



**Assessment of Female Migrant Domestic Workers' Housekeeping Training  
at the Technical Training Centres (TTCs)**



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## Acronyms

BKTTC	Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
FMDW	Female Migrant Domestic Worker
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HTM	Housekeeping Training Module
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFW	Overseas Filipino Worker
PDOS	Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar
PTL	Participatory Teaching and Learning
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
SLBFE	Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment
STM	Skill Training Module
ToT	Training of Trainer
TTC	Technical Training Centre

## **Background**

### **Introduction**

Unexpected return of some female migrant workers from the Gulf and other Arab countries has raised major concerns for government as well as civil society. Many of these returned female migrant workers reported that they experienced physical assault, sexual harassment, non-payment of wage in the destination countries, migration researchers and activists in Bangladesh increasingly emphasised on participation at markets that require higher skills as well as professional development of the female workers. In particular, the quality and applicability of the training have been reported as an important area to look into. Under this circumstance, Bureau of Manpower and Employment Training (BMET) took an initiative to assess the quality of the compulsory Housekeeping Training Module (HTM) that the Female Migrant Domestic Workers (FMDW) complete before migrating to the Gulf and other Arab countries. This assessment study is part of that initiative. It primarily aims to analyse and evaluate the quality of the HTM designed for the FMDWs from Bangladesh. Thus its findings intend to help development of necessary standard and quality control mechanism for further improvement of the training module. The Technical Training Centres (TTCs) administer this training and therefore primary data for this study was collected from the concerned persons at the TTCs and the training participants.

### **Pre-departure training for meeting the needs of migrants**

Pre-departure training programmes are a part of the whole cycle of migration and are designed to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers and to enable them to maximize benefits from overseas employment. The migration cycle begins with making the decision to migrate, followed by leaving the country, arriving in the foreign country, settling in the workplace and integrating into the new environment, living and working overseas, and ends when the migrant finally returns home to readjust and reintegrate in society. While the migrants have specific needs in every stage (as outline in Table 1.1 below), the pre-departure orientation programmes are ideally designed to help workers to become informed and empowered in each phase in the overseas contract employment cycle. In the context of Bangladesh, many migrants face problems in terms of employment and living conditions, and are often exploited in the

countries of destinations. Due to lack of appropriate information in each phase of their migration, they struggle to get the full benefits of overseas migration. There is a consensus among the policy makers, migration researchers and activists that pre-departure training has crucial role in avoided unwanted circumstances for the migrant workers.

Pre-Departure	<p>Knowledge of costs, benefits, risks associated with migration.</p> <p>Information on job availability, conditions of contract and placement, financial resources to meet migration expenses, assistance in making domestic arrangements during their absence and preparing for work overseas, including psychological preparedness for safe migration.</p> <p>Standards and certification of required skills.</p> <p>Knowledge on culture, expected attitudes and behaviour at destination.</p>
Post-Arrival	<p>Information on access to decent working conditions and humane treatment and support (psychosocial, legal), in the event of problems in destination countries.</p> <p>Information and support in remitting income and maintaining communications with their families at home.</p>
Reintegration	<p>Development of financial stability through proper investment of their earnings.</p> <p>Access to investments that would generate maximum income, and access to credit, technical services, marketing and other facilities for migrant workers wishing to create self-employment activities.</p> <p>Counselling in dealing with intra-family difficulties and with reintegration into the community.</p>

Table 1: The needs of migrants in various stages of migration cycle

### The skill training module

In 2016, a Skill Training Module (STM) was developed to enhance skills of the aspiring female workers who wish to go to the Middle East. Due to lack of adequate information and skills, many female workers experience different kinds of obstacles during decision-making and also throughout their entire migration journey. Considering this, it was then decided that Bangladeshi female workers should get proper training in order to help them increase their skills at workplace and thus minimise their risks and vulnerabilities in the destination countries. Subsequently BMET and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) jointly provided technical support to prepare a STM for the female workers migrating to the Middle East as domestic workers. Thus a one-month residential training was made compulsory for the female workers going to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. The main purpose of this training is to introduce the Bangladeshi female workers aspiring to migrate overseas as domestic workers to various steps in the migration process so that they could migrate through a safe, regular and well-organised way. Moreover, the training intends

to make the female migrant workers aware of their rights and about the actions in case of violation of those rights. In fact, the training is a comprehensive way of letting the female workers know about the problems in migrants' life, solutions to those problems, acquiring necessary professional skills, destination countries and their language, cultural traditions and customs etc. The training wants to train the female workers to tackle personal risks and work-related problems by utilising their life skills and thus enhance their capacity to flourish the potentials. Through this training, the female workers also get information about the contacts that they should be in touch with in case of emergency, awareness about female domestic workers' health protection, and information on physical and mental preparation for work. The trainees also learn about the processes of sending remittances, utilisation of remittances, investment and its management.

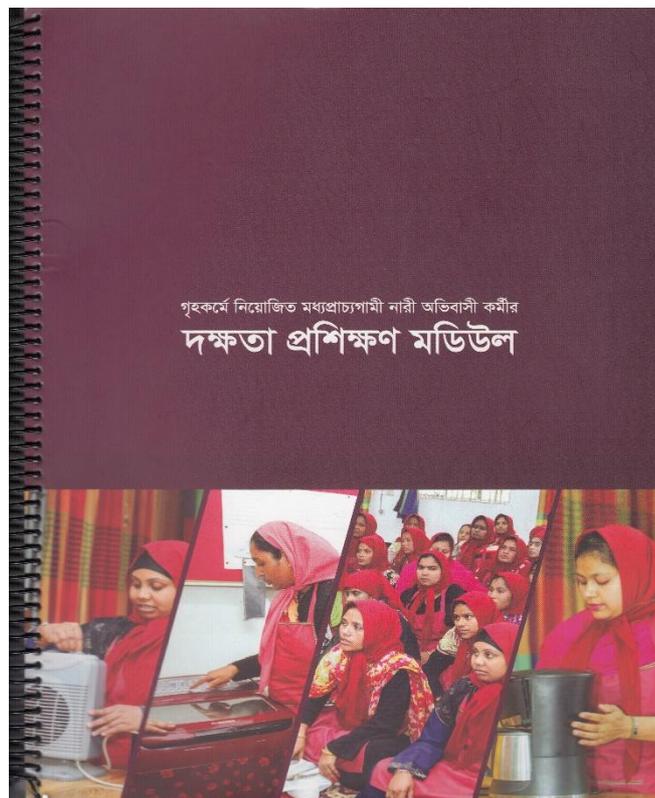


Figure 1: The cover page of Skill Training Module (STM)

The training module was prepared by following the principles of adult education and participatory teaching and learning (PTL) while its target group was mainly the women who have completed secondary level education or lower than that. The module was made easy so that the participants could attend the training with great interests and share their own

knowledge and experiences with others. In order to ensure appropriate use of the module, 75 trainers from 29 TTCs were trained through a three-day residential training. Thus, the trainers were introduced to various participatory teaching methods and they practiced some activities for enhancing their skills.

The training module outlined a schedule of four weeks where the training would be conducted from Sunday to Thursday, 8:00am to 4:00pm. The module suggested to allocate designated class time for discussing steps in international migration, training on domestic work, basics of Arabic, workers’ rights and the ways to protect them, and life skills. The module presented the following sample class schedule:

Morning 8:00- 8:45	Morning 8:45- 10:00	Morning 10:00- 10:45	Morning 10:45- 11:15	Morning 10:45-1 1:15	Noon 12:00- 1:00	Noon 1:00- 2:00	Noon 2:00- 2:40	Noon 2:45-4 :00
Physical exercise	Safe and regular migration	Workers’ rights and duties	Tea break	Introducti on to Arabic and practice activity	Training on househol d works	Lunch break	Life skills	Training on household works

Table 2: Sample of class schedule presented in page 10 of the training module

The training module emphasises on practicing language among the participants whenever they are outside the training centres, adopting change in their meal menus, practicing the rules and behaviours of destination countries. Thus, the module endeavours to prepare the training participants psychologically and physically as skilled workers within a month. As such, the housekeeping training for female domestic workers had the following goals:

1. To ensure high quality training for female migrant workers through a pool of expert trainers;
2. To impart modern, applied, subject-specific practical training by using advanced training materials;
3. To create better employment opportunities for female migrant workers through improving the quality of housekeeping training given by the TTCs; and
4. To ensure safe migration for women and to protect their rights.

This training module was the key research subject for this assessment study. The module was thoroughly reviewed and the classroom-based teaching and learning was observed to examine to what extent the module was related safe migration and work rights of the female migrant workers in the Middle East. Moreover, the module was carefully examined to find how it could reduce risks and fraudulence in female migrant workers' migration process by providing them modern, practical, professional tools and subjects-oriented applied training. The overarching purpose of this assessment was therefore based on this training module to explore how it could create better opportunities for making decent workplace for female migrant workers by enhancing the quality of housekeeping training imparted by the TTCs.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are specific target and impact oriented and practically verifiable. The key objective of this evaluation was to assess female domestic workers' training and to help prepare a guideline for enhancing the quality of services provided to them. In doing this, the female domestic workers' existing training modules were analysed, the quality of their training was assessed with a view to enhancing the standard of existing training programmes. It was expected that this study would identify the gaps and challenges in the existing training programmes for the female domestic workers and help enhance their skills and lead to opportunities for creating safe workplace for them.

### **Expected implications**

The new knowledge from this assessment study is believed to help improve the quality of the female domestic migrant workers' migration experience through the following implications:

1. By helping the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) ensure safe female migration;
2. By helping GoB reduce female workers' risks at workplace by assessing existing training modules and thus enhancing the quality of training;
3. By helping GoB enhance female migrant workers' skills by assessing the housekeeping training modules at the TTCs;
4. By helping female workers' access to decent jobs in destination countries; and
5. By building capacity of specific TTCs to function as model training centres.

## Methodology

This evaluation study followed an exploratory method to collect primary data. While the study started with a consultation workshop to identify the key research issues, the field-based observations at four TTCs offered critical investigation of gaps and challenges in administering the housekeeping training within the classroom and outside. For the purpose of collecting necessary data and evidence, a comprehensive checklist was developed through a rigorous discussion with all parties associated with the training programme i.e. concerned officials at BMET, trainers, Principals of TTCs etc. The checklist is outlined below in *section 2.2*. Upon collection of primary data, a “systematic synthesisation” method was followed to undertake analysis, comparison and discussions of the primary data. Synthesised data from various stakeholders not only provided the opportunity to get the real picture of the field-based operationalisation of the training programme but also validated the relevance of the data for undertaking comparative analysis of the findings.



### Consultation workshop

On 15 June 2019, a half-day consultation workshop was organised in Dhaka to know the background of the research problem and thus determine the methodology to investigate that. Some TTC Principals and trainers participated in the workshop to share their thoughts on the housekeeping training for female domestic workers. The participant BMET and TTC officials had practical experience in dealing with the training programmes (i.e. Hong Kong and some other countries). High officials from BMET and officers from RMMRU participated too. A rigorous discussion on the gaps and challenges in the housekeeping training programme and their effects on female migrant domestic workers was conducted. Throughout the discussion, the Skill Training Module (STM) prepared in 2016 and its weaknesses were indirectly referred to failed migration of Bangladesh’s female migrant domestic workers in the Middle East. Therefore, it was urged, particularly by the trainers, to review the operationalisation of the housekeeping training based on the STM at the TTCs. Reflecting on the workshop discussion,

the research team for this study considered an effective research methodology that could fit well to the overall structure of the training programme and its administration. It was decided that four TTCs (two from Dhaka and two from other regions) would be visited where the training participants and trainers would be interviewed, and the Principals from those TTCs would be consulted to assess the training and its associated weaknesses thoroughly. A comprehensive checklist was framed as a guideline for collecting primary data through field observations and interviews.

### Checklist

A detailed checklist, as outlined below, was prepared with a view to assessing the training programme for the female domestic workers. Based on this checklist, qualitative data was collected from two TTCs in Dhaka and two from other areas:

Subject	Purpose	Method
<b>Migrant workers' contexts: Successful/failed/returned</b>	1.To know about the migration background of certain localities  2.To know about people's perception and knowledge about migrants and to find the actual number of migrants	1. Visiting the District  2. Employment and Manpower Office (DEMO)  3. Discussion with officers  4. Review of relevant statistics and documents
<b>Reviewing the training module</b>	1.To identify if the module has separated the daily lessons  2.To identify if a lesson plan is followed  3.To identify if the module has any weaknesses in terms of its applicability  4.To review the contents, training	1. Visiting TTC  2.Interviewing the trainer based on a semi-structured questionnaire  3.Observing the module thoroughly  4.Reviewing the training manuals

	methodology, practical exercise and techniques or tools	
<b>Compliance check</b>	1. To assess if the curriculum, methods, tools and lesson plan given in the training manual for migrant domestic workers are being followed	1. Interviewing the training participants 2. Field-based observation
<b>Trainers' capacity check</b>	1. To assess if the trainers are capable of imparting participatory and enjoyable learning environment to the trainees 2. To identify if the trainers face any obstacles to use the module	1. Observing teaching in classroom 2. Discussion with the concerned authority
<b>Infrastructural capability check</b>	1. To assess the training centres' infrastructural facilities, management of resources, and attitude to the participants	1. Observing the amenities such as access to toilet, food menu etc. 2. Discussion with the teachers, trainers and concerned authority
<b>Effectiveness of supplies and tools used in practical training</b>	1. To assess relevance and effectiveness of the supplies and tools used in practical training	1. Testing the tools and their applicability in classroom 2. Discussion with teacher, trainer and concerned authority
<b>Training of the trainers</b>	1. To assess if the trainers have received any Training of Trainer (ToT) 2. To identify if the trainers are having difficulty in spite of receiving ToT.	1. Discussion with concerned authority 2. Discussion with the trainers and observation of their teaching in classroom

<b>Significance of training: Perceptions of participants and their family and middlemen</b>	1.To assess the perceptions and opinions of various stakeholders on the significance of the training	1.Interview with the participants, their families, community leaders and middlemen
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Table 3: The checklist for collection of data

### Field observation

Since this was an exploratory research, field observation was very crucial to collect evidence on field-level operationalisation of the housekeeping training. The research team anticipated that field observation would help collect evidence on many key areas such as contents of the training module, classroom environment, teaching and learning outcomes, availability of resources, participants’ response to teaching, trainer-participants relationships etc. Moreover, considering the limited resources and time for conducting this research, field observation enabled the research team to integrate a range of perceptions and narratives of the training participants and their trainers. The following four TTCs were visited to collect data for this research:

1. Keranigonj Technical Training Centre,
2. Tangail Technical Training Centre,
3. Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre, and
4. Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women Technical Training Centre

### In-depth interview

In addition to field-based observation, in-depth interviews were conducted to record the personal perspectives and narratives of the training participants and their trainers. Although this was the primary purpose of the in-depth interviews, the research team undertook in-depth interviews with some other parties who were substantially related to the housekeeping training programme and its administration. For example, Principal of TTC, admission officer, and trade in-charge were interviewed too. Interviews with a wide range of relevant persons and authorities allowed the research team to collect multiple pieces of information and thus a mechanism to testify the collected data through various sources. Therefore, in-depth interviews

helped obtain a rigorous dataset for a rigorous review of the training programme both at TTCs and outside.

## **Field findings**

### **Keranigonj Technical Training Centre:**

The training hall room was neat and clean. All the training participants were wearing the same dress and scarf and they appeared to be disciplined. They were from 94<sup>th</sup> housekeeping batch that started on 6 July 2019 and it intended to continue till 5 August 2019. Although 34 participants enrolled, 24 were found regular. While they were asked about how they were doing during this training, they all responded that they were doing well. They also assured they were receiving adequate support from their teachers and thus they thought they were learning many things throughout the training. They were able to count from 1 to 100 in Arabic. They were also able to demonstrate some basic Arabic knowledge by saying the name of some fruits, foods, furniture, crockeries etc. They were familiar with some household activities such as washing and ironing the clothes, dishwashing, cleaning floors by using vacuum cleaner, etc. They were confident that they would be able to learn these practical skills thoroughly upon completion of the training. The overall learning outcomes of the training appeared to be satisfactory.

The research team interviewed four participants: Mowshumi Akter, Lucy Akter, Jhinuk Begum and Deepa Mahmud. All of them were between 27 to 35 years. One of them had a young child (3 years old). They had almost similar socio-economic background and they thought they would be able to reduce their poverty by taking this training and subsequently migrating overseas.

The research team found that participants came from Narayangonj, Munshigonj, Manikgonj, Gazipur, Kishoregonj, and Dhaka district. Although the training module is ideally residential, there was no dormitory or accommodation facility at this training centre. However, the participants were able to accommodate themselves in two large hall rooms where they had to sleep on the floor. They said they had cook for themselves. Still they seemed satisfied with such accommodation arrangement.

It was found that no class was conducted after the afternoon.

The research team managed to speak to the chief trainer, Mr. SudiptoBhokto, who joined this training centre in 2013 as a housekeeping trainer. He has already conducted training form 47 batches starting from the 47<sup>th</sup> batch. As the research team understood, he was very hardworking, sincere and disciplined that helped the participants to remain disciplined too.

However, throughout his trainer career Mr. Bhokto did not receive any kind of training on teaching methods or classroom moderation.

### **Tangail Technical Training Centre:**

The research team found a training batch that started on 29 June 2019 and thus it was supposed to continue till 28 July 2019. There were 10 participants only. The participants reported that the women from Tangail and surrounding districts had recently become reluctant to migrate overseas as domestic workers because of various misconceptions. They stated they had heard about harassment and assault in the Middle East. The research team asked them why they were so keen to complete the training and migrate overseas in spite of hearing about these. They replied that they did not believe these. One of the participants, Parul (29), reported that she had a relative in the Middle East who was staying there for two years and came to Bangladesh to spend one month-long vacation. Parul also thought that harassments were everywhere, even in Bangladesh, and thus she believed that she would be able to protect her dignity after going abroad. She was very optimistic that she would be able to change her life if she could work overseas for two years only.

Almost all the training participants had similar stories. The research team was able to speak to all of them. They reported that their relatives sent their visa. No one had any contact with middleman, as they claimed. Only one participant reported that she had to pay Tk 12,500 for getting her passport but after coming to the TTC she could know that the passport should not require such high fee to pay.

The training participants reported they learned about fundamentals of Arabic, use of some tools and machineries, etiquettes and cultural traditions of Arab countries.

The training participants also reported that they had training sessions from 8:00am to 11:00am only. Then they did not have anything to do for the rest of the day. However, they were respectful to government's guideline on the duration of the training i.e. one month. Although they were able to show their knowledge on why such long duration was made compulsory to them.

The research team interviewed Mr. Jahir Uddin, Senior Instructor and In-charge of Housekeeping Trade department. He was fluent in Arabic. He used to run the sessions on fridge and air condition and Hong Kong trade in addition to the housekeeping training. He reported that he had to allocate very little time for the housekeeping as he was the only person to conduct sessions on all the three trades. Although Mr. Jahir claimed that he had adequate experience and knowledge to train the participants within the little time allocated for the housekeeping training, he reported that he did not follow any specific guideline or curriculum in conducting the sessions on housekeeping. He also reported that he did not receive any copy of the Skill Training Module (STM) and hence he compiled a small manual by including some Arabic words and some selected materials from pre-departure training. He mentioned that he did not receive any kind of training throughout his career. As happened in case of Keranigonj TTC, the STM did not arrive at this TTC.

The TTC management authority did not know that the housekeeping training's regular class hours were from 8:00am to 11:00am. Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam, the Vice Principal of this TTC, reported that the housekeeping training sessions were supposed to start at 8:00am and continue till 2:00pm. However, he had no idea about why the sessions ended so early at 11:00am. He stated that a new trainer had joined the TTC for the housekeeping trade but he did not start his duty officially.

Lack of manpower at Tangail TTC affected the overall quality of the housekeeping training. However, the problem was persistent due to general scarcity of resources for the TTCs. As the Director (training) at BMET claimed, *"Lack of manpower is truly a serious problem for us. Trade-specific trainers are inadequate. Computer trade instructor trains housekeeping training programme. Housekeeping training is 100% government-funded. This training is not under a project. In only one TTC, there is one housekeeping trade specific trainer. But except this one, in all 70 TTCs, there is no housekeeping trade specific trainer. Housekeeping training and pre-departure training programmes are always in the top list of the TTCs and hence we are seriously thinking about this"*.

### **Bangladesh-Korea Technical Training Centre:**

The research team visited the Bangladesh-Korea TTC (BKTTTC) on 29 July 2019. It was found that the housekeeping training sessions were scheduled to start at 2:00pm, unlike other TTCs where the training sessions started at 8:00am. Starting from 2:00pm, the training sessions usually continue till 6:00pm.

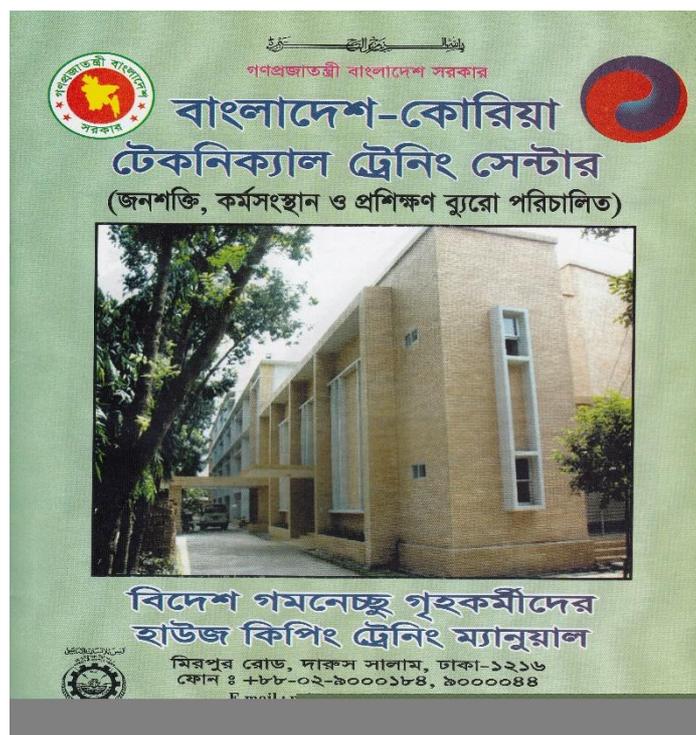


Figure 2: The cover page of the housekeeping training manual followed in BKTTC

No accommodation facility was available for the training participants and hence they had to stay in shared housing (mess) nearby the TTC. The trade in-change Ms. Shahida Khatun had 24 years of experience but did not receive Training of Trainer (ToT). However, another person in the same trade, Ms. Hamida Khatun, received this but she did not have solid background to conduct housekeeping training for the female domestic workers. As she outlined, *“I do not know Arabic properly. I have basic knowledge about 500 Arabic words only. I have not received any language training yet.”* Moreover, she could not utilise the knowledge and skills received from the ToT because the STM, like other TTCs, did not arrive here too. Ms. Shahida showed the research team a copy of housekeeping training manual (as shown above in figure 2) that she was following to conduct the sessions.

The Principal of this TTC compared his centre’s training module to that in Philippines and expressed his disappointment by saying, *“we start a course with so short notice that we do not get ample time to prepare ourselves and structure the training sessions properly”*.

The research team was able to interview few participants to understand their performance and learning progress. All of them were satisfied with the learning materials and teaching methods. A few were able to say the name of some basic things in Arabic. They claimed that they were

able to operate two-three household machines (i.e. vacuum cleaner, iron and washing machine) for doing household tasks. One of the participants expressed her disappointment with her accommodation in mess. She reported that meals that were served to her were not delicious to eat. Moreover, the mess was too congested, as she claimed, to accommodate 10 participants in a room. However, she thought every training would be difficult and hence she should try to adapt to the problems so that she could get the best outcome.

### **Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women Technical Training Centre:**

The research team went to visit this TTC on a Monday when the housekeeping trade was closed. The trade in-charge, Ms. Shahnaz Parvin, was on leave. The Principal of this TTC referred the research team to her and confirmed that no one from her TTC participated in the ToT that held at BKTTC in 2018.

Later the research team managed to visit the training participants and interview some of them in detail. Their overall performance was found satisfactory. Many of them were able to learn Arabic quickly and thus practise with other participants. Two participants reported that, although one of the main objectives of the housekeeping training was to help them adopt a routine habit of taking meals that are similar to Middle Eastern foods, they struggled to do that. As one training participant reported, she had always had rice since her childhood and hence she could not think her life without having rice at least once a day and therefore she had never tried to have bread thrice a day.

Moreover, one participant expressed homesickness. As she reported, Dhaka was a busy city and everything was very expensive. She could not talk to her family for last two days as she did not have money to recharge her mobile phone account and ring her family.

### **Analysis**

Based on the field findings explained above, the following sections present analysis of the findings and their specific relevance to female domestic workers' safe migration.

### **Skill training module yet to arrive at TTCs**

All the four TTCs reported that the Skill Training Module (STM) for the female migrant domestic workers did not arrive to them and hence they had no idea about the teaching and

learning guidelines given in the module. As explained in *section 3.2* and *3.3* above, the instructors followed either an old housekeeping training manual or compiled a manual by themselves. This was identified as a major challenge to successful and effective operationalisation of housekeeping training for the female migrant domestic workers. Two instructors reported that they might have seen a copy of the STM somewhere before but did not get a chance to read or follow it. Review of records on distribution of the training manuals at TTCs showed that the copies of STM had not arrived at TTC and hence it had never been followed in the classroom. To fill this gap, a strong mechanism to oversee the distribution of the STM would be necessary, as training-related persons suggested. In particular, a thorough review of the official distribution process should be necessary where the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) could intervene for ensuring that adequate copies of the STM are available at all TTCs.

### **Lack of coherent practices**

The TTCs inspected for this study showed lack of coherent practices in terms of class time, resource management and instructors' capacity. For example, Tangail TTC and Keranigonj TTC started their training session in the morning, BKTTC started in the afternoon. Moreover, in terms of duration of the training session, TTCs did not demonstrate uniformity. While BKTTC conducted the training session for four hours, Tangail TTC conducted the session for three hours. In addition to these, workloads of the trainers were different from one TTC to another. For example, the trainer at Tangail TTC had to conduct all three trades together and thus he was under pressure to manage time effectively for the housekeeping training. Such incoherent practices demand for immediate intervention to review the trainers' workloads and thus ensure that they are allocating adequate time for the housekeeping training. Lack of manpower was a serious problem for all the TTCs that prevented them from conducting the housekeeping training efficiently.

### **Unavailability of residential facility**

Although Keranigonj TTC had an imperfect residential arrangement for the housekeeping training participants, other TTCs did not have such facility. As a result, the participants had to stay in a rented mess which was costly. Also, such accommodation had safety and health-related concerns. Although the purpose of the STM was to deliver a full residential training for the aspirant female migrant workers, the TTCs could not ensure residential facility for the

participants. Lack of residential facility at TTCs created opportunity for a third party, such as middleman or *dalal*, to take advantage and thus it led to many other obstacles towards safe migration of the female workers. The role of middlemen or *dalals* is discussed below which could be related to this.

### **Adaptability of the participants**

The STM emphasised on increasing the participants' psychological and physical adaptability to the food habitat destination countries (see page 11 of the STM). However, some participants were found unwilling to change their food habit and adapt to Middle Eastern foods such as handmade bread. They did not start changing their food habit and hence they could experience food-related concerns after migrating to the Middle East.

### **No training for the trainers**

In all the four TTCs studied for this research, the trainers of housekeeping training did not receive any kind of capacity building training on participatory teaching and learning (PTL) or adult teaching principles. Therefore, they did not follow any participatory methods in teaching. As a result, the housekeeping training was conducted by following conventional teaching methods that did not provide any effective learning outcomes. None of the three trainers responsible for training the housekeeping trade at Keranigonj TTC, Tangail TTC, and Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Women TTC received trainers' training (ToT). Although a trainer from Bangladesh-Korea TTC received such training, she could not implement STM on housekeeping training as the module did not arrive at her TTC.

### **Role of middleman in TTCs**

While visiting the BKTTTC, the research team identified some middlemen or *dalals* across the TTC who were waiting here and there in a very scattered way. The trainers of BKTTTC reported that since there was no residential facility available at the TTC, the training participants are required to organise their accommodation by themselves. Thus, they stay in a mess or rented housing nearby the TTC. Often these messes or rented housing facilities are owned or run by the middlemen. It was also reported that sometimes recruiting agents hired a mess for accommodating the training participants that were sent by them.

The role of middlemen or *dalals* is quite prevalent in the TTCs, particularly in BKTTC. As one instructor from BKTTC stated, *“dalals wait outside the TTC. When a woman comes here to enquire about our training programme, from the very beginning the dalals start targeting them by offering assistance. Thus the dalals try to start building business relations with them on the spot.”* In order to investigate this statement further, the research team interviewed two middlemen or *dalals* roaming around the TTC. They reported that they were working on behalf of their recruiting agents who paid them monthly salary (i.e. Tk 8,000) and some additional “pocket money”. They also reported that they helped the newcomer women to complete medical test, admission, accommodation etc. both in the TTC and outside. The instructor reported that she had always seen some middlemen or *dalals* on Saturdays when the selection committee conducted interviews.

The role of middlemen or *dalals* is also evident during the pre-departure training. As one middleman or *dalal* reported, *“I run a mess near this TTC. When someone comes here to complete pre-departure training from various districts, I ask them if they would need accommodation. If yes, I take them to my mess. Usually they pay me Tk. 1500 for three days.”* While the research team asked him about how he runs the mess, he replied, *“I get women through the recruiting agents only. I live in a two-bedroom apartment. My family uses one bedroom. The other one has been turned into a mess where 10-12 persons can sleep. I get Tk 5,000 per person for 30 days. However, the recruiting agents pay me this money, not the women.... When someone falls sick, I call the recruiting agent or its nominated person first. If needed, I pay all the medical bills and then the recruiting agents pay me later.”*

The Deputy Director of BMET (training) emphasised on removing the middlemen’s existence in the participant selection process. As he put, *“we are sending women to the Middle East as housekeepers. But the problem is intermediary and their role in the entire selection process. The intermediaries select them and bring them to BMET.... Throughout the selection process, the middlemen have significant role.... Now we are thinking if we could improve the housekeeping training to reduce malpractices and problems associated to female migration.”*

### **Challenges in dealing with fake identity documents for enrolment**

The admission officers and trainers at TTCs reported use of fake identity documents in case of enrolment in housekeeping training. For example, one aspirant woman has 25 years on passport. However, the real age is 12 to 15 years. When TTCs protest this malpractice, they

face various forms of pressures. There is a general allegation from the TTCs that the government agencies (i.e. police/passport office) are not taking these pressures that they are passing the problem to the TTCs. Thus, all the pressures go to the Principals of TTCs. As a result, the Principals are often accused of wrong selection. When a Principal declines to accept an underage participant, then the local political leaders put pressures on the Principal. Moreover, it was reported that sometimes the middlemen bring certification from one recruiting agent at the time of enrolment in training. However, at the time of sending overseas, the middlemen switch the women's recruiting agent. Thus, the original certification does not stay valid due to quick switch from one agent to another. Although such practices are not widespread, these create pressures on day to day functions of the TTC officials.

### **Educational qualification of the participants**

Interviews with the trainers reveal that Class III is the minimum requirement for selection of the participants for housekeeping training but this is absolutely low qualification. When the trainers want to impart language training, the participants face various problems in learning basic language skills. Therefore, it is necessary to look into the potential participants' educational qualifications and their capacity to take the best benefits of the training.

### **Challenges to safe female migration**

Above analysis of field findings suggest that the overarching purpose of the STM is yet to be fulfilled due to many constraints. While these challenges are closely interrelated, it may not be wise to separate them based on their significance. Rather these challenges together contribute to threats to safe migration for the female migrant domestic workers. Considering the scope and significance of female migration in Bangladesh, the above gaps could affect safe migration in many ways. Therefore, immediate intervention will be necessary to address these challenges.

### **Recommendations**

#### **The best practices**

In order to suggest changes, this study endeavoured to identify the best practices in pre-departure training, particularly in Asia. Theoretically the best practices are considered successful initiatives if they:

1. have a demonstrable effect and tangible impact on improving people's quality of life;
2. are the result of effective partnerships between the public, private, and civic sectors society;
3. are realistic to administer; and
4. are socially, culturally, economically and environmentally sustainable.

**The Philippines:** In the Philippines, pre-departure orientation is mandatory for all new hires and implementation is part of the documentation system for Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), the programme is institutionalised, giving government easy access to target workers and facilitating supervision of the programme's implementation. However, the Pre-Departure Orientation Seminar (PDOS) programme implements a registration system for its service providers upon compliance with certain requirements (venue, facilities, inclusion of an approved PDOS module and curriculum). Usually the trainers undergo the necessary training before content and skills can be accredited and are thus able to handle modules, in accordance with their expertise. Trainers from NGOs can also act as resource persons on topics within their domain, such as workers' rights, gender sensitivity, and HIV/AIDS. While all PDOS providers are required to provide a general PDOS module, there are different types of PDOS curricula which can be used according to the vulnerability and information requirements of a particular group of workers. Specific modules have been created for household workers, performing artists and entertainers, nurses and seafarers (skill-based modules) or for workers migrating to certain countries/regions with special information requirements, such as Hong Kong, Libya, the Middle East, South Korea, and Taiwan (country-specific modules).

The PDOS syllabus in the Philippines, has evolved over the years to the current curriculum through various consultative and developmental processes, including workshops/writeshops, FGDs, and periodic meetings and discussions with all sectors, to ensure that it addresses the changing needs of migrant workers. A general PDOS syllabus is used for skilled and semi-skilled workers, with different syllabi for skill- and country-specific training for workers who are considered vulnerable, such as household workers and entertainers. PDOS providers are required to follow a three-module syllabus to conduct the seminars. The coverage of contents in the Philippines is quite broad, ranging from skill-specific contents to general discussions on workers' rights and legal protection mechanisms in the countries of destination. Moreover, there are special provisions for vulnerable groups. While standard PDOS modules have been

imposed, there are different types of PDOS which can be conducted to provide specific information to vulnerable groups, such as household workers, overseas performing artists and entertainers, nurses, and seafarers (skill-based). There are also modules for certain destinations, including Taiwan, South Korea, Libya, the Middle East and Hong Kong. The Philippines has introduced a comprehensive monitoring and feedback system for measuring quality and identifying areas which need to be upgraded for its pre-departure orientation services.

**Sri Lanka:** In Sri Lanka, most pre-departure programmes offered to prospective migrant workers involve training and orientation. Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) provides licensed agencies with instructors to ensure that the training is conducted to a common standard. The agency is expected to maintain the training centre and equip it in conformity with the requirements for practical training. Specific module on the expected role at the scene of the employment is particularly useful for the female migrant workers. The contents of the module cover a wide range of issues such as the “tips” on protecting themselves not only from “electric shocks” from household appliances, but also from the sexual demands of their employers and other men in the countries of destination. The training participants seriously remember their instructor’s anecdotes and many keep copious notes and seen carrying their exercise books at the airport, as reported in various earlier studies. Pre-departure training in Sri Lanka is based on a common curriculum, designed for domestic workers in the Middle East and non-Middle Eastern countries, with an additional nine days of English language classes. The course emphasises on improving worker efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace, as it is thought that inefficiency may lead to maltreatment. Counselling sessions focus on preparing the worker for leaving home and facing the realities of overseas employment, including adaptation to a new culture and to cultural conflicts that may arise. There is also training in food preparation and handling of appliances, which takes up more than one-third of the total training hours. Language learning represents a significant amount of training hours for the participants in the module for the Middle East.

In Sri Lanka, the SLBFE has many instructors recruited on a non-permanent basis and paid at an hourly rate. The instructors are migrant domestic workers who are required to have a minimum work experience of five years in the relevant country and GCE O Level qualifications. It has recruited English language instructors for non-Middle East training programmes. The SLBFE draws on the expertise of other institutions and consequently can provide resource persons from the two state banks, the Family Planning Association of Sri

Lanka and a private company which lectures on banking, health and electricity. Instructors are provided with training prior to their deployment and in-service training is also available. Although these persons are not professional trainers, their skills are upgraded continuously. Sri Lanka has introduced a skills development and national certification programme with training agencies to upgrade skills to meet overseas job requirements and to provide a common national certificate to those with the required skills. Certificates are awarded on satisfactory completion of the course and on the basis of assessors' assessment built on the National Competency Standards. According to Sri Lanka's National Competency Standards, a migrant working intending to work as a domestic housekeeping assistant is required to complete the following six units:

1. Perform cleaning of wall, ceilings and floors in domestic accommodation units (level 2);
2. Perform cleaning of furniture and furnishings in domestic accommodation units (level 2);
3. Carryout cleaning of bathrooms and toilets at domestic accommodation units (level 3);
4. Carryout laundry activities in domestic accommodation units (level 2);
5. Carryout activities related to preparing meals in domestic accommodation units (level 3);
6. Serve food and beverages in domestic accommodation units (level 2).

Each unit has specific competence requirements, and underpinning knowledge and skills. Sometimes a combination of continuous assessment and summative assessment is followed. The competencies covered in the unit should be demonstrated by the candidate working alone.

### **Policy suggestions**

The previous sections on the field findings and data analysis indicated some critical gaps and challenges in making the housekeeping training effective in order to ensure safe migration for Bangladesh's female migrant domestic workers in the Gulf and other Arab countries. The problems identified by this evaluation study are interlinked and hence an integrated action is necessary to address them. On the basis of the findings of this study, BMET could take following actions to minimise the problems in relation to the housekeeping training programme for the female migrant domestic workers:

1. To distribute ample copies of the STM to TTCs and ensure that each trainer has got two copies of the module;

2. To form a technical team of experts equipped on methods of participatory training who can thoroughly follow up the field-level administering of the housekeeping training programme;
3. Instead of administering the training in all the TTCs at a time, some specific TTCs could be selected so that the problems and weaknesses associated with the training could be identified first before providing training at all the TTCs;
4. An expert team of trainers could be formed and they should be provided fundamental ToT, subject-specific ToT and communication facilitation training to enhance their capacity;
5. Pilot testing in a few centres will help review and restructure the training programme before conducting the training in other centres;
6. Participant selection is an important factor that should be crosschecked thoroughly to ensure necessary background check and fitness for migration. Also, effective measures should be taken to tackle the certificate falsification practices as outlined in section 4.7 above;
7. Thorough monitoring should be ensured so that the middlemen or *dalals* do not have any predominant role in enrolment in training programme at TTCs;
8. To follow up the completion rate, all the training participants' class attendance should be registered and reviewed digitally.
9. To ensure quality outcome of the training, the participants should be assessed by following some standard assessment criteria, not by the duration. Thus the competition of housekeeping training should be determined by certain standard criterion, not by duration such as 30 days. For example, as in Sri Lanka, the performance of the participants should be assessed on the basis of some "competency standards" that will emphasise on:
  1. the training participants' ability to transfer and apply knowledge and skill to new situations and environments;
  2. achieving outcomes and application of knowledge and skills, not just specification of knowledge and skills;
  3. what the participants are able to do and the ability to do a task in a range of contexts;

4. all aspects of workplace performance and not only narrow task skills.

In assessing the training participants' competence, the assessors should ensure the participants can competently and consistently perform all elements of the unit as specified by the criteria and that she possesses the required underpinning knowledge.

5. At least one course coordinator cum trainer should be available full time for the housekeeping training module;

6. New sections on psychosocial stress management should be introduced in the module. While some sections on sexual harassment and abuse, worker rights and redressal mechanisms available to workers on-site are mentioned in the existing module, they should be effectively communicated to the training participants. For example, to enhance efficiency of discussions on these issues, more female trainers should be involved;

7. Some effective measures should be taken to habituate the training participants to the socio-cultural norms in the countries of destination. For example, the training participants should practise living in scorching hot weather, working in large houses, looking after pets etc.;

8. Like Sri Lanka, the competent returnee female migrants should be trained to become trainers. Also, they could be invited as guest trainers. Training from the returnee female migrants could help the training participants get trustworthy overview of the work environment and life style in the destination countries. However, cautionary measures should be taken to monitor their involvement in training programmes as interpretation and wrong information from the returnee female migrants may easily confuse the departing migrants; and

9. A monitoring team should be formed whose job will be only to evaluate the trainings provided by the trainers and continuously suggest change in conducting the training.

The above interventions could help the TTC Principals, trainers, training participants and other parties involved in the housekeeping training module administer the module effectively which could be very helpful for ensuring safe migration for female domestic migrant workers from Bangladesh.