

Research Study
on
“The Present Trend of Labour Migration in GCC Countries: Measures Needed for Bangladesh to Shift from Un-Skilled to Semi-Skilled and Semi-Skilled to Skilled and High-Skilled Labour Migration”

Submitted to
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Submitted by
Dr. Shilpi Das
Associate Professor
Department of Accounting & Information Systems
Jagannath University, Dhaka

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the study is to identify the current trend of labour migration in GCC countries and explore measures needed for Bangladesh in order to grasp the overseas employment opportunities in GCC countries through developing human capital by shifting unskilled labours to semi-skilled and semi-skilled labours to skilled and high skilled.

The current study is necessary because very few evidence-based policy studies have been found. In fact, no structured study has been found in order to show a concrete roadmap to Bangladesh though GCC countries are the most attractive and prospective destination for Bangladeshi labour migrants. In this circumstance, this study has been conducted in order to show policy guidelines to the nation so that Bangladesh can retain and develop the labour market for semi-skilled, skilled, and high skilled labour migrants in GCC countries.

This study uses a mixed research philosophy which falls under both positivism and interpretivism from epistemological perspective since both qualitative and quantitative data have been used. Trends of the GCC labour market and Bangladeshi labour migrants have been identified using secondary sources like reports from different national and international organizations, and academic papers. A couple of focus group discussions (FGDs) consists of academicians, govt. officials, and experts has been conducted in order to explore the reasons for which Bangladeshi Labour migrants remain unskilled. Additionally, the measures to be taken for uplifting their skill levels have been explored through the same FGDs. Using the findings from the two FGDs, a questionnaire was developed for collecting quantitative data in order to validate the qualitative data. Moreover, the level of significance of each of the items developed through the FGDs has been measured through quantitative analysis using frequency, mean, and descriptive statistics. Analyzed data have been visualized using various types of visualization tools.

This study finds that the general trend of the GCC labour market shows that Bangladesh has tremendous opportunity over there. In fact, this study depicts that majority of the employment opportunities in GCC labour market is occupied by foreign nationals. But in order to grasp the opportunity Bangladesh should prepare its migrant labours uplifting the skill levels from

unskilled to semi-skilled and semi-skilled to skilled and high skilled. This study further states that the competition in the labour market of GCC countries is increasing dramatically.

This study further argues that in this era of digitalization, globalization, smart technologies, fourth industrial revolution, Bangladesh must be prepared to compete in the labor market of GCC countries with necessary skills of manpower. The migrant labors must be provided with necessary training, skill-based certificate courses with the collaboration of highly dedicated and professional TVET institutes, polytechnic institutes, universities and so on. Moreover, greater level of collaboration and cooperation among the stakeholders like migrant labors, govt. agencies, training providers, employers of GCC countries, recruiting agencies, accreditation bodies of GCC countries is necessary in this circumstance.

Bangladesh should collect updated labour market data and take evidence-based decision for ensuring appropriate skill-based training and certification for the migrant labors. More study in this area is necessary using bigger sample size and engaging multiple stakeholders. The current study is expected to serve as a milestone in this area serving both the policy makers and academicians.

Keywords: Labor Migration, GCC Countries, Bangladesh, Un-skilled, Semi-skilled, Skilled, High-skilled Labor, Labor Migration Policy, Human Capital Development

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BBS	:	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BMET	:	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
GCC	:	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
HCD	:	Human Capital Development
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
IOM	:	International Organization for Migration
KSA	:	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MoEWOE	:	Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment
QDA	:	Qualitative Data Analysis
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UAE	:	United Arab Emirates
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Program

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CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Population explosion, the very burning question for Bangladesh during the beginning of the 21st century (Chowdhury, 2009), has been somehow addressed through the exploration of the opportunity of labour migration (Siddique, 2019). The emergence of the concept of globalization accelerated the opportunity for the developing and under developed countries like Bangladesh (Jalil et al.,2020) There is huge opportunity for the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force to be employed abroad through the alleviation of migration complexities by the fervent efforts of the current government as a part of its attempt to upgrading the diplomatic relationship with other countries (Siddiqui, 2005). According to the UNDP report about 68 percent of the total population belongs to the age group of 15-65, the labour force. The existing limitations of domestic employment opportunities in Bangladesh made us dependent on labour migration to other countries (Siddiqui, 2016). that can be revealed through the remittance statistics provided by Bangladesh Bank, BBS report that Remittance as Percent of GDP and Export Earnings of Bangladesh are 6.03% and 67.14% respectively. According to the Economic Review of Bangladesh, 2022, it's clear that the major destination of Bangladeshi labour migrants is the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries. The report, produced by the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (up to February 2022), shows that the percentage of overseas employment by GCC countries are- KSA- 74.08%, Oman- 8.91%, UAE- 4.73%, Qatar-1.81%, Kuwait- 0.30%. The current trend of overseas employment shows that his proportion of Bangladeshi along with other south Asian labour relative to their own labours has been increasing since its inauguration as a recipient country of temporary labour migration from south Asia.

Bangladesh, being endowed with a huge amount of less-skilled (Islam,2011) and unskilled labour force, has been exploring the market of less skilled and semi-skilled labour force across the world. According to BMET, MoEWOE, Bangladesh Bank, the percentage of less skilled labour migration from Bangladesh to the total labour migration is 76% in 2021. The government, through the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE), is highly concerned with the labour migration of less-skilled and semi-skilled work force especially to GCC countries.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

GCC countries, being the largest migration destination for the Bangladeshi (Oommen, 2017) as well as the other south Asian migration seeking population, are offering huge migration opportunities in their labour market. In fact, 47% of the total population of the GCC countries are non-nationals (Shah, 2012). The incremental demand for labour force in these countries is emerging mostly due to the rapid development in science and technology. In such a situation the ratio of required semi-skilled, skilled and high-skilled migrants to unskilled and less-skilled migrants in GCC countries is gradually increasing (Chennells and Reenen, 1999). Recent studies show that GCC countries are now emphasizing on taking semi-skilled and skilled migrants. Additionally, from the perspective of migrants and their home country economy migration is much beneficial as it creates source of huge amount of remittance. But the matter of deep concern is that Bangladesh is still mostly responding to the requisition of less skilled labour force (Afsar *et al.*, 2002). So, in the near future, Bangladesh may fail to grasp the opportunity of labour migration in GCC markets. Ahamad (2023) states that Bangladesh is still exporting unskilled workers abroad which must be changed in order to have higher remittance. In such a situation, to strongly face the challenge Bangladesh needs to upgrade the skill level of the migration seeking population (Siddiqui, 2021). But the problem that the trend in the labour market in GCC countries is still unexplored and thus the ways to develop labour migration from Bangladesh to GCC countries is still unidentified. Moreover, Bangladesh still has not designed any well-structured and GCC country-specific guidelines showing the ways through which Bangladesh can upgrade their labour force through shifting them from Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled Labour for meeting the host country demand.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study consists of the following three research questions. Getting answers of the following three questions will keep the research within its defined boundary.

- a. What are the current trends in labour migration in GCC Countries?
- b. Which reasons are responsible for keeping the Bangladeshi labour force unskilled?

- c. What kinds of actions might help in shifting labour from Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled for developing the labour migration from Bangladesh to GCC Countries?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to find the answers to the above research questions and fill the stated research gap, the current study has both a general and some specific objectives. The general objective is to understand the Present trend of labour migration in GCC Countries in order to offer Bangladesh some ways to grasp the labour market through uplifting the skill-levels of existing labour force. This general objective will be attained through the following three specific ones-

- d. To explore the current trend of labour migration in GCC Countries.
- e. To investigate the reasons of Bangladeshi labour force for remaining unskilled.
- f. To suggest the ways of shifting the Labour Migration: Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled.

1.5 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Bangladesh, being a developing country, is overburdened with lots of problems such as poverty, malnutrition, unemployment, etc. Poverty and malnutrition along with many other social problems are also instigated by the unemployment problem. If the problem of Unemployment, specially the unemployment of unskilled, less-skilled youth age group of people, can be addressed and worked out, there could have less propensity for the other social problems to rise. Entrepreneurship and Labour migration are thought to be the major solutions to the headache of unemployment problem. The lack of capital required to go for entrepreneurial activity and the risk of failure associated is triggering the youth search employment abroad.

GCC countries being the number one geographical recipient (Buttorff *et al.*, 2018; Shah 2013) with six countries, in term of the number of migrants receiving entity have been worthy study the problems, prospect and ways out in exploring the opportunities for Bangladeshi labour force. As the world as a whole is advancing toward artificial intelligence and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour force is increasing and assumed to be so high that in the near future it will chase away the requirement for unskilled workforce (Siddiqui,

2021). That's why it's high time the government of Bangladesh thought about the composition of workforce and emphasize Human Capital Development (HCD). The shifting of Un-skilled labour to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled labour to Skilled and High-skilled Labour can both become the weapon to defend the threat of competing labour exporting countries and achieving competitive advantage over other labour exporting countries if the shifting is achieved earlier (Afsar *et al.*, 2002).

As temporary labour migration has been the largest source of earning foreign currency and reducing unemployment, it has been crucial to understand the labour migration and its current trends in GCC Countries and take necessary skill adjustment and up gradation measures accordingly.

The study aims at exploring the current trends of labour migration in GCC countries, finding out problems associated with labour migration, suggesting ways out to upgrade skill level of the current labour force of Bangladesh searching employment opportunity abroad and thus bringing solutions to the problem of unemployment.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The focus of the current study is limited to exploring the trend of labour migration in GCC Countries and offering measures needed for Bangladesh to shift from Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled Labour Migration. As mentioned in the methods section of the study, this paper considers both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedure and analysis techniques. There are some possible limitations of this study. Reaching the respondents was very challenging since they are mostly scattered and unorganized. In order to reach respondents of these characteristics, the current study uses convenience sampling and the sample size was small. Findings of this study might not be generalized for labour migration to other countries since the variables are highly country specific. Responses from mostly uneducated and unskilled labour force might have biasness though the researchers tried their level best in order to tackle this issue.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This study has been divided into five main chapters namely- introduction, literature review, methods, findings and analysis, and conclusion and recommendations. Apart from these five

main chapters, this paper contains an executive summary containing abstract of the whole study. The introduction chapter provides a preliminary background, states a research problem, identifies the research questions and objectives, and states the rationale, scopes and limitations of the study. The literature review section explores the existing literature and finds the gaps. The methods section shows how the research has been conducted which includes data collection, analysis techniques, sampling and so on. The findings and analysis chapter contain the quantitative and qualitative findings along with results. The last chapter namely, conclusion and recommendations contain major findings and discussion along with some policy recommendations. The secondary sources used in the current study have been acknowledged in the reference section. Finally, the appendix section contains the study questionnaire through which data were collected from the respondents.

CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Labour migration contributed a lot in deciding the labour dynamics across the world and thereby facilitated the development of global economy. Bangladesh, since it first officially experienced labour migration in 1970s, has been experiencing growth in labour migration as well as growth in remittance that substantially started to contribute to the national income of the country (Siddique, 2019). Labour migration is defined as the movement of people having their own country of origin or permanent resident country to establish themselves in other country either permanently or temporarily. In most of the times migration, individually or in group, happens for economic issues (Bhugra & Bhui, 2001) and that brings socio-economic and socio-cultural change for the destination country and the country of origin (Bogue.D.J, 1977). Migrants are categorized as temporary migrants, irregular migrants, business and highly-skilled migrants, forced migrants, family reunification migrants and return migrants where temporary migrants mean those who migrates for employment and for a limited period of time (Radi, 2020). Basically, Bangladesh is exposed to this kind of migration since the adult people, especially the less skilled, are most of the times unable to find employment at home and shifting to the oil-rich GCC countries who are in dire need of relatively low-cost less skilled worker (Quayam, 2017). Majority of the people from Bangladesh migrate themselves for the reason of improving their own economic condition (Siddiqui and Abrar, 2002). The study conducted by Afsar et al. (2002) revealed that most of the migrants are semi-literate with less-skill. But in the age of technological advancement, the need for less skilled labour force would certainly fall and at the same time a quick rise in the demand of technically sound labour has been noticed.

Since its establishment in 1981, The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) heavily depends on migrant workers (Buttorff et al.,2018) specially in private sector and employs a huge percentage of migrant workers relative to its own population. The percentage was 44.8 percent in 1990 and reached 59.9 percent in 2017 (Atong et al., 2018).

Though The GCC countries as a destination of our workforce, formerly idle adults, are contributing to the economy of Bangladesh through the reduction of unemployment problem, being the source of remittance, contributing to the knowledge base of the migrants (Hass, 2010), and so on, there are some obvious problems and challenges faced by the migrants like Kafala, a

major uncertainty of losing the work permit if the contract with the employer gets terminated (Bachmann, 2018) that by turn causes loss of financial investment (Costa & Martin, 2018). Lack of knowledge about pre-departure issues (Mayah, et al., 2018) and Illegal agencies' abuse are also some challenges in this regard. So, the current trends in the labour market of GCC countries have to be explored.

Due to the technological advancement, the employment opportunities in the overseas are shifting. The demand for labour having skills is increasing and thereby the markets for less skilled labour is shrinking day by day (Manning, 2004). As GCC countries constitute the destination of the approximately more than 80 percent Bangladeshi migrant labour, the analysis of trends and skill upgradation required according to the host country's requirement is inevitable to cope up with the competitive environment exporting manpower.

2.2 MIGRATION AND ITS HISTORY

People have been migrating since the start of time. This process has established communities all across the world, and it continues to do so now. People are migrating in greater numbers than ever before (Doherty et al., 2014). People may opt to relocate for a variety of reasons, including improved career opportunities or better weather (StudySmarter, 2022). Migration, for whatever cause, may have a significant influence on people's life. IOM (2019) defines a migrant as an umbrella phrase, not defined by international law, representing the ordinary lay concept of a person who moves away from his or her normal abode, whether inside a country or across an international boundary, for a number of reasons, temporarily or permanently. It furthers the concept by mentioning that the term encompasses a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; individuals whose specific types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; and those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined by international law, such as international students. A person may be deemed a migrant regardless of their legal status, the reason for their travel (voluntary or involuntary), or the length of time they want to stay (StudySmarter, 2022). As documented by Earth Eclipse (2023), Migration can be categorized in different forms based on the nature and reason of movement. Migration is first and foremost categorized according to the type of movement that is taking place. Both immigration and emigration would fall under this. Migration of people or populations to another nation is referred to as immigration. On the other hand,

emigration describes the movement of people or populations out of one country. Consider the exodus of Indians from India and the immigration of Filipinos to the United States. Permanence is referred to in the second category of migration. Permanent, temporary, voluntary, and forced are the options under permanency. Permanent migration is defined as a relocation from one location to another without any intention of going back to the original location. Temporary migration is movement carried out for a brief period of time. Migrants who are forced to migrate do so without consent. Forced migration is the antithesis of voluntary migration. The nature of the location is the subject of the third migration categorization. There are two categories under this one: internal and international. Internal migration is a form of migration in which individuals move between states within the same country whereas international migration is a sort of movement in which individuals move from one country to another for a variety of reasons such as work possibilities, higher education, business prospects, and so on (Hevjt, 2017). The types of migration can be furthered into-

- a. Gross migration: the term "gross migration" describes the sum of all immigrant arrivals and emigrant departures.
- b. Net migration: the difference between the total population entering and leaving the country. It could also be a reference to the gap between immigration and emigration rates.
- c. Impelled migration: describes the exodus of citizens from a nation or region as a result of bad circumstances.
- d. Step migration: is the gradual movement from a closer location to a farther one.
- e. Chain migration: is the term for a sequence of migrations involving a certain population.
- f. Rural-urban migration: The movement of people from rural to urban parts of a country is referred to as rural-urban migration. This can be caused by the fact that metropolitan regions provide higher job prospects.
- g. Interregional migration: is the movement of people inside a country from one region to another.
- h. The term "intercontinental migration" describes the movement of people between and within several continents. For instance, individuals from Asia could immigrate to Europe.
- i. Intra-continental migration: this is the term used to describe individuals moving inside and between nations on the same continent. People from Thailand could immigrate to Japan, for instance. Both nations are located in Asia.

- j. Seasonal migration: describes the movement of humans or animals as a result of seasonal or climatic factors. For instance, some individuals might relocate in order to produce or harvest crops.
- k. Return migration: is the movement of persons back to their nation of origin after having travelled elsewhere.

The history of migration can be traced back to the history of civilization. According to studies, the pre-modern migration of human populations began around 1.75 million years ago with the travel of *Homo erectus* out of Africa through Eurasia. However, the modern migration trend accelerated during the 18th and 19th centuries due to industrialization and the slave trade. The First and Second World Wars, as well as the wars, genocides, and crises that resulted from them, had a massive influence on migration. During the Ottoman Empire's demise, Muslims travelled from the Balkans to Turkey, while Christians went in the other direction. Following India's partition in 1947, huge people moved from India to Pakistan, based on their religious views. The Indian Independence Act 1947 established partition as a result of the disintegration of the British Indian Empire. The partition displaced up to 17 million people throughout the erstwhile British Indian Empire, with estimates ranging from a few hundred thousand to a million lives lost. Muslims from former British India travelled to Pakistan (including East Pakistan, now Bangladesh), whereas Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and Hindus from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) migrated in the other direction. According to Overseas Development Institute research, there is a rapid shift of workers from slower-growing to faster-growing sectors of the economy. Migrants are frequently excluded by urban housing rules, and migrant assistance efforts are required to increase workers' access to market information, identity verification, housing, and education. Migration is a complex phenomenon that is driven by various factors, including both push and pull factors. The literature on migration has focused on the interplay between push and pull factors and the impact they have on migration patterns. Push factors refer to the conditions that drive individuals to leave their home countries, such as poverty, political instability, and lack of economic opportunities. Research has shown that push factors, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities, are major drivers of migration in developing countries (De Haas, 2010). Moreover, conflicts, persecution, and human rights violations are also considered push factors that force people to leave their countries (ESchooltoday, 2022). On the other hand, pull factors refer to the conditions that attract individuals to migrate to a particular

destination, such as better economic opportunities, higher wages, and improved living standards. Research has shown that pull factors, such as better economic opportunities and higher wages, are major drivers of migration in developed countries (De Haas, 2010). Moreover, family reunification and study opportunities are also considered to be pull factors that attract people to migrate (IOM, 2019). The literature has shown that the interplay between push and pull factors is crucial in determining migration patterns. The decision to migrate is often based on a cost-benefit analysis, where individuals weigh the benefits of migration against the costs, such as the risk of exploitation and the difficulty of adapting to a new culture (De Haas, 2010).

2.3 TYPES OF LABOUR

Labour migration is a complex phenomenon that has been widely studied in the literature. Labour migration is the movement of people across national borders in search of work opportunities. This definition includes both international and domestic migration, as well as other types of labour movement such as permanent, temporary, and cyclical migration (ILO, 2019). The topic of labour migration usually includes- Skilled, Semiskilled and Unskilled labours.

2.3.1 Skilled Labor

An individual having specific expertise is referred to as a skilled worker or skilled labour (Indeed, n.d.). The skilled labour sector of the workforce calls for specialized education, expertise, or knowledge to carry out mental or physical duties. These labours are capable of exercising judgment and have knowledge of the particular trade or industry they work in (Esub, 2017). According to Indeed (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021), these are the three kinds of skills that these experts need to possess: Foundation skills, Transferable skills, and Technical and vocational skills. Foundation skills are regarded as basic since they form the cornerstone and foundation for other abilities, training, operations, and more. Also, it's crucial for professionals to have transferable talents that may be used in a variety of settings. Technical and vocational skills refer to the capacity to complete particular jobs. Jobs requiring a high degree of expertise, education, or experience, like engineering or medicine, are frequently filled by skilled workers (Mahr, 2022). To be capable of filling these jobs, skilled labours often need a greater degree of education or training, which leads to a higher wage than unskilled labours. A bachelor's degree in

a relevant discipline, a master's degree, or a doctorate is frequently required for candidates for skilled labour employment (Indeed, n.d.).

2.3.2 Semi-skilled Labor

Workers who execute duties that call for a certain set of talents or skills but don't necessitate additional education are known as semi-skilled labours (Indeed, n.d.). While semi-skilled labour does not need advanced education or specialized training, it does call for a greater level of expertise than unskilled labour. Semi-skilled workers often possess higher education than a high school diploma but less than a college degree. Although not difficult, the kinds of abilities required for this often include the capacity to keep track of and carry out repeated activities (Esub, 2017). These talents are more likely to be adaptable and valuable in different occupations. It is more common than unskilled labour and is often found in jobs that need more physical labour than skilled labour. They are often paid at a lower rate than skilled labour, but it is still an important part of the economy (Mahr, 2022). Truck drivers, retail salespeople, bartenders, flight attendants, taxi drivers, waiters, and security guards are a few examples of these sorts of employment.

2.3.3 Unskilled Labor

An employee who does simple tasks that require little to no autonomous judgment or prior expertise is considered to be unskilled, however familiarity with the workplace environment is still important (Paycheck.in, n.d.). Thus, in addition to physical effort, his job may also call for expertise with a variety of products or publications. As clarified by Labour for hire (Labor4hire, n.d.), By no means does the term "unskilled labour" imply that the worker is not required to have any abilities. Simply said, it indicates that the person lacks any official or specialized education or training experience in a given field. The labour economy is heavily dependent on unskilled workers. Unskilled employees, such as those who work as janitors, fast food workers, maids, furniture movers, etc., are able to learn on the job, usually with some physically involved. According to research from the Bureau of Labour Statistics and the U.S. Department of Labour (labor, 2022), the growth in job possibilities for unskilled and low-skilled labour is expected to be the greatest between 2014 and 2024.

2.4 LABOUR MIGRATION

The literature on labour migration has focused on various aspects of the topic, including the motivations for migration, the economic and social impacts of migration, and the challenges faced by migrants and host communities. One of the key motivations for labour migration is the pursuit of economic opportunities. According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019), economic factors are the primary drivers of international migration, with many individuals migrating to take advantage of better employment prospects and higher wages in host countries. Research has also shown that labour migration can lead to increased economic opportunities for migrants and their families, as well as for host communities through the inflow of remittances and the development of new industries (ILO, 2019); (Massey, 1990). However, the literature also highlights the negative impacts of labour migration, including the exploitation of vulnerable workers and the disruption of social and cultural norms in host communities. Studies have shown that migrant workers are often subject to poor working conditions and low wages, and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (ILO, 2017); (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015). Moreover, the literature also highlights the challenges that host communities face in terms of integration and the potential for social and cultural upheaval (Stark, 1991).

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the human rights of migrant workers and the need for greater protection. The literature calls for implementing fair labour standards and strengthening regulations to prevent human trafficking and forced labour (ILO, 2019). Moreover, the literature suggests that the integration of migrants in host communities through the provision of education and skills training, and the facilitation of social and civic integration can lead to more harmonious and inclusive societies (Castles S. and Miller, 2009).

2.5 LABOUR MIGRATION IN GCC COUNTRIES

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have experienced significant labour migration in recent years. The rapid economic growth and development in the region, as well as the shortage of skilled and unskilled labour in the local workforce, are the main drivers of labour migration to GCC countries (Al-Tamimi, 2017). However, the large number of migrant workers

has also led to several challenges, such as wage stagnation, unemployment among locals, and a lack of legal protections and rights for migrant workers (Organization, Labour migration in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries., 2017). This thesis aims to examine the impact of labour migration on GCC countries and the challenges faced by migrant workers in these countries. The high demand for labour in the construction, manufacturing, and service sectors is one of the main factors driving labour migration to GCC countries (Al-Rasheed, 2015). The ongoing construction of infrastructure projects, such as airports, highways, and housing developments, has led to a high demand for construction workers. Additionally, the growth of the manufacturing and service sectors has resulted in a shortage of skilled and unskilled labour in these areas. The impact of labour migration on GCC countries has been mixed. On the one hand, the influx of migrant workers has helped to meet the high demand for labour and has contributed to the economic growth and development of the region (Al-Tamimi, 2017). On the other hand, the large number of migrant workers has also led to issues such as wage stagnation, unemployment among locals, and increased competition for housing and other resources (Organization, 2017). One of the biggest challenges faced by migrant workers in GCC countries is the lack of legal protections and rights (ILO, 2017). Many migrant workers are not covered by labour laws and are not entitled to the same rights and benefits as local workers. This has led to issues such as poor working conditions, low wages, and a lack of job security. Additionally, migrant workers often face discrimination and mistreatment by employers, which can lead to physical and psychological abuse.

2.6 SOUTH ASIAN LABOUR MIGRATION IN GCC COUNTRIES

One of the main drivers of South Asian labour migration to GCC countries is the high demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled labour in these countries, particularly in the construction and domestic sectors (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001). This demand is driven by the rapid economic development and population growth in GCC countries, as well as the desire to reduce dependence on national labour (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001). A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that the majority of South Asian migrant workers in GCC countries are employed in low-skilled and semi-skilled jobs such as construction, domestic work, and manual labour (ILO, 2016). These jobs often offer low wages and poor working conditions, and the migrants are often not protected by labour laws or social protections (ILO, 2016).

Another study found that South Asian migrant workers in GCC countries often face discrimination, both in terms of access to employment and treatment on the job. This discrimination is often based on race, ethnicity, and national origin, and can limit the migrants' ability to improve their economic situation or integrate into their host society. On the receiving end, GCC countries have a high demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled labour due to their rapidly expanding economies and construction booms. This demand is met by importing large numbers of workers from South Asian countries, who are willing to work for low wages and in difficult conditions. This migration is driven by a combination of push factors in the sending countries, such as poverty and unemployment, and pull factors in the receiving countries, such as high demand for low-skilled and semi-skilled labour. The resulting influx of South Asian workers has had a significant impact on both the sending and receiving countries, as well as on the migrants themselves. One of the main push factors for South Asian labour migration to GCC countries is poverty and unemployment in the sending countries. In particular, countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan have large populations of underemployed or unemployed workers who are eager to find work abroad. Additionally, the lack of opportunities for economic advancement in the sending countries can make migration an attractive option for many workers. This migration is also driven by push factors in the sending countries, such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001). Migrants are often motivated by the desire to improve their standard of living and provide for their families back home (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001).

However, the migration of South Asian labour to GCC countries is not without its challenges. Migrants often face poor working and living conditions, discrimination, and a lack of legal protections (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001). They are also often subject to abuse and exploitation by their employers (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001). Additionally, South Asian migrant workers in GCC countries are often denied basic rights such as the right to form trade unions, the right to strike and the right to collective bargaining. This makes it difficult for them to assert their rights or seek justice in case of abuse. Furthermore, the lack of legal protections for migrant workers in GCC countries can make it difficult for them to assert their rights or seek justice in case of abuse (ILO, 2016). The study found that many migrant workers are unable to access legal remedies for workplace abuses, and are also often denied the right to form trade unions or engage in collective bargaining (ILO, 2016). Despite these challenges, South Asian labour migration to GCC

countries continues to be an important source of income for many workers and their families in the sending countries. It also contributes to the development of GCC countries, as migrant workers help to fuel economic growth and fill labour shortages in key sectors.

Despite these challenges, South Asian labour migration to GCC countries continues to be an important source of income for many workers and their families in the sending countries. It also contributes to the development of GCC countries, as migrant workers help to fuel economic growth and fill labour shortages in key sectors (Al-Ali & Koser, 2001).

2.7 LABOUR MIGRATION IN GCC COUNTRIES FROM BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries and has a large population of young, unemployed individuals. As a result, labour migration has become an important source of income for many Bangladeshi families. According to the data of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are the major destinations for Bangladeshi workers in the GCC (Alam, 2018). Bangladeshi labour migration to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries has a long and complex history. The first recorded instances of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC can be traced back to the 1970s, when a small number of individuals were recruited to work in the oil-rich countries of the Arabian Peninsula (Ahmed N. , 2018). However, it was not until the 1980s that large-scale labour migration from Bangladesh to the GCC began to take place (Ahmed N. , 2018).

One of the primary drivers of this trend was the oil boom of the 1970s and 1980s, which led to a significant increase in demand for low-skilled labour in the GCC countries (Ahmed S. , 2015). This created an opportunity for poor, rural Bangladeshi workers to find employment abroad and earn much higher wages than they could at home (Ahmed S. , 2015). Additionally, the Bangladesh government actively encouraged labour migration as a way to reduce unemployment and improve the country's balance of payments (Ahmed S. , 2015). In recent years, a significant number of Bangladeshi workers have been migrating to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (Khan A. , 2017). The GCC countries have been experiencing a labour shortage due to their rapidly growing economies and have been actively recruiting workers from other countries

to fill this gap. In particular, the construction and domestic service sectors have been the main recipients of Bangladeshi workers in the GCC countries (Khan A. , 2017). The literature on Bangladeshi labour migration in GCC countries has focused on various aspects of the topic, including the motivations for migration, the economic and social impacts of migration, and the challenges faced by migrants and host communities.

One of the key motivations for Bangladeshi labour migration to GCC countries is the pursuit of economic opportunities. According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019), economic factors are the primary drivers of international migration, with many individuals migrating to take advantage of better employment prospects and higher wages in host countries. Research has also shown that labour migration can lead to increased economic opportunities for migrants and their families, as well as for host communities through the inflow of remittances and the development of new industries (Massey, 1990). Moreover, the NewAge Business (2022) reported that remittance inflow from GCC countries to Bangladesh has been steadily increasing over the past decade, reaching a peak of \$22.07 billion in 2021, making it a significant source of foreign currency for the country.

According to a study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) (Khan M. R., 2018), the number of Bangladeshi workers in GCC countries has grown significantly over the past four decades, reaching an estimated 2.2 million in 2017. The majority of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the GCC are employed in low-skilled, low-paying jobs such as construction, domestic work, and manual labour (Ahmed S. , 2015). According to the data of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain are the major destinations for Bangladeshi workers in the GCC (Alam, 2018). Despite the challenging conditions they often face, these workers continue to be attracted to the GCC countries by the promise of higher wages and the opportunity to support their families back home (Ahmed S. , 2015).

However, the migration of Bangladeshi workers to the GCC countries also has negative consequences for the country. The loss of skilled and unskilled labour has resulted in a shortage of workers in certain sectors of the economy, such as agriculture and manufacturing (Khan A. , 2017). Additionally, the migration of young male has resulted in a gender imbalance in certain areas of the country, with many villages and towns having a disproportionate number of women

and children (Khan A. , 2017). The migration of Bangladeshi workers to the GCC countries also has significant social and cultural impacts. Many of the migrants are low-skilled and poorly educated, and they often face discrimination and abuse in the host countries (Khan A. , 2017). Additionally, the prolonged separation from their families can have negative psychological effects on the migrants, and the cultural differences between the host countries and Bangladesh can also lead to feelings of alienation and isolation (Khan A. , 2017). Studies have shown that Bangladeshi migrant workers in GCC countries are often subject to poor working conditions and low wages, and are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2015). Moreover, the literature also highlights the challenges that host communities face in terms of integration and the potential for social and cultural upheaval (Stark, 1991). Additionally, in recent years, there has been growing concern about the human rights of Bangladeshi migrant workers in GCC countries and the need for greater protections. One of the most talked about systems used to abuse migrant workers in GCC countries is 'Kafala'. The Kafala system, also known as sponsorship, is a system of labour regulation used in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman. The Kafala system requires foreign workers to be sponsored by a local employer in order to enter and work in the country, and it places significant restrictions on their freedom of movement and ability to change employers. This system has been criticized for violating the rights of migrant workers, including Bangladeshi workers, who make up a significant proportion of the labour force in the GCC countries (Mishra & Al-Naser, 2020). The Kafala system has been linked to a range of human rights abuses, including forced labour, exploitation, and abuse at the hands of employers (Al-Dosari, 2019). Bangladeshi workers in the GCC countries are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse under the Kafala system, due to their status as low-skilled workers and their limited legal protections (Al-Rashid & Al-Tawfiq, 2020). There have been numerous reports of Bangladeshi workers being subjected to low wages, poor working conditions, and restrictions on their freedom of movement (Al-Sayed, 2018). The literature calls for the implementation of fair labour standards and the strengthening of regulations to prevent human trafficking and forced labour (ILO, 2019). Moreover, the literature suggests that the integration of migrants in host communities through the provision of education and skills training, and the facilitation of social and civic integration can lead to more harmonious and inclusive societies (Castles S. and Miller, 2009). Despite the curing measures, the problems have

not disappeared after even half a century of struggles. As a matter of fact, this might only represent the start of several other problems that may arise in the migrant labours due to the major shift in technology that the world is witnessing. Technology is advancing, which is changing the career opportunities abroad. The market for less skilled labour is getting harder to find as a result of the rising demand for expert labour. As the GCC nations get more than 80% of the migrant labour from Bangladesh, it is essential to analyze trends and determine the necessary skill upgrades in accordance with the needs of the host country in order to compete in the global labour market.

2.8 THE NEED TO SHIFT FROM UN-SKILLED TO SEMI-SKILLED AND SEMI-SKILLED TO SKILLED LABOR

Although the Bangladeshi government along with other concerned parties has taken several steps to protect the rights and welfare of its migrant workers in the GCC, the actual long-term solutions might lie with the labour itself. We need to transform our labours in order to truly ensure that they are being valued: Bangladesh needs to shift from un-skilled to semi-skilled and semi-skilled to skilled and high-skilled labour migration. This, for several reasons-

Firstly, un-skilled workers are often subjected to lower wages, limited job opportunities, and poor working conditions in foreign countries (Das, 2017). This results in low income, and a lack of opportunities for personal and professional development, which can lead to negative impacts on their health and well-being.

Secondly, skilled workers are in high demand in many countries, and they tend to be offered better wages, working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement (Hasan & Islam, 2019). This leads to higher income, improved quality of life, and greater financial stability for the worker and their families.

Thirdly, the migration of skilled workers can also benefit the sending country, as the remittances they send back can provide a significant source of income and boost economic growth (Ahmed M. , 2017). In addition, skilled workers can also contribute to the transfer of knowledge and technology, which can help to improve the competitiveness of the sending country in the global market (Hasan & Islam, 2019).

Fourthly, the government of Bangladesh has a role to play in promoting the shift from un-skilled to skilled labour migration. For example, the government can invest in education and skills training programs, and work with international organizations to promote fair treatment of migrant workers (Khan A. , 2020). In addition, the government can also help to create jobs and promote entrepreneurship through initiatives such as microfinance programs (Hossain, 2020).

In conclusion, shifting from un-skilled to semi-skilled and semi-skilled to skilled and high-skilled labour migration is important for improving the quality of life and financial stability of workers, boosting economic growth, and promoting fair treatment of migrant workers.

CHAPTER 03: METHODS

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a mixed research philosophy which falls under both positivism and interpretivism from epistemological perspective where both qualitative and quantitative data have been used. Since the concepts are still unexplored there was much room for subjectivities, explanations, and interpretations.

3.2 SAMPLING AND SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

The target population of this study constituted the labor force migrated to GCC countries, both who are currently residing and who recently came back. Because of the nature of the respondents, this study used a purposive sampling technique. The researchers reached respondents who are qualified, accessible and willing to provide data. Purposive sampling technique was used also because the distribution of the respondents is highly scattered and unstructured. The following table shows the sample distribution of the study.

Table 01: Sample Distribution

Category	Methods	Tools	No. of Respondents	Inclusion Criteria
Labour Migrants	In depth interview, telephone interview, observation	Semi-structured questionnaire	30 (homogenous group)	The labour migrants either residing in GCC countries or recently returned Bangladesh
Government officials	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	FGD checklist	8	Ministry of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Ministry of Labour & employment.
Academicians and experts	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	FGD checklist	10	University Professors, Researchers and trainers on labour migration.

Source: Prepared for current study

3.2.1 Justification of sample size

Non-probabilistic purposive sampling was utilized in this qualitative study to gather data. However, there are no clear rules for calculating non-probabilistic sample sizes. As a result, the idea of "saturation" is often used to determine the sample size (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006), which helps to ensure the validity of the results. Because it shows that no new themes or information have been discovered in the data from the conclusion of more cases or interviews. That's why saturation has emerged as the acknowledged benchmark for determining purposeful sample sizes (Clive Roland Boddy, 2016). Based on methodological considerations and prior experience with related studies, a number of authors have given guidelines for sample size in qualitative research; Minimum for saturation in qualitative research is 20 to 30 (Creswell 1998, 2002).

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Additionally, this study uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Primary qualitative data have been collected through focus group discussion, in depth interview, telephone interview, and observation. Primary quantitative data have been collected using questionnaire developed based on the findings from qualitative data. Trends of the GCC labour market and Bangladeshi labour migrants have been identified using secondary sources like reports from different national and international organizations, academic articles, books, newspapers & other published materials. Two consecutive focus group discussions (FGDs) consists of ten academicians and experts and eight government officials, and has been conducted in order to explore the reasons for which Bangladeshi Labour migrants remain unskilled. Additionally, the measures to be taken for uplifting their skill levels have been explored through the same FGDs. Using the findings from the FGDs, a questionnaire was developed for collecting quantitative data in order to validate the qualitative data. Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted in this regard. All sorts of primary data were collected in January and February 2023. The level of significance of each of the items developed through the FGDs has been measured through quantitative analysis using frequency, mean, and descriptive statistics where a portion of data was collected using five-point Likert scale.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to make the data meaningful, this study has used appropriate data analytical tools and statistics based on data type. Along with analysis, adequate amount of interpretations has been stated based on understanding of the researchers and other evidences. The following table shows how the data have been analyzed on the basis of objectives and data types.

Table 02: Research tools on the basis of objectives

Objectives	Qualitative/ Quantitative Research Tools
a) Current trend of labour migration from Bangladesh and in GCC Countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptive Statistics through SPSS• Content analysis of secondary sources
b) Reasons of Bangladeshi labour force remaining unskilled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thematic analysis of data collected through FGD, in depth interviews, telephone interviews, and observation• Descriptive Statistics through SPSS• Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) tools
c) Ways of shifting the Labour Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thematic analysis of data collected through FGD, in depth interviews, telephone interviews, and observation• Descriptive Statistics through SPSS• Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) tools

Source: Prepared for current study

3.5 DATA VISUALIZATION AND REPORT PRESENTATION

Analysed data have been presented in this paper using different kinds of data visualization tools such as bar chart, histogram, pie chart, line graph, and other tools. The report has been prepared using five major chapter namely introduction, literature review, methods, analysis and findings, and conclusion and recommendations.

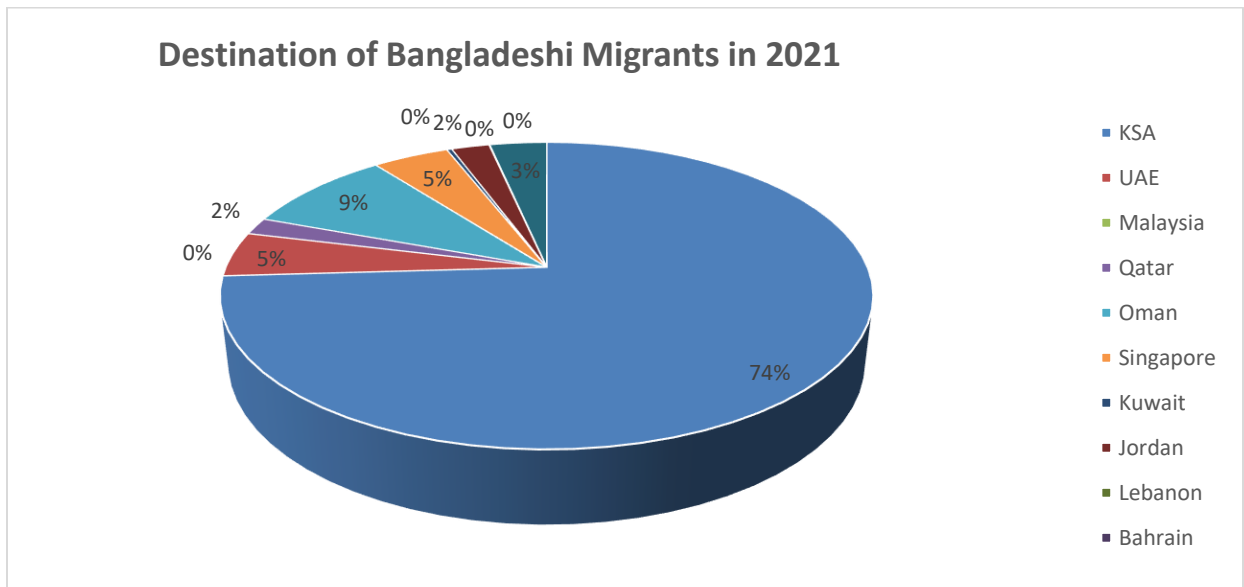
CHAPTER 04: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 TRENDS OF BANGLADESHI MIGRANTS

Bangladeshi labors are being migrated around the globe every year. In this section, the trend of Bangladeshi migrant labors has been stated from various perspectives.

4.1.1 Destination of Bangladeshi Migrants in 2021

Figure 01: Destination of Bangladeshi Migrants in 2021

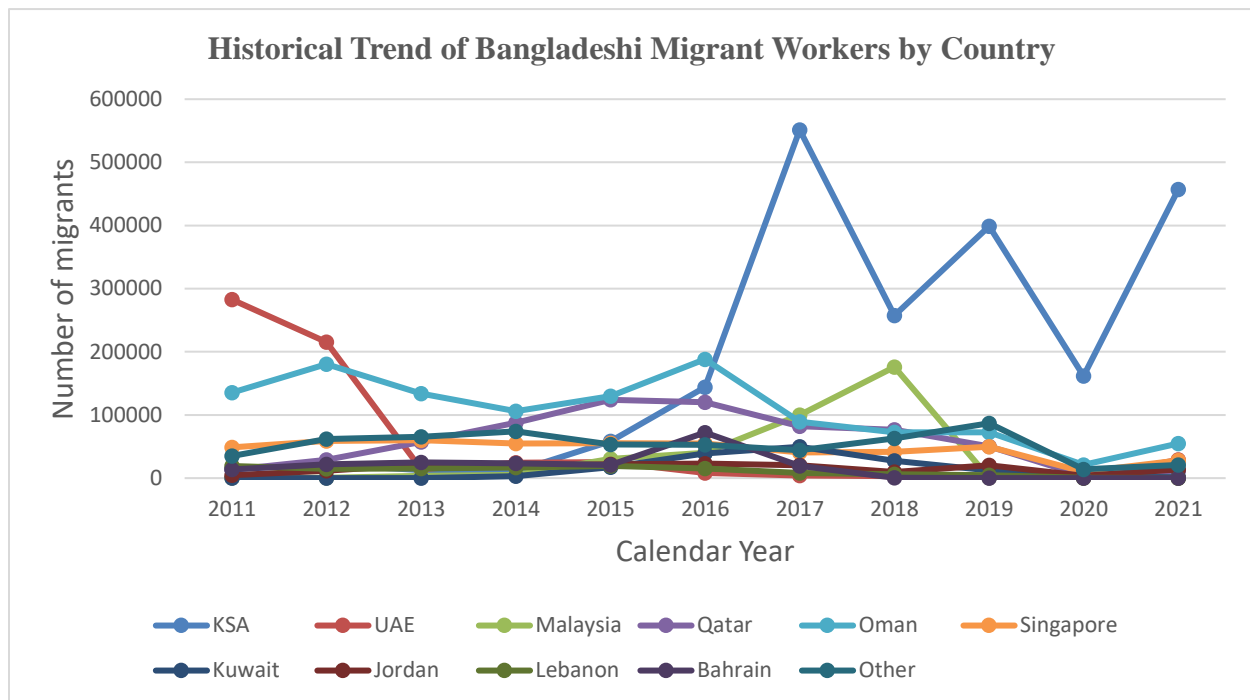


Source: Prepared based on Data from Bangladesh Economic Review 2022 (p. 31)

The above graph shows the propensity of Bangladeshi migrants' destination seeking behavior in 2021. The percentage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia being the largest market for Bangladeshi migrants in 2021 is a very usual trend and that's why the lion's share of the population of Bangladesh residing abroad is in Saudi Arabia. Oman, United Arab Emirates and Singapore are the next major destination countries in 2021. The number of people migrated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2021 is 457227. Here the ratio of population migrated to Qatar in 2021 shows a very lower number (11158) though it was a gigantic number in 2019(not shown in the chart). The reason is the restriction imposed by the government of the country due to covid 19. But the clear message is that the GCC countries are the leading destination for the Bangladeshi migration seeking people.

4.1.2 Trend of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers by Country

Figure 02: Trend of Bangladeshi Migrant Workers by Country

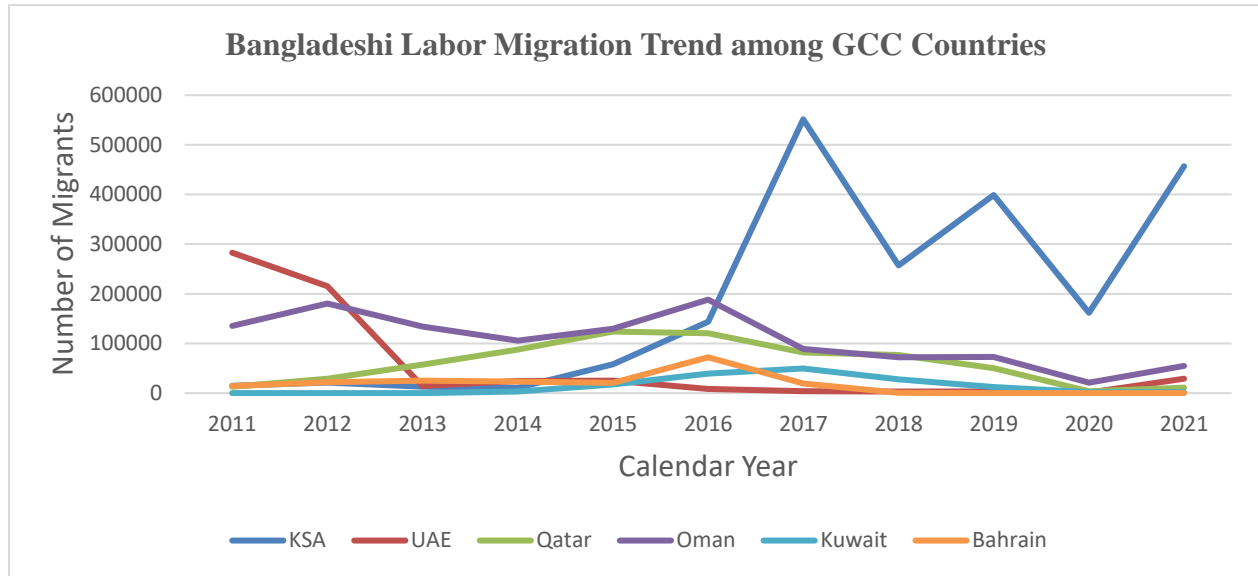


Source: Prepared based on Data from Bangladesh Economic Review 2022 (p. 31)

The above figure shows the trend of the number of expatriate Bangladeshi workers by country from 2011 to 2021 (the partial data from the year of 2022 is not shown in the above chart). The notable point in the above chart is that in the year of 2020 the number of expatriates migrated to all the destination countries drastically fall down due to Covid 19. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia being the leading destination country for Bangladeshi Migrants since the year 2017 had also received more than 1.5 lac migrants in that year (2020). Oman is much consistent in receiving a handsome number of migrant labor from Bangladesh. Bahrain seems to be the only GCC country experiencing the migration of a very little number of Bangladeshi population in recent years (only 14 migrants in 2020 and 2021 and 878 in last four years). The countries other than the CGG countries receives a very little number of migrant labors relative to the GCC countries most probably because of the lack of exploration and requirement and less scope for less-skilled and unskilled labor force.

4.1.3 Bangladeshi Labor Migration Trend among GCC Countries

Figure 03: Bangladeshi Labor Migration Trend among GCC Countries

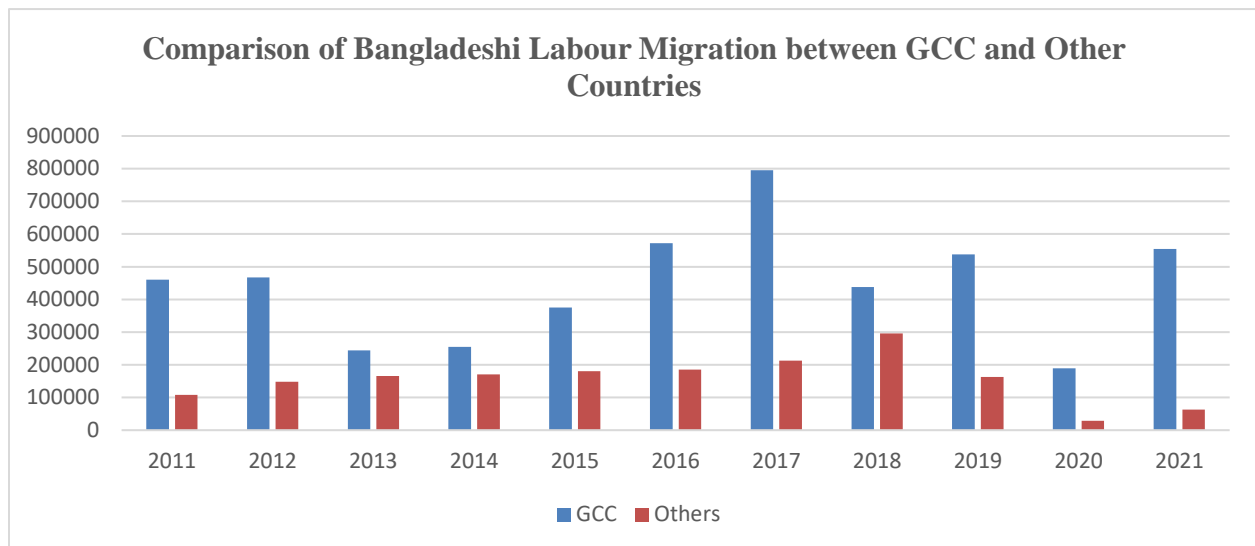


Source: Prepared based on Data from Bangladesh Economic Review 2022 (p. 31)

The above figure shows a close comparison of migration to each of the GCC countries from 2011 to 2021. Though altogether 554455 out of 617209 people were migrated to Gulf countries in the year of 2021 most of the expatriates were migrated to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Oman and United Arab Emirates are the following countries in term of the number of migrations. The number of migrations to UAE started increasing from the year of 2021 since it started falling down in 2016(25271 in 2015 and 8131 in 2016). The figure shows a gradual decline in migration to Qatar after 2015. But the notable fact in the above figure is that migration to almost all of the Gulf countries started rising in term of taking number of migrants after the world market started being normal after Covid 19.

4.1.4 Comparison of Bangladeshi Labour Migration between GCC and Other Countries

Figure 04: Comparison of Bangladeshi Labour Migration between GCC and Other Countries

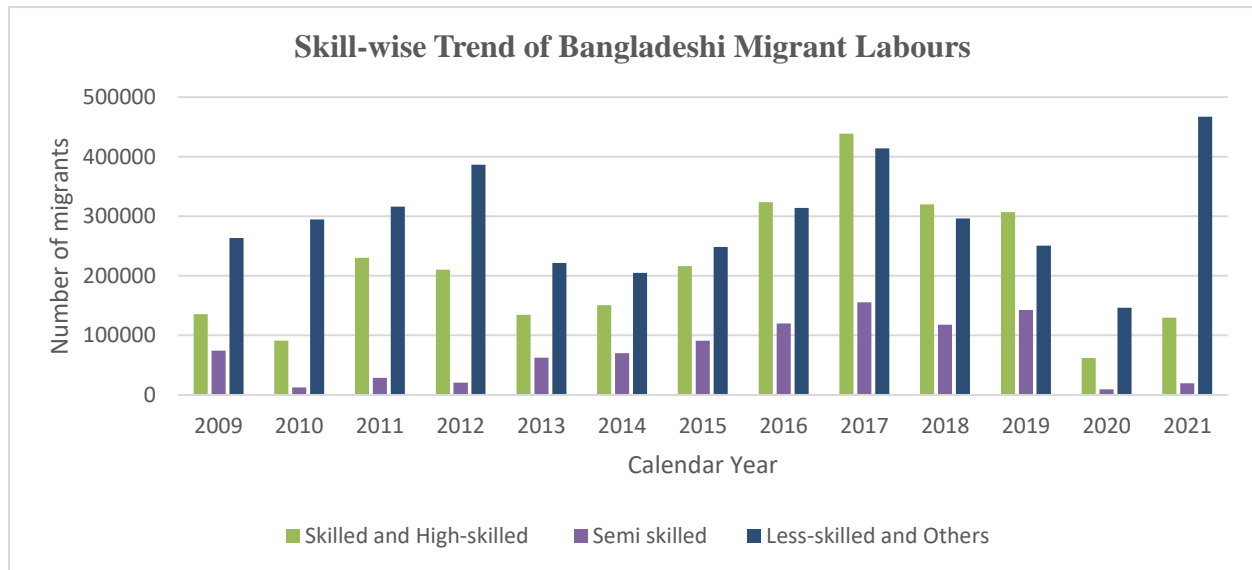


Source: Prepared based on Data from Bangladesh Economic Review 2022 (p. 31)

The figure above gives a clear idea about the trend of migration of Bangladeshi migrant labors regarding the destination to GCC and Other countries. Historically its clear that among all of the years from 2011 to 2021 (even in 2022, though not shown in the figure above as the information for the whole year is not available) labor migration to GCC countries is much more than those of other countries in the rest of the world. It was much closer in the year of 2013, 2014 and 2018 but in the year of 2021 the ratio between GCC and Other countries in term of the amount of migration is 11.3:100 that is the highest difference among the years between 2011 and 2021 based on historical data.

4.1.5 Skill-wise Trend of Bangladeshi Migrant Labours

Figure 05: Skill-wise Trend of Bangladeshi Migrant Labours



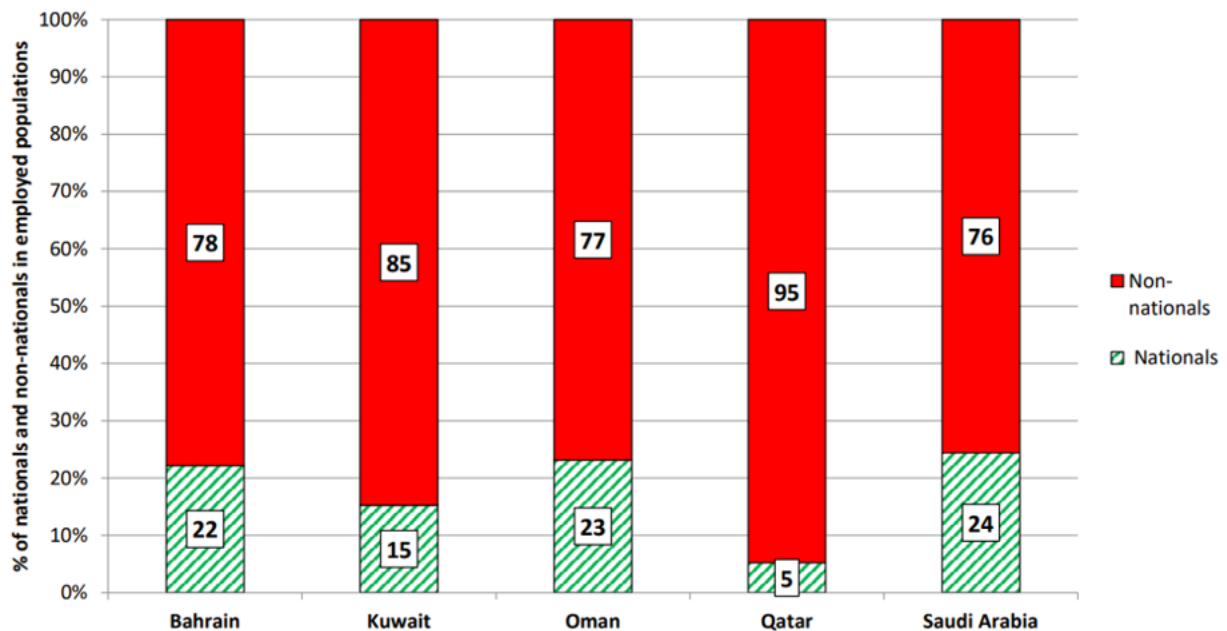
Source: Prepared based on Data from Bangladesh Economic Review 2022 (p. 30)

The above graph shows that historically Bangladesh is a supplier of mostly unskilled and less skilled migrant labours. Unfortunately, this scenario is worsening as seen in the graph. Though in 2017, Bangladesh showed notable success in exporting skilled and high-skilled migrant labours, the situation has been reversed in 2021. The recent situation indicates quantitative progress having significant qualitative regress. Historically, Bangladesh was maintaining a moderate level in exporting semi-skilled labors from 2013 to 2019 but the country has experienced dramatic fall in this category as well. This might have impact on lowering the actual remittance flow of the country. In this circumstance, Bangladesh should focus on upshifting the skill level of migrant workers. Less-skilled and unskilled migrant labours should be shifted to semi-skilled and semi-skilled labours should be shifted to skilled and high-skilled labours taking proper initiative in order to grasp the opportunity of abroad labour market especially in the GCC countries which is the focus point of current study.

4.2 TRENDS OF GCC LABOUR MARKET

4.2.1 Percentage of Nationals and Non-National in GCC Countries' Employed Populations (2020)

Figure 06: Percentage of Nationals and Non-National in GCC Countries' Employed Populations (2020)



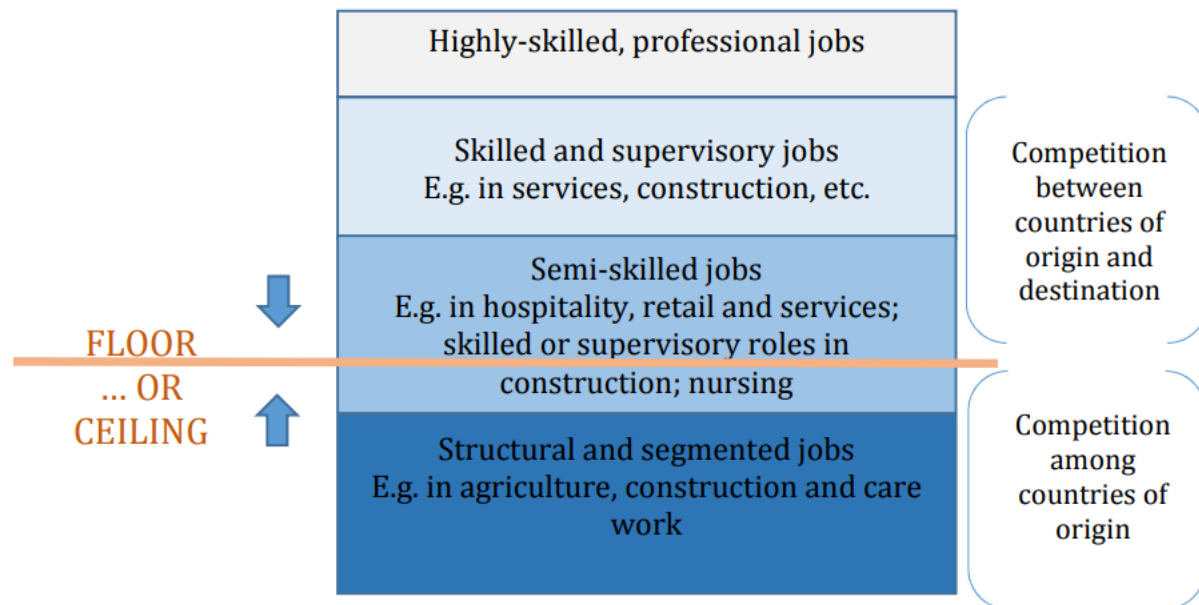
*UAE: no data disaggregated by nationality available.

Source: National Statistical Institutes. Last data available as of June 2022 <https://gulfmigration.grc.net/gcc-percentage-of-nationals-and-non-nationals-in-employed-population-in-gcc-countries-2020/>.

Though data of UAE was not found, the general trend of all other countries shows that majority of the employed population in GCC countries are foreign nationals. It means that GCC countries are highly suitable destination for the labour migrants of other countries. Bangladesh is already one of the countries supplying labours in GCC countries. But in order to sustain and develop the market, proper initiatives must be taken. Without uplifting the skill-level of the Bangladeshi migrant labours, this may not be possible.

4.2.2 Skill Level Wise Nature of Competition in GCC Labour Market

Figure 07: Skill Level Wise Nature of Competition in GCC Labour Market



Source: Tunon, M. (ILO), presentation at the ILO Inter-regional Forum on Skills and Migration in the South Asia – Middle East Corridor, New Delhi, July 2017

Understanding the competition from strategic perspective in this era of highly competitive global market is mandatory. The above model shows that the GCC labour market can broadly be classified into two categories based on the nature of competition.

- **Type A:** market of unskilled and less skilled labours where competition happens only among the origin countries. In other words, the labours of GCC countries (destination) normally do not participate this market segment which might be because of less wages, and odd jobs.
- **Type B:** Market of semi-skilled, skilled, and high-skilled labour where competition happen both with the labours of destination countries and other origin countries. Bangladesh needs to enter into the type B market with better and trained human capital in order to get competitive advantage in the market.

4.2.3 Skill Level and Job Opportunities Available in GCC Labour Market

Table 03: Skill level and job opportunities available in GCC Labour Market

<i>Types of Workers</i>	<i>Job opportunities Available</i>
Unskilled Worker	Washing & Cleaning garbage and dishes in different factories, office, and restaurants, Construction Labour, Restaurant staff, Food Packaging, Agriculture Warehouse, Delivery service, Storekeeper, Cleaner, Oil and Gas sector (workers), Workshop helper, and Domestic workers.
Semi-Skilled	Packaging job (Shrimp, Agro- food, Fruits), Lather factory, Factory Worker (Manufacturing), Garments Sector, Construction Sector, Agricultural sector(farming), Motor Repair, Metal Worker, Welder, Restaurants, Technicians, Nurse, Office Assistant, Welder, Baker, Hostess, Health-Care Sector, Driving, Mechanical, Green-house labour, Day Care centre, Retail, Electrician, Carpenter, Logistic & Supply chain, and Media & Public Relations.
Skilled	Driving, Crane Operator, Sanitation, Chef, Restaurant manager (if good language and communication skill), Hotel management & Tourism, Banking & Finance, Lather factory, Business, Green-house labour, Garments job, All industry (Farming, IT, Industrial Production), Aviation, and Logistics, Information Technology, Construction Engineering, Education, Consulting, Language instructor, Translator, Oil and Petroleum Engineers, Legal Services, Real Estate Agent, Waste Recycling Specialist, Chemist, Database Administrator, and Accountant.

Source: Based on existing literature and primary data collected from respondents.

4.2.4 Country Wise Distribution of Skill Requirements in GCC Countries.

Table 04: Country wise distribution of skill shortage in GCC countries.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Available Job</i>	<i>Nature of skill shortage</i>
United Arab Emirates (Employment, 2023)	Tourism, Finance, Real Estate, Construction Engineers, Aviation, and Logistics.	Skilled
	Retail, Healthcare, Tourism and Hospitality, Welder, Driver	Semi-Skilled
	Construction Sector (Workers),	Unskilled
Kingdom of Bahrain (Expatriates, 2023)	Banking and Finance, Information Technology, Oil and Gas sector (Engineering), Construction and engineering, Hospitality and Tourism, Education, and Consulting.	Skilled Worker
	Driving, Welding, Construction and engineering, Healthcare.	Semi-skilled
	Oil and Gas sector workers, Construction workers.	Unskilled
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Expatriates, 2023)	Driver, Construction Labour, Doctor, Chef, Engineers, Waste Recycling Specialist, Chemist, Database Administrator, Accountant.	Skilled
	Electricians, Technicians, Nurse, Office Assistant, Welder, Baker, Hostess.	Semi-Skilled
	Retail shop, Delivery service, Storekeeper, Cleaner.	Unskilled
Sultanate of Oman (Indeed, 2023)	Education, Healthcare, Finance and Banking, Information Technology, Language instructor.	Skilled
	Hospitality and Tourism, Logistics and Supply chain, Translator.	Semi-Skilled

	Workshop helper, Oil and gas, construction worker, storekeeper.	Unskilled
<i>State of Qatar</i> (Saakin, 2023)	Construction, Oil and Petroleum, Engineers, Engineers, Teacher, Hotel Management, Information Technology, Real Estate Agent.	Skilled
	Tourism, Health workers, Media and PR, Technician, Marketing.	Semi-Skilled
	Domestic workers, Construction, Shopkeeper.	Unskilled
<i>State of Kuwait</i> (Expatriates, 2023)	Oil and Gas, Finance and Banking, Construction and Engineering, Healthcare, Information Technology, Aviation, Consulting, Legal Services.	Skilled
	Hospitality and Tourism, Oil and Gas technicians, Hostess.	Semi-Skilled
	Construction worker, Retail and Sales, Oil and Gas workers.	Unskilled

Source: Based on existing literature and primary data collected from respondents.

4.2.5 Training and Development Areas for Preparing Bangladeshi Migrants for GCC Countries' Labour Market

Table 05: Training and development areas for preparing Bangladeshi migrants for GCC countries' labour market

<i>Suggested training and development</i>	<i>Specific areas to be focused</i>
<i>Washing & Cleaning garbage and dishes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train individuals on proper cleaning techniques, including the use of cleaning agents and equipment. ▪ Emphasize the importance of hygiene, safety, and waste management. ▪ Teach efficient time management to complete tasks promptly.
<i>Construction Labour</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on construction site safety, including proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). ▪ Teach basic construction skills like measuring, cutting, and handling materials. ▪ Familiarize individuals with various tools and equipment used in construction.
<i>Construction Sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teach construction-specific skills, such as carpentry, masonry, or electrical work, depending on the individual's role. ▪ Provide training on construction site safety regulations and best practices. ▪ Emphasize teamwork and coordination skills.
<i>Food Packaging</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate individuals on food safety regulations and proper packaging procedures. ▪ Train in quality control measures to ensure product integrity. ▪ Teach efficient packaging techniques to maximize productivity.

<i>Packaging job (Shrimp, Agro-food, Fruits)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train individuals on specific packaging requirements for different products. ▪ Teach quality control and inspection techniques. ▪ Educate on proper labeling and documentation procedures.
<i>Lather factory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on operating machinery and equipment specific to the leather industry. ▪ Teach proper handling and storage of leather materials. ▪ Focus on quality control and finishing techniques.
<i>Restaurant staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on customer service skills, including effective communication and problem-solving. ▪ Train individuals in food handling, safety, and hygiene practices. ▪ Provide knowledge about menu items, ingredients, and proper serving techniques
<i>Garments Sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate individuals on sewing, cutting, and garment assembly techniques. ▪ Train in quality inspection and garment finishing. ▪ Provide knowledge on different fabrics, patterns, and garment construction.
<i>Factory Worker (Manufacturing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train individuals on machinery operation and assembly line processes. ▪ Teach safety procedures and protocols. ▪ Provide knowledge on quality control and efficient production practices.
<i>Agriculture Warehouse</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on proper handling, sorting, and storage of agricultural products. ▪ Teach inventory management and logistics skills. ▪ Familiarize individuals with safety protocols and equipment used in warehouse settings.

<i>Language Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Specific training along with English Language Training, Regional based Behavioural training, Cultural integration training.
<i>Culinary</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide comprehensive culinary training that covers basic cooking techniques, food safety and hygiene, menu planning, and recipe execution. ▪ Offer practical hands-on experience in a professional kitchen setting to develop cooking skills and work under pressure.
<i>Hotel Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on various aspects of hotel management, including front desk operations, housekeeping, event management, and food and beverage services. ▪ Teach customer service skills, effective communication, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. ▪ Emphasize the importance of organizational skills, financial management, and leadership in hotel operations.
<i>Greenhouse Service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train individuals on greenhouse operations, including plant care, irrigation systems, pest management, and environmental controls. ▪ Teach knowledge of different plant species, growth cycles, and proper cultivation techniques. ▪ Emphasize the importance of maintaining optimal conditions for plant growth and productivity.
<i>Aviation Sector</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer comprehensive training programs that cover aviation regulations, safety protocols, and emergency procedures. ▪ Teach customer service skills specific to the aviation industry, including communication with passengers, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity. ▪ Provide practical training on aircraft operations, including aircraft handling, safety equipment usage, and cabin crew

	duties.
<i>Tourism and Hospitality Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide training on tourism industry trends, destination knowledge, customer service, and sales techniques. ▪ Teach event planning and management, tour guiding, and cultural awareness. ▪ Offer practical training opportunities in tourism-related businesses or through internships to gain hands-on experience.
<i>Driving</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer driver training programs that cover traffic rules, defensive driving techniques, vehicle maintenance, and safety procedures. ▪ Include practical driving lessons to develop driving skills and confidence on the road. ▪ Teach navigation skills and familiarity with local routes and transportation regulations.

Source: Based on existing literature and primary data collected from respondents.

4.3 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND FGD PARTICIPANTS

4.3.1 Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 06: Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age (N=30)	<i>20 Years and Less</i>	4	13.33
	<i>21- 30 Years</i>	14	46.67
	<i>31 – 40 Years</i>	5	16.67
	<i>41 – 50 Years</i>	5	16.67
	<i>51 Years and Above</i>	2	6.67
Education Level (N=30)	<i>Below SSC</i>	9	30.00
	<i>SSC and Equivalent</i>	10	33.33
	<i>HSC and Equivalent</i>	6	20.00
	<i>Undergraduate and Equivalent</i>	4	13.33
	<i>Graduate and Equivalent</i>	1	3.33
Age of Going Abroad (N=30)	<i>20 Years and Less</i>	13	43.33
	<i>21- 30 Years</i>	16	53.33
	<i>31 and Above</i>	1	3.33
Country Migrated to (N=30)	<i>Bahrain</i>	2	6.67
	<i>Kuwait</i>	4	13.33
	<i>Oman</i>	8	26.67
	<i>Qatar</i>	4	13.33
	<i>Saudi Arabia</i>	8	26.67
	<i>UAE</i>	4	13.33
Job Sector (N=30)	<i>Construction</i>	13	43.33

	<i>Hotel and Restaurant</i>	6	20.00
	<i>Shop and Commercial</i>	5	16.67
	<i>Agriculture</i>	3	10.00
	<i>Driving</i>	2	6.67
	<i>Garments</i>	1	3.33
Length of Service (N=30)	<i>Less than 1 Year</i>	7	23.33
	<i>Between 1 - 5 Years</i>	13	43.33
	<i>Between 6-10 Years</i>	6	20.00
	<i>11 Years and Above</i>	4	13.33
Income Level (in BDT) (N=30)	<i>50000 and Less</i>	2	6.67
	<i>51000 to 100000</i>	10	33.33
	<i>101000 to 150000</i>	12	40.00
	<i>151000 to 200000</i>	5	16.67
	<i>201000 and Above</i>	1	3.33

Source: Field Study 2023

4.3.1.1. Age of the Respondents

The above table shows that there are migrant labours of almost all age level in GCC countries. However, among the respondents, majority are aged between 21 to 30 Years (46.67%). Which may also indicate that young people are more likely to choose employment abroad. This is well known that young people are comparatively more ready to learn. Using this opportunity, Bangladesh can take the chance of developing human capital through skill-based training and development.

4.3.1.2. Education Level

The education level data shows that majority of the migrant labours have SSC and Equivalent (33.33%). This may indicate that significant portion of the Bangladeshi labour migrants have standard level of theoretical educational background in order to receive language and other skill-

based trainings. The table also shows that a certain portion of the migrant labours have bachelor and master's degrees. This may indicate that Bangladesh can plan for exporting high-skilled professional in GCC countries. This can also be generalized that irrespective of educational backgrounds, Bangladeshi labors are interested in overseas employment in GCC countries.

4.3.1.3. Age of Going Abroad

Among the respondents, most of the migrant labors went to GCC countries for employment during their youth. Almost 97% of the respondents went abroad within 30 years of age. Data also shows that a significant portion even went abroad before reaching there 20.

4.3.1.4. Country Migrated to

In the current study, there are respondents from six GCC countries which are Bahrain (6.67%), Kuwait (13.33%), Oman (26.67%), Qatar (13.33%), Saudi Arabia (26.67%), and UAE (13.33%). This may indicate that Bangladesh has overseas employment opportunities in almost all of the GCC countries.

4.3.1.5. Job Sector

The table shows that the respondents of the current study are from various job sectors like Construction (43.33%), Hotel and Restaurant (20.00%), Shop and Commercial (16.67%), Agriculture (10.00%), Driving (6.67%), and Garments (3.33%). This may indicate that Bangladeshi migrant labours are working in diversified sectors.

4.3.1.6. Length of Service

The table shows that the respondents are working in GCC countries for significantly long period of time. For instance, more than 43% of the respondents are working for more 6 years. It may indicate that the overall working environment for the Bangladeshi migrant labours is favorable.

4.3.1.7. Income Level

This section is one of the most insightful section that shows the income level of the Bangladeshi migrant labours in GCC countries. Data shows that income of more than 60% of the respondents

is more 1,00,000 BDT. This indicates that the general income level of the Bangladeshi migrant labours in GCC countries is quite attractive.

4.3.2 Participants of the Focus Group Discussion (Academicians and Experts)

Table 07: Participants of the Focus Group Discussion (Academicians and Experts)

Participant No.	Gender	Age	Educational Qualification
01	Male	32	Master's
02	Female	35	Master's
03	Male	40	Master's
04	Male	48	PhD
05	Male	39	PhD
06	Male	30	Master's
07	Male	33	Bachelor
08	Female	37	Master's
09	Male	40	Master's
10	Male	42	PhD

Source: Field Study 2023 (Date: January 02, 2023).

4.3.3 Participants of the Focus Group Discussion (Government Officials)

Table 08: Participants of the Focus Group Discussion (Government Officials)

Participant No.	Gender	Age	Educational Qualification
01	Female	40	Master's
02	Male	37	Master's
03	Male	29	Master's
04	Male	32	Bachelor
05	Female	41	Bachelor
06	Female	37	Master's
07	Male	34	Bachelor
08	Male	38	Master's

Source: Field Study 2023 (Date: January 05, 2023).

4.4 THE REASONS FOR WHICH BANGLADESHI MINGRANT LABOURS REMAIN UNSKILLED

4.4.1 Exploration of the Reasons through Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data have been collected through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) mentioned in the methods chapter. Participants were asked to tell the reasons for which Bangladeshi migrant labor remain unskilled. Based on their responses and discussion, the following reasons have been explored which are responsible for keeping the Bangladeshi migrant labors unskilled.

- a. Most of the people have lack of awareness about the importance of acquiring new skills
- b. The existing training capacity is not utilized properly
- c. Skill mismatch between the market demand of Bangladesh and that of GCC countries
- d. The existing training centers are not upgraded periodically
- e. There is insufficient attempt in creating and updating the training manuals or curriculum by developing and incorporating new materials
- f. The existing strategy is not implemented well for the national skill standard
- g. The inadequacy of infrastructure and delivery planning at district- and upazilla-level institutes
- h. There is inadequate capacity among relevant agencies (including key ministries and government agencies).
- i. There is lack of an integrated and regularly updated database (the present database currently being fragmented and out of date)
- j. Authority has inadequate linkages with overseas industries and the labor market
- k. People living in rural areas are not well-informed about the running training centers

FGD participants stressed on some points like lack of awareness among migrant labours and general citizens, failure of training providers, lack of collaboration, and lack of information which are responsible for keeping the Bangladeshi migrant labours unskilled. They proposed that awareness program led by government agencies can develop the situation.

The following statement from the FGD respondents no. 03 is notable here-

“Growing awareness among the people through proper initiatives could develop the scenario. All we need is making the up to date employment related information to the

people of Bangladesh so that they become encouraged and engaged in the migration process.”

They also stated that in fact the current scenario is much better than previous times. However, they believe that the situation could be more improved with the help of stakeholders engaged in developing human capital.

FGD participant 06 stated the following-

“Our capacity for upgrading skill level of migrant labours is much better now. But this situation could be more improved if Bangladesh could ensure collaborative efforts and regular monitoring of the skill development programs. Moreover, since we have huge unskilled labours, we should increase number of training centers and programs. People are now ready to get the benefits of being skilled. We need proper public policy for guiding migrant labours in developing their skill levels. Awareness towards upgrading the skill level is another issue to be addressed as soon as possible.”

4.4.2 Mean of the Reasons for Which Bangladeshi Migrant Labours Remain Unskilled

Table 09: Mean of the Reasons for Which Bangladeshi Migrant Labours Remain Unskilled

Statement no.	Statement (N=30)	Mean score out of 5
1	Most of the people have lack of awareness about the importance of acquiring new skills.	3.50
2	The existing training capacity is not utilized properly.	3.67
3	Skill mismatch between the market demand of Bangladesh and that of GCC countries.	3.80
4	The existing training centers are not upgraded periodically.	4.03
5	There is insufficient attempt in creating and updating the training manuals or curriculum by developing and incorporating new materials.	4.10
6	The existing strategy is not implemented well for the national skill standard.	3.77

7	The inadequacy of infrastructure and delivery planning at district- and upazilla-level institutes is liable for Bangladeshi labor force remaining unskilled.	4.23
8	There is inadequate capacity among relevant agencies (including key ministries and government agencies).	3.90
9	There is lack of an integrated and regularly updated database (the present database currently being fragmented and out of date).	4.03
10	Authority has inadequate linkages with overseas industries and the labor market.	4.00
11	People living in rural areas are not well-informed about the running training centers.	4.00

Source: Field Study 2023

4.5 MEASURES NEEDED FOR BANGLADESH TO SHIFT FROM UNSKILLED TO SEMI-SKILLED LABOURS

4.5.1 Measures Developed through Qualitative Data Analysis

The FGD participants were asked about the measures to be taken by Bangladesh for shifting the unskilled labours to semi-skilled. According to the responses from the FGD participants, the following measures have been explored which are expected to help developing the skill level from unskilled to semi-skilled.

- a. Pre-departure training/ Common behavioral training to cope up with the host country culture at free cost and through video content
- b. Training from vocational institutions
- c. Foreign language training institutions
- d. Training from technical institutions
- e. Training of women for working abroad
- f. Short courses offered by ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment and other private centers

- g. Easy access to online video tutorials about the desired task abroad
- h. Expanding the service of technical and vocational training institutions in economically lagging regions
- i. Diploma courses offered by ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment
- j. Private foreign language coaching centers
- k. Accredited training centers operated by private recruitment agencies licensed under relevant ministry
- l. Video content about language of the desired countries' language

Almost all of the participants agreed upon a point that Bangladesh should focus on exporting semi-skilled and skilled manpower in GCC countries which is only possible through developing our human capital. A significant portion of the participants identified language as a highly valuable skill to be provided to the unskilled labors.

Regarding the importance of foreign language training one of the academicians (FGD participant) says-

“We have foreign language centers. But yet the young generations tend to have low level of interests on the courses. MoEWOE can collaborate with the foreign language centers of public university for providing GCC country specific language and culture trainings. Using the existing infrastructure will be significantly cost effective.”

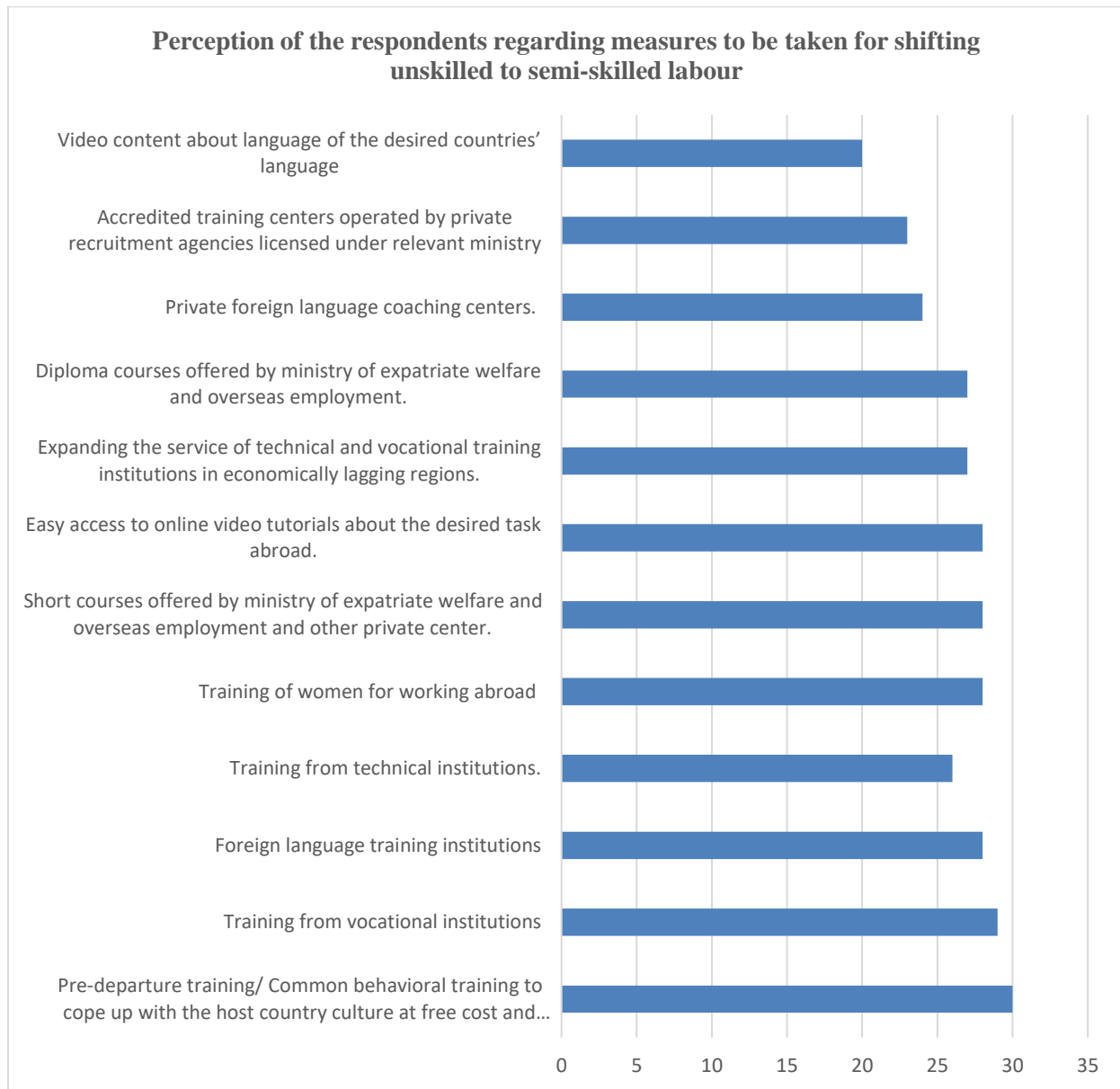
They also believe that mostly TVET institutes and responsible government agencies should come forward in this regard and they should work together in achieving the mission of upgrading unskilled labors. They further stated that semi-skilled labors have great demand in GCC countries. Considering this circumstance, it is needful for Bangladesh to offer training courses, certificate programs, online materials and other supports mentioned above.

A highly relevant statement from one of the FGD participants has been stated here-

“Upgrading unskilled labors to semi-skilled is not that much challenging. Everything we need now is a positive attitude and visible efforts through partnership among the parties like labours, government agencies, TVET institutes and so on.”

4.5.2 Frequency Distribution of the Perception of the Respondents

Figure 08: Perception of the respondents regarding measures to be taken for shifting unskilled to semi-skilled labour



Source: Field Study 2023

From the above figure it has been found that almost all of the measures suggested by the FGD participants are effective as per the perceptions of the respondents.

4.6 MEASURES NEEDED FOR BANGLADESH TO SHIFT FROM SEMI-SKILLED TO SKILLED AND HIGH-SKILLED LABOURS

4.6.1 Measures Developed through Qualitative Data Analysis

Finally, the FGD participants were asked to suggest measure to be taken for shifting the semi-skilled labours to skilled and high-skilled. Following measures have been identified based on the responses from the FGD participants.

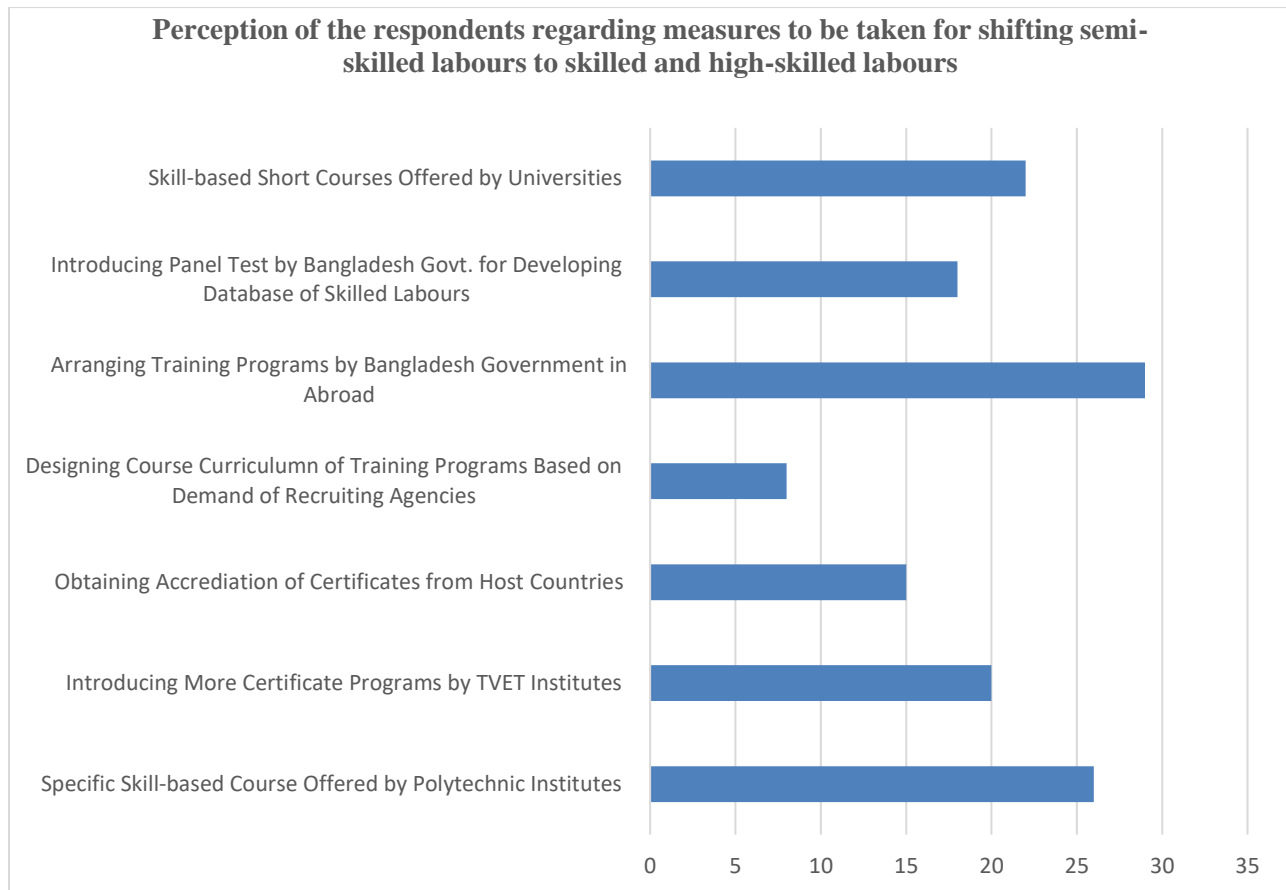
- a. Specific Skill-based Course Offered by Polytechnic Institutes
- b. Introducing More Certificate Programs by TVET Institutes
- c. Obtaining Accreditation of Certificates from Host Countries
- d. Designing Course Curriculum of Training Programs Based on Demand of Recruiting Agencies
- e. Arranging Training Programs by Bangladesh Government in Abroad
- f. Introducing Panel Test by Bangladesh Govt. for Developing Database of Skilled Labours
- g. Skill-based Short Courses Offered by Universities

The most common ground of discussion was that Bangladesh should now focus on offering highly skilled based certificate programs rather than traditional general training programs. Majority of the participants argue that the certificate programs should be provided by highly skilled and professional trainers and institutes. They also suggested that the certificate or training programs should be designed as per the demand of the labour market and recruiting agencies of GCC countries. In this regard, they also suggested to collect skill requisition from the employers and recruiters GCC countries. The following comment from FGD participant 5 is highly relevant here-

“We should not only focus on upgrading skill level without understanding the demand of the employers and recruiter, rather we should now engage the recruiting agencies and employers in the certification program through their accreditation. This is how we can create value and acceptance of our certification abroad which will lead to higher payment.”

4.6.2 Frequency Distribution of the Perception of the Respondents

Figure 09: Perception of the respondents regarding measures to be taken for shifting semi-skilled labors to skilled and high-skilled labors



Source: Field Study 2023

From the above figure, it can be concluded that almost all of the measures are needful. However, the idea of arranging training for migrant labors in abroad by Bangladesh government received highest value as per the perception of the respondents. The second position is held to be the idea of introducing specific skill-based training by the polytechnic institutes. Apart from these, it can be said that all of the measures have moderate to high level of importance as per the perception of the respondents.

CHAPTER 05: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

General trends of the labor markets of the GCC countries show that there is huge prospect for Bangladesh to export semi-skilled, skilled and high-skilled labors. In fact, data shows that GCC countries are highly suitable destination for Bangladesh labor migrants as shown in the trend of Bangladeshi labor migrants. But unfortunately, the competition is expected to be higher. On the other hand, the preparation of Bangladesh for exporting semi-skilled, skilled, and high-skilled labors is not notable. Bangladesh has already done tremendous development in different kinds of socio-economic indicators; thus, this is high time for Bangladesh to get ready to enter into the competition of skill and merit-based labor market rather than only of unskilled migrant labors.

The recent trend of Bangladesh's migrant labors' skill is highly dissatisfactory. The situation is even worsening. Bangladesh as a growing nation must come out of this phenomenon. This is high time Bangladesh focused on human capital development for shifting the migrant labors from unskilled to semi-skilled, semi-skilled to skilled and high-skilled.

In this circumstance, this study has identified some factors like lack of awareness, lack of proper training, lack of cooperation and collaboration among the stakeholders, and so on which are mostly responsible for keeping the Bangladeshi migrant labors unskilled. Proper actions has been suggested in this research paper which are offering more skill-based training and certificate programs with the collaboration of TVET institutions, polytechnics, and universities. Accreditation of training is another important issue to be address. Apart from these, Bangladesh should maintain liaison and partnership with the recruiting agencies, government bodies, and employers of the GCC countries. Bangladesh should also track the GCC labor market regularly to take evidence-based decision and stay competitive in their labor market.

5.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to assist the policy makers, this study offers the following specific policy recommendations. By implanting the following recommendations, Bangladesh can sustain and develop the labor market in the GCC countries which will have significant contribution to the economy of the country. The case of India is highly relevant here. Statistics shows that India has done notable success in increasing the number of skilled migrants in GCC countries. Instead of unskilled and semi-skilled blue-collar workers, India is now exporting skilled professional especially in the healthcare sector of GCC countries (Calabrese, 2020; Government of India, 2018). It has become possible due to skill development of targeted human resources. Following similar example, Bangladesh can also grasp the market of white-collar labor migrants in GCC countries.

- Collect sector-wise job opening data and identify necessary skills for getting the employment opportunity
- Establish and maintain liaison and partnership with government agencies of GCC countries (Hasan, 2021).
- Establish political relationship with GCC countries and maintain liaison and partnership with local and foreign recruiting agencies and employers of GCC countries. Previous literature also shows that recruiting agencies are the main player in labour migration from Bangladesh to GCC countries (Ali, 2020; Das, 2017; Rahman, 2012)
- Establish more technical and vocational training centers (Rahman, 2016) specialized for providing training for meeting the expectation of the GCC labor markets
- Offer more foreign language course targeting language and culture of GCC countries
- Receive accreditation of the training programs and certifications from relevant authority of GCC countries.
- Create awareness among the young generation regarding the employment in GCC countries through social media, campaign, and other methods
- Create a skill-based nation through introducing skill-based recruitment in domestic labor market (both in public and private sector) which will create willingness to achieve technical skills among the young generations. In other, current generalized recruitment test should be replaced by skill-based job test.

- Arrange training centers in GCC countries in order to shift the skill level of migrant labors who are already employed there
- Highly skilled and professional instructor must be ensured in TVET institutions, polytechnic institutes, and science and technology-based universities
- Education quality of the TVET institutions, polytechnic institutes should be improved through proper management
- Skill-based training might be provide using infrastructures and experts from existing universities.
- Provide special technical supports and/or training to the healthcare workers like nurses, midwives, and medical assistants through special wings.

For better understanding the above recommendations have been shown using the following model.

Figure 10: Model of Policy Recommendation

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Specific functions</i>	<i>Parties to be involved</i>
<i>Research and innovation strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect sector-wise job opening data • Action research and data analytics for real-time data • Understanding the drawbacks of existing training facilities through research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migrant labours ▪ Researchers ▪ Academia ▪ Recruiting agencies
<i>Education and training strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish more technical and vocational training centers ▪ Establish training centers in GCC countries ▪ Accreditation of the training programs ▪ Foreign language courses ▪ Special training for healthcare workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TVET institutes ▪ Training centers ▪ Colleges ▪ Universities
<i>Collaboration and partnership strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political relationship • Liaison and partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCC countries • Local and foreign recruiting agencies
<i>Support strategy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create awareness through social media, campaign, and other methods ▪ Legal and social protection for migrant labours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Migrant labours ▪ Celebrities ▪ Bangladesh Embassies in GCC countries

Source: Developed for current study, 2023

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Questionnaire on The Present trend of labour migration in GCC Countries: Measures Needed for Bangladesh to shift from Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled Labour

This study is designed to explore the present trend of labour migration in GCC countries: measures needed for Bangladesh to shift from un-skilled to semi-skilled and semi-skilled to skilled and high-skilled labour. The objective of the study is to explore the current trend of labour migration in GCC Countries, to investigate the reasons of Bangladeshi labour force for remaining unskilled and to suggest the ways of shifting the Labour Migration: Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled. We are requesting you to give your responses based on your knowledge and experience. You are free to avoid any question you feel make you uncomfortable. This research will never use your name in publications and follow research ethics to preserve your data.

Thank you for your time and valuable comments.

Part 1: Demographic information

1. Name:

2. Gender:

i) Male

ii) Female

3. District:

4. Age

i) 20 Years and less ii) 21-30 iii) 31-40 iv) 41-50 v) 51 Years and above

5. Age of Going Abroad For Work: i) 20 years and less ii) 21-30 iii) 31 years and Above

6. Education level

• Below SSC

• Graduate and Equivalent

• SSC and Equivalent


• Others -----

• HSC and Equivalent

• Undergraduate and Equivalent

Part 2: Current Employment Status

7. Which country are you currently working in?

a)		Kingdom of Bahrain
b)		Kuwait
c)		Oman
d)		Qatar
e)		Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
f)		United Arab Emirates

8. What type of job are you doing?

- Construction
- Hotel and Restaurant
- Shop and Commercial
- Agriculture
- Driving
- Garments
- Others (if any)

9. Length of service at your present job.

- Less than 1 Year
- Between 1 - 5 year
- Between 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

10. Your current monthly income

(average in BDT):

- i) 50000 and less
- ii) 51000-100000
- iii) 101000-150000
- iv) 151000-200000
- v) 201000 and above

Part 3: The reasons of Bangladeshi labour force for remaining unskilled

1. Most of the people have lack of awareness about the importance of acquiring new skills.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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2. The existing training capacity is not utilized properly.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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3. Skill mismatch between the market demand of Bangladesh and that of GCC countries.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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4. The existing training centers are not upgraded periodically.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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5. There is insufficient attempt in creating and updating the training manuals or curriculum by developing and incorporating new materials.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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6. The existing strategy is not implemented well for the national skill standard.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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7. The inadequacy of infrastructure and delivery planning at district- and upazilla-level institutes is liable for Bangladeshi labour force remaining unskilled.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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8. There is inadequate capacity among relevant agencies (including key ministries and government agencies).

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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9. There is lack of an integrated and regularly updated database (the present database currently being fragmented and out of date).

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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10. Authority has inadequate linkages with overseas industries and the labour market.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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12. People living in rural areas are not well-informed about the running training centers.

a)	Strongly disagree	b)	Disagree	c)	Neutral	d)	Agree	e)	Strongly Agree
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Part 4: Ways of shifting the Labour Migration: Un-skilled to Semi-skilled and Semi-skilled to Skilled and High-skilled

Which measures do you think can support Bangladeshi migrant workers to be semi-skilled from unskilled? (You may tick more than one option)

Pre-departure training/ Common behavioural training to cope up with the host country culture at free cost and through video content.

(Please, mention, if any, your suggestion regarding behavioural training)

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Training from vocational institutions.

(Please, mention, if any, the training you feel demanding)

--

Foreign language training institutions.

Training from technical institutions.

(Please, mention any name you feel demanding)

--

Training of women for working abroad.

Short courses offered by ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment and other private centers.

(Please mention , if any, some demanding short courses)

Easy access to online video tutorials about the desired task abroad.

(Please mention any type of video tutorials)

Expanding the service of technical and vocational training institutions in economically lagging regions.

Diploma courses offered by ministry of expatriate welfare and overseas employment.

(Please mention, if any, the demanding diploma courses, you feel)

Private foreign language coaching centers.

Accredited training centers operated by private recruitment agencies licensed under relevant ministry.

Video content about language of the desired countries' language.

Others (If any)

Q.2. What are the measures needed for Bangladesh to shift Semi-skilled labor migration to skilled and high-skilled labor migration? (You may tick on multiple options

- Specific Skill-based Course Offered by Polytechnic Institutes.
(Please, Mention the name of the course you suggest)

- Introducing More Certificate Programs by TVET Institutes.
(Please mention your specific suggestion)

- Obtaining Accreditation of Certificates from Host Countries.

- Designing Course Curriculum of Training Programs Based on Demand of Recruiting Agencies.

- Arranging Training Programs by Bangladesh Government in Abroad.
(Please mention your suggestion)

- Introducing Panel Test by Bangladesh Govt. for Developing Database of Skilled Labours.

- Skill-based Short Courses Offered by Universities.
(Please mention, if possible, the type of course)

- Others...

Appendix 2
List of sample respondents (Migrant Workers)
 (Timeframe of data Collection- January to February, 2023)

Respondent No.	Name of the Respondent	Occupation of the respondent	Country
1.	Md. Ibrahim	Construction	Oman
2.	Asaduzzaman Mia	Hotel and Restaurant	Qatar
3.	Md Harunur Rashid	Hotel and Restaurant	Saudi Arabia
4.	Md Abdul Abrar Raiyan Mia	Hotel and Restaurant	UAE
5.	MD. Uzzal	Shop and Commercial	Saudi Arabia
6.	Ahmed Hasan	Shop and Commercial	Qatar
7.	Md. Sabbir	Hotel and Restaurant	Oman
8.	Didarul Islam Rony	Shop and Commercial	Kuwait
9.	Md. Ridoy	Construction	Bahrain
10.	Md. Amin	Construction	Kuwait
11.	Md. Romjan	Shop and Commercial	UAE
12.	Nazmul Sheikh	Agriculture	Saudi Arabia
13.	Sajib	Construction	Oman
14.	Md. Abdur Rouf	Driving	Saudi Arabia
15.	Asif	Hotel and Restaurant	Kuwait
16.	Parvez Bepari	Construction	Oman
17.	Hiru Bepari	Construction	UAE
18.	Niru Bepari	Construction	Qatar
19.	Tushar Mia	Construction	Saudi Arabia
20.	Md. Sayid	Agriculture	Saudi Arabia
21.	Mahir Khan	Construction	UAE
22.	Hasibul Hasan Ani	Construction	Oman
23.	Payan Mia	Construction	Kuwait
24.	Md. Saharia	Construction	Qatar
25.	Hifizul Matubbor	Driving	Oman
26.	Md. Nazir Molla	Shop and Commercial	Bahrain
27.	Jubayer	Construction	Oman
28.	Md. Akram	Garments	Oman
29.	Md. Awal	Hotel and Restaurant	Saudi Arabia
30.	Zuhurul	Agriculture	Saudi Arabia

Appendix 3
List of Academicians and Experts (Participants in FGD-1)
(Date of FGD-1: January 02, 2023)

Sl. No.	Name of the Participants	Designation
1.	Mr. Sayed Azharul Islam	Assistant Professor, Khulna University
2.	Mr. Tariq Morshed	Assistant Professor, Khulna University and Masters student in University of Oxford
3.	Tania Sultana,	Assistant Professor, Khulna University
4.	Mr. Kajol Karmoker	Assistant Professor, Khulna University
5.	Dr. Sumon Das	Professor, University of Dhaka
6.	Dr. Mohammad Thoufiqul Islam	Professor, University of Dhaka
7.	Dr. Shilpi Das	Associate Professor at Jagannath University
8.	Masud Rana, PhD	Assistant Professor, Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University
9.	Md. Amanullah	Assistant Professor, KUET.
10.	Ripon Kumar Paul	Lecturer, Khulna University.

Appendix 4
List of Government officials (Participants in FGD-2)
(Date of FGD-1: January 05, 2023)

Sl. No.	Name of the Participants	Designation
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		