



Towards a better skilled workforce in the Bangladesh ready-made garment sector



The activities and achievements of the International Labour Organization's RMG Centre of Excellence project supported by Sweden and H&M

Date of publication: December 2017

Published by: International Labour Organisation

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Foreword

The Bangladesh ready-made garment (RMG) industry is the engine of the national economy and has helped drive the development of the nation over recent decades. It generates over 80 per cent of the country's export earnings and employs some four million workers, the majority of whom are women.

Although prospects in this sector are bright, the Bangladesh RMG industry has enormous scope to improve productivity through skills development. By doing so, it will be able to move further up the value chain and away from competing on the basis of low prices.

Skills and employability are a major priority for the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Bangladesh. For this reason, and recognising the importance of the RMG sector in both economic and social terms, the RMG Centre of Excellence project was launched in 2014 with the support of Sweden and international retailer H&M.

The initiative set out to support the skills development system in the country while providing practical benefits to employers and workers alike. To realise the objectives of this project, a new institution named Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) was set up by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturer and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

CEBAI offers market-responsive and demand-driven skills development programmes that meet nationally recognized standards. The initiative is driven by the RMG industry to address the challenges it faces in responding to changing market demands. Since its inception the Centre of Excellence project has supported CEBAI in number of key areas including curriculum development, the establishment of Enterprise Based Training centres, and the training of garment workers, for many of whom new skills translate into higher salaries and a better life.

A better skilled workforce will serve as an important catalyst for the growth of the industry and will benefit employers, workers and buyers alike. I look forward to building further on these efforts to achieve a more flexible, demand-driven and inclusive skills development system in Bangladesh.

Srinivas Reddy
Country Director
ILO Bangladesh

A need for a better skilled garment workforce

The ready-made garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh employs over four million people. However, the provision of training available for RMG workers has failed to keep pace with the growth of the industry itself. In general, training available is neither market-responsive nor industry-driven. At the same time the industry is adversely affected by a high turnover of employees and an acute skills shortage at all levels.

To help address the skills gap in the RMG sector, the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the RMG Centre of Excellence (CoE) project in 2014 in collaboration with Sweden, leading Swedish fashion retailer H&M and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA). The project concluded in November 2017.

The vision of the Centre of Excellence project was to establish a replicable model of industry-driven training and support services in Bangladesh. This model would be a sustainable, self-funded approach that effectively increases skills levels in the industry as well as employability and income of disadvantaged groups.

A new institution named the Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) was established as part of this process. Amongst a number of priority areas, CEBAI sets out to provide competency-based training to workers in areas where demand from the industry is greatest.

The guidelines of the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Frameworks (NTVQF) and National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) have been strictly followed during planning and implementation of CEBAI activities to ensure that they meet national standards. By doing so, it can help meet employers' needs for skilled workers while at the same time workers can attain the skills that lead to higher wages and decent employment.

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The establishment of the Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) was a major output of the Centre of Excellence project carried out by ILO with the support of Sweden, H&M and the BGMEA. There have been many other excellent achievements including the introduction of Enterprise Based Training, the development of specialised curricula, support for disadvantaged young people to gain training opportunities and conducting of research on issues affecting the RMG sector.

While much has been accomplished CEBAI is still in its infancy and we must continue to nurture it so that it is able to provide the support industry needs to move up the value chain and gain further share in the world market.

”

Md. Atiqul Islam

President

Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh
Apparel Industry (CEBAI)

Achievements of the Centre of Excellence project

The Centre of Excellence project has achieved a number of results benefitting workers and employers alike.



8,500+

Project activities benefited more than 8,500 women and men in Bangladesh.



CEBAI launched and training centre established in Ashulia.



Comprehensive curricula and competency-based learning materials developed for sewing machine operation, sewing supervising, industrial engineering and sewing machine maintenance.



Certified training

Certified and accredited training implemented in line with the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) of Bangladesh.



13

13 RMG companies established 'Enterprise Based Training (EBT)' centres in their factory premises.



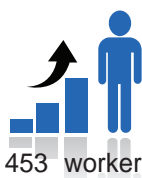
5,113

5,113 new entrants/helpers trained within the industry and placed in operator-level positions in RMG factories.



66

66 factory supervisors trained in key leadership skills and responsibilities including occupational safety and health, disability inclusion and workers' rights.



453

453 workers assessed through the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process, with a view to improving their wages.



1,891

1,891 Enterprise Based Training (EBT) participants or workers who took Enterprise Based Training (EBT) assessed at Sewing Machine Operator NTVQF Level-1.



274

274 EBT Competency Based Training and Assessment Level-IV trainers and assessors trained and achieved certification from Bangladesh Technical Education Board.



1140

1140 workers trained by UCEP, Muslim Aid, DAM and Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKTTTC) and placed in RMG factories.



The majority of CEBAI beneficiaries are women and five percent people with disabilities.

The Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI)



The Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) was established in 2014 with the support of the ILO Center of Excellence project to help meet the changing needs of the Bangladesh garment sector as it seeks to move up the value chain.

CEBAI was inaugurated by the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on 7 December, 2014 and is managed by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Swedish Government and H&M.

One of the major tasks of CEBAI is to address

the challenges the RMG sector faces to increase its exports and contribute towards a more rapid economic development of the country. The objectives of CEBAI differ from those of other institutes as it not only provides skills training but also prepares the sector to meet the ever changing challenges it faces to remain among the top RMG exporters of the world.

A number of key areas of CEBAI activities are supported by the Centre of Excellence project. These include the establishment of the CEBAI Training Centre in Ashulia, curriculum development, the introduction of Enterprise Based Training, and the provision of training to disadvantaged youths and those with disabilities.



In addition to work supported by the project, CEBAI also plays a wider role acting as a ‘think tank’ for the industry. CEBAI has research and development wings based in Dhaka University and North South University to coordinate research and development work for the RMG sector. CEBAI has identified major areas of research covering inclusive business strategies for the RMG sector; factory relocation strategy; enhancing RMG SME competitiveness; the empowerment of women in the industry; and workplace improvements and productivity enhancement.

A CEBAI Coordination Cell based at the BGMEA coordinates the overall activities of CEBAI. It also facilitates knowledge sharing through a central repository unit; manages electronic databases and labour market information (LMI); reinforces occupational safety and health practices; supports capacity building for trade union management; and also undertakes lobbying and advocacy actions.

CEBAI is a registered organization with a fully independent Board composed of members of BGMEA, and other apparel industry stakeholders as well as academics and media. The institution collaborates with the University of Dhaka and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) which also have representatives on the CEBAI Board as does the Bangladesh Employers Federation. To ensure representation from the Government, workers and other stakeholders, the Chairman of Technical Education Board, Director Technical Education and Chairman of the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education are also included.

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In just a few short decades the Bangladesh garment industry has grown to become the world’s second largest exporter of apparel. This is an achievement for us all to be proud of; yet we cannot be complacent. If the industry is to fulfil its true potential we need to upgrade the skills of our workforce. The ILO Centre of Excellence project has played a major role in this regard by supporting the establishment of the Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI) and I am certain that its efforts will make a long lasting contribution to the future success of our garment sector.

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Siddiqur Rahman
President

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers
and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

The CEBAI Training Centre



An integral part of the Centre of Excellence project's support to the ready-made garment (RMG) sector has been the establishment of the CEBAI Training Centre. Launched in 2014, the Centre is located in Ashulia, a key RMG industry cluster area close to Dhaka.

The state-of-the-art training centre features four skill demonstration rooms with 175 sewing machines. It also features two theory and demonstration rooms.

The Centre offers a number of courses tailored to the needs of the industry. These include basic sewing machine operator training courses under the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF). CEBAI is also providing competency based training and assessment of National Certificate Level-IV and periodically conducting Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments.



In addition the centre also conducts skills training for trainers and assessors, soft skills training for supervisors, and mid to top level management and entrepreneurship training.

The facilities of the CEBAI training centre have been put to use by the ILO/IFC Better Work programme which seeks to enhance compliance and productivity in the Bangladesh RMG industry. Better Work has engaged the CEBAI centre to carry out a number of training courses including occupational safety and health, financial literacy, managing people, workplace communication and supervisory skills training.

Other initiatives such as the Skills for Employment and Productivity program funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation are also availing CEBAI facilities to train workers.

Graduates
1592



Job
Placement
1118



Introducing Competency-Based Training for the RMG sector



A major priority of CEBAI is to improve the quality of work and productivity in RMG factories and to help workers have their skills formally recognized by implementing certified training within the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) of Bangladesh.

To support this goal, ILO's Centre of Excellence project has helped facilitate the introduction of Competency-Based Training (CBT) for the RMG sector through CEBAI. The project has also helped by developing a comprehensive curriculum and competency-based learning materials for this training.

Competency-Based Training is an approach to Technical & Vocational Education and Training (TVET) that places emphasis on skills, knowledge and attitudes required for effective performance of individuals in the workplace. CBT courses are practical and demand-driven and designed to respond to present and future needs of the industry. This training prepares workers to become more productive in the workplace so they can gain better employment opportunities and higher wages.

In CBT, focus is placed on concrete skills rather than abstract learning. Competency standards are broken down into smaller units of competency and each of these units describes a specific workplace activity. Units of competency can progressively build to a full qualification.

Progression of learners within a CBT programme is not time-bound; instead it depends on the person's ability to demonstrate the necessary competence for the job. Once a person has been assessed as successfully completing a unit of competency, he/she is given a Statement of Attainment.

Implementing a Competency-Based Training System for RMG sector requires two key elements: trainers who are at least qualified as per Competency-Based Training and Assessment (CBT&A) level-4; and registration and accreditation of training organizations as Registered Training Organizations (RTO) with the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), the statutory authority for quality assurance and certification for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.



In November 2015, the Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industry received accreditation as a Registered Training Organization from the BTEB. The RTO certification enables CEBAI to run training courses as per the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF), which is based on competency based training methodology. The accreditation also helps CEBAI conduct certification for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The Centre of Excellence project has supported the capacity development of trainers and assessors in the RMG industry on how to introduce CBT to workers. Trainers from several apparel companies have also participated in the training.



Readymade garments have gradually become the biggest strategic sector for Bangladesh as it emerged as one of the leading exporters globally. This growth has also had significant national impact. Considering this importance, CEBAI, in close partnership with key stakeholders has huge potential to support the RMG sector through updated information, in depth studies, research and capacity strengthening initiatives.

As a public private partnership, it is important that CEBAI continues its skills development initiatives as well as contributes towards improving employability and wages for female workers.



Anders Öhrström
Head of Development Cooperation
Embassy of Sweden

Development of new Competency Standards for RMG skills



Recognising that existing qualifications for sewing machine operators no longer met the needs of the industry, the Centre of Excellence project supported a comprehensive review process which involved the Industry Skills Council for the RMG sector and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB).

A series of consultative workshops were held to analyse the skills required by the industry. Four key areas were identified, namely basic operator skills for knitwear, denim, lingerie and woven products.

The project commissioned Technical Sub Committees (TSCs) to consider the courses for these demand-based areas which were then reviewed and validated for content, accuracy and relevance by industry and labour groups.

The Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) subsequently developed competency standards on knitwear, denim, lingerie and woven products for the RMG sector covering levels I, II and III of the National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF).



Training activities under CEBAI (taking place at the CEBAI Training Center in Ashulia and Enterprise Based Training centres) are now being conducted following these competency standards. The scope of training will be gradually extended in line with the development of competency standards for other levels of NTVQF.

To meet the demand of the RMG sector, CEBAI is furthermore developing three new courses on sewing supervision, industrial engineering and sewing machine maintenance under the NTVQF framework.

A benefit of qualifications under the NTVQF is that they are nationally recognised. This means that any worker who has completed a level can use the certificate to gain employment in any other RMG factory nationwide.

The development of these competency standards is also a major legacy of the Centre of Excellence project. They will help ensure a steady supply of workers who meet the needs of the industry and will be built upon further to help strengthen the foundations of the RMG sector.

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The Bangladesh RMG industry has witnessed tremendous growth during the last couple of decades. While the industry has boomed the demand for skilled workforce has also continuously increased. A skilled workforce increases its employability, contributes to the growth of the industry and to the socio-economic development of the country. It will also help Bangladesh to move up the value chain as a key garment manufacturing destination.

H&M collaborated with Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and ILO to address the skills gap and established CEBAI to cater to the needs of the industry. As a key partner of the RMG industry, H&M strongly believes that further initiatives and collaboration are needed to ensure a stable supply of skilled workers.

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Kiran Gokathothi
Sustainability Manager
H&M Bangladesh

Enterprise Based Training (EBT) at industry level



Enterprise Based Training (EBT) is a system of in-house training established within factory premises to help companies meet the skills development needs of their workers. ILO's Centre of Excellence project has supported Bangladesh ready-made garment factories to establish EBT centres where competency-based training is being provided on sewing machine operation (SMO) level-1.

Having an in-house EBT centre helps eliminate helpers, develops the capacity of existing workers/employees and increases their efficiency resulting in increased productivity. It motivates workers to follow compliance issues properly, particularly occupational safety and health. This in turn contributes to better and more compliant working conditions and helps uphold the image of the enterprise among international buyers.

Participating factories have supported the establishment of the centres within their premises and cover the running costs while the project provides technical assistance to set up the centres.

An EBT Center requires a dedicated training space of at least 2,500 square feet for setting up training lines, a

“ This project needs to run until a critical mass of workers have come through the training centre and are working in the factory. So far we have trained around 100 people but in the next two years we will have around 600 and then we will see a net positive benefit. At that point neighbouring factories who have been picking up my trained workers will start to see the benefits of doing it themselves. ”

Miran Ali

Chairman of Remi Holdings



separate space for conducting theoretical classes as well as sewing machines, tools and equipment. It further more needs trainers certified in providing competency-based training and assessment.

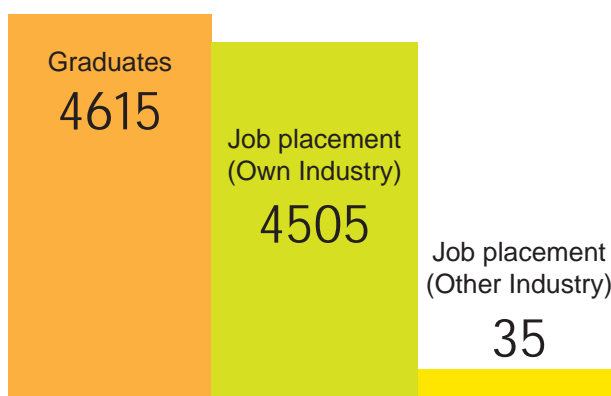
Training provided by an EBT Centre must meet national standards and the 13 EBT centres established by the project have been certified as Registered Training Organizations (RTO) by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board. Accreditation as an RTO not only allows enterprises to provide National Technical and Vocational Qualification Framework (NTVQF) qualifications but is also a recognition of the enterprise's commitment towards workers' skills development, better business, inclusivity and sustainable growth.

Performance of trainees is assessed by external assessors, authorized by BTEB, with trainees needing to pass an assessment test to obtain certificates. EBT courses commonly run for two months or the equivalent of 360 hours instruction. These nationally recognized qualifications can help lead to higher salaries and are also of great value to trainees should they wish to move to other jobs in the industry.

To date, a total of 127 EBT trainers and assessors have received certification on competency- based training and assessments through the ILO's Centre of Excellence programme.

The 13 EBT pioneers

- Osman Group (Russel Garments)
- Fakir Apparels
- Knit Concern Group
- Remi Holdings Limited
- Hop Lun BD Limited
- Metro Knitting & Dying Limited
- M&J Group
- Mohammadi Group
- Comfit Composite Ltd and
- Tarasima Apparels
- Rose Dresses Ltd
- Pacific Jeans
- Clifton Group



Providing entry to the RMG industry for disadvantaged groups



The Centre of Excellence project has collaborated with Muslim Aid, Underprivileged Children's Education Programs (UCEP), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and the Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre (BKTTTC) to provide training to 1140 members of the rural poor, including persons with disabilities.

This partnership has promoted access and entry of underprivileged groups to formal skills qualifications. It also helped trainees get placed at a higher grade at the workplace, and created career pathways for disadvantaged and women workers.

The initiative saw UCEP run an apprenticeship training programme to improve employability of and opportunities for 340 young people in Dhaka. Meanwhile, Muslim Aid and BKTTCC conducted training in a slum area of Chittagong city that saw some 800 young people trained. Of those trained over 90 percent successfully completed the course in basic Sewing Machine Operation and gained jobs in the industry.

Graduates

1140

Job placement

1026



In addition, the Centre of Excellence project has also supported the improvement of physical facilities at the vocational training centres of Muslim Aid, DAM and UCEP where workshops, classrooms, refreshment rooms and toilets were refurbished. Fire extinguishers, First Aid equipment and drinking water were also made available in the training venues as per BTEB requirement.

Leading RMG producers commit to enhance workplace inclusion



Executives from the Ananta, Bitopi and Shin Shin groups sign an Inclusive Business Policy in the presence of State Minister for Labour and Employment, Md Mujibul Haque and industry leaders.

With the support of the Centre of Excellence project three leading RMG companies, Ananta, Bitopi and Shin Shin groups have signed an Inclusive Business Policy to promote gender equality and create better access for persons with disabilities in the RMG sector.

The agreement will see these companies bring their disability inclusion policies in line with the Bangladesh “Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013.” The companies have also committed to reach gender parity at management levels and ensure equal pay for women employees.

Through a series of meetings and workshops organized by the Center of Excellence Project, the top management of the companies not only accepted the concept but also volunteered to adopt a policy to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities as contributors to their business.

Management representatives of the three companies visited the Center for Disability and Development (CDD), so they could gain first-hand experience of how people with disabilities can be accommodated in the workplace. Consultation and advice was also provided by ILO and CDD on how to survey existing factory facilities using various tools and assessment methods. As a result the companies have taken a number of practical steps such as amendments to their HR policies while physical modifications are also planned to be implemented in phases.

A number of innovative ideas have also been incorporated to empower the female workforce. These include action plans to promote skilled female workers in different positions such as supervisors, auditors, quality controllers (QC), product developers and production in-charge posts. Women workers are also being encouraged to take part in different committees to have greater voice in decision making processes and regarding safety issues.

Fuli works to make her dreams come true

Enterprise Based Training (EBT) being offered in garment factories is helping workers learn and earn more.



Fuli Begum has always had a dream.

The 25-year-old Bangladeshi longed to open her own business, preferably a big tailoring shop back home in her village in the northern district of Jamalpur.

The second child from a family of six, Fuli experienced the pains of severe poverty growing up. It was hard for the family to manage on her father's sole income as a landless farmer. It seemed unlikely that Fuli's dream would ever come true.

However, things picked up when she married Wazed Ali in 2010. Fuli moved to Narayanganj in the Greater Dhaka area in 2012 with her husband, who was working as a sewing machine operator at Fakir Apparels.

Fuli soon gave birth to a daughter Sumiya, but it was a struggle managing a family of three on just her husband's income. Saving to start a business was certainly out of the question. The decision was made. Fuli would work alongside her husband in the garment factory.



In late 2014, Fuli took her daughter to stay with her mother back in the village and joined Fakir Apparels as a helper. Fuli and her husband worked hard and together they started to save.

A year later, Fuli became aware that Fakir Apparels had started Enterprise Based Training (EBT) for semi-skilled workers and new staff.

EBT is a training system that sees nationally recognized skills qualifications taught to staff on factory premises.

Fuli jumped at the opportunity and joined the three-month training programme in December 2015.

“It was a great opportunity for me as the training was very useful. Our instructors and trainers were very sincere and supportive,” Fuli says.

“More than 70 percent of the training sessions were practical and this helped us become skilled within a very short span of time.”

“Earlier we didn’t have any clear understanding about occupational safety. The EBT trained us on this as well as various other compliance issues.”

“I was nervous whether I could face the assessors. But was so happy when I passed and was awarded a certificate. This certificate is precious to me as I can use it to get employment easily at home and abroad as a skilled worker.”

After completion of the EBT, Fuli was promoted from helper to

“

EBT not only increased my wages but also my social status.

”

Fuli Begum
Garment Worker

a skilled sewing machine operator and she received a pay rise.

“EBT not only increased my wages but also my social status,” Fuli says.

Together Fuli and her husband now earn around BDT 20,000 per month (approx. USD255) of which they save a significant portion.

Fuli’s face lights up as she realizes her dream may one day come true. Yet happiness is tinged with sadness as Fuli thinks of her daughter who she has so little opportunity to spend time with.

“We have to sacrifice to fulfill our dreams. Whatever we are earning, it is for the sake of our beloved daughter and family”.

Enterprise based training helps beat staff turnover at Knit Concern

Enterprise Based Training is helping RMG companies to reduce the numbers of low-skilled 'helpers' and to develop a steam of staff trained to Bangladesh national standards.



Knit Concern Group is a leading garment manufacturer in Bangladesh. Starting its operations in 1992, Knit Concern now employs about 17,000 workers on its 25 acre site at Narayanganj just outside Dhaka. In all, the company produces some 150,000 pieces of high quality knit apparel and 25,000 pieces of lingerie daily for export to markets worldwide.

Staff turnover presents a challenge to garment manufacturers in Bangladesh as workers jump from factory to factory seeking better salaries or drop out of the industry altogether. Knit Concern

is no different, with each month around 4-4.5 percent of its workforce moving on.

There is a strong need to retain staff as well as train those who are newly recruited. One way that Knit Concern is doing so is through the establishment of an Enterprise Based Training (EBT) center with the support of the Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI). EBT helps enhance the skills of its workers, helping them earn higher salaries while also ensuring a steady flow of trained newcomers.

The EBT Centre at Knit Concern was established in 2015. This well-equipped 5000 sq ft training center includes a practice floor equipped with 120 machines, a class room and an office. 10 full-time trainers work at this EBT Centre all of whom received training from CEBAI. CEBAI has also supported the development of course curricula and helped support Knit Concern to establish and run the EBT as per the guidelines of the National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) 2011.

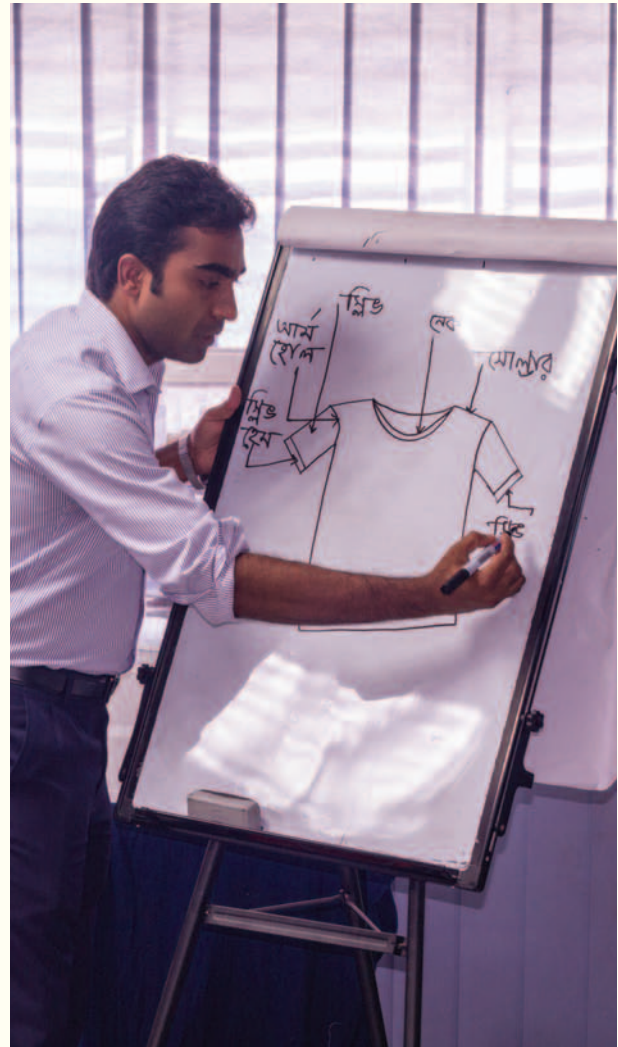
“The factory spends a considerable amount to manage the training center. But the overall benefit is much higher than the management cost,” said Nasim Ahmed, Director of Knit Concern Group.

He adds, “The EBT has helped Knit Concern to meet the gap from staff turnover by producing more skilled workers. It has helped us to eliminate helpers from our factory. This eases the pressure on the floor and utility services and helps ensure a healthy atmosphere. Skilled workers receive higher wages and above all our productivity also increases.”

The EBT Centre at Knit Concern has already been certified as a Registered Training Organization (RTO) by the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). External assessors, accredited by BTEB assess the EBT and successful trainees are awarded certificates by BTEB.

Mr Ahmed says, “We provide training to about 100 people per month. Some of the trainees may subsequently go to work at other companies. This may seem like a loss for us but if the skills of our trained workers are used in other garment factories I believe this is a contribution from us to the RMG sector”.

“Each and every garment factory should introduce Enterprise Based Training as it is in the interest of every business. Ultimately this also contributes to the healthy growth of RMG sector and upholds the positive image of Bangladesh among buyers and garment importing countries.”



“

The EBT has helped Knit Concern to meet the gap from staff turnover by producing more skilled workers. Skilled workers receive higher wages and above all our productivity also increases.

”

Nasim Ahmed

Director, Knit Concern Group

Enterprise based training delivers results

Enterprise Based Training is helping one major Bangladesh RMG company to reduce the numbers of low-skilled ‘helpers’ and develop a pool of trained staff to step in when staff shortages occur.



Representatives of the Swedish Embassy and H&M join executives of Fakir Apparels to observe EBT in action.

Established in Narayanganj in 1998, Fakir Apparels Limited has grown to become one of the leading garment manufacturers in the country. Starting with just four lines of machines, today Fakir Apparels boasts 137 lines and over 10,000 staff.

In October 2015, Fakir Apparels introduced Enterprise Based Training (EBT) inside its factory with support from the Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI). The purpose of starting EBT was to

train and up-skill operators. Training was also needed for new workers as well as to provide a pool of skilled staff who could provide support during any worker shortages.

Mr. Md. Kamruzzaman, General Manager (HR and Audit) of Fakir Apparels oversees EBT activities of the factory.

“EBT is very helpful for developing the competencies of workers. Usually workers can find training somewhere, but often this learning is of no use when

they start working in export oriented garment factories. Hence, EBT is designed based on the requirements of the factory,” he said.

Md. Kamruzzaman also highlighted the benefits of EBT to help deal with worker turnover.

“EBT is playing a crucial role to meet the challenges arising from the dropout of workers by providing a backup pool of trained workers. At present the factory has 200 trained workers to provide back up when needed. Usually workers receiving EBT are loyal and provide greater output than others.”

Another significant outcome of EBT is the elimination of helpers in factories.

“We have succeeded in reducing helpers from 10 to 5 for every 20 skilled workers,” said Mr. Kamruzzaman. “We are also working hard for 100 percent percent elimination of helpers for salaried skilled workers,” he added. “Once workers receive EBT they no longer need any support from helpers as they had been trained to work independently. Helpers are also trained so that they can become operators and earn higher salaries.”

Fakir Apparels has allocated 3,500 sqft of space to run its training center which features practice lines and a class room. There are three instructors, two trainers and a manager. Currently the center has the capacity to provide training for 30 persons. However, the management is planning to increase this to 100 persons.

CEBAI has supported the factory EBT Centers by training the trainers and instructors. It has also provided comprehensive training modules for conducting EBT that are custom tailored to the requirements of the factory. The EBT Centers at factories need to offer services that meet national standards. Hence CEBAI has helped forge links between Fakir Apparels and the Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). EBT participants are assessed by staff from the BTEB and receive a nationally recognized certificate from BTEB after successfully completing the training.



“

EBT is very helpful for developing the competencies of workers. Usually workers can find training somewhere, but often this learning is of no use when they start working in export oriented garment factories. Hence, EBT is designed based on the requirements of the factory.

”

Md. Kamruzzaman
General Manager (HR and Audit)
Fakir Apparels



Enterprise Training a blessing for Marzina

The chance to participate in Enterprise Based Training is helping both workers and their families



For Marzina Akter nothing was more important than the education of her three younger siblings. All were doing well at school and had good prospects for the future.

Now 24 years old, Marzina had also once dreamed of pursuing higher education. However, with her father struggling to manage the family as a vegetable vendor, Marzina quit school and found employment in a garment factory to help support her father.

In 2013, Marzina and her family moved to Savar on the outskirts of Dhaka. There she joined a garment factory as a semi-skilled worker.

The family rented a small single room in which Marzina, her parents, brothers and sister lived together. Marzina accepted their situation as she hoped that the family's sacrifices and efforts would help her younger siblings. However, luck soon took a turn for the worst when Marzina became ill and lost her job. This was a catastrophe for the struggling family.

When Marzina recovered and started looking for an employment she found her way to the gate of the Hop Lun factory. Marzina asked the security guard about employment opportunities and a few minutes later, she was allowed to enter.



Once inside, Marzina was referred to Hop Lun's Enterprise Based training (EBT) center. As she already had experience Marzina was considered a semi-skilled worker and selected to receive further training.

Hop Lun had launched its EBT Centre in December 2015 with support from the Centre of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry (CEBAI). The center provides in-house training on different competencies required by the factory. In addition to giving unskilled staff a start, the centre also focuses on enhancing the skills of those who have already worked in the industry.

"It was a very exciting day for me," Marzina explains. "I was just roaming around looking for a job and finally got an opportunity. I had some skills, but it was not enough to convince the factory owners as I was not able to show them any certificate. Some specific skills are needed

at Hop Lun and so I had to learn new things. With the help of my instructors, I was able to pick up the lessons very quickly."

"Apart from technical training we also learned about occupational safety, compliance issues and how we should conduct ourselves in the workplace. This helped me to adjust in a new environment. It also helps create a safe and congenial atmosphere on the working floors," Marzina said.

After successful completion of her training Marzina was awarded a certificate. She joined Hop Lun as a skilled worker with a monthly salary of Taka 7,500 along with other benefits. Marzina is now earning about Taka 10,000 per month.

"My brothers and sister need teaching materials and a decent diet. My father was exhausted trying to support the family and at such a difficult time in my life, this training opportunity came to me like a blessing from the Almighty," Marzina says.

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Marzina Akter
Garment worker



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Knitwear is a fast moving industry that sees constant technological change. As a result, it is vital to have a constant inflow of workers with the skills that meet the needs of the knitwear industry. BKMEA believes that the skills acquired from training make workers more productive so that they can receive higher wages. Training activities create benefits for individuals, teams, and organizations that ameliorate a nation's human capital, which in turn contributes to a nation's economic growth.

We also believe that training at the organizational levels increases its effectiveness and profitability. These activities have the potential to produce economic benefit for the whole country such as poverty reduction, economic growth and other related financial outcomes as well as achieving SDG goals.

By introducing courses to national standards that provide these skills, the Centre of Excellence project and CEBAI have helped build the foundation upon which our skill development needs can be built further.

A.K.M. Salim Osman, MP

President

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)

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