	27	73	100
Bajitpur	33	67	100	37	63	100
Hossainpur	25	75	100	24	76	100
Itna	23	77	100	29	71	100
Karimganj	17	83	100	18	83	100
Katiadi	27	73	100	24	76	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	14	86	100	21	79	100
Kuliarchar	35	65	100	36	64	100
Mithamain	16	84	100	28	72	100
Tarail	25	75	100	36	64	100
Pakundia	30	70	100	38	62	100
Nikli	24	76	100	38	63	100
Bhairab	23	77	100	31	69	100
Total	24	76	100	29	71	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) is relatively low, especially among young women, with a preference for learning mathematics over other subjects (table 71-72). There is potential to encourage more engagement in STEM fields through tailored programmes.

Table 71 Interest in science, math and engineering

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	35	65	100	27	73	100
Bajitpur	47	53	100	26	74	100

(Table 71 contd.)

(Table 71 contd.)

Upazila	Adolescent girls (13-16)			Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Hossainpur	23	78	100	9	91	100
Itna	33	67	100	19	81	100
Karimganj	41	59	100	23	78	100
Katiadi	31	69	100	21	79	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	34	66	100	25	75	100
Kuliarchar	56	44	100	32	68	100
Mithamain	50	50	100	41	59	100
Tarail	33	67	100	21	79	100
Pakundia	56	44	100	32	68	100
Nikli	48	52	100	31	69	100
Bhairab	51	49	100	29	71	100
Total	42	58	100	26	74	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Table 72 Types of interest to learn STEM

Interests	Per cent
Interest in learning Mathematics	29.5
Interest in learning Science	5.2
Interest in learning English	2.1
Interest in learning other subjects (Bangla/Arabic/History)	1.9
To become an Engineer	1.4
To become a Doctor	2.4
To become a Scientist	0.3
To become a Nurse	1.0
To get a job	8.6
To know more mathematics and Science	46.8
To increase my knowledge more	1.4
To know for research	0.2
To fulfill dreams	0.3
To do social work	1.0
To educate children	0.3
For Higher education	1.6
Computer learning	1.0
Being an entrepreneur yourself	0.3
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

7.2.2 Vocational skills for employment

The average distance to training facilities differs across regions, with some upazilas, like Hossainpur, having closer access than others (table 73), like Bajitpur. which indicates that accessibility may be a barrier to participation in training programmes. Additionally, as mentioned earlier the parents and relatives of young women are less reluctant to let their girls attend in vocational training institutes. Mobility is one of the key challenges for girls in the Kishoreganj district where the average distance shows a total of 1-2-hour long journey to visit the training centre and to return.

Table 73 Distance of the training institute from home location

Upazila	Adolescent Girls (13-16 Years)		Young Women (17-26 Years)	
	Observations	Average distance (in KM)	Observations	Average distance (in KM)
Overall	642	6.4	696	7.1
Austagram	22	6.2	25	5.6
Bajitpur	66	8.3	63	9.8
Bhairab	69	5.4	70	5.7
Hossainpur	33	2.5	37	7.4
Itna	41	3.7	49	3.5
Karimganj	53	7.6	58	8.1
Katiadi	59	7.1	62	5.6
Kishoreganj Sadar	87	8.9	108	9.6
Kuliarchar	46	8.8	48	9.0
Mithamain	43	5.5	44	5.3
Nikli	32	3.6	40	5.7
Pakundia	57	7.3	61	8.5
Tarail	34	1.6	31	2.2

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

In terms of vocational skills, tailoring emerges as a common skill—some learned it at home while others received formal training from the Upazila Parishad. However, not all women had the opportunity to pursue such skills during their schooling years, indicating gaps in access to skill development opportunities. This gap highlights a need for more widespread vocational training and educational opportunities that accommodate the diverse aspirations of women in the community.

The major available training institutes include as follows where the girls need to visit to receive training—

- a. Youth Development Training Centre
- b. Upazila Parishad Training Centre
- c. Technical Training Centres

- d. Skill Development Training Centres
- e. BRAC Training Institute
- f. District Social Services Office
- g. Computer Training Centres
- h. Various High Schools and Madrassas
- i. Women's Specialized Training Centres
- j. Department of ICT and Digital IT Centres
- k. Kishoreganj Polytechnic Institute
- l. Primary and Secondary Schools

Trainers in government training institutions believe that the current curriculum is not sufficient to meet the demands of the domestic job market, as it lacks adequate integration of modern technology. Therefore, it is important that vocational training programmes are to be introduced as benign for adolescent girls and young women who take part in them and are ready for the formal job market or for self-employment. The training needs to address local, regional, and global market demands to align with the participants' aspirations.

7.2.3 Soft skills for employment

Both adolescent girls and young women show moderate levels of proficiency in adaptability, time management, and communication skills. However, only a small percentage are considered very proficient.

The proficiency levels in soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are largely moderate, with few young women achieving high proficiency. Table 74 shows that a significant percentage of young women remain in the 'moderate' to 'less proficient' categories across key soft skills, which are important for adaptability and success in formal employment. This indicates a gap and lack of soft skill training, which further challenges employability, especially in sectors that demand high interpersonal or critical thinking capabilities. Addressing this gap would require targeted soft skills programmes integrated or separated into existing vocational and technical training frameworks.

Table 74 Soft skills by age and Upazila

Soft skills	Age group	Not Proficient	Less Proficient	Moderate	Proficient	Very Proficient	Total
Listening	13-16	7	21	51	15	7	100
	17-26	6	21	46	19	7	100
Speaking	13-16	4	22	50	20	4	100
	17-26	5	21	44	25	5	100
Writing	13-16	6	27	47	16	4	100
	17-26	5	24	44	19	7	100
Teamwork and Collaboration	13-16	6	24	48	18	5	100
	17-26	6	22	45	20	6	100

(Table 74 contd.)

(Table 74 contd.)

Soft skills	Age group	Not Proficient	Less Proficient	Moderate	Proficient	Very Proficient	Total
Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking	13-16	6	25	50	13	5	100
	17-26	5	19	49	21	6	100
Adaptability and Flexibility	13-16	6	27	47	18	4	100
	17-26	6	20	46	21	7	100
Time Management	13-16	5	23	49	18	5	100
	17-26	5	19	51	19	6	100
Leadership Skills	13-16	6	28	50	13	3	100
	17-26	6	22	50	16	5	100
Conflict Resolution	13-16	6	29	50	11	3	100
	17-26	6	20	50	18	5	100
Decision-Making	13-16	6	27	46	16	5	100
	17-26	6	17	52	18	7	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The analysis highlights a significant gap between young women's current skills and the evolving demands of Kishoreganj's labour market. While there is interest in skill development, training opportunities are largely limited to traditional, low-skill areas, such as tailoring, which restricts broader employment potential. Although some private institutions provide training, the focus remains on skills that are less aligned with the emerging needs of expanding sectors like manufacturing and tourism. Additionally, soft skills such as leadership, adaptability, and communication, crucial for diverse work environments, are underdeveloped among young women.

As Kishoreganj's economic landscape shifts, particularly with the anticipated growth of the BSCIC industrial zone, there is an increasing demand for a more diverse and technically skilled workforce. By expanding training programmes to cover in-demand skills in non-traditional fields, including advanced vocational and soft skills, young women can be better skilled to meet these market needs.

7.3 Overall findings

The analysis reveals that young women in Kishoreganj face significant barriers to skill development and employability. Training engagement remains low, especially in non-traditional sectors, with most programmes focusing on basic skills like tailoring, computer literacy, and handicrafts. Private institutions dominate the training landscape, potentially limiting accessibility and scope. The skill composition reflects traditional female-dominated areas, suggesting socio-cultural preferences that restrict broader employability, despite a high interest in fields like freelancing and computer work. Demand for soft skills is also unmet, as young women show moderate proficiency in important areas like adaptability and communication. Limited vocational training facilities and socio-cultural constraints further reduce access, particularly for remote upazilas.

8. MARKET LINKAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN KISHOREGANJ: FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

8.1 Available opportunities

In Kishoreganj district, young entrepreneurs face challenges to market their products due to the limited access to networks. Young women often lack access to professional networks and business connections, which are important for securing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Additionally, prevalent gender biases and socio-cultural norms restrict young women's participation in the workforce, particularly in male-dominated sectors. Furthermore, insufficient access to capital and financial resources challenges young women from starting or expanding their businesses leading to many young women being confined to informal job markets with low wages and unstable employment conditions.

Young women in Kishoreganj have mentioned these challenges and entrepreneurs among them stated that their major challenge is to market/ ship the product. During their training from the MoWCA and Joyeeta Foundation, they were promised to ship their products to the whole of Bangladesh throughout Joyeeta, however, that was not implemented.

Table 75 Running an online business

Upazila	Young women (17-26)		
	Yes	No	Total
Austagram	3	97	100
Bajitpur	4	96	100
Hossainpur	0	100	100
Itna	0	100	100
Karimganj	0	100	100
Katiadi	4	96	100
Kishoreganj Sadar	1	99	100
Kuliarchar	0	100	100
Mithamain	0	100	100
Tarail	4	96	100
Pakundia	4	96	100
Nikli	2	98	100
Bhairab	0	100	100
Total	2	98	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

Local young women entrepreneurs supply food and bakery items, clothing products, handicrafts, boutique products, etc. Currently, they are selling their products in the local market where the market values including the demand for those products are low. Therefore, they produce less, and costs are usually higher which does not meet their expected income level to cover all the variable costs that are associated.

The same applies to the young women who are running online businesses (although a meagre rate of 2 per cent of young women) and their dream is to open a shop or showroom in the urban areas to better promote their products. Very few (1/2) entrepreneurs have succeeded in doing so, however, others conduct these activities from home or rented space near their home.

Table 76 Types of online business are running

Items	Per cent
Clothes	70.4
Baby dress	3.7
Baking items	3.7
Cosmetics	11.1
Product	7.4
Arts & Crafts	3.7
Total	100

Source: CPD Labour Market Assessment Survey, Kishoreganj (2024).

The curriculum of training programmes targeting entrepreneurship development should be designed to equip adolescent girls and young women with business management, inventory management, human resource management, cash flow management, and risk management skills related to their online or offline businesses. Such training will help them anticipate business trends, manage risks, and expand their businesses effectively.

8.2 Potential partnerships with local businesses, suppliers, and markets

The stakeholders, including training institutions, employers, and families, recognise the importance of supportive environments for women's education and career development. While some programmes, such as sewing and tailoring initiatives, exist, many women remain unaware of them. Additionally, there is growing awareness of the importance of personal skills like self-confidence, time management, and communication for workforce success. Women advocate for more home-based work opportunities, which would enable them to contribute economically while managing family responsibilities.

In order to do that, a partnership has to be made among the stakeholders as it can connect the young entrepreneurs with other business institutions that can play the role of backward and forward linkage businesses to develop the value chain in the Kishoreganj district.

Potential partnerships can be made with local shipping agencies and business institutions that provide raw materials or help to expand businesses and place the products in the market. Along with the shipping agencies, there are a number of industries for food, vegetables, poultry, shoes, etc. that are related to the online businesses that young women are currently running.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The inferences discussed require different types of collaboration, intervention and policy support from the government and stakeholders related to skills development. The suggestions are categorised into different issues and location-specific. The policy matrix highlighted in below table suggests undertaking initiative for the enhancement of skill development, employment opportunities, and labour market linkages for adolescent girls and young women in Kishoreganj and across the country through targeted training, career guidance, policy alignment, and innovative approaches like dual apprenticeship models, digital literacy, and partnerships with local and international stakeholders.

Table 77: Policy matrix for adolescent girls and young women

Issues	Location	Initiatives for adolescent girls (13-16)	Initiatives for young women (17-26)
Training and potential/current future employment opportunities	Austagram, Mithamain and Itna	To expand foundational skill development in non-traditional areas (e.g., digital literacy, foundational STEM courses)	
	Bhairab and Kishoreganj Sadar	Introduce skill courses tailored to emerging sectors like healthcare, computer training, and freelancing	
	Karimganj, Tarail and Pakundia		Diversify vocational training to include high-demand technical skills, such as sewing, computer applications, and business operations
	Itna and Hossainpur		Strengthen agricultural training by incorporating agribusiness management, eco-farming, and livestock rearing
Market linkage and value chain development	Austagram and Mithamain		To establish online marketplaces and digital selling platforms to connect local products with wider markets
			Skills development in e-commerce and online marketing
			To partner with local cooperatives to facilitate bulk sales and reduce logistics costs
	Bhairab and Bajitpur		To strengthen connections with local industries (e.g., shoe, garment, and food processing factories) to promote youth apprenticeships and direct employment
		To encourage partnerships between training institutes and businesses to create a “skills-to-job” pathway	
Training on basic digital literacy and businesses for young women	Mithamain, Nikli and Kuliarchar		To develop targeted training programmes in freelancing, content creation, and digital marketing for remote work opportunities
	Kishoreganj Sadar and Pakundia		To integrate intensive soft skills training, including leadership, conflict resolution, and customer handling

(Table 77 contd.)

(Table 77 contd.)

Issues	Location	Initiatives for adolescent girls (13-16)	Initiatives for young women (17-26)
Improving labour market linkages by age-specific apprenticeships for both adolescent and young women	Austagram and Katiadi	To partner with local businesses to establish paid apprenticeship programmes for adolescent girls and young women in industries with growth potential, such as eco-tourism, food processing, and light manufacturing	
Improving labour market linkages by career guidance and job readiness support for both adolescent and young women	Bhairab, Bajitpur and Hossainpur	To facilitate career counselling and job placement services	
	Kishoreganj Sadar		To establish a local career centre that provides resume writing, interview skills, and job application support
Policy and stakeholder engagement for systemic improvement	All upazillas in Kishoreganj	To form multi-stakeholder forums, including training institutions, local government, and private sector representatives, to align training with labour market demands and improve job placements	
		To create upazila-specific incentives for businesses to employ young women, such as tax reductions or subsidies for providing on-the-job training in high-demand skills	
Training on basic digital literacy and communication for adolescent girls	All upazillas in Kishoreganj	To provide introductory digital literacy and soft skills workshops in schools, covering communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills	
		To organise regular workshops with role models and career counsellors can improve girls' career aspirations and awareness	
Monitor the training types and quality	Across the country	To monitor the types of training being provided and the quality of that training programme	
Increasing foresee capacity		To collaborate with the private sector to understand future machine replacement in different industries and its impact on possible job loss so that govt can provide up-skilling support	
Encourage foreign investment in the training sector		To collaborate with internationally accredited institutions in order to get recognition for girls' skills	
Revise TVET curriculum		TVET curriculum needs to be reformed in collaboration with ISC and employers to incorporate their demand	
Create a database of employer		To rectify the national skills portal of NSDA of the employer's section	
Introduce a dual apprenticeship model		To introduce a dual apprenticeship model in vocational training to equip trainees with both theoretical and practical skills	

Source: Author's suggestions based on the findings of the study

Annex

Annex 1 Skills required for agriculture sectors

Agriculture Sectors	Technical Skills	Business Skills	Technology Skills	Soft Skills
Vegetable Farming Businessw	Knowledge of soil preparation, fertilisation, and irrigation techniques.	Budgeting and cost analysis for seeds, fertilisers, and tools.	Familiarity with modern farming equipment and tools.	Problem-solving to handle unexpected challenges like drought or pests.
	Crop rotation and sustainable farming practices.	Marketing and sales strategies for local and wholesale markets.	Use of mobile apps for monitoring weather, soil health, and market prices.	Communication skills to negotiate with buyers or suppliers.
	Pest and disease management using organic or chemical solutions.	Knowledge of government subsidies or grants for agriculture.		
	Understanding of weather patterns and seasonal planting.			
	Post-harvest management (sorting, grading, and packaging).			
Fish Cultivation	Knowledge of different fish species and their breeding requirements.	Financial planning for fish feed, pond maintenance, and marketing.	Use of water aeration systems and other aquaculture technologies.	Time management for monitoring daily fish farm activities.
	Skills in pond preparation, water quality testing, and management.	Knowledge of local demand and market networks for fish sales.	Monitoring tools for water temperature, pH levels, and oxygen levels.	Teamwork for managing larger fish farms with multiple workers.
	Feeding techniques and use of supplements for optimal growth.	Awareness of export opportunities for specific fish species.		
	Disease prevention and treatment for fish.			
	Fish harvesting, sorting, and storage.			
Crop and Fish Cultivation (Integrated Farming)	Integrated farming methods, including the use of fish farm waste as fertiliser for crops.	Strategic planning to balance investments and profits from both activities.	Use of aquaponic systems or other integrated farming technologies.	Adaptability to manage two interconnected yet distinct activities.
	Water resource management to benefit both crop irrigation and fish farming.	Diversifying produce (e.g., vegetables and fish) to attract varied customers.	Familiarity with modern irrigation systems.	Leadership and organisation to allocate resources effectively.

(Annex 1 contd.)

(Annex 1 contd.)

Agriculture Sectors	Technical Skills	Business Skills	Technology Skills	Soft Skills
	Understanding symbiotic relationships between crops and fish.	Knowledge of market trends for seasonal crops and fish.		
	Pest and weed control that is safe for both crops and fish.			
	Multi-tasking to manage both farming activities effectively.			

Source: Author's analysis based on the Labour Market Assessment of Kishoreganj District.

Annex 2 Skills required for industrial sectors

Industrial Sectors	Technical Skills	Business Skills	Soft Skills
Food and Beverage (e.g., Baking Factories, Ice Cream Factories, Confectionery)	Food processing and packaging.	Inventory management for ingredients.	Creativity in recipe development.
	Baking, freezing, and mixing techniques.	Marketing and branding of food products.	Time management for production cycles.
	Quality control and hygiene standards (HACCP knowledge).	Understanding of food safety regulations.	
	Equipment operation and maintenance.		
Textile and Fabric (e.g., Cloth-Making, Garment, Thread Mills, Jute Mills)	Sewing, weaving, and embroidery techniques.	Design and product development for market trends.	Attention to detail for quality control.
	Knowledge of fabric types, dyeing, and finishing processes.	Supply chain and inventory management.	Effective teamwork in production settings.
	Operation of textile machinery.		
Agriculture and Livestock (e.g., Poultry Farm, Agro-based SMEs)	Animal husbandry and poultry care.	Planning and budgeting for livestock businesses.	Problem-solving for animal health issues.
	Disease prevention and vaccination.	Marketing and distribution of products (e.g., eggs, meat).	Patience and dedication in livestock management.
	Feed management for optimal growth.		
Construction and Manufacturing (e.g., Brick-Making, Metal Factory, Coil Factory, Candle Mills, Rope-Making)	Operation of heavy machinery (e.g., brick kilns, metal casting).	Cost estimation and resource management.	Leadership for supervising factory workers.
	Knowledge of material properties (e.g., clay, metal, wax, fibre).	Distribution and supply chain logistics.	Analytical skills for troubleshooting production issues.
	Safety protocols in industrial environments.		

(Annex 2 contd.)

(Annex 2 contd.)

Industrial Sectors	Technical Skills	Business Skills	Soft Skills
Consumer Goods (e.g., Shoe Factory, Cigarette Factory)	Precision in product assembly (e.g., shoemaking, cigarette production).	Branding and market positioning of consumer goods.	Creativity in product design.
	Operation and maintenance of production equipment.	Quality assurance to meet customer expectations.	Team coordination in assembly lines.
	Knowledge of product design and manufacturing standards.		
Rice Mill	Operation of milling machinery.	Market research for pricing strategies.	Attention to detail for quality control.
	Knowledge of grading, sorting, and packaging of rice.	Inventory management for raw and processed rice.	Communication skills for negotiating with suppliers and buyers.
	Maintenance and troubleshooting of equipment.		

Source: Author's analysis based on the Labour Market Assessment of Kishoreganj District.

EndNote

¹EDC. (2018). *Labor Market Assessment Report*. Education Development Center (EDC). Available at <https://www.careevaluations.org/wp-content/uploads/Labor-Market-Assessment-final-04-18.pdf>

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The report uncovers the labour market dynamics of adolescent girls and young women in the Kishoreganj district, along with their dreams, aspirations, training demand, employment opportunities, flexibility in terms of mobility, socio-cultural norms, and familial responsibilities.



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