CPD

Working Paper 132

**Challenges for the Marginalised
Youth in Accessing Jobs**
How Effective is Public Service Delivery?

Khondaker Golam Moazzem
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CENTRE FOR POLICY DIALOGUE

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Abstract

The study brings forth the challenges of marginalised youth in accessing jobs and how effective is the public service delivery in addressing their challenges. Taking a life cycle approach, the study identifies four categories of challenges which include livelihood, education, training and employment-related issues of the youth. Lack of transparency and accountability of the concerned public offices deprive youths in accessing essential services related to these challenges. A standard operating procedure (SOP) should be maintained in order to ensure effectiveness, transparency and accountability of these public services. Increased budgetary allocation is required in a number of accounts, such as for better housing facilities, for accessing tertiary-level education and establishment of new schools, educational equipment, ICT labs and skill development of teachers. Establishment of specialised industrial estates/zones may be taken into consideration in regions where marginalised youths' concentration is high. Effective GO–NGO–private sector collaboration in accessing information and providing soft–hard skills of training, is also important.

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List of Tables, Figures and Diagrams

Acronyms

AGWEB	Association of Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs, Bangladesh
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BIIT	Bangladesh Institute of Information Technology
BITAC	Bangladesh Institute of Technical Assistance Centre
BRDB	Bangladesh Rural Development Board
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CSE	Computer Science and Engineering
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDM	Department of Disaster Management
DNCC	Dhaka North City Corporation
ESDO	Eco-Social Development Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HSC	Higher School Certificate
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
MAWTS	Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NID	National Identity (card)
NIET	National Institute of Engineering and Technology
NIS	National Integrity Strategy
NSA	Non-State Actor
NSDA	National Skill Development Authority
PPP	Public–Private Partnership
PRDS	Peace and Rights Development of Society
PRF	Projanmo Research Foundation
RMG	Readymade Garments
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SITC	Shyamoli Ideal Technical College
SMC	School Management Committee
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SSNP	Social Safety Net Programme
TMSS	Thengamara Mohila Shabuj Sangha
UCEP BD	Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs Bangladesh
UDDIPAN	United Development Initiatives for Programmed Actions
7FYP	Seventh Five-Year Plan

1. INTRODUCTION[*]

1.1 Background of the study

The sustained economic growth that Bangladesh has achieved over the last three decades and its future depend on, among others, its large productive labour force employed in different labour-intensive economic activities (ADB, 2016). Of the country's 64.1 million total labour force, approximately 11 million are 'youth', in the age group of 15–24 years, which forms the pillar of Bangladesh's labour force.[1] With the youth population being the major drivers of future economic growth, Bangladesh is now passing through a phase when there is high opportunity to reap the potential benefits of 'demographic dividend' (The World Bank, 2011; Khatun and Saadat, 2020). However, a major constraint in this scenario is that a large section of this young population, particularly those belonging to the marginalised communities, are not prepared or equipped aptly for the future labour market. Many among these youth, have limited access to quality education and training that are necessary to enter into the skilled labour market.[2]

Youth in Bangladesh, like in many other developing countries, do not belong to a homogenous group (Nugent and McNeill, 2016). Most importantly, the marginalised section of the youths have diverse identities in terms of their location, gender, religion, race, academic qualification, skills and level of vulnerabilities. Since they come from different and often challenging backgrounds, the job market, which usually provides a homogenous platform only, can offer limited scope for them. Therefore, the nature and extent of challenges for these youths towards entering the job market are different. They are further handicapped by being deprived of getting a premium on skills in this increasingly knowledge-based economy, which is considered to be the driver of employment, productivity and economic growth (Education for All, 2010). Bangladesh's performance in youth development is not satisfactory—it is one of the poor performers in the world. The Youth Development Index, prepared by the Commonwealth Secretariat shows that Bangladesh's overall ranking is at 146 out of 183 countries.[3] It is one of the weakest performers in creating employment and opportunity for the youth (177th) and ensuring quality education for the youth (140th). Providing adequate facilities for them—especially the marginalised—has been a challenge for the successive governments.

The ruling party during the national elections of 2018 promised to create 30 million jobs by 2030 (Bangladesh Awami League, 2018). This has also been echoed in the follow-up official agenda of the government—the national budget for FY2019-20 (GoB, 2019). Needless to say, the youth labour force would be the main beneficiary from the process of creating such large-scale employment. However, these youth need to be adequately educated and trained to cater the demands of the emerging job markets. Public institutions are supposed to play the key role of 'service-providers' in this regard, with private sector and civil society organisations (CSOs) to act as supplementary service-providers (ADB and ILO, 2016). However, it is observed that public institutions are not being able to provide effective services to the youth as per requirement, due to various reasons, such as

[1]This number increases to one-third of total labour force (20.1 million), if the age group covers youth aged between 15–29 years. Among these youth, 13.1 million are male and 7 million are female; and they constitute about 30 per cent of the total labour force.

[2]About 12.2 per cent of the total youth are unemployed, of which 16.8 per cent are female and 10.1 per cent are male. Besides, there is a large section of youth, to the tune of 7.4 million, who are not in employment, education and training (NEET).

[3]For details, please see The Commonwealth (2016).

unsatisfactory governance systems, inappropriate allocation of resources and weak delivery of vital public services (Shah, 2005). Effective public service delivery is one of the important targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which Bangladesh has committed to achieve by 2030. Hence, 'accountability' and 'transparency' in public service delivery, particularly with regard to education, training and employment, need to be made more effective.

In this backdrop, the present study will examine how the public service delivery system related to education, training and employment ensures and creates scope for employment for the marginalised youth, in the future job market.

1.2 Review of global accord, national policies and electoral pledges on education, skill and employment

The Bangladesh Government in its commitment to implement SDGs by 2030 has emphasised on the issues of youth employment and effectiveness of public service delivery on many scores[4], which are underwritten as part of the SDG 16. According to SDG 16.6, countries will 'develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels' by 2030. The two indicators to assess Target 16.6 are:

a. **16.6.1:** Primary government expenditures as a proportion of original approved budget, by sector (or by budget codes or similar); and
b. **16.6.2:** Proportion of the population satisfied with their last experience of public services.

The implementation status of 16.6 in Bangladesh has been analysed in detail in a review report on Goal 16 (Rahman, 2020). The report has broadly reviewed activities of public service delivery institutions covered under the National Integrity Strategy (NIS), and found that: (i) the legal framework and institutional arrangements of the public institutions mentioned in the NIS are well-defined; (ii) there are many laws to determine effective functioning, transparency and accountability of these institutions; (iii) NIS institutions are empowered with institutional arrangement; (iv) selected institutions have capacity to utilise the allocated budget effectively; (v) various regulatory and institutional initiatives have been undertaken to make institutions effective; (vi) huge gaps are observed in terms of implementation of various laws and policies; and (vii) regressive legal reforms have been undertaken. Overall, the report indicates that youth could be the victim of weak enforcement of rules and policies of NIS-related institutions.

Various national policies have addressed the issues of youth employment, as well as their education and training with a view to make them skilled for the job market. The relevant policies include the draft Youth Policy 2017 (Ministry of Youth and Sports, n.d.), Seventh Five-Year Plan (7FYP) (2016–2020)[5], and Ten-Year Perspective Plan (2011–2020).[6] One of the highlights of the national budget for FY2019-20 was the target to create 30 million additional jobs by 2030 (GoB, 2019). However, no particular mention has been made about how the youth, particularly the marginalised, will benefit from public institutions in education, training and employment, and how effective public service delivery will

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[4]It may be noted here that similar pledges have been made by different political parties over time.

[5]Youth-related strategies as stipulated in the 7FYP are related to skill development, employment generation and institutional development for providing the services (GED, 2015). These include: improving the link between training and job markets; strengthening the institutional capacity and infrastructures; sufficient resource allocation for human resource development; strengthening of public–private partnership (PPP) programme; and creation of employment and self-employment opportunities.

[6]See also, GED (2012).

be ensured. One possible way of measuring the effectiveness would be measuring the progress of implementation of SDG indicators under Goal 16 as mentioned earlier (i.e. primary government expenditure and perception of people regarding level of satisfaction about the public services).

Overall, there exists a wide gap between the employment targets set by the government and the public service delivery system in preparing the labour force for the job market. The present study intends to address these issues.

1.3 Projections for Bangladesh's youth employment for 2024 and 2030

The projection of youth employment (aged 15–24 years) for the period 2024 and 2030 has been carried out based on the analysis of data of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (ILO, n.d.). According to this analysis, no major change is projected in overall labour force participation till 2030 (Figure 1). If ILO's 2024 projection is extrapolated on 2030, it reveals an employment growth of 2.4 per cent per year. It means only 14.9 million additional jobs would be created by 2030, which is less than half of the targetted number of employment of 30 million as per the election manifesto and the national budget of FY2019-20.

Figure 1: Projection of Bangladesh's employment between 2019–2030
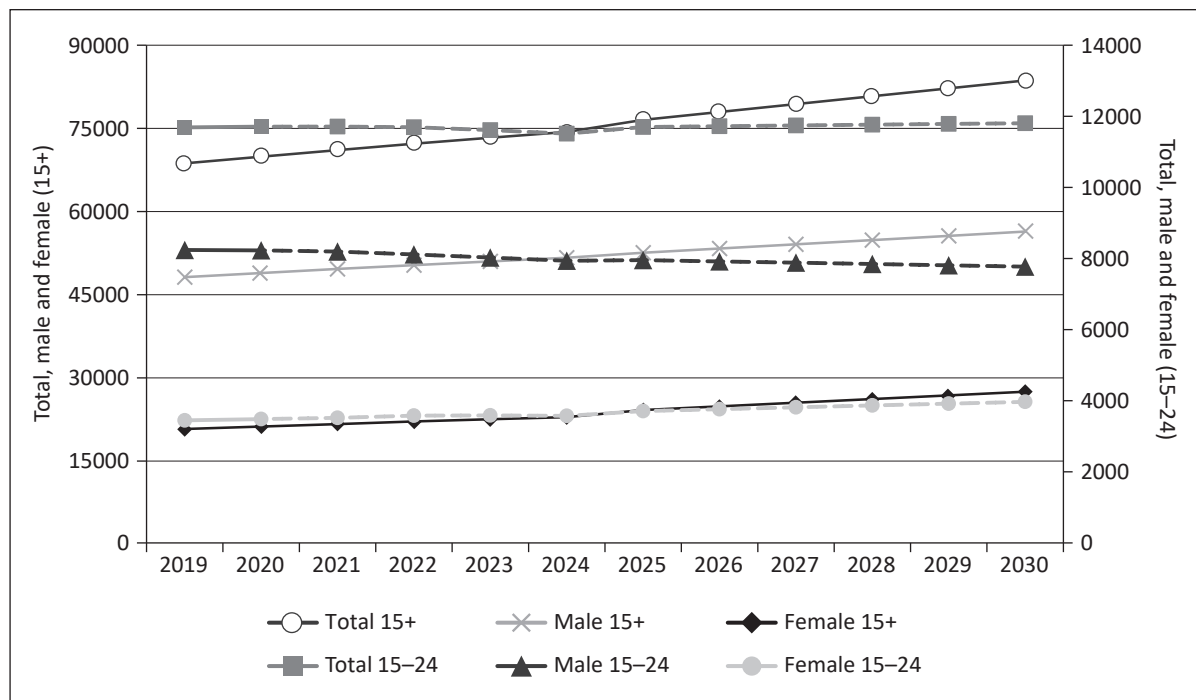
Source: ILO (n.d.).

Bangladesh labour market will experience considerable changes in composition by 2030. These include rise in female labour force participation aged between 15–24 years (1 per cent), 25–54 years (1.9 per cent) and 55–64 years (3.9 per cent). On the other hand, male labour force would observe a fall in their participation, particularly in age groups 15–24 years (-4 per cent), 25–54 years (-1.6 per cent) and 55–64 years (-3.3 per cent). Major changes in employment for youth is observed during 2019–2030 (Figure 2). Female employment has observed significant rise, particularly for those aged 25 years and above. On the other hand, moderate rise in employment would happen in case of

Figure 2: Annual growth in employment between 2019–2030
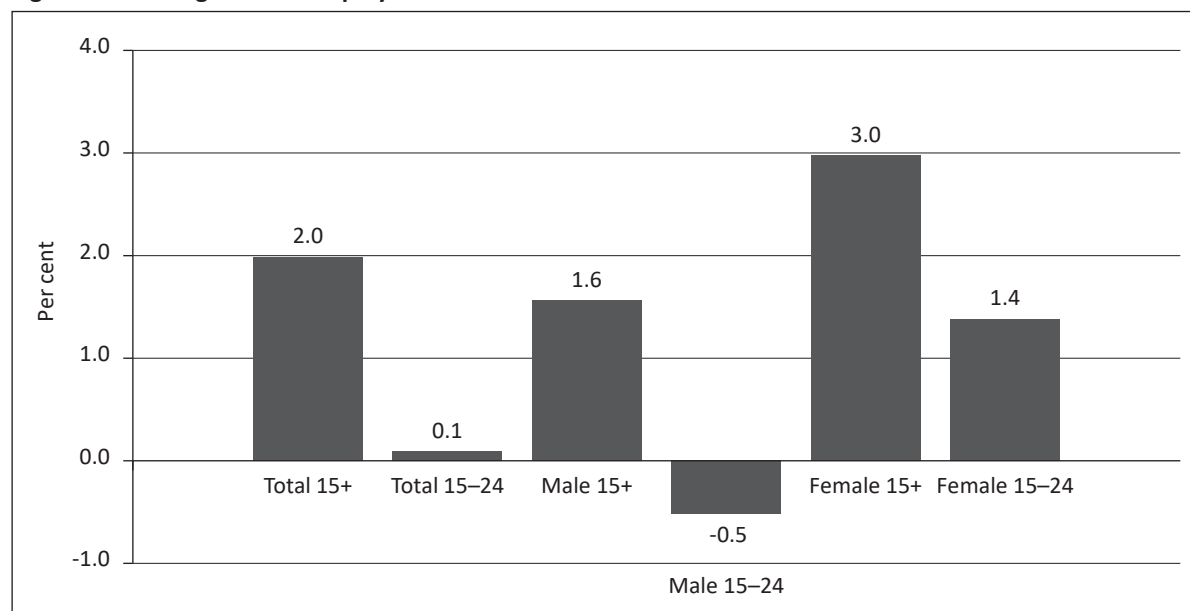
male (25+ years) and female (15–24 years) workers. However, male youth employment is contracted during this period (15–24 years).

The projected changes in employment do not fulfil Bangladesh's long-term aspiration to become a 'middle-income' country by 2030; in some key employment indicators, Bangladesh will still remain behind middle-income countries by 2030. Most importantly, labour productivity of Bangladesh would be far-behind from those of higher middle-income countries in 2030. The productivity would be even lower than that of the lower middle-income countries.

Overall the 'business as usual' growth in labour force and employment in the coming decade would not commensurate with the country's long-term targets for employment generation. Hence, Bangladesh needs to invest significantly in the coming years for human resource development, particularly in education, skill and entrepreneurship development of the youth.

1.4 Objective and scope of the study

The objective is to examine the effectiveness of different public service-providing agencies in the domain of education, skill development and employment for the youth as part of fulfilling the government's electoral pledge to ensure more and better jobs by 2030.

The specific objectives are:

- To review the challenges faced by the marginalised youth in education, skill development and employment;
- To analyse the effectiveness of public expenditure, as well as that of services provided by public institutions (transparency and accountability), in ensuring access to education, skill, entrepreneurship and jobs for the marginalised youths; and

- To put forward a set of recommendations for improvement of delivery of public services in addressing the challenges of the marginalised youth, and thereby creating opportunities for them in mainstream education, training and employment.

1.5 Methodology

Defining the marginalised youth

The study focuses on the marginalised youths and the challenges they face in education, training and employment. They are defined differently in different documents. According to the National Youth Policy 2017 (draft), youths are defined through 'need-based approach', and have been identified under sixteen different categories: unemployed youth; women youth; youth entrepreneurs; youth migrants; rural youth; youth dropped out of school; illiterate and half-literate youth; unskilled youth; youth belonging to ethnic sects; youth with special needs; youth addicted to ill-ways of life; homeless and slum-dwelling youth; transgender youth; youth affected in accidents or calamities; youth victims of human trafficking and torture; and youth contracted with communicable diseases (see, Ministry of Youth and Sports, n.d.). By and large, most of these categories reflect their marginalisation.

Marginalised youth could be defined in terms of the level of vulnerability. According to Bhattacharya et al. (2017), there are twelve vulnerability criteria, under which different vulnerable groups could be defined. These include: income, gender, geographic location, life cycle, civil identity, disability, education and skills, health, occupation, religion and ethnicity, sexual orientation and shock-induced vulnerability.

Following this above definition, four marginalised youth groups have been selected for this study. These are:

a. *Religion and ethnicity-based vulnerable group*: Plainland adivasi youth living in Thakurgaon district;
b. *Shock-induced and income-related vulnerability group*: Urban slum youth living in Dhaka;
c. *Education and skills-related vulnerability group*: Madrasah students living in Dhaka;
d. *Geographic location-related vulnerability group*: Youth living outside the capital city (Dhaka)—Sylhet in this case.

Overview on importance of public services for the marginalised people

Why are public services important for the marginalised people?

The provision of public goods and services is defined as what every citizen has the right to expect from the state, and the state has the responsibility to provide those goods and services. Without strong public service system and committed civic employees at the local and national levels, the delivery will neither be effective, nor any commitment be made. Enhanced knowledge and awareness among the citizens about their rights, responsibilities and privileges on public services and empowering citizens to demand enhanced quality public services, are the essential pre-requisites to make policymakers and service-providers accountable.

Developing countries often suffer from unsatisfactory and ineffective governance systems with rent-seeking behaviour, improper allocation of resources, revenue collection system that is inefficient,

and poor supply of essential government services. Such poor governance results in poor access to government services by society, particularly by the poor and the disadvantaged, such as women, children and minorities (Shah, 2005). In many contexts, the inherent power imbalance can often prevent or discourage participation of youth in the political process, including governance and accountability, which favours adults. Even formal structures set up for youth-oriented programmes ultimately eliminate the most marginalised (Davis, de la Harpe and Lundy, 2014). Earlier, the argument on government services had centered around both, the money being made and the 'input' that went into the organisations. The perception on quality public services has altered; now it measures how effectively resources are being used, and whether services are delivering results that will truly change people's lives (Cedefop, 2008).

Why efficiency of public services is important?

It is not easy to identify people, especially the most marginalised and the most disadvantaged, to appreciate the full potential of all the facets made in the provision of public services for them. Identifying those living in poverty is particularly important, as they rely almost completely on public services to survive and also to come out from the vicious cycle of poverty. The low level of awareness amongst service-users, in particular their failure to evaluate the quality of service rendered due to absence of knowledge about their right and their lack of capacity to formulate complaints, adversely affects the quality of services delivered.

Due to absence of proper accountability mechanism, often complaints lodged by the poor are ignored by public officials. There is a large social gap between those service-receivers who are poor and the public service-providers. This is due to the fact that a better socio-economic background and high income of the latter create a psychological barrier between the two. Many poor who are illiterate or have limited literacy are burdened with an extra barrier in receiving public services.

Absence of transparency in the public service system is another challenge for the marginalised people. Often poor people find these services come with a high cost, including hidden costs, or even the necessity of paying bribes. In certain cases, these challenges are so chronic, that people accept them as normal, just so as to get the best out of the failing system, instead of trying to amend or streamline it. Consequently, the lack of transparency persists in the structure.

Overall, there is need for a whole range of institutional reforms to make public services work for the people, particularly for the poor. In this regard, enacting a change in bureaucratic culture and monitoring the delivery of public services are required.

1.6 Analytical framework of the study

The present study has been carried out from an 'institutional analysis' point of view. Based on Dumiter (2014), the study highlights on 'efficiency', 'transparency' and 'accountability' of public institutions to deliver the required services to the youth. Diagram 1 presents the linkages of service-providers and service-recipients in achieving the goal of creating 30 million additional jobs by 2030.

Conceptually three core issues of effectiveness of public service delivery can be defined as follows:

Diagram 1: Effectiveness of various services provided by public service-providers to the service-recipients
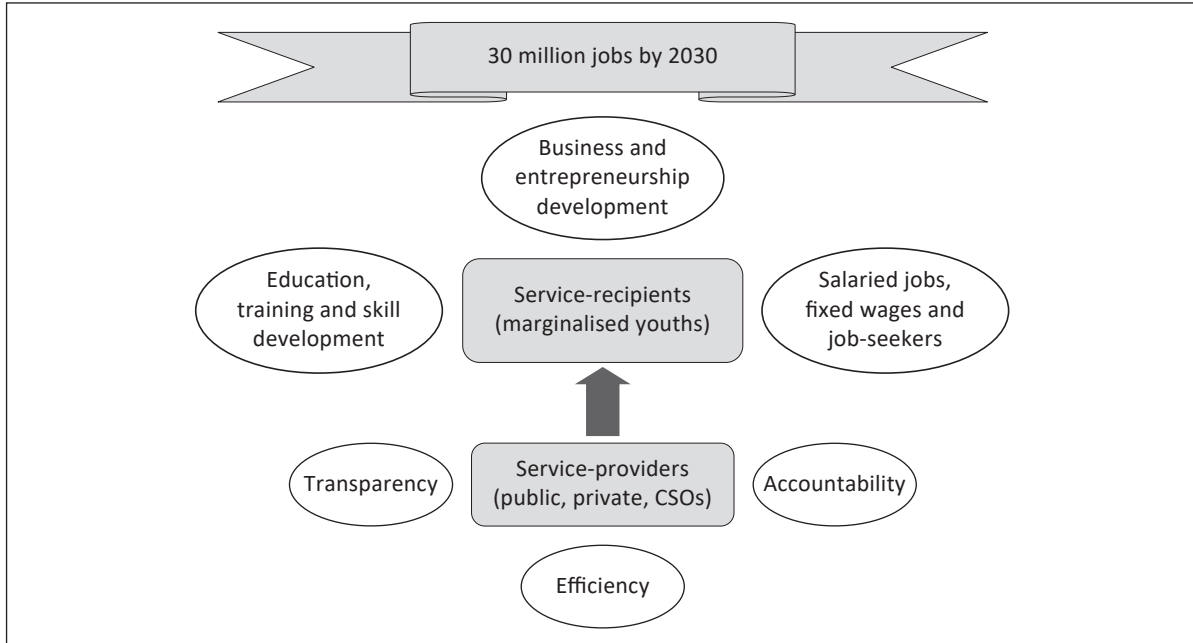
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Efficiency: Efficiency can be achieved, when the outcome of an action is maximised in relation to the resources used, and it is calculated by comparing the effects that result from these efforts.

Transparency: Transparency means that citizens have a right to know the truth about public issues, and the government ensures that this is met.

Accountability: Accountability is that aspect of administrative responsibility, through which officials are held answerable for general notions of specific legal mandates.

The study hypothesises that the diverse nature of obstacles in the way of education, training and employment push the marginalised youth behind; against this backdrop, delivering public service through improvement in efficiency, transparency and accountability could help reduce those barriers, and would ensure better access for the marginalised youth.

1.7 Data sources

The present study focuses on youth who are lagging behind with respect to location, caste/ethnicity, poverty and religious groups. It needs to be noted here that, the 'youth' age bracket is defined differently in various government policies and documents. For example, The National Youth Policy has termed youth as persons who are aged between 18–35 years, while Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) categorises youth to be the age range between 15–29 years. Keeping this in mind, the focus of the present study has been put on youth aged between 15–24 years. The four categories of youth who are covered under this study are as follows:

- those that live in metropolitan areas outside the capital (Sylhet division);
- those that come from minority group (plainland adivasi living in Thakurgaon district);

- those that belong to marginalised groups (urban slum youth living in Dhaka); and
- those that have non-conventional academic background (madrasah students living in Dhaka).

As part of the study, a number of workshops were conducted in Sylhet, Thakurgaon and Dhaka with the above mentioned groups. The objectives of these workshops were to learn about the challenges faced by the youth regarding employment and quality of public and private institutions through exchanges of views among different stakeholders. These workshops were attended by various categories of youths (as 'service-recipients'), as well as officials of different public and private offices (as 'service-providers') of the particular locality. The youths who attended these workshops fell into the following categories:

- those who are still in education and training;
- those who are in businesses and entrepreneurs; and
- those who are in salaried jobs, fixed wage jobs and job-seekers.

A number of sample surveys were conducted among the youth participants in Sylhet, Dhaka and Thakurgaon with a view to appreciate their aspirations, living conditions, peer-group's quality of jobs, and future prospect of jobs within the locality and outside, including interest in working abroad. These surveys are termed as 'Sample Survey (2019)' throughout this paper in presenting the results. However, the selection of survey respondents and total number of respondents are not representative for the whole country. Hence the outcome of these surveys could be considered 'indicative' about the above issues.

To supplement the information collected through these primary surveys, secondary data on education, training and employment of the related regions have been collated from publicly available national data. A part of the analysis has been done by using data from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of 2016 (BBS, 2019). Besides, ILO datasets have been used to analyse the projection of the labour market of Bangladesh for the period 2024–2030. Overall, the study draws its conclusion based on the field-level investigation about related issues, supplemented by evidences from secondary data.

2. LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES OF THE MARGINALISED YOUTH: ARE THE PUBLIC SERVICES EFFECTIVE?

This section discusses livelihood-related challenges of the selected marginalised youth groups; how far public expenditures and public services are able to address those challenges; and the level of transparency and accountability in delivery of these public services towards improvement of the livelihood of the selected study groups.

2.1 How challenging is the livelihood of the marginalised youths?

Livelihood-related challenges are the first barrier for the marginalised youths on their way to enter the job market. The Mastercard Foundation (2017) found that due to complexities in livelihood-related issues, young people in Africa are forced to take an indirect way to enter the job market by making a combination of activities. According to the sample surveys, the youths are marginalised when they come from modest economic and social background. Their families do not own land and they live on private or public properties. Both the plainland adivasi as well as slum-dwellers often experience

threat of eviction from their current place of living.[7] On the other hand, for some, access to basic amenities has improved. For example, access to electricity among the urban slum-dwellers reached over 90 per cent; a large share of urban slum-dwellers use sanitary latrine (58 per cent). Increase in investment in public utility services and private/public sector-led infrastructure development has helped these youths. However, there still exist on other hand, various kinds of adversities—about 37 per cent of urban slum-dwellers have lost their mothers; about 12 per cent of sample urban youth slum-dwellers have been arrested by the police for known and unknown reasons. Overall, a large part of the marginalised youths face different kinds of vulnerabilities.

The study tries to rank the level of livelihood challenges for different categories of youths. Among the four different categories of marginalised groups, access to safe and secured housing is still a 'major' concern for plainland adivasi and urban slum-dwellers. Access to food and medical facility is a 'moderate' level challenge for plainland adivasis and urban slum-dwellers, though the nature of challenge for these two categories is not the same. However, access to basic education is a 'moderate' level of challenge for all four, except that of Sylhet-based urban youth. Access to electricity is found to be a 'minor' level of challenge for all these marginalised groups. Those living in Sylhet city did not experience any major livelihood-related challenges. Given their diverse socio-economic background as well as their different residential locations both at the centre (in the capital city) and periphery (outside the capital city), nature and extent of livelihood-related challenges are not same (Table 1).

Table 1: Level of challenges faced by the youth in getting access to basic livelihood requirements

Respondent group	Level of challenges					
	Food	**Clothing**	**Education**	**Housing**	**Electricity & other utilities**	**Treatment**
Plainland adivasi and religious minority youth, Thakurgaon	Moderate	Minor	Moderate	Major	Minor	Moderate
Urban slum-dweller youth, Dhaka	Moderate	Minor	Moderate	Major	Minor	Moderate
Madrasah-educated youth, Dhaka	Minor	Minor	Moderate	Minor	Minor	Minor
City-dweller youth, Sylhet	No	No	No	No	No	No

Source: Based on the analysis of perception data of the Sample Survey, 2019.

In the backdrop of the diverse nature of livelihood challenges, the childhood dreams are confined to a few areas. Majority of them feel that their marginalisation offers no scope to dream of a better future job (BIGD, 2018). Their poor academic record, lack of experience and skills are the biggest hurdles. Their peers who earn more are also found to be mostly within the lower earning bracket. Overall, their chances of getting a job equivalent to their urban peers is slim, as they do not have comparable level of education, training and experience, and also because they are not networked suitably for getting into the job market.

2.2 Are public expenditures for livelihood development well-targetted?

Public expenditure for livelihood improvement of the marginalised is being covered under various social safety net programmes (SSNPs) of the government. There are altogether 65 different types of SSNPs which are mandated to improve livelihoods of different vulnerable groups. These

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[7]According to the sample survey on the slum-dwellers, at least 7 per cent youth has experienced eviction from their living places.

programmes operate in different types of direct provision of services, such as cash transfer, food security programme, funds for social protection and social empowerment through ongoing and new development programmes. With the changing needs of vulnerable groups, the demand for these programmes has changed and likewise their coverages. According to the SSNP data, the target groups of the current study, such as plainland adivasis and slum-dwellers, are covered under SSNPs, including programme for improving the livelihood of harijan, dalit, bede and other disadvantaged communities, rehabilitation and generation of alternative employment for beggars, and programme for improving the livelihood of transgender and street children rehabilitation. There are various social empowerment programmes targeting these communities, such as *Ashrayan* (Phase 2 and 3) projects that include community-based healthcare, infrastructure and livelihood development in haor areas; *Amader Bari* (Our Home)—an integrated old age and children's home, improved life standard for low-income people, primary education for children, urban primary healthcare service delivery, slum integration, and food and livelihood security programme.

A number of new SSNP projects are also being implemented (by Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Department of Disaster Management (DDM), among others), which include urban resilience project, improvement of living standard of marginal people, improvement of life standards of low-income people, support to urban health and nutrition project, income support to the poorest and support services for vulnerable groups (Figure 3). Although these programmes focusing on housing, food and medical treatment facilities are intended to cover a large section of the marginalised community, the quantum of support is considered to be inadequate against the requirement.

Despite having various programmes targeting livelihood development of the marginalised, their effectiveness is in question. For example, a large section of the plainland adivasi of Thakurgaon

Figure 3: Different SSNPs for marginalised groups
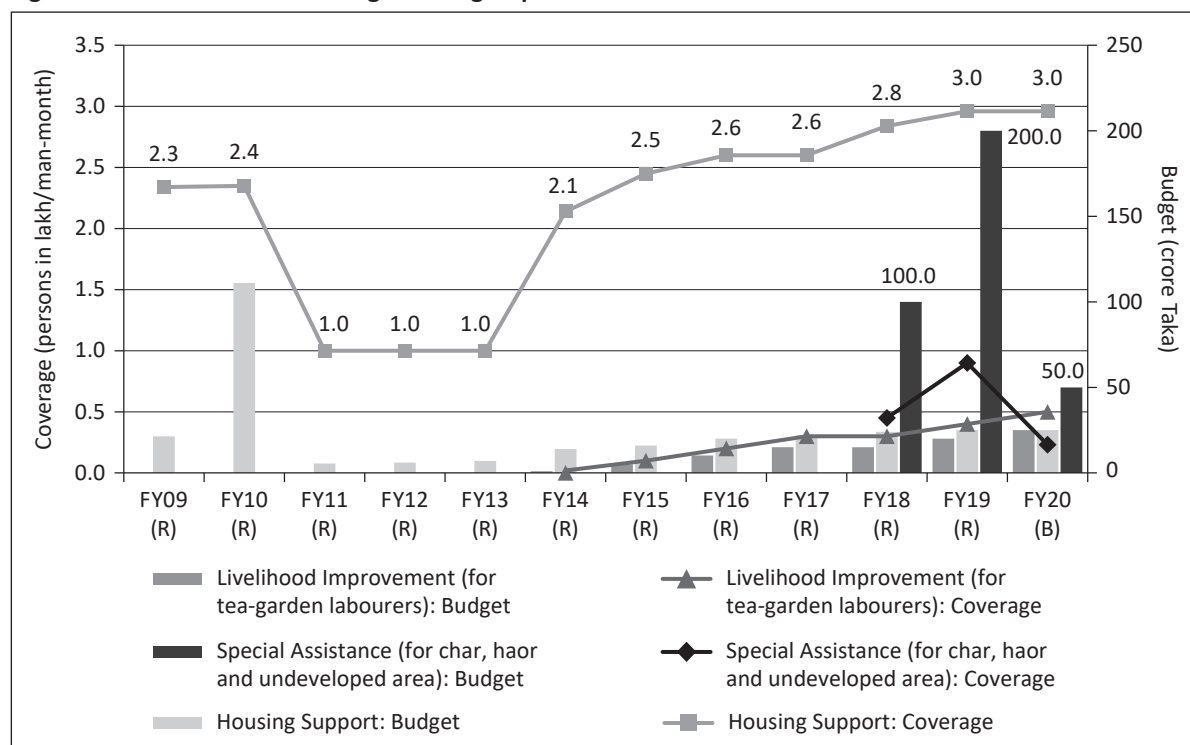
Source: MoF (n.d.).
Note: 'R' refers to revised budget; 'B' refers to original budget.

district complained that they were not covered under the public support programmes.[8] Yet in another instance, it was reported that though stipends were being provided to students of the dalit community, the amount of stipend was insufficient both in terms of coverage and requirement of these people. These students complained about receiving only a part of their entitled stipend.

The plainland adivasi and urban slum-dwellers are threatened with eviction from their current area of residence.[9] A section of these people had been staying on public property (e.g. land owned by a state-owned sugar mill); however, they were pushed out by the authorities from these properties. Similar situations prevail in case of urban slum-dwellers who have been in constant threat of eviction from their current residing places, because of pressure from the local authorities, such as the city corporations in Dhaka. Vested interests, such as real estate developers eying to grab high-value lands, got the slum-dwellers evicted from places such as Karail Basti in Banani and Chalantika Basti in Mirpur, despite assurances from local representatives. Transgender people who stay in these localities, particularly in slum areas face the maximum trouble.[10] Often neighbours directly and indirectly induce them to leave these areas. According to them, during the last three years alone, members of the transgender community have been forced to leave multiple times, some over 15 times. Therefore, in spite of various initiatives undertaken by the local authority for improvement of the livelihood of the marginalised, the ground reality is exactly the opposite; these are either inadequate or missing the target.

2.3 How transparent and accountable is the public service delivery?

Transparency issue

Often the dalit community is not aware about the entitlements under different public sector projects, including those being implemented under SSNPs. In this connection, government officials have admitted that the effort to inform and create awareness among the people of the dalit community about their rights are poor or, in most cases, absent. Also, the SSNP-related programmes are found to be counter-productive in some cases. For example, the programme under the Department of Social Service to make the city of Dhaka beggar-free by resettling beggars in rural areas with houses and occupation, was not successful. It has been found, that within two years, some of these beggars returned from the villages where they were rehabilitated, after having sold their houses, and got back to begging! And this, despite considerable improvement in village life. These marginalised people want to stay in cities for better earning. Another reason being relatively low wages in farming activities.

Lack of transparency is a major concern for the slum-dwellers especially in housing. According to the Korail slum-dwellers, as per the government's plan to develop the lakesides, contractors are engaged in preliminary work, but the slum-dwellers are not sure whether they will get housing facilities there. Similarly, slum-dwellers of Chalantika and Mirpur are not sure whether they will be finally settled in housing facilities. There is complete opacity from the government agencies. Those who are doing

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[8]In the workshop organised by CPD in collaboration with Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO) in Thakurgaon, a government official reported that Tk. 4.3 million has been provided by the Social Welfare Department to 830 ethnic people as a one-time allowances: about Tk. 4,900–5,000 was received by these people.

[9]Although plainland adivasis are the native people who have been staying over centuries in these land, because of lack of documents in support of their land ownership, local people forced them to leave.

[10]According to the transgender youth who participated in the workshop, they could not rent houses as the neighbourhood does not easily accept them.

jobs in the neighbourhood are losing them. A government official observed that housing projects should target genuine slum-dwellers, otherwise the initiative would go in vain. Hence, lack of access to information and failure to ensure the information to reach the marginalised are major livelihood threats for these people.

Accountability issue

In spite of their entitlement to equal rights and benefits, the marginalised are not only deprived of getting their rights, but more importantly, they are facing hostility from public authorities, by way of social stigma and discrimination.[11] More importantly, little effort has been made by the government to act against those who harass these people.

Although the government's current 'support-based' initiative is a good effort, these measures are yet to take off. For example, the government may consider building multistoried housing for slum-dwellers, where these people could live on rent. But at the same time, it is important to *identify* the eligible slum-dwellers who could stay in these buildings.

The local public authority should ensure that as part of the urban area development, slum-dwellers live in these housing colonies with all facilities, which unfortunately usually does not happen. Moreover, local government representatives of these slum areas have little authority towards addressing the challenges of the people living here. Also, lack of regulatory and financial authority or local government representative results in weak accountability. The government may consider adopting new and innovative models for supporting these marginalised youths.

2.4 Can non-state actors (NSAs) supplement public service delivery?

Various national and international organisations, including NGOs, work with the marginalised youths in order to address their requirements. In case of housing, a number of NGOs have been working with slum-dwellers, particularly by providing legal support regarding their housing facilities. Besides, many other organisations work for ensuring facilities, such as safe drinking water for the urban slum-dwellers by providing utility connections for water supply.[12] NGOs have been working on innovative ways, such as by transferring assets to the marginalised people as in Thakurgaon, where they are working through legal and administrative measures to ensure land rights for the plainland adivasi people.

2.5 Conclusion

Various measures have been undertaken by the public sector in order to address the livelihood concerns of the marginalised communities. Those measures have been appreciated by these communities; but at the same time, those are found to be inadequate to address all their challenges. While public sector initiatives have tried to meet the short-term and day-to-day needs, such as food, electricity, water supply and education, etc., access to housing however, is found to be a weak part in these initiatives.

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[11]The Government of Bangladesh gave citizenship recognition to country's transgender people in 2014. They are now receiving national identity cards (NIDs) and are being included in the national voter list. However, they are still being excluded from the access to other facilities. It is the attitude of the people that needs to be changed (Department of Peace and Conflict, University of Dhaka, DIGNITY and Anthropology Department, University of Edinburgh, 2016).

[12]These water connections have been provided under legal arrangements with water supply authority, WASA and the users pay monthly water charges on a regular basis.

Although their level of impact is still limited, various NSAs do play a supplementary role in addressing the gaps in public services delivery. Further, access to information about public services is a major barrier for the marginalised, and so is lack of transparency and accountability. The latter, often driven by vested interests needs special measures as part of ensuring the safe and secured livelihood for these communities. These lacunae are often found to be difficult to resolve due to their links with the political and the influential groups. A rights-based approach could be undertaken, within which a specific 'anti-discrimination law' would be enacted to address these challenges.

3. EDUCATION-RELATED CHALLENGES FOR THE MARGINALISED YOUTH: CAN THE PUBLIC SERVICES ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY, AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY FOR THEM?

Barriers to formal education is the second hurdle for the marginalised youths towards entering the job market. The respondents of the sample survey shared their views about the quality of academic institutions, level of challenges in accessing quality education in primary, secondary and tertiary levels and information and communication technology (ICT) education. This section also discusses public expenditure for education of the marginalised youth, and to which extent these reach the targetted groups. Based on the responses of the survey respondents, the section analyses the level of transparency, accountability and efficiency of the public services pertaining to education.

3.1 Why are the marginalised youth deprived of tertiary education?

According to the survey respondents, among all academic institutes, a majority lags far behind the good academic institutes—the standards of these district-level academic institutes are mostly below the level of 50 per cent compared to that of national-level good academic institutes (Table 2).[13] Similarly, training institutes are found to be at a very poor state compared to national-level good quality training institutes.

For a large number of marginalised youth that include plainland adivasi and urban slum-dwellers, access to tertiary-level education (meaning college and university education), is limited (The World Bank, 2019).

Table 2: Response on relative quality of local academic institutions by the selected marginalised youth

(in Per cent)

Level of performance of local institutions	Response on quality of best academic institutions of the locality vis-à-vis best national-level academic institutions	
	Thakurgaon	**Sylhet**
>20%	7.69	
20–30%	15.38	13.33
30–50%	25.64	20.00
50–70%	30.77	53.33
70–80%	15.38	13.33
80–100%	2.56	
>100%	2.56	
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

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[13]The plainland adivasi youth of Thakurgaon and Sylhet city responded about the quality of academic institutes and training institutes.

While tertiary-level education is accessible to madrasah-educated youth, it is at a limited scale. Urban-based youth outside the capital city, for example, those who live in Sylhet city have better access to primary, secondary and tertiary education. On the other hand, access to ICT-based education for the marginalised youth communities is by and large absent; and if available, the quality is poor. Overall, access to tertiary-level education, including college and university education, remains limited for a large section of this community.

The quality and standard of education available to the marginalised youth is ranked according to their own perception in this study (Table 3). The challenges are 'high' for plainland adivasi and urban slum-dwellers in receiving primary and secondary education. The challenges are 'moderate' for the madrasah-educated youth and 'low' for city-dwelling youth. In other words, youth from the marginalised sections are being discriminated through their levels of education—first, being discriminated by limited access to education *necessary* for making them competitive in the job market; and second, by not getting *quality* education vis-à-vis those of the urban youth. As a result, a large section of marginalised has stopped pursuing further academics with only a level of education that is not sufficient for applying in formal sector jobs; they are able to only compete in unskilled, 'low' paid' and 'informal' jobs.

Table 3: Level of challenges faced by the youth in attaining education

Respondent group	Level of challenges		
	Primary- and secondary-level education[*]	Tertiary-level education[*]	ICT-related education
Plainland adivasi and religious minority youth, Thakurgaon	High	Marginal scope for youth	Marginal scope for youth
Urban slum-dweller youth, Dhaka	High	Marginal scope for youth	Marginal scope for youth
Madrasah-educated youth, Dhaka	Low–moderate	High	Moderate–high
City-dweller youth, Sylhet	Low	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.
Note: [*]Challenges pertaining to primary, secondary and tertiary education relate to mode of education, teachers' quality, curriculum, facilities and dropout.

Their educational handicaps include: lack of minimum number of teachers required, especially in science—vacancies have been filled by teachers of Bangla, religion, or history who are not subject specialists; lack of textbooks in own mother tongue for ethnic minorities, such as plainland adivasis; lack of religious teachers for ethnic minority students; absence of skilled teachers, which force the students to depend on private tutors—and more importantly, the marginalised youth find it difficult to go to private tutors due to financial constraints.

The respondents of the survey complained about governance and management system of schools which include: current structure of teacher registration system, which hardly ensures recruitment of quality teachers; poor quality of School Management Committee (SMC), which is responsible for ensuring better academic environment in schools; and commercial activities of teachers' associations at district and upazila levels, which become a constraint for ensuring corruption-free environment in schools.[14]

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[14]These associations often forced to buy question papers, where the school management is unable to exercise their authority to set questions as per their own guidelines.

Sometimes, parents too are found to be irresponsible—lack of awareness among guardians in demanding quality education; high demand for child labour limits parents' interest to send children to school; lack of sufficient students in slum-based schools and early/child marriage of female students force them to leave school mid-way. Poor economic and financial condition, as well as lack of education of the parents, constrain them to take proper decision about children's education.

Insufficient number of schools and other related facilities in the neighbourhood due to limited public expenditure causes lack of interest in education. The survey respondents complained about—lack of government schools in slum areas, although various non-government organisation (NGO)-based primary schools are available in those localities; partial/no stipends provided to the plainland adivasi students; third gender youth cannot complete their education due to discrimination and humiliation in schools; and the physically challenged youth face constraints in pursuing their education.

In case of madrasah education, the challenges are different: lack of teachers, educational tools and limited number of skilled teachers are some of the key constraints; madrasah teachers are presumed to be weak in general subjects; madrasahs located in villages face more acute problems with small number of teachers and limited supply of educational tools and aids; rural madrasah teachers are poorly remunerated compared to the general education-based school teachers; village-level madrasah teachers are found to be irregular and not so punctual in attending classes; teachers are often found poor in mathematics and English; madrasah teachers play a pessimistic role in discouraging students about madrasah education[15]; and lack of proper recognition and limited scope of madrasah education in formal job market.

For the urban youth from outside the capital, the educational problems discussed mostly related to college and university-level problems. These are: not progressive in educational curriculum; failure to complete the courses on time; quality of teachers not properly evaluated; internet facility at the university/college level is not available; lack of communication skill of the students, particularly in English; and limited scope for accessing student loan.

According to students of madrasahs, computer training facilities are not available. On the other hand, Sylhet urban-based youths have complained about poor quality of information technology (IT) education.

Overall, the feedback received from the marginalised youth regarding their primary- and secondary-level education varies in terms of availability and quality. Most importantly, there is variance in terms of accessibility to tertiary-level education also. In addition to that, supply-side constraints from the providers is a major challenge. Thus, the claim from the government to increase literacy for the students is being challenged by all the above constraints.

3.2 Does public expenditure address the concerns of the marginalised youth?

Public expenditure for education of the marginalised youth is likely to take different forms: first, for providing easy accessibility to public schools/colleges; and second, in meeting various costs incurred for educational expenses. The national-level data on HIES 2016 does not specifically mention education-related details of the marginalised communities (BBS, 2019). To overcome this, an alternate approach is followed to provide information for these categories. Considering their lower income strata, the

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[15]It is claimed that kawmi madrasah education system is better than alia madrasah-based education because of dedication of the teachers.

average income of the lower fourth deciles has been regarded for reviewing the state of education of the marginalised youths.[16] Such generalisation has risks in representing the actual situation of the marginalised youth, however the results might indicate upper bias as the marginalised youths represent the most backward population of the country.

Though the youth of this community receive education in public schools, a large section still remains outside the scope of public education. According to the HIES 2016, only 40 per cent of youth aged between 15–29 years have accessibility to public schools and academic institutions. However, another 57 per cent have studied in private academic institutions and madrasahs that received government grants. In other words, about 97 per cent of the marginalised youths received education funded by the public sector.[17] Only 3 per cent received education from madrasah-based institutions and another 1 per cent from NGO-run institutions.

The biggest challenge before the marginalised youth is to complete their education without facing financial hurdles. Table 4 shows the forms of financial constraints these youth face. About 88.5 per cent did not receive any stipend and 6.7 per cent youth mentioned that they could not pay examination fees. More strikingly, 5.8 per cent could not afford to buy exercise books/stationary, 6 per cent could not afford uniform dresses/footwear, and 6.5 per could not afford to spend on tiffin.

Table 4: Percentage of currently studying respondents aged 15–29 years, who did not receive financial/other benefits and could not afford educational expenses

Criteria	Sub-group total (Income of household head (wage/salaried) < Tk. 7,000)
No stipend received for education	88.46
Could not afford the expenses for the following:	
Examination fees	6.74
Exercise books/stationary	5.82
Uniform dress/footwear	6.07
Tiffin	6.51
Private tutoring	7.52
Coaching	4.98
Internet use (education-related)	4.07

Source: BBS (2019).

The cost incurred for after-school tuitions and private coaching could not be afforded by a section of these marginalised youths: 7.52 per cent and 4.98 per cent, respectively. The inability to cover these costs have pushed the marginalised youth both physically and emotionally behind their peers who have access to education in better academic institutions due to their better financial condition.

Overall, the government initiative to make education free for male students up to primary level and for female students up to degree levels (for students residing outside the *pourasava* and city corporation areas) is well-appreciated. However, education beyond the primary level has been constrained by weak financial condition of these families. Hence, the government needs to consider further support for these groups beyond class V, and should consider financial support both for male and female

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[16]According to BBS (2019), these four income decile groups are: Tk. 0–2,000, Tk. 2,001–4,000, Tk. 4,001–6,000 and Tk. 6,001–7,000.

[17]In contrast, 45 per cent of the youth from the higher income groups get education from public schools, which is 5 percentage points lower than that of the marginalised youth.

students covering not only school fees, but also examination fees, costs for educational equipment and other costs.

3.3 Can public service delivery be made more effective in 'business as usual' approach?

Transparency issue

There have been complaints about poor quality of teaching. This is partly due to the faulty process followed in registration of primary- and secondary-level teachers. A large number of members of the SMCs could not contribute to school performance at the local level as they have been accommodated without having necessary academic qualification. As a result, the marginalised youth have been deprived of quality education. Corruption is a major challenge that confronts the marginalised youth—the public school authority sometimes does not issue certificates/other official documents without monetary exchanges that is beyond the official charges. Local-level administration has taken a few actions against such irregularities.

It so happens, that certificates of the madrasah education are not recognised, and therefore, not accepted. In such cases, students opt for an additional mainstream academic degree for better job opportunity though it is not legally allowed to have two degrees. But the limited public monitoring of non-compliances of having double degrees simultaneously has made many to opt this method. However, the concerned public offices did not take any proactive measure in this regard. Also, there exists the problem of transparency for urban youth in disclosing publicly the quality of teachers. Taken actions are limited and existing mechanism is inadequate to assess the quality of teachers and to take actions against their poor quality and standard.

Accountability issue

Lack of accountability of public service delivery at the academic institutes is reflected through different channels. *First*, the students are deprived of not having sufficient number of teachers; besides, the gap is being filled up by the teachers who are not specialised in those subjects. *Second*, the scarcity of teachers teaching religion severely hampers their religious education. Given the directives of the National Education Policy 2010 to not recruit teachers teaching religion having less than 40 students, it is difficult for the youth belonging to minority groups in receiving proper education on religion in schools as they do not meet the requisite number. Considering the demand, this conditionality needs to be reconsidered in order to appoint more teachers teaching religion. Youth belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community as discussed earlier, often are humiliated and harassed by their peers at educational institutions and are forced to leave early. However, the authority does not have any policy or mechanism to address this issue and ensure continuance of their academic life. Similar is the case for the physically challenged youth, who, in the absence of a proper government policy, face difficulty in getting admission in educational institutions.

Efficiency issue

Another major concern is the poor quality of teachers. As already mentioned, students are the ultimate sufferers when they have to compromise with quality teaching. In addition to that, poor salary structure as compared to the mainstream academic institutions discourages qualified teachers to apply for teaching jobs in madrasahs.

3.4 Conclusion

For the marginalised youth, accessibility to education is a great barrier, particularly at the tertiary level (i.e. colleges and universities). Lack of public expenditure on quality school teachers, as well as adequate numbers, have further put constraint on quality education. The government's aim to increase the literacy rate is challenged by poor accessibility, limited availability and low quality, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. Also financial constraints, such as failure to pay examination fees, inability to bear costs for educational equipment further act as impediment to educational growth. The financial support provided by the government is insufficient, and their coverage is also limited.

4. TRAINING-RELATED PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY: CAN IT BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE WITHOUT ENSURING AVAILABILITY/ACCESSIBILITY TO THE MARGINALISED YOUTH?

This section discusses the challenges confronted by the marginalised youth in getting training from different organisations. The respondents of Thakurgaon and Sylhet spoke on the quality, the different kinds, the availability in their localities and access to training facilities. Along with public and private sector-led training facilities, NGOs also provide training to the marginalised youths. Based on the information provided by the respondents, the section assesses and ranks the level of effectiveness of public service delivery.

4.1 What kind of training is received by the marginalised youth?

Selected respondents have mentioned about the quality of academic and training institutes of their localities/areas (Table 5). The quality of training institutes at their own locality and accessible to them are found to be much inferior to that of national level good quality training institutes.[18] The marginalised youth have limited orientation for any type of training (Table 6). A large section did not have information on different training facilities offered by the public sector training institutes at the district and upazila levels. In a few cases, public sector training centres, such as youth development centres, which are supposed to provide quota for the marginalised youth, do not provide so. The

Table 5: Response on relative quality of local training institutions by the selected marginalised youth

(in Per cent)

Level of performance of local institutions	Response on quality of best training institutions of the locality vis-à-vis best national-level academic training institutions	
	Thakurgaon	**Sylhet**
>20%	7.50	
20–30%	15.00	40.00
30–50%	17.50	
50–70%	35.00	53.33
70–80%	17.50	
80–100%	5.00	
>100%	2.50	6.67
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

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[18]Sylhet-based academic and training institutes are found to be better compared to that of other district/local-level organisations where the marginalised youth stayed in.

Table 6: Level of challenges faced by the youth in attaining training

Respondent group	Level of challenges			
	Access to information about public sector training institutes	Availability of sufficient training facilities in public sector training institutes	Quality of training in public sector institutes	Quality of training in private sector institutes (including those of NGOs/ funded by international organisations)
Plainland adivasi and religious minority youth, Thakurgaon	High	High	High	Low
Urban slum-dweller youth, Dhaka	High	High	Moderate	Low
Madrasah-educated youth, Dhaka	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low
City-dweller youth, Sylhet	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

Department of Youth Development in Thakurgaon mentioned that free training facilities are offered to plainland adivasis under its livelihood development programme. NGOs and other development organisations play a vital role in addressing the gaps in training.[19] However, initiatives undertaken by the NGOs/development organisations are still considered to be inadequate.

Poor quality of vocational and technical training is a major concern raised by the marginalised youth. A large section, particularly those living outside city areas, mentioned that public sector training institutes contribute little in skill development, and thereby help little in getting jobs. Moreover, urban-dwellers like in Sylhet mentioned that often public training institutes do not offer trainings based on the local-level needs.[20] According to the officials of the Department of Youth Development, Thakurgaon Sadar, these organisations currently have two types of training: institutional and non-institutional.[21] Moreover, quota system is not available for the plainland adivasi at the district level. So, without any financial support for the duration of the entire training period, it becomes expensive for these marginalised youth. Training provided by the private sector organisations including those of NGOs and foreign-funded organisations, is found to be better in terms of quality, and meets the requirements of the youth.

4.2 What kind of public expenditure has been made for the marginalised youth?

The participation of the marginalised youth in national-level vocational training is negligible. According to the BBS (2019), only 1.55 per cent of youth aged between 15–29 years from the lower 40 per cent household category received vocational training. The ratio is much lower for the youth of the upper 60 per cent household categories (0.85 per cent). The marginalised youth mainly receive training from government-supported organisations (98.4 per cent), where the comparable ratio among

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[19]NGO, such as ESDO, provides training to the mariginalised youths in Thakurgaon on different trades; UCEP provides different vocational trainings to the slum-dwellers, along with other marginalised youths in Dhaka.

[20]For example, participants in Sylhet dialogue indicated that trainings for tourism, food-processing, handicrafts making and entrepreneurship development are of special need for the Sylhet region.

[21]These programmes usually span for 7 days, 14 days and 21 days. Due to lack of trainers, only short course (7-day long) programmes are currently being implemented. However, at district level, longer version trainings (spanning for 6 months) are available.

the upper strata youths was 28 per cent. Interestingly, a significant number from the upper strata take training from private institutes (including those that are government-supported). Nobody who received technical education from private organisations is found in the lower strata. This is because of the weak financial position of the marginalised youth.

4.3 Can public service delivery be made more effective for entry into job market?

Transparency issue

Various public sector organisations offer different types of skill development trainings to the youth, including the marginalised; however, those trainings could not meet the requirement of the latter. The National Skill Development Authority (NSDA) has been formed to make uniform standards, quality and focus of different types of trainings. The NSDA is still at a nascent stage, and is yet to undertake the initiative in this direction. However, there are debates over the scope of work of the NSDA, as well as those of the existing certifying agencies under the Ministry of Education. The government has taken the initiative to develop a nationwide database of the youth with all important information, including their status of education, training and jobs, as well as demand for training for skill development. District-level offices have also undertaken similar initiatives at the local level.

Accountability issue

Despite the huge demand for long-term trainings for different trades, public training institutes often are not able to continue full-fledged operation or are unresponsive due to lack of sufficient number of trainers. Limited efforts have been made to address the shortages of trainers. There is limited effort to undertake survey to understand the demand for different types of trainings and restructure of training courses and curriculums. Despite the demand from adivasi/slum-dwellers, no special measures have been undertaken to make training available for them.

Efficiency issue

Lack of standardisation of programme curriculum, limited number of skilled trainers and insufficient training materials made the public sector training institutes obsolete and ineffective. In contrast, private sector-based training institutes and NGO and foreign-funded institutes cater better to the need of the youth. However, their capacity is limited. On the other hand, new and innovative approaches are required to meet the need of the marginalised youth.

4.4 Conclusion

Limited number of training opportunities is the third entry barrier for the marginalised youth to develop minimum required skills for entering the job market. Public sector-led training institutes are often found to have limited capacities and poor facilities; moreover, information about those training facilities are not readily available to them. Besides, there is limited quota available for the marginalised youth. The operations of private sector and NGO-led training facilities are relatively better, but their scale of operation is limited. Despite those efforts and initiatives, it is hard to provide training to the marginalised youth, which could make them competitive for the formal job market.

5. PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY FOR EMPLOYMENT: CAN LIFE CYCLE CHALLENGES BE OVERCOME IN ACCESSING DECENT EMPLOYMENT?

This section discusses the employment situation of the marginalised youth in their localities and their intention to work abroad. It also reviews how public expenditure in different employment generation programmes support them to get jobs. Based on the data and sample survey, focus group discussions (FGDs) and secondary sources, analysis on different issues has been made.

5.1 How far behind is the marginalised youth in the job market?

Majority of marginalised youth are of the opinion that employment opportunity for them in their district/region is insufficient (Table 7).[22] An overwhelming share of respondents (87.5 per cent) in Thakurgaon indicated that they want a job within their locality, mainly to stay near home. The Sylhet-based urban youth consider the locality less opportune for their jobs as per their requirement, despite having urban-based facilities and amenities. Majority of Sylhet-based youth consider their peers living in the capital city are far better off in terms of getting quality education, training, job opportunities, and more likely to be selected. Besides, scope for part-time jobs is limited in the cities outside Dhaka. Participating in training and job-related examinations in the Dhaka city is difficult for the marginalised youth, as coming from outside Dhaka entails high transportation costs.

Table 7: Response on level of employment opportunities

(in Per cent)

Perception level	Thakurgaon	Sylhet
Below average	25.64	73.33
Fairly average	35.90	26.67
Similar	15.38	
Fairly high	23.08	
Total	100.00	100.00

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

Despite the fierce competition in the domestic job market, particularly in the low/unskilled jobs and low-earning business activities, the desire to work abroad is rather low among the marginalised youth (Table 8). Only one-third of the total have aspirations to work overseas; perhaps due to limited

Table 8: Perception about working abroad

Perception	Thakurgaon	Madrasah	Sylhet
Youth who are interested to work abroad (% of total)	38.46	37.84	60.0
Reasons for interest (% of above)			
High competition at home	26.67	21.43	22.22
Higher salary than home	53.33	14.29	44.44
Low opportunity for business at home	3.33		11.11
Others (e.g. relative(s) staying abroad)	6.67	50.02	22.22
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

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[22]Only 23.1 per cent of the plainland adivasi respondents mentioned that there is fairly high chance to get employment in Thakurgaon district.

financial capacity to bear the migration-related costs. The Sylhet-based city-dwelling youth have expressed more interest to work abroad perhaps due to their better financial capacity to bear the costs. Those who want to work abroad cite attractive salaries and working family members abroad as the main reasons.

Poor economic condition, as well as backward position in education and training, compared to those of their peers locating in the urban areas, push these marginalised groups behind in the job market. As a result, these youths, particularly those of plainland adivasi and slum areas, found the level of challenges for accessing jobs 'high' (Table 9). These youths also confronted other challenges compared to their peers among the urban-based city-dwellers, where the level of challenges is at 'low–moderate levels'. Among the marginalised sections who are lagging behind, urban-based city-dwellers are found to be relatively ahead compared to those of the others. However, their perception about relative difference with their peers living in the capital city are significant.[23] In the case of plainland adivasi and dalits, poor academic qualification put them even below the minimum eligibility criteria for jobs. Poor financial condition hardly creates an opportunity for them to initiate a business.[24] With traditional nature of training, madrasah-educated youth lose out in the job market. There is demand for training in different languages to work as interpreters/translators, and in media houses. Lack of ICT is also a constraint for the madrasah-educated youth in the job market.

Table 9: Level of challenges faced by the youth in getting employment opportunities

Respondent group	Level of challenges				
	Challenges in access and availability of jobs	Challenges at the preparatory stage in salaried jobs	Challenges in access and availability in business	Challenges at the preparatory stage in starting business	Concerns as regards supports provided for the marginalised youths for jobs/ business
Plainland adivasi and religious minority youth, Thakurgaon	High	High	Almost no access	No participation	Moderate–high
Urban slum-dweller youth, Dhaka	High	High	Almost no access	No participation	Moderate–high
Madrasah-educated youth, Dhaka	Moderate–high	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate–high	High
City-dweller youth, Sylhet	Low–moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate–high	Not available

Source: Sample Survey, 2019.

5.2 Can public expenditure on employment serve the purpose of the marginalised youth?

The government under different SSNPs has been providing support to the marginalised groups for business development. The Social Welfare Department of Thakurgaon district provides grants to

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[23]Over 70 per cent respondents from the Sylhet city said that urban-based youths outside Dhaka city are behind because of lack of access to good quality education, training and limited opportunities for employment.

[24]In case of taking preparation for applying for jobs, Sylhet-based urban youths complained about high cost for applying for jobs, burden to provide security money, lack of presence of online tracking system in case of applying and following up of the selection process, and no arrangements for job fair at the sub-national and divisional levels.

ethnic minority people.[25] Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB) of Thakurgaon Sadar Upazila office provides loan facility to the youth who could generate savings. However, the facilities do not provide any quota to the dalits. Different NGOs have taken the initiative to provide training to those seeking jobs. Disabled people living in slum areas also face difficulty in finding jobs due to inadequate support, and jobs in the private sector are still limited. Government organisations, such as the Bangladesh Institute of Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC), offer different types of electrical and mechanical training, but no special programme is available for urban slum-dwellers. Table 10 presents different types of job-related training provided by different public and private organisations. According to Bangladesh Bank data, a total of 10,844 participants have enrolled in different training programmes, of which 10,664 received certificates. Among those, 7,209 (67 per cent of total participants) are employed and 2,261 are involved in entrepreneurial activities.

Table 10: Course name, qualification, duration and training institute for the marginalised youth

Srl.	Course	Duration (month)	Minimum qualification	Training-providing organisations
1	Certificate course on dress making and tailoring	3	Class VIII	UCEP BD, PRDS, TMSS, AGWEB
2	Certificate course on sweater, knitwear and woven merchandising	6	Graduate/equivalent	UDDIPAN, TMSS, BIIT
3	Certificate course on quality control management in RMG	3	SSC/equivalent	BIIT, TMSS, UCEP BD
4	Lathe machine operation	3	Class VIII	UCEP BD, MAWTS, BIIT, TMSS
5	Automobile mechanic	6	Class VIII	UCEP BD, MAWTS,
6	Industrial electoral maintenance	3	SSC/equivalent	UCEP BD, MAWTS, BIIT, TMSS
7	Website design and development	6	HSC/Diploma in CSE/ equivalent	BIIT, PRF, SITC, NIET, TMSS
8	Professional freelancing	3	HSC/Diploma in CSE/ equivalent	BIIT, PRF, SITC, NIET, TMSS
9	Graphics design	3	HSC/Diploma in CSE/ equivalent	BIIT, PRF, SITC, NIET, TMSS
10	IT maintenance and servicing (IT support service)	6	HSC/Diploma in CSE/ equivalent	MAWTS, BIIT, TMSS, UDDIPAN

Source: Bangladesh Bank data.
Note: AGWEB: Association of Grassroots Women Entrepreneurs, Bangladesh; BIIT: Bangladesh Institute of Information Technology; CSE: Computer Science and Engineering; HSC: Higher School Certificate; MAWTS: Mirpur Agricultural Workshop and Training School; NIET: National Institute of Engineering and Technology; PRDS: Peace and Rights Development of Society; PRF: Projanmo Research Foundation; RMG: Readymade garments; SITC: Shyamoli Ideal Technical College; SSC: Secondary School Certificate; TMSS: Thengamara Mohila Shabuj Sangha; UCEP BD: Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs Bangladesh; UDDIPAN: United Development Initiatives for Programmed Actions.

Bangladesh Bank as part of its initiative for inclusive banking has been providing different types of banking, loan and training facilities, in collaboration with private banks, as well as with various public/ private organisations and NGOs. The Youth Development Centre provides training to the youth, and also provides a loan of Tk. 200,000 for each of the eligible trainees without any collateral after the training. However, despite having the scope and coverage, a large section of the marginalised youth living in slum areas and ethnic minorities are not aware about those facilities.

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[25]About Tk. 4.1 million has been provided to 830 ethnic people as one-time allowances (as mentioned during the workshop in Thakurgaon in August 2019).

5.3 Are the conditions for effective public service delivery for employment difficult to meet?

Transparency issue

In case of applying for jobs, providing security money is found to be a burden by the marginalised youth, while it is viewed as a source of earning (at least a part) by the service-providing agencies. While online applications could improve the level of transparency, there is little interest from the service-providing agencies to introduce/maintain online tracking system.[26] The inordinate delay in the selection process indicates lack of efficiency, and also, lack of transparency. Even when public offices formally receive complaints from the victims, there is often no mechanism to do the follow-up.[27] Often the decisions and actions taken are not made public and no reason is given for inaction.

Lack of information for availability of jobs, particularly for those living in rural areas is a major constraint. In the case of the madrasah students, there is no official position on the non-eligibility criteria in certain public services, due to which, they are often disqualified. Persons belonging to the LGBT group do not get proper training facilities; sometimes only a one-month training is provided, which is hardly of any use.

Accountability issue

Accountability is, in fact, almost absent in jobs- and business-related public services. In most cases, the plainland adivasi and slum-dweller youth have almost no access to formal jobs and businesses. Often these youths are involved in informal petty trading and businesses and informal sector jobs, which usually have no formal compliance structure. In other words, accountability issues related to public and private sector services are 'inconsequential' for the marginalised youths.

In contrast, the accountability issues are found to be relevant for formal jobs and businesses in public and private sectors, which usually are availed by the urban-based youths. According to the respondents of Sylhet, only 15–20 per cent of public sector jobs are at present handled online. Most of the public office personnel are not competent to provide online services. Entrepreneurs and business sector people have complained about the dismissive attitude of the public sector officials. As part of ensuring accountability, the government has introduced a telephone complaint service at '333' to provide information support to the citizens.[28]

There is no special provision for access to credit and to provide subsidised credit facility or any assurance of a minimum number of jobs for these youths in public and private sectors.

Efficiency issue

Those who applied for formal sector jobs, complained about lack of efficiency of public and private sector service-providers. Despite the infrastructure, most public offices fail to provide services due to lack of sufficient skilled personnel. Besides, there is apathy from government officials also. In the case of jobs and employment, there is limited scope for NGOs to bridge the gaps between public and private sectors.

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[26]At present, only 15–20 per cent of jobs at public institutions are done online, which was expressed by the participants in a dialogue.
[27]Only few (e.g. 15 per cent of total complaints) have been taken into consideration for internal review.
[28]The facility is currently available in the Dhaka city; but it will soon be expanded to other districts.

5.4 Conclusion

Poor economic condition and their socially backward position in education and training compared to those of their peers locating in the urban areas, push these marginalised groups behind in the job market. Job opportunity outside Dhaka and a few other districts is limited; the majority therefore, does not get employment opportunities within their locality. However, despite these limitations of low skill and low earning, the desire to work abroad is rather low among the marginalised youths. The government under different SSNPs has been providing support to the marginalised groups for business development, while NGOs take the initiative in providing training. Lack of information about availability of jobs, particularly for those living in rural areas and lack of transparency and accountability in public services keep the marginalised youth outside the purview of formal job market.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study brings forth the challenges of the marginalised youth in the country in regard to access to education, training and employment and how effective is the public service delivery by the associated organisations in addressing their challenges. Given the poor socio-economic background of the marginalised youth, the study takes into account the 'life cycle approach' to review their challenges. The study considers effectiveness of public service delivery from three dimensions—efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The study identified that the challenges faced by this community are significantly different from those of the mainstream youth. Contrary to the proposed linkages between service-providers and service-recipients as suggested in the analytical framework of the study, this analysis rather revealed a complex and fragmented nature of relationship between service-providers and service-recipients. Diagram 2 revisits the analytical framework of the study and revises the flowchart presented in Diagram 1. It is found that, while the urban-based youth partially enjoy better facilities in education, training and employment and a somewhat limited level of public service delivery, the marginalised youth struggle to avail minimum facilities in the area of education, training and employment, and almost nothing as far as effective public service delivery is concerned.

Based on the analysis of the data and information, the study has identified the following issues for policy consideration, and thereby has put forward a few suggestions with regard to improvement of livelihood opportunities of the marginalised youth, as well as to further enhance the efficacy of public service delivery in education, training and employment.

Difficult to attain the targetted 30 million jobs by 2030 under current rate of growth in employment

Various policy documents have put special focus on youth employment, but there has been only limited attention to the marginalised youth and limited mention about efficiency, transparency and accountability of public service delivery targetted to them. It is found that an additional 30 million employment would be difficult to generate with current rate of growth in employment unless further efforts are made to come out of the 'business as usual' approach. In this regard, targetted measures on effective, transparent and accountable public service delivery are required. The government should review its activities as part of implementing SDGs with specific target on 16.6 of the SDGs.

Diagram 2: Modified version of effectiveness of various services provided by public service-providers to the service-recipients
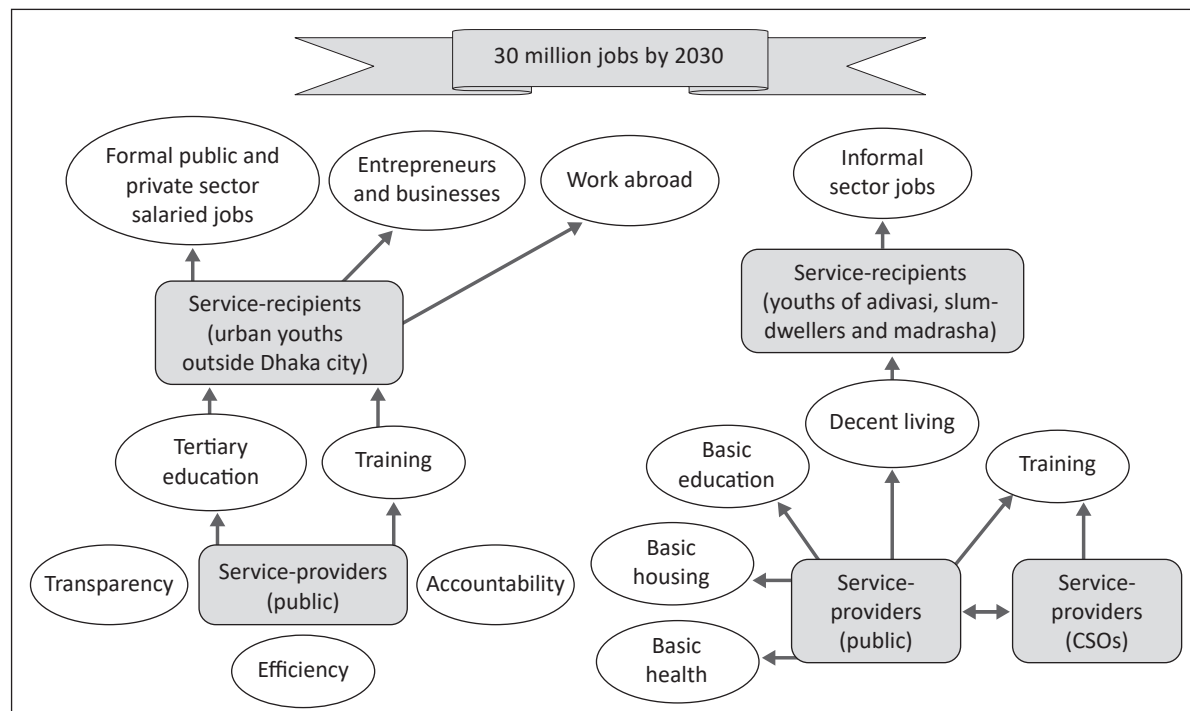
Source: Prepared by the authors.

Public services are not well-targeted to address major livelihood challenges and those are sometimes regressive in nature

Different marginalised groups confront different types of livelihood challenges, of which housing is a major factor. More importantly, authorities often are found to evict these groups from their current place of residence. A rights-based approach needs to be taken into account for the community to address their livelihood challenges instead of adopting market-based approach. In this connection, the government should consider ratifying the draft 'anti-discrimination' law.

A GO–NGO collaboration could fill the gaps in public service delivery

In view of various weaknesses in public service delivery, a GO–NGO (government–NGO) collaboration is found to be functional in case of ensuring better access to information and other services. Such collaboration could be enhanced further by allocating more resources through NGOs/CSOs which work with marginalised communities. It is important to examine the allocative efficiency of resources by government-supported organisations vis-à-vis those of private/NGO-supported organisations. It is important to create comprehensive, calibrated and market-oriented job market both in public and private sectors, which the GO–NGO collaboration could facilitate.

Shortfall in educational facilities and cost of education

The government's initiative to ensure access to basic education for all does not guarantee minimum required educational facilities for the marginalised youth. The government, therefore, should

increase allocation for students' stipend, which will cover all their education-related expenses. Public expenditures for education need to be increased, such as for recruitment of more teachers for different specialised subjects including religious teachings and own language teachers. Providing for teachers' training facilities is also important for the schools located outside the capital city. Also allocating weekly hours for orienting students in practical knowledge at the college and university levels is important.

Marginalised youths are deprived of accessing tertiary-level education and ICT education due to financial pressure

Lack of finances and the pressure to find a job make university and college education a distant dream for most of the youth; it also happens in many cases with ICT-related education/training. As a result, they enter the job market with poor academic and IT competencies and end up mostly in informal, low-paid and unskilled jobs. The government should extend support for access to tertiary-level education and make enabling conditions for receiving ICT education with low-cost computer facilities for IT-enabled jobs. Both theory and practice needs to be made mandatory.

Transparency and accountability in the delivery of public services in education are almost non-existent

Education in the peripheral regions is often accompanied by corruption and non-accountable practices in terms of ensuring proper education with competent teachers. As a result, the marginalised youth communities, such as LGBT, physically challenged, slum-dwellers and students from madrasahs receive limited attention. A section of marginalised youth who stay in urban areas get education with limited level of accountability of the public institutions. A standard operating procedure (SOP) should be maintained in academic institutions, which will focus on issues related to transparency and accountability of public services. Such practices are more important for those institutions, which are located outside city areas.

Training facilities have increased, but their quality and standard are not satisfactory

There is demand for customised training, particularly at the local level, taking into account its economic activities and socio-cultural issues. Public services are less responsive to the changing demands for skills. Most of the skill development trainings could facilitate low-skilled and informal nature of jobs and such trainings hardly capacitate the marginalised youths to enter the formal skill-oriented jobs. The quality and standards of the trainings need to follow guidelines of the NSDA, as well as the standards set by the private sector. The different types of training imparted to the youth should be assessed at regular intervals and the curriculum accordingly should be modified. Where suitable trained personnel are not available, the public sector should opt for GO–NGO–private sector collaboration. Special budgetary allocation should be made for the same. Besides, subsidised credit should be made available to help set up new enterprises. Incorporating soft-skills along with hard-skills in the courses will lead to leadership, confidence building, communication, problem solving and team-building qualities. Industry-specific vocational training programmes, e.g. for the garment industry, would enhance technical skills, as well as create more opportunities for local youth in the sector, where foreign professionals are currently working.

Public service delivery often fails to ensure access to information for the marginalised youth

Public services need to be publicised through different channels. There is little mechanism to disseminate training-related information among the target groups. Besides, such trainings often do not offer any quota for the marginalised groups and require registration and other fees, which make it difficult to avail the services. A large part of these activities are based within the city, which becomes difficult for those staying outside the city. Besides, training programmes should cover related expenses like travel, food, hostel charges, etc. It is important to introduce mobile-services in remote locations too; app-based training modules need to be developed for easy access to those services. Given the comparative advantage of the NGOs, GO–NGO collaboration seems more effective for giving information on different trainings. A database that the government is planning to develop for different districts is a well-thought initiative that should cover all relevant information on the youth.

Jobs are scarce in localities inhabited by the marginalised

Due to almost non-existent manufacturing and service-oriented industries, there are few jobs at the localities of the marginalised youth. Jobs are concentrated to a few industrial clusters, such as Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Chattogram and other nearby districts. Given the poor academic and training skills and poor networking skills a high level of unemployment exists among the youth, which leaves them lagging behind in the job market. The government's initiatives for establishing special economic zones (SEZs) should give priority to this segment. Besides, some of the industrial parks may be set up in regions where their concentration is high, provided those regions are technically viable for setting up such facilities. The government may also consider setting up a 'youth employment' guarantee scheme targetting this group across the country.

Widening inequality in education and training further marginalise them in the job market

There is a huge inequality in terms of level and quality of education and training received by the marginalised youth vis-à-vis those of others. Such inequality has further increased after the ICT-based education and training has been considered as a pre-requisite for formal sector jobs, and thereby widened the inequality. Public expenditure for capacity building needs to be undertaken through diverse means and approaches. On one hand, budgetary allocation for education and training for both these categories need to be significantly increased, particularly for establishment of new schools, educational equipment, ICT labs, improvement of skill development of teachers and school management. On the other hand, a section of the youth could be trained in different types of traditional and non-traditional sports (e.g. football, cricket, swimming, basketball, gymnastics, track and field events, boxing, rowing, etc.) and cultural activities (e.g. musical instruments, stage performance, etc.). Trained and nurtured over a long period of time would make them national-level athletes/performers. The involvement of private and public organisations in the long-term would prove good for their careers.

Lack of access to employment information as well as absence of accountability and transparency mechanism disproportionately affect the marginalised youths

The traditional means of disseminating job-related information need to be changed by using alternate means, such as social media, internet, mobile-based information services, etc. People belonging to the LGBT community do not get proper training facilities and neither jobs. Taking into account of

the regressive attitude of the public sector officials, initiatives are needed to change their mindset. There are scopes for further improvement of service delivery system by undertaking necessary changes in organisational, regulatory and technological issues. The business chambers also cannot avoid their responsibility in ensuring due services for entrepreneurs and businessmen. Job-related information, such as vacancy and selection processes, need to be transparent and made public for better transparency and accountability. NGOs have developed specific apps, which could be used to better inform the marginalised about jobs.

Lack of coordination between different government offices working with the youth

A number of government departments and offices under different ministries have been working on youth and their overall well-being, but there is lack of coordination between them. This has impacted the efficiency of relevant public offices. A proper coordination mechanism needs to be established between different government offices working with the youth.

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