

How do Education and Skill Development Affect the Transition from ‘Good-enough’ Job to ‘Decent’ Job in Bangladesh?

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Although, the decent work agenda has been initiated since 1999, the ongoing current literatures are highly concentrated either on policy implications or depict the decent work agenda from a macro point of view. Majority of studies conducted on decent job primarily focused on the demand side issues. However, there is a need to explore the supply side issues as the composition of labor supply itself can be a determining factor for the status of decent job. This article follows the definitions of ‘good-enough’ job, ‘good’ job and ‘decent’ job from Raihan (2014) where it is argued that there could be three stages for moving towards ‘decent’ job. The first stage is the ‘good-enough’ job which shows the transition from no job to job or from unpaid family job to paid-job. The second stage is the ‘good’ job which shows the transition from ‘good-enough’ job to job with better return, formal job security and enhanced workers' rights. The third stage is the ‘decent’ job, which is the transition from ‘good’ job to a state of productive employment in compliance with agreed international standards of working environment and workers' rights. In this paper, we have suggested that, although if we initiate improvements at the demand side, there could be a supply side mismatch intermitting the overall effectiveness of the demand side policies. From the econometric analysis part of the paper, we see that, education and training have highly significant impacts over the quality of employment that a person may avail. The transition takes place in the form of productivity enhancement. The importance of the productivity enhancement is that, even if we can generate terms and conditions for employing ‘decent work’ agenda in practice, the workers may themselves lack the quality to be absorbed in the transformation process due to their lower productivity. Productivity enhancement will not only create ‘decent job’ benefits to the households at the individual level but will also accelerate the process of transformation at the social level. Hence, supply side policies like spreading education and skill development programs to the mass population, removing socio-economic barriers those have converse impacts over education attainment, and enhancing the diversity of training programs taking into consideration of the domestic as well as global labor market demands should be adapted. Most importantly, to ensure the proper escalation of labor productivity – emphasis must be put on the improvement of the quality of education and training as well. A prompt response from the government

incorporating various development agencies and international donors will fasten the process of recognition of the problems, identification of the strategies and implementation of the policies.