

# POST COVID-19 JOBS AND SKILLS IN

# BANGLADESH





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### **Aspire to Innovate (a2i)**

ICT Tower, Agargaon,  
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207,  
Bangladesh

### **Research Team**

Asif Uddin Ahmed, Assistant Professor, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)  
Asad-Uz-Zaman, Policy Specialist, a2i  
Zubayer Zakir Khan, Adjunct Faculty, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

### **Creative Design & Illustration**

Easel Mortuza  
Zakia Sultana Anandi



**Cabinet  
Division**  
Government of the People's  
Republic of Bangladesh



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected public health and caused unprecedented disruptions to economies and labor markets. The seismic impact on global economy has led to massive job loss across various industries; with 60 million jobs at risk across EU and UK. A record 36 million Americans have filed for unemployment benefits since Mid-March, amounting to more than 20% of US economy.

Bangladesh's emerging economy has also suffered tremendous setback amidst the COVID-19 crisis. The economic turmoil spilled over to almost every sector; with some sectors facing more consequences than others. In order to understand and analyze the impact on various sectors in terms of jobs, skills and occupations; a2i commissioned a research titled "Post COVID-19 Jobs and Skills in Bangladesh".

The research identifies 11 high impact sectors where jobs have been lost and 5 emerging sectors where new jobs are being created. The 11 high-impact sectors where jobs have been lost are: informal sector and SME, transportation sector, construction sector, furniture sector, readymade goods and textile sector, leather goods and footwear sector, tourism and hospitality sector, light engineering sector, migration sector, real estate and housing sector and ceramic sector. It also identifies five emerging sectors: pharmaceuticals, ICT and e-commerce, health-care services, agro-food, and creative media. The research methodology included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and vetting workshops with relevant stakeholders which enabled the research team to assess the present situation regarding jobs, skills and occupation in 11 job loss sectors and 5 emerging sectors in the advent of COVID-19. Apart from consultation workshops, the research team conducted thorough review of all the available literature related to the topic.

The study projects that over 20.4 million workers are currently unemployed across 11 high impact sectors in Bangladesh. The study further forecasts that an additional 5.5 million workers will lose their jobs by the end of this year. It also projects that over 2.53 million people will lose their jobs in the coming year 2021. The immediate losers of this scenario are informal and SME sector, transportation sector and construction sector, with an estimated 18 million jobs being lost across these sectors. They represent 88% of the total job loss scenario. Meanwhile, tourism and hospitality sector emerges as the most impacted sector in the long-term with almost 2 million jobs estimated to be lost by 2021. The tourism sector is followed by informal sector & SME and construction sector. The study also identified several occupations at risk and pinpointed several emerging new occupations in each sector. For instance, occupations like wood seasoning technicians have emerged in furniture sector. Many industries have also started using automated machineries therefore, there is a huge demand for training workers in automation.

In emerging sectors like healthcare sector; there is a surge in demand for biomedical technicians and maintenance/operation technicians. In other emerging sectors like agro-food, ICT and e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, healthcare services and creative sector; there is high demand for occupations like essential goods farmers, PPE sewing operators, medical goods merchandiser, data engineer, cyber security specialist, and delivery man, freelancers (designers and content creators). The study projects that 0.78 million jobs will be created in 2020 and an additional 3.1 jobs will be created in 2021 across five sectors: pharmaceuticals, ICT and e-commerce, healthcare services, agro-food and creative media. The findings of the research also identify some occupations in job loss sectors which can be transferred to emerging jobs sector.

This paper will guide the policymakers to develop an action plan to shift unemployed workers from job loss sectors to emerging sectors. It will also support the relevant stakeholders to develop an eco-system for entrepreneurship. This research lays the foundation for more future research works on this topic; the research team welcomes further innovation, improvisation, analysis and feedback on the findings on the report.



# 1.0 BACKGROUND



In December, 2019; a new virus namely “Covid-19” emerged in Wuhan, China and in a time span of about 5 months it has managed to spread throughout the globe. The Coronavirus is shaking up businesses and consumer behavior on a massive scale; also creating a ripple effect on the job markets globally. Since the virus has emerged, over 3.5 million people were infected worldwide and the death toll has crossed 246,000 people throughout the globe as of 3rd May, 2020. While the world mourns grim milestones, another economic pandemic devised by the virus has created a huge impact on the global job market. While the full economic consequences of this black swan event are still unclear and the true extent is yet to be determined; it is certain that the crisis will claim millions of jobs worldwide. The crisis has already transformed into an economic and labor market shock, impacting both supply and demand. The disruptions to production which initially started in China have now spread across the globe as businesses are facing serious challenges. The impact is bigger on some industries like aviation, tourism and hospitality as they are facing the real threat of significant declines in revenues and insolvencies resulting in loss of jobs.

## 1.1 THE EVOLVING NATURE OF THE PANDEMIC AND THE EVOLVING NUMBERS

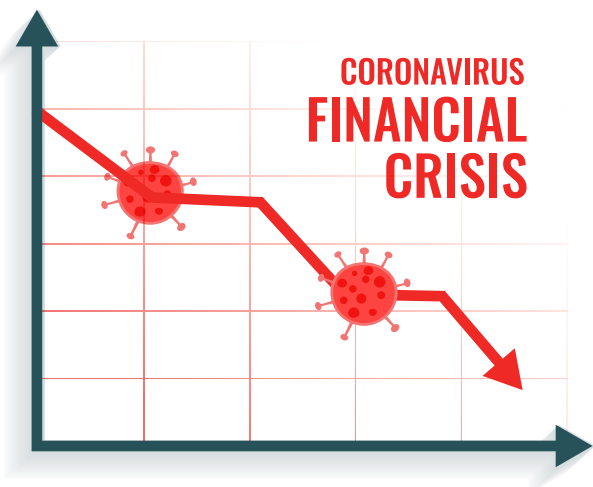
The COVID-19 pandemic presents the worst global crisis since the Second World War; severely affecting public health and causing unprecedented disruptions to economies and labour markets. According to ILO estimates, taking into account employers and self-employed workers, around 436 million enterprises in the hardest-hit sectors worldwide are currently facing high risks of serious disruption. [More than half of these, approximately 232 million are in wholesale and retail trade which is currently one of the most impacted sectors globally.](#) As of 21st April, 2020; UNTWO

estimated that the global international tourist arrivals could decline between 20-30 percent which could translate into a loss of US\$ 30 to 50 billion in spending by international visitors. According to latest estimates by [World Travel and Tourism Council \(WTTC\)](#), the [global Tourism and Hospitality industry faces threat of 100 million job losses due to the pandemic](#) and these numbers indicate the sheer crisis affecting this sector. They also mentioned that out of the 100.8 million jobs at risk, almost 75 million of them are in G20 countries and already the crisis has led to over one million jobs being lost every day in the sector. It is estimated



that over 50% SMEs globally will not survive the next few months of lockdown and this sector could lose between 850,000 to 1.6 million workers, depending on the length of the lockdowns. The small and medium sized enterprises make up 80% of the tourism sector and these businesses will be hit the hardest. This may in turn affect millions of livelihoods globally who depend on tourism as their main income source. Moreover, self- employed workers and small enterprises accounts for 70% employment in retail trade, 60% in accommodation and food services sector. The International Monetary Fund estimates global growth to fall to -3 percent in 2020, a downgrade of 6.3 percentage points from estimates in January 2020. Due to the evolving nature of the pandemic the global statistics also evolve as governments take measures to tackle the virus. According to the 2nd edition ILO Monitor Report, it was found that as of 1st April 2020, 81% of all workers lived in countries with recommended or required workplace closures. While the 3rd edition reveals the percentage has gone down to 68%; the drastic change in numbers is due to China opening up their workplaces. However, numbers may be misleading as the situation got far worse around the globe with 64 new countries closed down their workplaces since April 1. The ILO has urged countries to come up with urgent and significant policies to protect industries, particularly paying attention to vulnerable/marginal workers and small businesses, especially those operating in the informal economy.

Furthermore, the closed down workplaces had a severe impact on smaller enterprises and self- employed people as it leaves them at high risk of insolvency. Even after the lockdowns are lifted, these people and enterprises will face tremendous challenges as the recovery is expected to be slow.



Companies engaged in global supply chains will face disruptions in backward and forward linkage industries as other countries continue lockdown with reduced economic activities. Therefore, restarting businesses may require significant adjustments along with cost implications. Even after the lockdown, workplaces must pay utmost priority to hygiene, social distancing and ensuring a safe work environment. Moreover, without the cushion of effective policies; the new world of work and its new requirements will likely put a severe constraint on businesses.

<sup>1</sup> Worldometer (2020) COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (Accessed: 3rd May 2020).

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2020) SME Policy Responses, Available at: [https://oecd.dam-broadcast.com/pm\\_7379\\_119\\_119680-di6h3qgi4x.pdf](https://oecd.dam-broadcast.com/pm_7379_119_119680-di6h3qgi4x.pdf) (Accessed: 26th April 2020).

<sup>3</sup> UNWTO (2020) TOURISM AND COVID-19, Available at: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-covid-19> (Accessed: 21st April, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, International Labor Organization.

<sup>5</sup> Acosta, A., Evans, D. (2020) The Economic Impact of COVID-19 around the World: A Round-Up of the Most Recent Analysis, Available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/economic-impact-covid-19-around-world-round-most-recent-analysis#evans-growth-global> (Accessed: 6th May 2020).

<sup>6</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Second edition, International Labor Organization.

<sup>7</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, International Labor Organization.



2.0

**METHODOLOGY**

The research team has used a comprehensive approach and a holistic research methodology to develop this report. The research started off with an extensive desk research which explored various perspectives and reviewed different international publications, working papers, journals, newspaper articles, press releases, monitoring reports, policy papers and other related materials available online.

Once the desk research was completed, the research team had detailed discussions to develop an effective framework for collecting primary data for the research. After developing the research framework; the research team held multiple discussions to narrow down ten high impact sectors.



After selecting the sectors, various industry leaders and experts were carefully identified; who later shared their perspectives and knowledge through key informant interviews. During the virtual interviews, the participants reflected on the impact of the COVID-19 in their respective sectors.

They shared key information, figures and ideas; giving the research team a vantage point which paved way for exploring the implications in the job market of Bangladesh. The questionnaire of the research was shared with participants beforehand, in order to give them time to jot down the key points they want to explore. The audio recordings from the KIIs were verbatim transcribed.

Apart from KIIs, the research team also did a comprehensive study on 16 sectors in Bangladesh and identified both 'Job Loss' and 'Emerging' Jobs sectors. The research team also facilitated a vetting workshop with the key stakeholders of the 16 sectors.

After conducting the KIIs, the research team went on to analyze the information shared by the participants to draw perspectives and delve deeper into the topic in hand. Both primary and secondary findings were shared amongst the research team and thoroughly analyzed. In addition, the team held various consultations to identify gaps and incorporate feedback to finalize the report.



## 2.1 LIMITATIONS

• **Lack of previous literature and research studies on the topic:** The research had limited access to prior studies and data on the topic as the subject is new. Moreover, the researcher had to look through existing literature which is constantly being updated and new perspectives are drawn on a daily basis due to the evolving nature of the pandemic. The researcher had to use an “on-the-go” learning approach and changed his analysis as data emerged in real time. Although access to previous data was limited; the research was built on theoretical foundations gained through monitoring and using the constantly updated information of the pandemic’s impact on the global job market.



• **Scope of discussion:** The scope and depth of the discussions were compromised as the data available on the topic is either limited or constantly evolving. Therefore, the research has drawn perceptions which may undermine or overestimate the future implications discussed in the report. The numbers and perspectives were reflective of the information available during the time of research but may be subject to change anytime given the unpredictability of the pandemic.

• **The changing nature of the pandemic and the evolving numbers:** Over the timeframe of the research, from the starting of secondary data analysis to submission of final report; the data and available information has changed tremendously. Therefore, the researcher had to revise the secondary data constantly to ensure updated numbers and perspectives are shared. The researcher has updated the information as much as possible in an attempt to represent the most recent scenario and possible future implications.

• **Reliance on primary data gathered from inputs of industry experts:** In order to analyze the impact of COVID-19 in Bangladesh and represent the economic turmoil leading to job losses in various industries; the researcher primarily relied on information given by industry experts. Moreover, updated figures on the unemployment of every industry was not always accessible online; therefore, data and information shared by industry experts and associations were given priority.

• **Time Constraints:** Due to time constraints, some of areas of the research which could have been explored further was restricted. Therefore, there is space to carry out further investigations on the topic in the near future.



## 2.2

# PROVISION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH



Understanding the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on the global and local job market has thus far proven challenging, as the current data is constantly changing, lacks consistency and there is sheer absence of research conducted on the topic. It is therefore of utmost priority and critical to constantly study the contemporary updated reports and emerging information as it creates significant impacts to the topic.



There is scope to conduct further research and to use this report as a starting point for creating a living document which can be changed through revisions that may or may not reference previous iterative changes.

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a silver pen, pointing at a world map on a document. The map is color-coded with blue and red regions. The document is titled "GLOBAL BUSINESS MARKET" in bold, black, uppercase letters. A semi-transparent red rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "3.0 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE" in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background is blurred, showing a desk and other documents.

# **3.0 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**



The following table is adapted from ILO 3rd Monitor Report; the figures for employers and own account workers are based on national house survey data from 114 countries. Moreover, own- account workers refer to workers who are self-employed. Based on real-time economic and financial data, the hardest-hit sectors identified were accommodation and food services, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, and real estate and business activities. The analysis shares a sectoral distribution of enterprises and takes into consideration employment status (employers and own-account workers). Approximately 47 million employers, representing some 54 per cent of all employers worldwide, operate businesses in the hardest-hit sectors, namely manufacturing, accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, and real estate and business activities. An additional 389 million own-account workers are engaged in these four sectors. Taking together employers and own-account workers, some 436 million enterprises worldwide are operating and working in the hardest-hit sectors.



## Impact of the Crisis on Enterprises (employers and own-account workers) in Hardest-Hit Sectors

| Economic Sector                                     | Impact of Crisis on Economic Output | Employers (Millions) | Own Account Workers (Millions) |
|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Whole and Retail Trade                              | High                                | 21                   | 211                            |
| Manufacturing                                       | High                                | 12                   | 99                             |
| Accommodation-Food Services                         | High                                | 7                    | 44                             |
| Real Estate; Business and Administrative Activities | High                                | 7                    | 35                             |
| Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Other Services  | Medium-High                         | 4                    | 57                             |
| Transport, Storage and Communication                | Medium-High                         | 4                    | 76                             |
| Construction  | Medium                              | 9                    | 103                            |
| Financial and Insurance Services                    | Medium                              | 1                    | 3                              |
| Agro, Forestry, Fishing                             | Low-Medium                          | 19                   | 470                            |
| Health and Social Work                              | Low                                 | 2                    | 11                             |
| Education   | Low                                 | 1                    | 7                              |
| Utilities   | Low                                 | <1                   | 3                              |
| Public Administration                               | Low                                 | <1                   | 0                              |

<sup>8</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, International Labor Organization





Fig: The Potential Winners & Losers In The Short Term

## 3.1 A NUMBERS PERSPECTIVE OF THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY AND JOB MARKET: EUROPE

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated the outbreak could eradicate almost 25 million jobs worldwide; as the pandemic forces hundreds of millions of people to remain indoors, shuttering the global economy. Currently (as of April 21), 81% of employers and 66 per cent of self-employed people live and work in countries affected by recommended or required workplace closures, with severe impacts on incomes and jobs. According to the ILO nowcasting model, global working hours declined in the first quarter of 2020 by an estimated 4.5 per cent (equivalent to approximately 130 million full-time jobs, assuming a 48-hour working week), compared to the pre-crisis situation (fourth quarter of 2019). Global working hours in the second quarter are expected to be 10.5 per cent lower than in the last pre-crisis quarter. This is equivalent to 305 million full-time jobs, which represents a significant deterioration on ILO's previous estimate of 195 million for the second quarter. The ILO also pointed out that there will be significant rise in underemployment causing income losses for workers. Moreover, ILO estimates a loss of \$3.4 trillion loss for workers, as the economic impact of the virus translates into reductions in working hours and wages. According to

study conducted by McKinsey, nearly 60 million jobs across EU and United Kingdom are at risk from the coronavirus pandemic. The report published assumes that the EU unemployment rate could soar from around 6% to 11% and remain elevated for years if the disease is not quickly contained. McKinsey estimates that one in four jobs across the European Union and the United Kingdom are at risk of a reduction in hours or pay, temporary furloughs or permanent layoffs. Professions that do not require close contact with others, including accountants and architects, are considered low risk, along with those that provide essential services such as police. Sectors like tourism and hospitality, SMEs, informal sector, RMG, aviation and maritime, construction and real estate and manufacturing have been devastated by the economic turmoil of the pandemic. Millions of people have lost their jobs across various sectors and the eventual job loss will depend on factors like how well the economy fares in second half of 2020, the evolvement of the pandemic and the effectiveness of the policy measures to preserve jobs and boost labour demand in the recovery phase. The construction industry in Europe including UK also got affected by the pandemic as multiple projects worth billions of dollars came to a halt. As construction sites in the UK remain closed; builders have lost their jobs on a frightening scale. The UK construction sector employs 2.4 million workers and contributes approximately 6% to the overall economic output. Another study on the construction industry in the UK revealed that the industry has dropped 39.3 in March. The construction sector in Scotland is also set to contract 40-50% amid lockdowns;

#### Countries in EUROPE



as both government and private construction of infrastructure and repair work is halted. Some 55 million workers are employed in high risk professions, including retail cashiers, cooks, construction workers, hotel staff and actors. At this rate, if Europe fails to contain the virus within 3 months and is forced to continue social distancing throughout the summer, the EU unemployment rate will peak at 11.2% in 2021 with a full recovery unlikely until 2024. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has estimated that the number of unemployed people has increased by at least 4 million across EU with more 7 million workers on short-time work schemes. Among the sectors most exposed to the economic fallout of the COVID-19 crisis, ILO identifies arts and entertainment, transport, accommodation and food, real estate or wholesale and retail trade. While there is an existing view in the UK, that youth employment prospects are

crumbling as opined by Gerwyn Davies, Senior Labour Market Adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. The estimate look rather grim for Europe, with many as a quarter of all jobs could be impacted by the economic fallout of the pandemic. The main risks associated with jobs include temporary furloughs, reduced working hours and permanent job losses. *The most visible impact will be in areas like customer service and sales, food services and building occupations.* The study suggested that government could incentivize redeploying workers to critical sectors – for instance, food retailers could temporarily employ restaurant staff. In the UK and the rest of Europe, government has stepped up efforts to redeploy government employees in critical roles. In Tameside, Greater Manchester, ground maintenance staff are now working in waste management while library staff are working in call centers.

<sup>9</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, International Labor Organization.

<sup>10</sup> Pandey, A. (2020) Coronavirus sledgehammers global job markets, Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-sledgehammers-global-job-markets/a-52905245>

<sup>11</sup> (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

<sup>12</sup> Romei, V. (2020) Coronavirus pandemic deals heavy blow to UK construction activity, Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/3c27d23e-be-fe-4a53-be52-325adacdb929> (Accessed: 24th April).

BBC News (2020) Coronavirus in Scotland: Warning over economic impact of lockdown, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-52209269> (Accessed: 23rd April).

<sup>13</sup> CNN Business, Riley, C. (2020) 60 million Europeans could suffer furloughs, layoffs or wage cuts, Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/19/business/europe-jobs-coronavirus-mckinsey/index.html> (Accessed: 20th April, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> Rios, B. (2020) ILO warns of 'devastating' consequences of COVID-19 on labour markets, Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/ilo-warns-of-devastating-consequences-of-covid-19-on-labour-markets/> (Accessed: 20th April, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> The Guardian, Jolly, J. (2020) 'UK youth employment prospects crumbling' in coronavirus crisis, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/apr/20/uk-youth-employment-prospects-crumbling-in-coronavirus-crisis> (Accessed: 19th April, 2020).

<sup>16</sup> Brenton, H. (2020) Quarter of Europe's jobs at risk from coronavirus crisis, Available at: <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/04/19/quarter-of-europes-jobs-at-risk-from-coronavirus-crisis-195465> (Accessed: 20th April, 2020).

## 3.2 A NUMBERS PERSPECTIVE OF THE IMPACT ON THE IMPACT OF ECONOMY AND JOB MARKET: USA

The USA has been the hardest hit country by the coronavirus pandemic. The country has a mammoth death toll of over 68,000 as of 3rd May, 2020. Moreover, the lockdown in USA to curtail the spread of the disease has hammered the economy; shuttering businesses and sending unemployment skyrocketing. Furthermore, many industries across USA have been severely affected leading to layoffs, furloughs and reduced working hours for employees as companies fight to survive this crisis. A record 29 million American have filed for jobless benefits since Mid-March which amounts to more than 15% of the US economy. It is predicted that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country will contract by nearly 40% annual rate in the second quarter of 2020; with unemployment expected to hit 16% by the third quarter. The government has said that the crisis will unfold into next year as well; as unemployment rates may remain as high as 10%. Moreover, to tackle the job crisis, the US congress has approved \$3 trillion in coronavirus relief to support laid off workers; further expanding unemployment benefits and increased payments among other measures. Moreover, the enormous magnitude of unemployment



has strained the US economy and plunged it into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Furthermore, every major industry has been affected and has absorbed severe layoffs. Economists estimate that hotels and restaurants have laid off 4 million workers which is nearly one-third of all employees in that industry. The layoffs had a huge impact on the front-line service occupations, disproportionately hitting minority and lower-income workers who have little or no financial cushions.

<sup>17</sup> BBC News (2020) Coronavirus: Thousands of council staff moved to the frontline, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-52067981> (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

<sup>18</sup> Worldometer (2020) COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, Available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/> (Accessed: 3rd May, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Al Jazeera (2020) US unemployment could surge to 16 percent on coronavirus, Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/ajimpact/unemployment-surge-16-percent-coronavirus-200427054725855.html> (Accessed: 27th April, 2020).

<sup>20</sup> Rugaber, C. (2020) Coronavirus pushes US unemployment to highest since Great Depression, Available at: <https://abc7news.com/finance/coronavirus-pushes-us-unemployment-to-highest-since-depression/6124230/> (Accessed: 27th April, 2020).

### 3.3 A NUMBERS PERSPECTIVE OF THE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY AND JOB MARKET: SOUTHEAST ASIA



The COVID-19 crisis is expected to wipe out 6.7 percent of working hours globally in the second quarter of 2020 which is equivalent to 195 million full-time workers. Moreover, Asia and the Pacific will be one of the hardest hit regions with 7.2 percent reduction of working hours which is equivalent to 125 million full-time workers. The most vulnerable sectors include accommodation and food services, manufacturing, retail, administrative and business activities. According to reports from ADB, China's transport sector could shrink 6.53 percent as global travel restrictions continue causing job loss of hundred thousands of employees. The employment in hotel and restaurant sector in China could

dip by 6.25 percent. Moreover, countries like Cambodia, Maldives and Thailand are tourism-dependent economies and their economies will be severely affected. Thailand could lose more than 1.8 million as hotel and restaurant and transportation sectors suffer. Moreover, Cambodia which has historical sites drawing millions of tourists each year, may see 400,000 losing their jobs with most of them in travel and hotel sector. Also, countries like Maldives could see 22,000 people lose their jobs. Countries like Malaysia and Singapore have bolstered their economies are rolling out financial stimulus package to deal with the likely impact on the economy. According to UNWTO, the most affected area is the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, they estimate that international tourists in this region will decrease by 9-12 percent in 2020. South-east Asia which is a tourist hotspot has been the hardest hit. Bangladesh's Tourism and Hospitality sector is estimated to lose BDT 97.5 billion from February to June, 2020. In Thailand, a country which derives 14% of its GDP from tourists' receipts; the tourism sector has come to a standstill leaving at least 1 million unemployed.

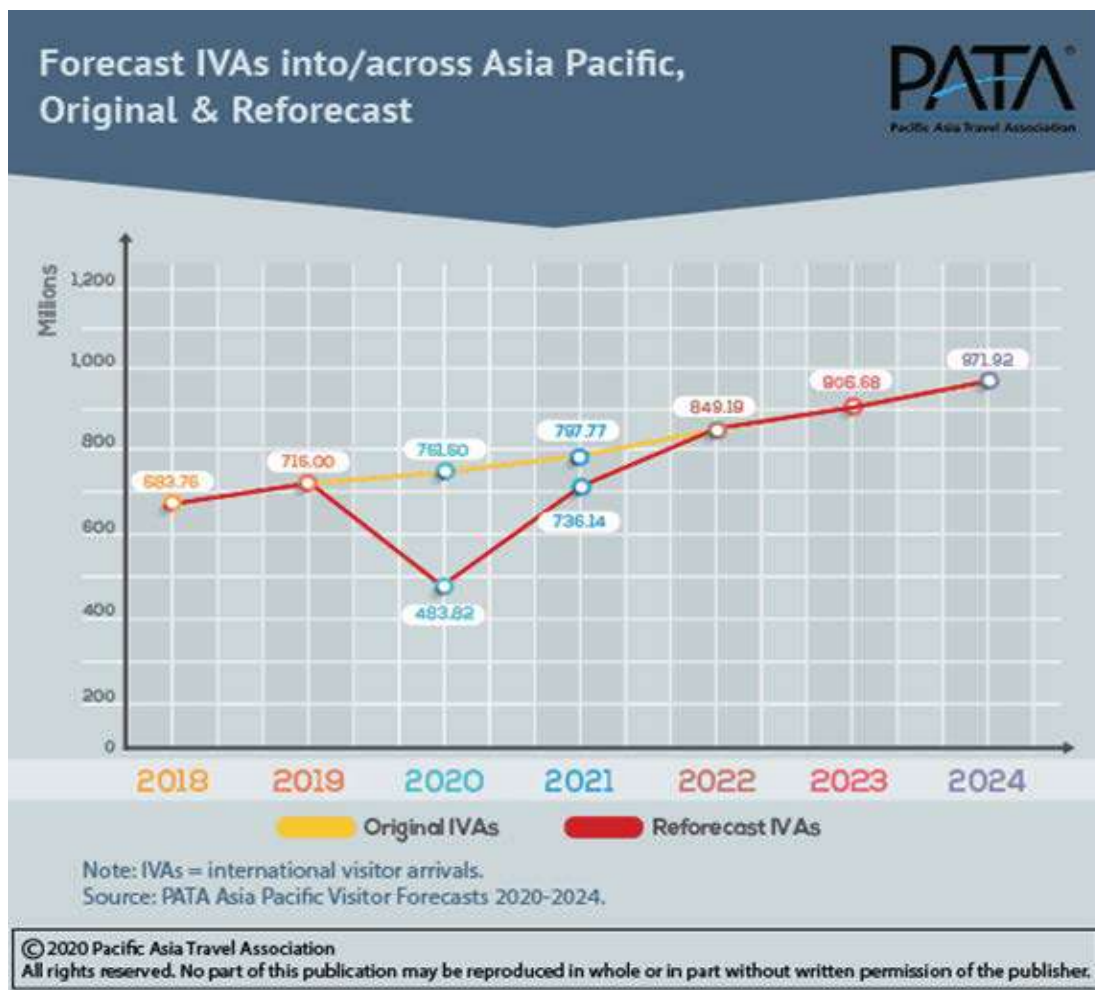
<sup>21</sup> ILO Press Release (2020) ILO: COVID-19 causes devastating losses in working hours and employment, Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_740893/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_740893/lang--en/index.htm) (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Alcosoba, H. (2020) ADB: Asia stands to lose 68 million jobs if coronavirus is not contained in six months, Available at: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/adb-asia-stands-to-lose-68-million-jobs-if-coronavirus-is-not-contained-in-six-months/> (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

<sup>23</sup> The Daily Ittefaq (2020) Corona Eclipse and Our Tourism, Available at: <https://www.ittefaq.com.bd/print-edition/opinion/146317> (Accessed: 24th April 2020)

<sup>24</sup> Pholsena, X. (2020) Thailand Tourism Looks to China to Start Down Path for Pandemic Rebound, Available at: <https://skift.com/2020/04/24/thailand-tourism-looks-to-china-to-start-down-path-for-pandemic-rebound/> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).





**Fig: Forecast IVAs into/across Asia Pacific – Original & Reforecast**

The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are expected to be most severe in the Tourism and Hospitality sector of Asia, especially Northeast Asia, which is now predicted to lose almost 51% of its visitor volume between 2019 and 2020 (most likely scenario), followed by South Asia with a reduction of 31%, and then Southeast Asia with a 22% drop in visitor arrivals. West Asia is projected to lose almost six percent in visitor arrivals, followed by the Pacific with a projected contraction of 18%, and the Americas with a loss of a little under 12%.

<sup>25</sup> PATA Bangladesh Press Release (2020) PATA: Asia Pacific Visitor Numbers Likely to Reduce by 32% in 2020, but return in 2021, Available at: <https://www.pata.org/pata-asia-pacific-visitor-numbers-likely-to-reduce-by-32-in-2020-but-return-in-2021/> (Accessed: 1st May 2020).



### 3.3.1 A NUMBERS PERSPECTIVE: SOUTH ASIA

As per United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), countries like India have suffered severe impact to their economy due to production slowdown in China causing a trade impact of \$348 million (as of March 6, 2020) out of which textiles accounted for \$64 million. In Bangladesh, 1 million garment workers already lost their jobs or have been furloughed due to order cancellations and the failure of buyers to pay for cancelled shipments. The BGMEA (Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association) reported that \$1.8 billion orders have been put on hold and \$1.4 billion orders have been cancelled. According to World Bank projections, Bangladesh's GDP growth will decelerate by 3 percent in FY20 and poverty will increase substantially in absence of mitigation measures.

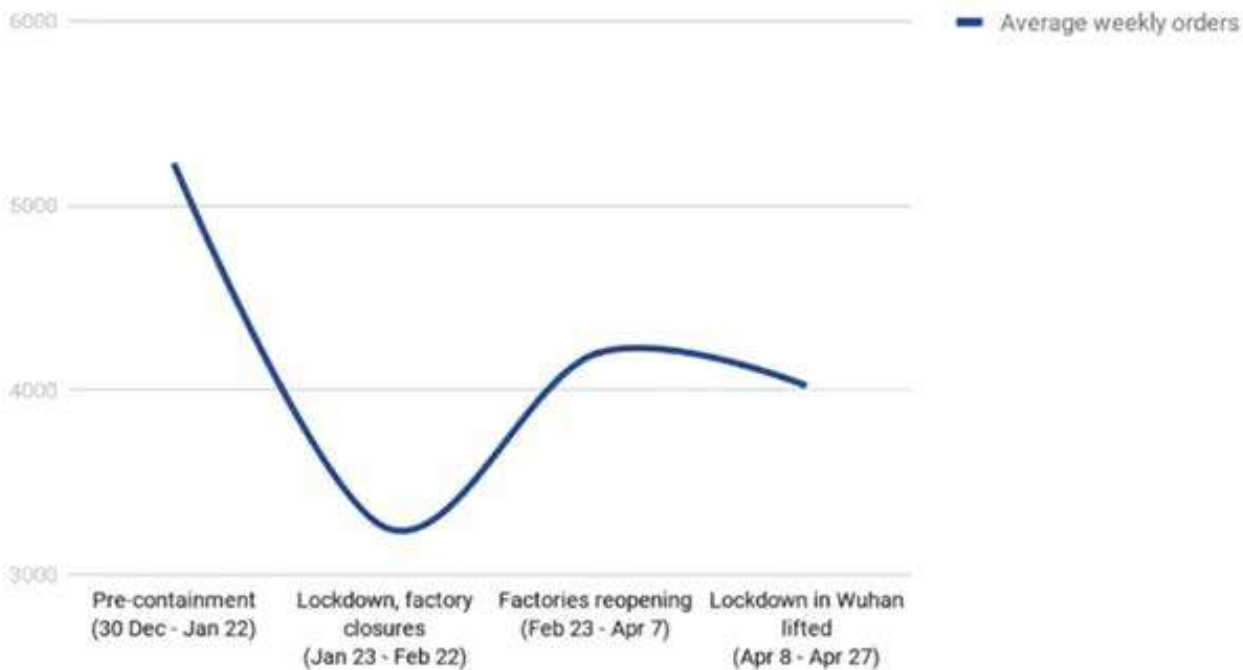
The decline in GDP would be the result of businesses incurring losses and millions losing their jobs or having to work reduced hours. The government has recently allowed RMG & Textile to resume operations in a small scale; which has lifted hundred thousands of workers out of poverty. The factories will be following government guidelines of social distancing and will have hygiene as their utmost priority. But it remains to be seen, how much trade activities surge after resuming the factories and whether the opening of factories move will create an impact in the numbers of coronavirus cases.

<sup>26</sup> Fibre2Fashion (2020) Indian textile industry post COVID-19 outbreak: An analysis, Available at: <https://www.fibre2fashion.com/industry-article/8653/indian-textile-industry-post-covid-19-outbreak-an-analysis> (Accessed: 4th May 2020).

<sup>27</sup> Alam, J. (2020) Bangladesh Garment Makers Say \$3 Billion in Orders Lost Due to Coronavirus, Available at: <https://time.com/5812406/bangladesh-garment-manufacturing-coronavirus-losses/> (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

<sup>28</sup> "World Bank. 2020. South Asia Economic Focus, Spring 2020 : The Cursed Blessing of Public Banks. Washington, DC: World Bank. © World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33478> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO."

Average weekly order volume, domestic and international - China



Source: Tradeshift

Fig: Forecast IVAs into/across Asia Pacific – Original & Reforecast

In recent weeks China's reopened its economy and trade activities surged briefly after factories resumed. But that surge is beginning to stagnate as many of its trading partners still remain in lockdown. As orders are flat lining in the US and other key trade partners, the World Economic Forum opines; it is doubtful whether the reputed "Factory of the World" China can orchestrate a recovery purely on its own terms. The graph below reflects on the situation.

ILO has formed an international working group, in an effort to bring garments industries, worker organizations, leading brands, retailers, governments and financial institutions under one platform, asking them to commit emergency funds and social protection for workers to guarantee industry survival in developing countries. The movement is an effort to save millions of jobs, tackle the economic disruption and threat to livelihoods caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to mobilize sufficient funding to enable manufacturers to ensure business continuity, payment of wages, job retention schemes to protect garments worker's income, health and employment. This initiative can lessen the human and economic devastation of the collapse of the industry and its supply chain; saving millions from getting thrown back into poverty due to unemployment.



Another sector which has been devastated by the COVID-19 outbreak is the informal sector which employs more than 2 billion people globally; with most of them working in emerging and developing economies. The informal sector includes wage labourers, rickshaw pullers, street vendors, construction workers, transport workers, domestic workers and anybody who lacks formal job agreement coverage. In South Asia, the informal economy is made up of approximately 80 to 90 percent of the labour force. According to Labour Force Survey, 87% of the labour force in Bangladesh is employed in the informal sector. In India, with a share of almost 90 percent of people working in the informal economy, about 400 million workers in the informal economy are at risk of falling deeper into poverty during the crisis. More than 94% of India's female population work in the informal sector and this lockdown has badly hurt their livelihoods. It is estimated that in Bangladesh, around 20 million people are temporarily jobless in the informal sector as the pandemic is tearing apart the economy. Among the most vulnerable in the labour market, almost 1.6 billion informal economy workers are significantly impacted by lockdown measures and/or working in the hardest-hit sectors. The first month of crisis is estimated to result in a decline in earnings of informal workers of 60 per cent globally. As of 22 April 2020, close to 1.1 billion informal economy workers live and work in countries in full lockdown, and an additional 304 million in countries in partial lockdown.

<sup>30</sup> ILO Press Release (2020) ILO welcomes joint action to tackle COVID-19 threats to global garment industry, Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_742446/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_742446/lang-en/index.htm) (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

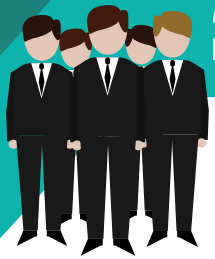
<sup>31</sup> In South Asia, the informal economy is made up of approximately 80 to 90 percent of the labour force. According to Labour Force Survey, 87% of the labour force in Bangladesh is employed in the informal sector.

<sup>32</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Second edition, International Labor Organization.

<sup>33</sup> Ayres, A. (2020) India: Fighting Coronavirus in an Informal Economy, Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/india-fighting-coronavirus-informal-economy> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

<sup>34</sup> The Independent (2020) Corona fallout spells disaster for millions of poor Bangladeshis: Economists, Available at: <http://m.theindependentbd.com/post/243332> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

<sup>35</sup> ILO (2020) ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Third edition, International Labor Organization.



## 3.4 CORONAVIRUS RIPPLE EFFECT: WHICH JOBS WILL STAY & WHICH ONES WILL FADE AWAY?

The COVID-19 outbreak is showing no signs of slowing down; and by every measure the global job market looks grim with many non-essential businesses closed and millions of workers getting laid-off or furloughed. Although there are many industries that will be severely harmed, there are many sectors which will benefit from this tragedy. Moreover, online companies, healthcare providers, supermarket chains, pharmaceutical companies, technology companies and services will make huge profits as the world prepares to transition into a new virtual reality. For instance, Amazon is hiring 10,000 workers due to overwhelming demand. Meanwhile, department stores, malls, retailers will incur losses in business and shed jobs to survive. Other sectors where jobs will be savagely cut includes garments and manufacturing industries, tourism and hospitality. Unemployment rates across Asia-Pacific could rise by well over 3 percentage points, twice as large as the average recession, as social distancing measures strike at the heart of the engine of job creation across Asia-Pacific – the service sector. Out of every 100 workers in Asia-Pacific, 55 on average work in services, of which 22 work in wholesale and retail trade or hospitality. This compares to just 14 workers in the entire industrial sector.



On the other hand, companies like Google, Apple, Microsoft, Netflix and other giant tech companies are hiring.

Their prominent online presence and non-reliance on physical locations enable them to stay open for business while their competitors are essentially closed. Grocery and pharmacy chains, pizza deliveries and in-store shoppers are also hiring. Walmart has announced they will hire 150,000 new workers while 7-Eleven will hire 20,000 people to address growing demand due to the coronavirus. As these companies hire employees, it will soak up the unemployment rate and ease the strain on the economy to some extent. Moreover, people who have lost shops at shopping malls, airlines, hotels and restaurants can be redeployed in these sectors.

<sup>36</sup> Kelly, Jack. (2020) The Coronavirus Effect: Here Are The Jobs That Will Be Added And Lost, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly-/2020/03/19/the-coronavirus-effect-here-are-the-jobs-that-will-be-added-and-lost/#3da50e002a1c> (Accessed: 21st April 2020).

<sup>37</sup> Roache, S. (2020) Economic Research: Jobs And The Climb Back From COVID-19, Available at: <https://www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/200420-economic-research-jobs-and-the-climb-back-from-covid-19-11437871> (Accessed: 21st April 2020).

<sup>38</sup> Long, H. (Kelly, J.) Thousands Of New Jobs Are Being Created In Response To The Coronavirus, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackkelly-/2020/03/27/thousands-of-new-jobs-are-being-created-in-response-to-the-coronavirus/#451e53f3d3fc> (Accessed: 21st April 2020).

4.0



# BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE – SUMMARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND LABOUR TURMOIL OF COVID-19



Bangladesh's emerging economy has suffered tremendous setback amidst the COVID-19 crisis. The economic turmoil spilled over to almost every sector; with some sectors facing more serious implications. Sectors which have been hard hit include Informal Sector Tourism and Hospitality, RMG, Leather Goods and Footwear, Construction and SMEs.



The Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) has estimated that the overall tourism and hospitality sector of Bangladesh stands to lose BDT 97.5 billion from February to June, 2020 due to the pandemic. The amount was estimated considering turnover of different segments of the sector including airlines, hotels, motels, restaurants, travel agents, tour operators and transports involved in tourism. The study also estimated at least 300,000 people will lose their jobs in this sector. Furthermore, TOAB (Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh) which is made up of 700 tour operators of the country, has reported losses of BDT 1500 crores and estimated that more than 5000 people lost their jobs. Meanwhile, the RMG and textiles sector which accounts for 80% of the country's exports and makes Bangladesh the 2nd largest apparel manufacturer in the world; only second to China, was left devastated as orders worth of \$3.17 billion were cancelled. Moreover, in this thriving sector more than half of the country's nearly 4.1 million garment workers were furloughed or laid off. The Bangladesh government has already announced \$8.5 billion financial stimulus package which includes loans to help factory owners pay worker salaries



It is estimated that in Bangladesh, around 20 million people are temporarily jobless in the informal sector as the pandemic is tearing apart the economy. Rickshaw-pullers, transport workers, day-labourers, street-vendors, hawkers, the employees of hotels, restaurants and different shops, markets, construction workers and other informal workers are the worst victims of the halt in economic activity as they have lost their means to earn bread and butter. According to the Labour Force Survey-2017, around 60.8 million people were in various employment or engaged in economic activity while the informal employment was dominating as 85.1 percent of the employed population engaged in the country's informal employment. The contribution of informal jobs to urban areas was 13.1 million while 38.6 million in rural areas.

The economic impact of the outbreak in Bangladesh is also evident in the SME sector. Bangladesh currently has 7.81 million SMEs that employ 2.45 crore people along with 27 million who are self-employed like hawkers, street vendors and small businessmen (e.g. grocery shop owners). All of these people face the risk of unemployment. As a whole, SMEs contribution to Bangladesh GDP is 20.25 percent and accounts for 40 percent of the total employed population. In Bangladesh, it is estimated that 20 million are jobless in the informal sector which includes day-labourers and construction workers.

<sup>39</sup> The Financial Express (2020) 'Tourism sector to lose Tk 97.05b during Feb-June period', Available at: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/bangladesh/tourism-sector-to-lose-tk-9705b-during-feb-june-period-1585757421> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

<sup>40</sup> The Daily Star (2020) Tourism Sector: Operators incur loss of Tk 1,500cr, Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/tourism-sector-operators-incur-loss-tk-1500cr-1890742> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

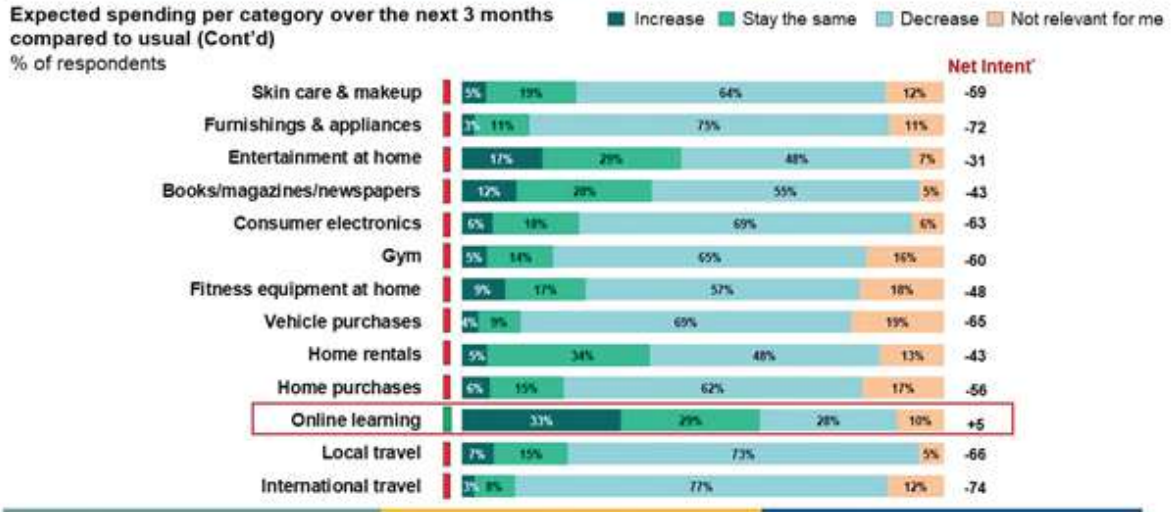
<sup>41</sup> Forbes (2020) Collapse Of Bangladesh's Garment Industry During Coronavirus Leaves Its Workers More Vulnerable Than Ever, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebecca-suhrawardi/2020/03/30/collapse-of-bangladeshs-garment-industry-leaves-its-workers-more-vulnerable-than-ever-during-coronavirus/#dcaf550f27e0> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

Image Source: <https://adventure.com/bangladesh-dhaka-rickshaw-artists/> (Accessed: 19th June 2020)



# CES COVID-19 Consumer Pulse Survey 2020

*Beyond Eid, consumer spending expected to increase only for Pharmaceuticals and Online Learning, decrease for all else; and decrease the least for groceries*

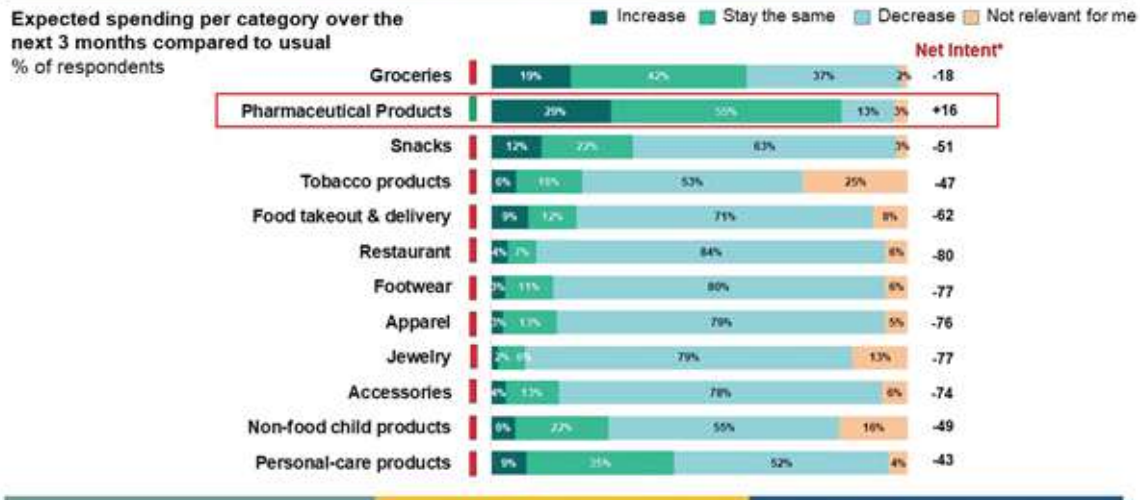


Q: In the next 3 months, do you expect that you will spend more, about the same, or less money on these categories than usual?  
\* Net Intent calculated by subtracting % of respondents stating they expect to decrease spending from the % of respondents stating they expect to increase spending

**Fig: Consumer Pulse Survey 2020 – Customer Spending Beyond Eid**

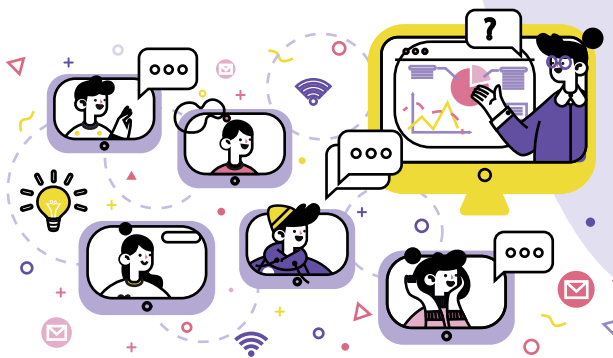
# CES COVID-19 Consumer Pulse Survey 2020

*Beyond Eid, customer spending expected to increase only for Pharmaceuticals and Online Learning, decrease for all else; and decrease the least for groceries*



Q: In the next 3 months, do you expect that you will spend more, about the same, or less money on these categories than usual?  
\* Net Intent calculated by subtracting % of respondents stating they expect to decrease spending from the % of respondents stating they expect to increase spending

As we can see in the Consumer Pulse Survey outlined above. Online spending beyond Eid will increase in terms of Online Learning and Pharmaceutical Products. Moreover, this provides further reflection into the mental landscape of the masses; people are buying pharmaceutical products like sanitizers, masks, vitamin tablets, etc. to ensure that they remain safe and healthy amidst the lockdown.



spending in online education implies that people are willing to learn a new skill or obtain a new degree while they are in the lockdown.

As the Consumer Pulse Survey, people are buying pharmaceutical products like sanitizers, masks, vitamin tablets, etc. to ensure that they remain safe and healthy amidst the lockdown.



Also, increased spending in online education implies that people are willing to learn a new skill or obtain a new degree while they are in the lockdown. Also, looking at the bleak job market; earning a degree through online education can increase chances of getting employment post coronavirus.

In a country like Bangladesh, social distancing and economic shutdown policies might not hold the same weight given that many people are working in the informal sector and hunger will strike them harder than coronavirus. According to BRAC survey conducted across 64 districts amongst low-income people, 14% people do not have any food at home due to coronavirus.

<sup>42</sup> The Independent (2020) Corona fallout spells disaster for millions of poor Bangladeshis: Economists, Available at: <http://m.theindependentbd.com/post/243332> (Accessed: 25th April 2020).

<sup>43</sup> The Daily Star (2020) Coronavirus Fallout: Govt to help affected SMEs, Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/coronavirus-fallout-govt-help-affected-smes-1888699> (Accessed: 24th April 2020).

<sup>44</sup> The construction sector in Scotland is also set to contract 40-50% amid lockdowns; as both government and private construction of infrastructure and repair work is halted.

<sup>45</sup> Chowdhury, A. (2020) Living with coronavirus: Life vs livelihood, Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/2020/04/13/living-with-coronavirus-life-vs-livelihood> (Accessed: 20th April 2020).

## 4.1 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT – INFORMAL SECTOR AND SME



The economic turmoil of the black swan event had dire effects on SME and informal sector; as most workers are poor, lacking any kind of social protection. Tailors, street food vendors, day labourers, rickshaw pullers, newspaper hawkers and all the other informal sector workers have been severely affected and most of them are currently unemployed. Approximately

500,000 informal enterprises are affected which had a huge impact on the livelihoods. Moreover, 10 million people are unemployed directly in the SME and informal sector; with the impact of their unemployment extending to their families. In total, SME and informal sector across all industries have about 0.78 million entrepreneurs including rural arts, micro, small and medium enterprises in the SME sector. This SME category is inclusive of micro/small entrepreneurs in light engineering, plastic, agro processing, and garments sector. All these small entrepreneurs are facing serious crisis and are struggling to just stay afloat. 70% of entrepreneurs in the sector operate in rural areas and these marginal workers are currently unemployed due to the on-going lockdown. The government and SME associations need to ensure that relief funds do not leave out any marginal workers or entrepreneurs in the sector. Furthermore, the cost of changes to work process (e.g. teleworking) may be higher for SMEs given their smaller size; while they will also have difficulties adopting to new technologies. Moreover, if lockdowns are lifted partially and productions are done on a small scale; then they will still struggle with costs of capital and underutilized labour.

The SMEs in sectors particularly affected by the crisis include: transport manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail trade, air transport, accommodation, food services, real estate, professional services and other personal services (e.g. hairdressing). SMEs in every sector have lost jobs like handicraft, construction raw material suppliers, small travel operators and agents, fashion designing, electrical manufacturing and plastic.

In Bangladesh, approximately 35-40% SMEs are cottage-based SMEs; draconian measures

taken during the lockdown which brought a total shutdown of the economy has led many micro/small entrepreneurs out of business, resulting in 10 million people permanently unemployed in the sector.

Overall, SMEs in the informal sector will reduce by 30-40%. Moreover, unemployment rates will soar up post-coronavirus and getting jobs in many sectors will be difficult. But the sector is likely to recover within 6 months as it made up of resilient people and right support from associations and government, this sector can be revived slowly but steadily.

Image Source: <https://www.manufacturer.com/news/sustainability-and-superior-quality-manufacturing-in-bangladesh/>  
<https://www.bangladeshweekly.com/ethiopian-clothes-makers-earn-less-than-half-the-salary-of-bangladeshi-tailors-study/>  
(Accessed: 19th June 2020 )



## NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED

**10 million (Immediate)**

## ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS

SMEs in the informal sector will reduce by 30-40%

Approximately 0.5 million informal enterprises are affected which had a huge impact on the livelihoods.

In Bangladesh, 35-40% SMEs are cottage based

# 4.1.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – INFORMAL SECTOR AND SME

1. People who are unemployed in various occupations of informal sector and SME can shift to the agricultural sector as there is an increasing demand for essential commodities. A comprehensive country plan needs to be prepared by National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) involving SME Foundation, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industries (DCCI), The National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) and Industry Skills Council (ISC).
2. Employees working in manufacturing SMEs can be reskilled to produce diesel pumps. In the future, there is an increasing possibility of disruption in global supply chain; therefore, Bangladesh needs to produce it locally.
3. The District Administration needs to take initiative to develop a comprehensive database of workers involved in informal sector and SME. Furthermore, they need to ensure that these workers are registered in National Skills Portal.
4. The District Administration needs to identify the informal workplaces and SMEs which are affected by COVID-19 and prepare the primary list for government stimulus of 20,000 crores BDT. The stimulus package disbursement policy needs to mandate package recipients to train at least 2 apprentices at their respective workplaces.
5. Increase the allocation of government funding by the Ministry of Finance to support the informal sector and SMEs on skills development.
6. Most of the workplaces in informal sector and SMEs do not even have access to banks; it will be difficult for them to comply with complicated procedures of acquiring the stimulus loan. Therefore, Bangladesh Bank needs to work closely with commercial banks and District Administration to develop a faster and more flexible loan disbursement process for the next two years to foster the growth of Informal Sector and SMEs.
7. SME Foundation, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industries (DCCI), National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) and Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to provide training on safety, hygiene and safe handling of products.

Image Source: <http://internationalphotomag.com/interview-with-photojournalist-gmb-akash/>



## 4.2

# JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - TRANSPORTATION AND EQUIPMENT SECTOR

The transportation sector has been severely impacted by the lockdown. The sector is made up of public transportation where majority of workers like drivers, helpers, workshop mechanics are daily wage earners who are now experiencing untold misery of unemployment during the ongoing shutdown. It is estimated that approximately 0.7 million workers are currently unemployed in this sector. During the ongoing lockdown, the movement of all forms of public transportation remains halted.

However, trucks, covered vans and emergency service vehicles remain outside the purview of the transportation shutdown. Moreover, with no demand for carrying goods, a large number of trucks and covered vans are also sitting idle. Another affected area is Ridesharing services like Uber and Pathao; according to data from commuters took six to seven million rides each month on average via ridesharing apps. Over 0.5 million registered drivers with ridesharing companies have become unemployed during the lockdown.

The country's transport sector is losing around BDT 500 crore daily due to the halt in movement amidst lockdown. There are approximately 0.45 million vehicles in the country like buses, trucks, covered vans, pickup vans, three-wheelers and easy-bikes; both transport workers and owners are jobless now. But the jobs lost in this sector will be re-employed post-lockdown as the economy slowly opens up. Initially, when lockdown is lifted; public transportation will not operate in full capacity and although most people will be employed; 0.1 million transportation and equipment sector workers are estimated to remain unemployed till August, 2020. But the sector will be completely revived by the end of the year.

| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED | ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 7 million (Immediate)       | Over 0.5 million registered drivers with ridesharing companies have become unemployed during the lockdown |

## 4.2.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – TRANSPORTATION AND EQUIPMENT SECTOR

1. The government needs to provide short-term stimulus for the transportation and equipment sector.
2. Creating employee assistance and counselling programmes to ensure practical help and strengthen mental resilience of transport workers involved in emergency services.
3. The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) needs to work closely with various relevant associations to address urgent short-term training requirements of transportation sector workers on issues like safety, hygiene and social distancing. This will play an instrumental role in boosting confidence of the commuters and will enable the transportation sector to smoothly transition into normal operation.
4. The unemployed people in the transportation and equipment sector like helpers can be redeployed in agro-food sector. Meanwhile, jobless technicians and workshop mechanics can be shifted to light engineering sector.
5. A large number of unemployed helpers in the transportation and equipment sector can be accommodated in rural areas as helpers in agriculture related works.
6. Unemployed motor mechanics in this sector can be redeployed as entrepreneurs in the light engineering sector of the rural economy.

Image Source: <https://maryknollmagazine.org/2020/06/covid-19-widens-social-divisions-bangladesh/>





## 4.3 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

The coronavirus pandemic has left huge negative implications for the construction sector of Bangladesh. Real Estate sector's contribution to the GDP is 5% which is equivalent to 15 billion US dollars. The extent of repercussions on this sector will depend on how quickly the virus is contained and the policy measures the government takes to protect the industry and ensure the well-being of the workers. When it comes to workforce in the sector; the most devastating impact is faced by the labour workforce. It is estimated that around 1 million labour workforce are unemployed in the sector and this shutdown means that not only jobs but also livelihoods of 1 million people are at risk. There are many underlying challenges for the construction sector as they rely heavily on backward linkage industries (e.g. steel, cement). With the lockdown in place, all the industries that manufacture raw materials, including cement and steel, are also shutdown.

Therefore, supply chain will of this sector are bound to face the ripple effect as companies producing rods, cement, tiles are set to face huge losses with their inventories remaining unsold. Also, the work at construction sites have been halted; contractors and suppliers have been left unpaid. Moreover, it must be reiterated that if the situation persists then upholding agreements with clients and meeting company targets will become difficult and their companies in this sector will continue to be hampered throughout the year.

The economic turmoil of COVID-19 is already visible and as the economy plunges into recession; people will not make high involvement purchases like buying an apartment. The industry has an unsold inventory of about 20,000 apartments. It was also revealed that in Dhaka and Chittagong there are presently 3000 under housing projects at different stages of construction comprising of approximately 60,000 apartments. Some of these projects are in pre-construction stages like designing, awaiting Rajuk approval; in general the incubation period for construction is about 2 years and this pandemic would further delay the process. Furthermore, small builders do not have the financial stability to stay afloat in business during the post COVID-19 recession period in Bangladesh. Also, as banks shrink their financing their capacity will be reduced even more as most of these companies rely on bank's financial support to complete construction projects.

Also, many small companies who took loans from banks for construction will become defaulters as they will be unable to sell all their apartments to pay off the bank debts. Moreover, as these companies close down; hundreds of thousands of workers will be laid off. It is estimated that 30% of the approximately 3.8 million workforce in the sector will be laid off by the end of the year 2020. Furthermore, a lot of construction raw materials and equipment are imported from foreign countries and with various countries having different approaches to lifting their lockdowns, the price of raw materials may fluctuate causing further strain to the construction industry. The industry demand will be down for a couple of years due to recession and decrease in disposable income of the population. Furthermore, during these reformative years, the government must provide support through policies to ensure the sector does not fall too far behind. In order to revive this sector, industries must be reshaped and affordable housing projects should be taken up to increase demand in this sector. It is feared by many industry experts that recession and the aftermath of the pandemic will completely demolish the sector as it is collection based industry. Moreover, lower monthly collections will have an adverse effect on current and upcoming construction projects. The economic impacts on this sector are inevitable and the sector will suffer losses and shed jobs over the next few years; but recovery is possible through rethinking business models and working closely with government/associations.

| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED   | ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS  |
|---|---|
| <b>1 million (Immediate)</b><br><br><b>30% of the approximately 3.8 million workforce in the sector will be laid off permanently –</b><br><b>Approximately 1.14 million</b> | Over 0.5 million registered drivers with ridesharing companies have become unemployed during the lockdown   |
|   | Post COVID-19 sales volume will fall by 30% as monthly sales will be down to 700 apartments per month   |
|   | Many small companies may close down due in the coming months as they unable to pay bank loans   |
|   | In Dhaka and Chittagong there are presently 3000 under housing projects at different stages of construction comprising of approximately 60,000 apartments |




## 4.3.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

1. Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to work closely with its associations like Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI) to prepare an online database of unemployed construction workers on National Skills Portal.
2. Currently Bangladesh has initiated multiple mega projects in the construction sector. Moreover, these projects require workers who have technical knowledge, physical endurance and effective communication skills. It is estimated that 36% mega projects fail due to lack of these traits. Therefore, Industry Skills Council (ISC) and Bangladesh Association of Construction Industry (BACI) needs to take initiative to upskill the existing construction sector workers and assign them work in government mega projects after they receive adequate training.
3. Support the local construction industry by reducing taxes and import duties on heavy and small industrial tools.
4. Many informally employed labourers in this sector can shift to other labour intensive sectors like manufacturing including light engineering.
5. The existing curriculum needs to be reviewed and revised in accordance with the requirements of mega projects.
6. Curriculums needs to be developed on automated machineries. Both public and private vocational training institutes need to start capacity development initiatives on these automation occupations to realize the existing and future market demand.
7. Department of Cooperatives and SME Foundation needs to provide financial and institutional support to the unemployed workers in this sector so that they can flourish as entrepreneurs.



## 4.4 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT – FURNITURE SECTOR



The impact of COVID-19 has left no sector untouched and the furniture sector is impacted severely because there are many small entrepreneurs; with some informally employed with no job protection. Approximately, 3.2 million people are employed in this sector with the majority of the sector made up of micro and small entrepreneurs. Moreover, making furniture is a craft and an art which is learned through years of practice. Many employees in this sector are at high risk of unemployment as the demand for furniture is decreased due lack of disposable income. As much as 40% of the micro and small entrepreneurs in this sector will be driven out of business if lockdowns are extended for a few more months. Approximately 0.6 million workers have been laid off in this sector and the numbers will keep rising even after the lockdown is over.

The economic aftermath looks bleak as the demand for furniture will remain low due to the economy plunging into recession which may take over a year to recover. During this recovery period, the disposable income of people will be low and they are unlikely to buy furniture. It is estimated that approximately 1 million workers will be unemployed in this sector by the end of this year. Although, most entrepreneurs in this sector are still paying partial or full salaries of employees but if the lockdown extends beyond May, a huge chunk of employees in the sector will be laid off. Over the years the furniture sector has been flourishing with revenues, exceeding 10,000 crore BDT in 2019. But the economic meltdown due to coronavirus will have drastic impact on this sector. With demand for furniture declining locally and globally in a post-pandemic work; many will be left unemployment in this sector. But, in the near future; there will be increasing demand for CNC (Computer Numerical Control) and robotics in the furniture sector which will create some additional jobs. On the other hand, furniture exports are likely to dry up due to travel restrictions to restrict the spread of the virus. Moreover, the sector is still dominated by unbranded furniture which make up 65% of the whole market demand for the industry. Therefore, many micro and small entrepreneurs will be driven out of business.

### NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED

**0.6 million (Immediate)**

**Unemployment could reach 1 million by the end of the year 2020**

### ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS

**65% of the industry consists of unbranded furniture**

**Majority of the sector is made up of small and micro entrepreneurs**

## 4.4.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – FURNITURE SECTOR

1. Making furniture is an art which takes years to master and there are many technical experts in this sector who do not have transferable skills to work in other sectors. Although most of them will be retained post-lockdown, some employees will have to face permanent unemployment due to reduced demand for furniture in the near future. Therefore, the government needs to come up with reskilling programs for this particular group who will be unable to find jobs in other sectors.
2. 10-15% of the skills in this sector can be replicated in other sectors. Moreover, employees who are support staff like helpers, loading/unloading staff and administrative managers can shift to working in other sectors like readymade garments and textile, transportation and equipment and tourism & hospitality.
3. The government needs to limit import of furniture post lockdown in order to protect jobs and support small entrepreneurs in this sector.
4. The government needs to encourage automation of production processes in the furniture sector. This can be done by reducing VAT on import of solutions like Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAM) and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines.
5. Bangladesh Furniture Exporters Association and Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to develop a comprehensive plan for upskilling unemployed workers in this sector. Both public and private training centers need to focus on holistic training to accommodate these workers in demanding occupations like carpentry, upholstery and machine operation.
6. The design of a furniture plays a key role in influencing purchase decision. Therefore, public and private training centers need to focus on providing training for specific skills like polishing, engraving, wood carving and overall furniture design. Moreover, this will help improve the quality and aesthetics of local furniture.
7. Bangladesh has a dearth of wood seasoning experts. Therefore, Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to involve more Training Service Providers for this occupation. The government can also provide incentives to encourage installation of wood seasoning plants.
8. The furniture sector in Bangladesh does not produce artificial wood. Therefore, the government needs to provide incentives to furniture makers so that they are encouraged to produce artificial wood locally. The Training Service Providers need to focus on occupations related to artificial wood.
9. Some of the unemployed workers in furniture sector can be shifted to interior designing which is part of creative media sector. Many buildings have interior with intricate woodwork designs; therefore, there is demand for skilled woodwork technicians.
10. However, the COVID-19 crisis will expedite the automation process in the furniture industry, particularly in the large factories. Therefore, many large factories will transition towards automation to cover the losses they have incurred. The advent of automation will also create new jobs. Moreover, the Training Service Providers need to focus on The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) related occupations like wood processing technician, wood CNC technician and robotic coating technician.



## 4.5 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - READYMADE GARMENTS AND TEXTILE SECTOR



The pandemic has also exposed the vulnerability of global supply chains and the impact was particularly visible in the RMG & Textiles sector. The impact across all levels of the supply chain has led to billions of dollars' worth of orders being cancelled, factories shutdown and workers laid off in Asian countries like China, Vietnam, India and Bangladesh. Moreover, the 2nd largest apparel manufacturer in the world, Bangladesh has laid off more than 0.5 million workers and suffered losses through suspended orders of over \$3.17 billion.

The thriving export sector in Bangladesh which employs nearly 4.1 million garment workers, has exported 25% less than their overall target this year. It is expected that the overall growth of the industry will reduce by 25-30% by the end of the year. China is a major supplier of specialty chemicals for textiles, especially Indigo required for denim.

Therefore, after China locked down its country; there was instant shortage of raw materials such as reactive dyes and chemicals which other factories around the world including Bangladesh use to produce denims and other garments. Therefore, all the raw material providers of the industry also suffered huge losses. Approximately 0.5 million workers are permanently unemployed in this sector and many others are on the verge of being laid off due to the on-going crisis. Also, employment interconnected with this industry is affected; with 4 million truck drivers, port workers, suppliers at risk of losing their jobs.

Many factories are still paying salaries and with the government stimulus in place, many bottom level employees have been saved from the harsh reality of unemployment. But some have laid off thousands of workers permanently due, predicting the future decrease in consumption and demand of garments products. Many small factories will be driven out of business if the lockdown extends for a few more months and the RMG sector will face devastating effects if the virus is not contained by the end of July. It is essential to exchange dialogue between government and garments associations to bounce back from this crisis.

<sup>46</sup> Anner, M. (2020) 'Abandoned? The Impact of Covid-19 on Workers and Businesses at the Bottom of Global Garment Supply Chains', Center for Global Workers' Rights (CGWR), Pennstate.

Image Source: <https://www.bangladeshweekly.com/ethiopian-clothes-makers-earn-less-than-half-the-salary-of-bangladeshi-tailors-study/>  
(Accessed: 20 June 2020)

The sector is expecting approximately 150 small factories to close down due to overall lack of demand for garments products post coronavirus. Furthermore, this will lead to further unemployment of approximately 20,000 people.

The RMG sector is in a vulnerable position and it may take over a year for the sector to fully recover even after coronavirus is contained. Furthermore, many studies explore the possibility of COVID-19 having a second or third wave; with possibilities of the virus staying till 2021. In that case, factories must redesign their spaces to carry out small scale productions safely, maintaining social distancing. They need to also prepare for shifting focus to produce products for healthcare and reskill employees so that they can work in healthcare sector. Also, this made may lead to many factories adopting automation as the social distancing requirement will enable them to only produce in small scale, employing limited number of employees. This also has the potential to create new jobs for this sector.

| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED  | ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS   |
|--|--|
| 0.5 million (Immediate)  | Bangladesh is the 2nd largest apparel manufacturer in the world and the sector has made losses through suspended orders of over \$3.16 billion |
|  | Overall growth of the industry will reduce by 25-30% by the end of the year  |
|  | The sector has exported 25% less than their overall target this year   |
| 4 million truck drivers, port workers, suppliers at risk of losing their jobs. | The sector is expecting approximately 150 small factories to close down – 20,000 more unemployed   |



## 4.5.1

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – READYMADE GARMENTS AND TEXTILE SECTOR

1. Garments workers who work in production of manufacturing of readymade garments and textile sector can be accommodated in the production related work of agro-food sector. The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) may take the leading role in shifting these unemployed workers to the agro-food sector.
2. The unemployment rate in this sector can be slashed by reskilling and shifting some workers to factories producing PPEs, masks and sanitizers.
3. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) need to ensure that health and safety guidelines are followed in factories including safe handling of products.
4. Readymade garments and textile sector is facing a surge in demand for merchandising, marketing and engineering. Therefore, curriculums need to be developed for occupations in these areas and Training Service Providers need to ensure that sufficient training is provided based on the curriculums.
5. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) needs to encourage factories to adopt automation devices like numerical controllers used to perform preprogrammed sequence for knitting and sewing. This will reduce lead time and new occupation like Computer Numerical Control (CNC) operator will emerge.
6. The readymade garments and textile sector has high demand for skilled knitting designers. Therefore, Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to encourage Training Service Providers to start skills development for this occupation with coordination support from National Skills Development Authority (NSDA).

## 4.6 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - LEATHER GOODS AND FOOTWEAR SECTOR

The leather goods and footwear sector is Bangladesh's second promising sector after RMG and the scenario looks bleak as overall consumption has declined along with predictions that footwear consumption forecasted to decline by 22.5% by the end of the year 2020. The Leather Goods and Footwear Sector has been hit hard as orders were cancelled amounting to huge losses. All the factories are closed down and productions are halted. Furthermore, small entrepreneurs in the sector are struggling to survive and are on the verge of closing down. The consequences of continuous lockdown in the coming months could have disastrous impacts on the sector with unemployment rates rocketing as companies lay off employees. Although, it is difficult to project the losses this sector will suffer by the end of the second quarter of 2020. But according to industry projections, the sector has suffered losses of over \$330 million through order cancellations.

The global leather industry looks bleak as billions of dollars' worth of orders are being cancelled. The sector employs 200,000 direct local workforce out of which 60,000 workers have already been unemployed. Moreover, the sector also employs approximately 700,000 workforce in the domestic market. Moreover, Bangladesh Paduka Prostutkarok Somiti (BPPS) has 525 members under them with approximately 5, 45,000 indirect employment and 1, 54,000 direct employment. In the domestic market approximately 50% have lost their jobs which is 0.35 million.



Therefore, it stands a total of 0.41 million workers are unemployed in this sector. It is estimated that 160 export-oriented leather goods and footwear factories will incur losses of 197 million from March to December, 2020. Factories in this sector are unlikely to recover the losses this year unless they start production on a different capacity. Moreover, factories can remodel their operations/production capacity to produce essential medical goods as globally there is huge demand for PPE and masks. As Europe is currently the epicenter of the pandemic and the continent is Bangladesh's biggest leather export market; the leather goods and footwear sector will suffer from huge losses even after the lockdown is over.

| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED | FUTURE ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 0.41 million (Immediate)    | 160 export-oriented leather goods and footwear factories will incur losses of 197 million from March to December, 2020. |
|                             | Majority of the sector is made up of small and micro entrepreneurs  |



## 4.6.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS - LEATHER GOODS AND FOOTWEAR SECTOR

1. Leathergoods And Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) needs to develop a comprehensive database of unemployed workers in this sector and they can use National Skills Portal for online registration. The initiative can be expanded to collecting information about retrenched workers for future reemployment.
2. 50% of the workforce working in the sector have transferable skills and can be redeployed in other sectors. For instance, people who work in sewing, cutting, finishing and quality assurance can shift to the RMG sector.
3. Employees working in administrative positions have soft skills which can be applied in other sectors as well. The National Skills Portal can be useful tool for creating linkages between workers from the leather industry with other industries.
4. Leathergoods And Footwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association of Bangladesh (LFMEAB) needs to ensure that workers in leather tannery sub-sector follow health guidelines and receive adequate training in health, hygiene and safe handling of products.
5. There is an increasing need for skilled workforce in leather processing sub-sector to flourish in global markets and maximize export earnings. Therefore, public and private Training Service Providers need to focus on creating skilled workforce in different occupations of leather processing.
6. The sector consists of many micro and small factories who are shoe makers, parts suppliers, accessories retailers, machining and equipment service providers. Moreover, most of these factories operate in rented spaces and may be driven out of business due to insolvency. Therefore, these factories need to be prioritized for receiving support through stimulus packages in the short term.
7. Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) under Ministry of Industries needs to explore the possibility of offering fully constructed production sites at highly subsidized rental rates to ensure small factories are not driven out of the sector. The COVID-19 pandemic might not be a one-time incident and the industry needs to prepare itself for future. This would eliminate or mitigate risks for future job loss in this sector.
8. There are many micro and small footwear factories who work as a sub-contractor for bigger companies. Both public and private Training Service Providers need to arrange training for these workers on multiple skills like sewing, cutting and finishing leather. Moreover, this will play an instrumental role in enhancing the multitasking capacity of workers and they will find it easier to find employment in other sectors.



# 4.7

## JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

The seismic impact of the outbreak presents an evolving challenge for the tourism and hospitality sector. The extent of damage on this thriving sector depends on how quickly the virus is contained. The whole industry is in a standstill with 95% planes grounded, cruises, buses, trains, resorts, airlines, travel agencies all are impacted severely. There are about 3500 travel agencies and 500 unregistered agencies in Bangladesh which 4 million people who are impacted directly or indirectly by the crash of this sector. It is estimated that over 1000 travel operators around the country have laid off approximately 8000 employees while about 2300 hotels have let go of 14,000 employees, and cruise vessels laid off 5000 employees; bringing the tally to 27,000 jobs being lost in the sector. Also, taking into account small hotels, motels, travel agencies, ticketing services, digital agencies and informal employment in the sector; a total of 320,000 people are directly unemployed in the sector currently.

Image Source: © Shahaz Uddin

Over 1 million people in this sector are at high risk of unemployment if the lockdown, partial lockdown or travel restrictions stay throughout the year. These estimates do not take into account the affected backward or forward linkage industries associated with the sector. Along with other service providers in tourism and hospitality industry, tourist vessel owners are badly affected. It is estimated that around 70 cruise vessels are operating river cruise packages in Bangladesh and around 1600 small tourist boats operating destination based local day cruise. It is estimated that around 5000 employees have lost their jobs with the tourist vessels sub-sector losing around 113 crore BDT in 3 months from February till April, 2020. In addition, Bangladesh also stands to lose 4.22 million passengers this year, impacting 47,200 jobs in the aviation industry. The tourism and hospitality sector contributes almost 4% to the GDP of Bangladesh and it will be severely impacted if the virus is not contained

quickly. The unemployment rates in this sector is likely to rise drastically post-lockdown. But through collaboration between industry leaders, associations and government, the sector can be restored gradually. Industry leaders and associations are already engaging in dialogue to bring major changes to the pattern of business, operations and services to meet the needs of a changing industry. The tourism and hospitality sector will shed jobs in the kitchen as half processed foods will enter the kitchen and meals will not have to be made from the scratch. The sector is looking to reduce human contact points during services which will shed more jobs, but at the same time some new jobs will be created as delivery/catering services are ramped up. The sector will develop new training approaches and remodel travel/hospitality experiences putting more emphasis on domestic or cross border tourism.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED

0.32 million (Immediate)

Over 1 million at high risk of unemployment if lockdown stays throughout the year 2020

## ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS

Over 1000 travel operators have laid off approximately 8000 employees and over 2300 hotels have laid off about 14,000 employees.

Losses of 9700 crores BDT will be incurred by the sector if lockdown extends till June.

About 3500 travel agencies and 500 unregistered agencies impacted directly or indirectly by the crash of this sector

# 4.7.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS - TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SECTOR

1.The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism needs to come up with a minimum wage for each of the occupations in this sector.

2.Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) and Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) need to focus on post COVID-19 occupations.

3.Tourism occupations have more theoretical parts in the curriculum pertaining to soft skills. Therefore, public and private Training Service Providers need to introduce online trainings.

4.The Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to take up an advisory role to promote and build local tourism. Their focus does not need to be on skill development but rather on assessing the market, identifying skill gaps, communicating with industries to assess demand and providing support to develop competency standards. The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to focus on the capacity development of Industry Skills Council (ISC).

5.The hotels, restaurants, travel and tour operators which are operating on limited capacity during this pandemic must ensure that they follow the basic guidelines of safety, hygiene and safe product handling.

6.Employees working in sales and administration can join other sectors in similar capacities.

7.Employees with informal employment can join the booming agriculture sector.

8.The Department of Tourism under various public and private universities and colleges can design and introduce short courses, especially focusing on post COVID-19 jobs; a2i can provide technical support in this regard.

9. The government needs to focus on stimulus packages aimed at revival of each sub-sectors like aviation, motels, hotels, resorts, travel agencies and restaurants



Image Source: © Wahid Raj



## 4.8 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT – LIGHT ENGINEERING SECTOR

The Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh declared 'Light Engineering' as the sector of year in 2020. But this thriving sector has also been severely affected is the light engineering sector where majority of the sector is made up of informal workers. It is estimated that 95% of this sector is made up of small/micro entrepreneurs and all of them are currently driven out of business. In total, there are over 55,000 micro, small and big businesses in this sector with only 10% making agricultural equipment which are still in demand; rest of them are making huge losses.

Moreover, SMEs in light engineering are not solvent enough to sustain for few more months if lockdown continues. Approximately 45,000 factories are closed down and 0.3 million workers are unemployed in the light engineering sector which employs approximately 1 million people.

The import based manufacturing trend in Bangladesh will shift as the global supply chains are strained. Moreover, this will pave way for light engineering sector to manufacture more products locally. It must be reiterated that this sector will be revived post-lockdown as there is huge demand for informal sector workers like light engineers, construction

workers and SMEs along the supply the chain. Light engineering is intertwined with other industries as they provide maintenance and repairing services which will be required when factories resume. Furthermore, as most of the industries will be working in reduced capacity after the lockdown; at least 20% of companies in light engineering sector will either close down or work on a limited capacity. It is estimated that approximately 75% of the employees will be fully unemployed by the end of the year, with only 15% working full-time and 10% working part-time.

Picture source: <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/editorial/light-engineering-1549382879> (Accessed: 20 June 2020)

| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED | ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS  |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 0.3 million (Immediate)     | 55,000 micro, small and big businesses in this sector with only 10% making agricultural equipment which are still in demand; rest of them are making huge losses                              |
|                             | Approximately 45,000 factories will close down  |
|                             | Most of the industries will be working in reduced capacity after the lockdown; at least 20% of companies in light engineering sub-sector will either close down or work on a limited capacity |

## 4.8.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – LIGHT ENGINEERING SECTOR

1. Honorable Prime Minister has declared light engineering sector as the 'Sector of the Year, in 2020. Therefore, special attention must be given to this thriving sector and efforts must be targeted towards its quick revival. The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to develop a holistic strategic guideline to revive this sector post COVID-19 through skills development, employment and entrepreneurship.
2. Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Center (BITAC) and Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA) needs to prepare an online database of light engineering sector enterprises and workers through the National Skills Portal.
3. People working as technicians in the light engineering sector can be reskilled technicians and Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machine operators in the agricultural sector.
4. The light engineering sub-sector can be subsidized to encourage local manufacturing. The government can put restrictions on import of agricultural products and encourage adoption of locally produced agricultural products from the light engineering sector; which will in turn create more jobs in the economy.



# 4.9

## JOB LOSS AND IMPACT – MIGRATION SECTOR



The pandemic has also affected livelihoods and employment of millions of Bangladeshi migrant workers who work in various parts of the world. It is estimated that already 0.5 million migrant workers have become jobless in Middle East, Europe and East Asian countries. Approximately 0.3 million migrant workers have returned to Bangladesh and are currently unemployed.

We have over 14 million expatriates in 174 countries of which the lion's share is in the Middle East. Over 10 million Bangladeshi migrant workers remitted over 18.3 billion USD to Bangladesh last year. As per Bangladesh Bank sources, expatriates in April sent around \$700 million, which is \$400 million lower than the country's receipt of \$1.1 billion of foreign currency remitted in the same period during March, 2020. Another five thousand Bangladeshi workers are expected to leave Kuwait next week as the lockdown in the Gulf nation has crippled their ability to earn a living. The oil prices in Middle East have collapsed as their economy is in deep waters; this has caused a ripple effect on the livelihoods of Bangladeshi workers as many of them were laid off. Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East are mostly engaged in construction, transportation services, hospitality, security services, and so on. Moreover, if oil prices remain unstable then the economic turmoil in the Middle East will lead to countries calling off many projects and majority of Bangladeshi construction workers in the region will be unemployed.

The recruiting agents in Bangladesh are also going through a grave crisis and have incurred losses of over BDT 500 crore. Moreover, 15% of the migrant workforce could be undocumented and another 29,000 migrant workers expected to return in the coming weeks which will add to the tally of unemployed migrant workers in Bangladesh

<sup>47</sup> The Daily Star (2020) How will the new normal for our migrant workers look like?, Available at: <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/closer-look/news/how-will-the-new-normal-our-migrant-workers-look-1899400> (Accessed: 6th May 2020).

Image source: <https://en.banglatribune.com/others/news/22993/Middlemen-cause-migration-cost-to-shoot-up> (Accessed: 20 June 2020)




| NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED  | ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS  |
|--|---|
| 0.1 million (Immediate)  | Approximately 100,000 workers returned home jobless from February 26 to March 26, 2020. Over 10 million Bangladeshi migrant workers, remitted USD 18.32 billion to Bangladesh last year.  |
| Over 250,000 migrant workers have returned to Bangladesh; with over 10,000 workers permanently unemployed. | Almost 5,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers are expected to leave Kuwait next week as the lockdown in the Gulf nation has crippled their ability to earn a living. Thousands more may return to Bangladesh if lockdown persists in Middle East and Europe. |

## 4.9.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS - MIGRATION SECTOR

1. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment needs to ensure reintegration and incentive package for the returnee migrants. To ensure these aspects the ministry needs to work closely with Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO) and a2i.
2. Returnee migrants need to be registered online through Collective Intelligence Platform, namely; National Skills Portal/Migration Portal.
3. a2i needs to collaborate with Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), Wage Earners Welfare Board (WEWB), Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA), International Organization of Migration (IOM), International Labour Organization (ILO) to ensure returnee migrants are registered online through the 'Collective Intelligence Platform', namely National Skills Portal.
4. The returnee migrant workers who have experience and start-up capital must be integrated into entrepreneurship programs under the government. Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Department of Cooperatives (DoC), Department of Youth Development (DYD) and Small and Medium Enterprises Foundation (SMEF) can play instrumental roles in this regard.
5. Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB) needs to provide bank loan facilities for returnee migrants who aspire to be entrepreneurs.

Image source: <https://devr.nagariknetwork.com/amp/foreign-work-woes/news.html.twig>



6. The returnee migrant workers who have expertise and several years of experience in a particular occupation can be provided Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certification through Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB). Moreover, they can be provided job placements based on their skillset. Both public and private Training Service Providers can take a leading role in this regard.

7. The returnee migrant workers who opt to return to work in other countries post-lockdown need to be either reskilled according to the skill requirements of the specified country or up-skilled based on their current occupation. The Technical Training Centers (TTC) of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) can play an instrumental role in this regard.

8. Returnee migrant workers who have experience of working in construction sector abroad can shift to working in mega projects of Bangladesh Government.

9. Returnee migrant workers who work in sales and administration can join other sectors in similar capacity.

10. The boom of agricultural sector has led to a surge in demand for agricultural equipment. Therefore, some unemployed returnee migrant workers can be reskilled to operate or produce agricultural equipment.

11. Social safety net programme can be introduced for the families of migrant workers who have returned home, or are not being paid their due wages in their destination countries due to COVID-19 lockdown measures.

12. There is a global demand for healthcare workers. Therefore, Technical Training Centers (TTC) under Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) needs to provide nationwide medical technician trainings.

13. The Counselling Departments of various public and private universities need to extend their services to provide counselling and career guidance services to returnee migrants.





# 4.10

## JOB LOSS AND IMPACT – REAL ESTATE AND HOUSING SECTOR

The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of housing and real estate sector. According to data from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the sector has contributed 7.8% to the GDP of Bangladesh in 2019. The on-going crisis has led to the immediate unemployment of approximately 15,000 workers in the real estate and housing sector. It is estimated that another 40,000 workers may be unemployed by the end of the year; due to the decreasing demand for apartments as the economy plunges into recession. The job losses in this sector would have a trickle-down effect on other sectors as well. Moreover, sectors such as steel, cement, and ceramics which are interlinked with this sector has also been affected.

The industry has an unsold inventory of about 20,000 apartments. It was also revealed that in Dhaka and Chittagong there are presently 3000 under housing projects at different stages of construction comprising of approximately 60,000 apartments. Some of these projects are in pre-construction stages like designing, awaiting Rajuk approval; in general the incubation period for construction is about 2 years and this pandemic would further delay the process. The industry has an unsold inventory of about 20,000 apartments. Moreover, in the past year 1000 apartments were sold per month which means there is an inventory overhang of about 20 months. It is also predicted that post COVID-19 sales volume is expected to fall by 30% for this thriving sector as monthly sales will be down to 700 apartments per month.

Image source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dhaka> (Accessed: 20 June 2020 )

#### NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED

0.015 million (Immediate)

#### FUTURE ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS

The industry has an unsold inventory of about 20,000 apartments. Post COVID-19 sales volume is expected to fall by 30%.

## 4.10.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – REAL ESTATE AND HOUSING SECTOR

1. Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB), in collaboration with a2i needs to develop a holistic database of unemployed people in this sector through National Skills Portal.
2. The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to form an Industry Skills Council (ISC) for real estate and housing sector.
3. People working in marketing, administration and sales can shift to other sectors like advertising agencies, sales department of banks (credit card sales) and take up administrative positions in other manufacturing companies.
4. New curriculums need to be developed for adoption of automated machineries in this sector. Both public and private Training Service Providers need to focus on providing training on these new occupations.

Image Source: © Wahid Raj





## 4.11 JOB LOSS AND IMPACT - CERAMIC SECTOR

The ceramic sector has been impacted by the unique and unprecedented pandemic. Although it is too early to forecast the overall economic turmoil in Bangladesh; but it is evident that it will have a lasting impact on the ceramic sector. Moreover, ceramic products like tableware are not a necessity and the demand for consumer products like ceramic will remain low post-lockdown as the economy plunges into recession. But Bangladesh has a glimmer of hope for industry revival if Europe, UK and USA refuse to import Chinese ceramic; paving way for increased export of Bangladeshi ceramics.

Approximately 4,000 people are currently unemployed in this sector. To create increased demand for ceramic products in local and international markets, the sector needs to be revamped and product innovation is required. The companies will diversify with new products post-coronavirus to respond to the changing needs of the market. The ceramic industry in Bangladesh will look to go beyond traditional usage of ceramics and produce more value added items to capture a global market.



#### NUMBER OF PEOPLE UNEMPLOYED

0.004 million (Immediate)

0.009 million to be unemployed if lockdown extends till August, 2020

#### ESTIMATIONS/COMMENTS

Huge losses for ceramic sector if lockdown extends a few more months. Many small entrepreneurs will be driven out of business and factories will be shutdown

## 4.11.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS – CERAMIC SECTOR

1. Bangladesh Institute of Glass & Ceramics under Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) needs to be bolstered with more market driven short courses.
2. Industry-Academia collaboration and strong linkage must be established for courses offered by Bangladesh Institute of Glass & Ceramics. Furthermore, Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) needs to organize regular job fairs in collaboration with industries.
3. The Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to play an active role in communicating with industries and assessing market demand.
4. Employees working in administration possess the soft skills to be employed in other sectors.
5. A lot of people consider foreign designs as superior when it comes to purchasing ceramic products. Therefore, the focus should be on developing skilled human resource in terms of ceramic design which will in turn plummet the dependency on foreign products and boost the demand for local ceramic products.

## JOBS LOST SCENARIO (IMMEDIATE)



| Sector                     | Jobs Lost             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| SME and Informal Sector    | 10 million            |
| Transportation Sector      | 7 million             |
| Construction Sector        | 1 million             |
| Furniture Sector           | 0.6 million           |
| RMG and Textiles Sector    | 0.5 million           |
| Leather Goods and Footwear | 0.41 million          |
| Tourism and Hospitality    | 0.32 million          |
| Light Engineering Sector   | 0.3 million           |
| Migration Sector           | 0.3 million           |
| Real Estate and Housing    | 0.015 million         |
| Ceramic Workers Sector     | 0.004 million         |
| <b>Total Jobs Lost</b>     | <b>20.449 million</b> |

## JOBS LOST SCENARIO - NEXT THREE MONTHS (AUGUST, 2020)

| Sector                     | Jobs Lost            |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| SME and Informal Sector    | 2 million            |
| Transportation Sector      | 0.1 million          |
| Construction Sector        | 0.05 million         |
| Furniture Sector           | 0.1 million          |
| RMG and Textiles Sector    | 0.1 million          |
| Leather Goods and Footwear | 0.05 million         |
| Tourism and Hospitality    | 0.25 million         |
| Light Engineering Sector   | 0.05 million         |
| Migration Sector           | 0.06 million         |
| Real Estate and Housing    | 0.01 million         |
| Ceramic Workers Sector     | 0.006 million        |
| <b>Total Jobs Lost</b>     | <b>2.776 million</b> |

## JOBS LOST SCENARIO END OF 2020

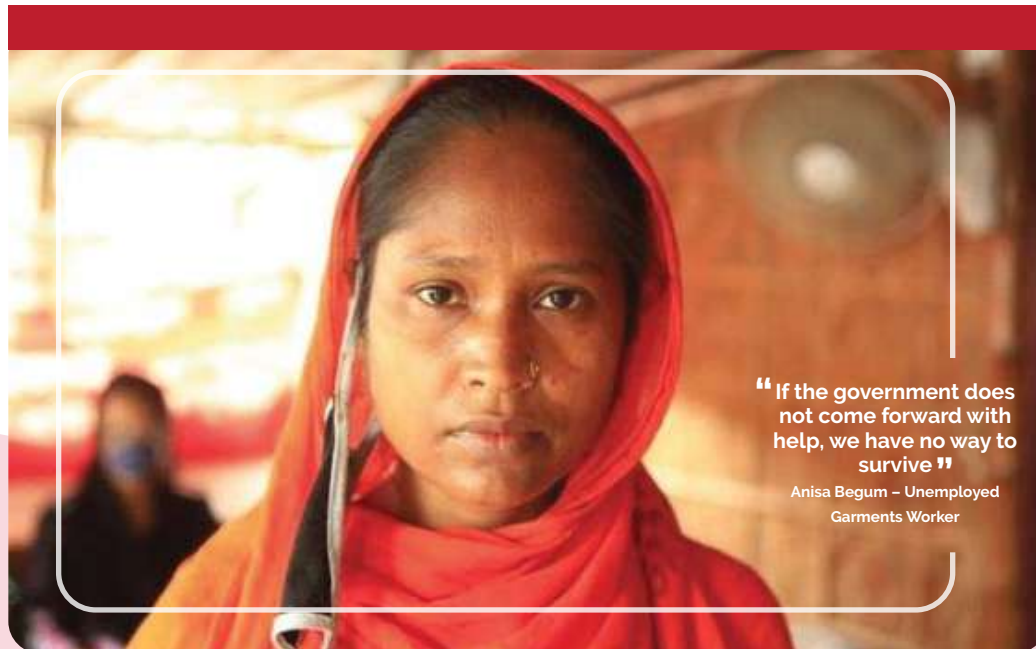
| Sector                     | Jobs Lost            |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| SME and Informal Sector    | 1.5 million          |
| Transportation Sector      | 0.01 million         |
| Construction Sector        | 0.1 million          |
| Furniture Sector           | 0.3 million          |
| RMG and Textiles Sector    | 0.1 million          |
| Leather Goods and Footwear | 0.04 million         |
| Tourism and Hospitality    | 0.5 million          |
| Light Engineering Sector   | 0.02 million         |
| Migration Sector           | 0.14 million         |
| Real Estate and Housing    | 0.03 million         |
| Ceramic Workers Sector     | 0.003 million        |
| <b>Total Jobs Lost</b>     | <b>2.743 million</b> |



## JOBS LOST - END OF 2021

| Sector                     | Jobs Lost            |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| SME and Informal Sector    | 0.8 million          |
| Transportation Sector      | 0.009 million        |
| Construction Sector        | 0.3 million          |
| Furniture Sector           | 0.1 million          |
| RMG and Textiles Sector    | 0.07 million         |
| Leather Goods and Footwear | 0.02 million         |
| Tourism and Hospitality    | 0.9 million          |
| Light Engineering Sector   | 0.01 million         |
| Migration Sector           | 0.3 million          |
| Real Estate and Housing    | 0.02 million         |
| Ceramic Workers Sector     | 0.003 million        |
| <b>Total Jobs Lost</b>     | <b>2.532 million</b> |

## 4.12 ALONE WITH EVERYBODY: STORIES OF UNEMPLOYMENT



As high street international brands around the world closed their doors for lockdown; the impact fell directly on victims who are thousands of miles away from the glass fronted shopping arcades. Sadia Akhter is one of them; although she is not alone, there are thousands like her in Bangladesh. She used to work in a garment factory on the outskirts of Dhaka in Bangladesh making shirts for the European market. A few days ago her boss announced that she has been laid off and the factory will be closed down due to the lockdown. Even after opening, she will remain unemployed because the factory will be downsizing on a large scale due to cancelled orders and decreased demand for garments products in global market.

Anisa Begum has also been laid off. She is at home with her family of seven on the outskirts of Dhaka. She says she and her husband could survive on one meal a day, but not with children. “If the government does not come forward with help, we have no way to survive” said a concerned Anisa Begum.

<sup>48</sup> BBC News (2020) Coronavirus: Two million Bangladesh jobs 'at risk' as clothes orders dry up, Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-52417822> (Accessed: 2nd May 2020).

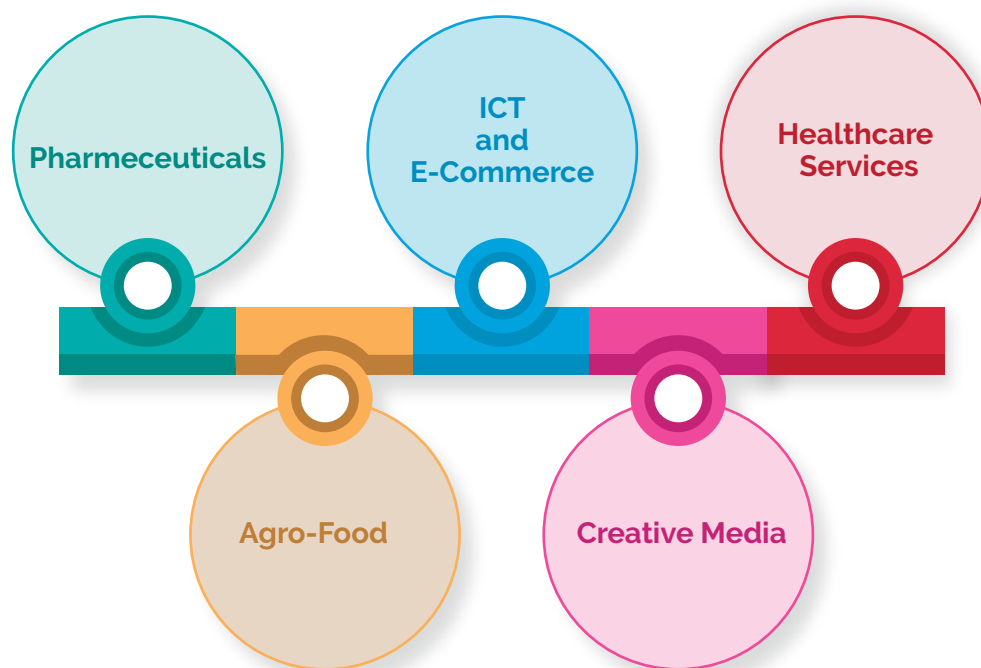


# 5.0

## EMERGING JOBS SECTOR IN BANGLADESH



Although, COVID-19 pandemic has had major negative impacts on most sectors across Bangladesh. There are new jobs created in some sectors. These are discussed below:



## 5.1 PHARMACEUTICALS

Due to the pandemic the demand for medical goods and equipment and medical textile has increased. Therefore, more factories are producing PPE gowns, hand sanitizers and masks. This has created approximately 51,000 new jobs in the factories manufacturing medical goods and pharmaceutical products. Moreover, many factories under BGMEA, local tech giants like Walton and international brands like Marks & Spencer are already making PPE, masks and other medical goods. Therefore, it is creating new jobs and many employees who are unemployed in sectors like RMG and Textiles, SMEs and Informal Sector can join these factories as they have jobs available. In the PPE and other medical goods production, occupations like sewing operators, finishing man, cutting man, packing man, line supervisor, numerically controlled machine operator, medical goods merchandiser are being created.



| Occupations                             | Jobs To Be Created by End of Year 2020 |
|---|--|
| PPE Sewing Operators                    | 20,000                                 |
| Finishing                               | 10,000                                 |
| Cutting and Packing                     | 10,000                                 |
| Line Supervisor                         | 5,000                                  |
| Numerically Controlled Machine Operator | 1,000                                  |
| Medical Goods Merchandiser              | 5,000                                  |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b>               | <b>51,000</b>                          |

## 5.1.1 RECOMMENDATIONS: PHARMACEUTICALS

1. The Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to communicate with industries to assess demand in terms of human resources. The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to focus on the capacity development of Industry Skills Council (ISC).
2. As pharmaceutical industries are increasingly active during COVID-19, responding to demands and supplying products. The industries need to ensure safe handling of products; safety and hygiene standards must be maintained.
3. Pharmaceutical sector is considered as one of the booming industries in post COVID-19 situation. Therefore, Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries (BAPI) and Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to work together to ensure a comprehensive database of emerging occupations is developed through National Skills Portal.
4. Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to ensure that Training Service Providers are on-board to provide skills training on occupations like PPE sewing operators, finishing, cutting and packing, line supervisor, numerically controlled machine operator and medical goods merchandiser.
5. Currently there are three Training Service Providers under Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) who are providing skills training on healthcare and pharmaceutical occupations in Dhaka and Barisal. As a response to the surge in demand for pharmaceutical sector occupations; Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to expand training services in other districts across Bangladesh.

# 5.2

## ICT AND E-COMMERCE

There are over 1500 companies in Bangladesh involved in software development and IT services. Moreover, these firms are hiring additional IT consultants, software developers, backend developers, front end developers and technical support engineers due to increasing demand for IT services. Moreover, as companies' transition to working from home; many of them are investing to improve their operations and move towards digitalization of many services. This is creating approximately 10,000 new jobs in the IT and Tech companies around Bangladesh. Companies in this sector are hiring web developers, technical support engineers, application developers, front end developers and software engineers to meet increasing demand for IT services by firms. Also, E-commerce services have witnessed increased demand during this pandemic. E-commerce platforms like Daraz, Bikroy and Clicko have been hiring new employees due to increase in demand



**ICT TECHNOLOGY**  
ISOMETRIC

**Uber  
Eats**



**Chaldal**  
.com

for home deliveries. Moreover, B2C e-commerce platforms like Pathao, Chaldal, Daraz have seen a surge in demand for home deliveries. Online grocery stores are experiencing double-digit growths in online deliveries with Chaldal delivering 18,000-20,000 packages per day on average; which is a sharp jump from average of 4,000-5,000 deliveries per day before the lockdown. Companies like Pathao and UBER Eats have extended their food delivery services to include groceries and other items. They have collaborated with retailers like Shwapno, UniMart to include their products in their delivery services. Occupations like food delivery man, product delivery man, delivery manager, and supply and logistics coordinator have emerged. Moreover, this has created over 15,000 jobs in e-commerce and home delivery services sector. As this sector lies on contractual employment, the sudden outflow of workers from the city and surge in demand has led to a serious workforce shortage; making these companies bound to hire. Also, occupations like Purchase and Inventory Management, E-Commerce Marketing Coordinator, Rich Content Developer, E-Commerce Project Manager, Web Designer, C# Developer, etc. are creating thousands of new jobs. Some other emerging occupations include: artificial intelligence specialist, site reliability engineer, data engineer, cyber security specialist, big data developer, full stack engineer, robotics engineer, cloud engineer, block chain engineer and python developer. Organizations like E-Cab and BACCO have announced that thousands of new jobs will be created in the sector in the near future. In total, by the end of 2021, it is expected that 0.65 million jobs will be created in ICT and E-Commerce sector.

| Occupations                                       | Jobs To Be Created by End of Year 2020 |
|---|--|
| IT Consultants                                    | 3,000                                  |
| Software Developers                               | 7,000                                  |
| Back End and Front End Developers                 | 8,000                                  |
| Technical Support Engineers                       | 4,500                                  |
| E-Commerce Marketing Coordinator                  | 6,000                                  |
| Rich Content Developer                            | 4,000                                  |
| E-Commerce Project Manager                        | 3,000                                  |
| Robotics Engineer                                 | 200                                    |
| Python Developer                                  | 3,000                                  |
| Artificial Intelligence Specialist                | 4,000                                  |
| Block Chain Engineer                              | 7,000                                  |
| Full Stack Engineer                               | 4,000                                  |
| Data Engineer                                     | 10,000                                 |
| Big Data Developer                                | 5,000                                  |
| Site Reliability Engineer                         | 7,000                                  |
| Cloud Engineer                                    | 8,000                                  |
| Cyber Security Specialist                         | 10,000                                 |
| Web Designer                                      | 8,500                                  |
| C# Developer                                      | 9,000                                  |
| Food Delivery Manager                             | 3,000                                  |
| Product Delivery Manager                          | 5,000                                  |
| Food Delivery Man                                 | 13,000                                 |
| Product Delivery Man                              | 16,000                                 |
| Order Placement and Coordination Manager          | 1,000                                  |
| Call Center Operators (Food and Product Delivery) | 5,000                                  |
| Product Purchase and Inventory Management         | 15,000                                 |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b>                         | <b>1,69,200</b>                        |

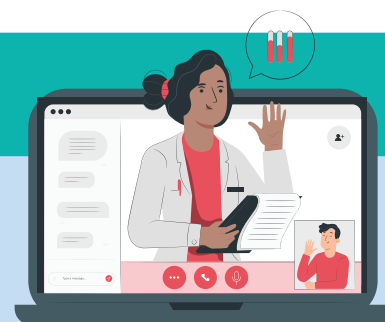


## 5.2.1

# RECOMMENDATIONS: ICT & E-COMMERCE

1. As ICT and e-commerce is one of the emerging sectors, there is a pressing need to create a database through National Skills Portal. Therefore, the ICT Division in collaboration with Bangladesh Association of Software & Information Services (BASIS), e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB) and Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to work together to build this database.
2. There are more than 150 Training Service Providers registered under Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) who provide ICT based market driven skills training. It is essential for Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) to orient the Training Service Providers on the newly emerging occupations which is the result of increasing demand in this sector during COVID-19 situation.
3. There is already an increasing demand for online transactions and online communication. Moreover, the demand will keep surging post-lockdown; therefore, Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to anticipate, identify and assess demand for occupations like data security and network security.
4. The unemployed workers in freelance driving (Uber, Pathao, etc.) can be redeployed under delivery man occupation in ICT and e-commerce sector. Moreover, e-Commerce Association of Bangladesh (e-CAB) needs to take initiative to equip these workers with the necessary skills.

## 5.3 HEALTHCARE SERVICES



The global outbreak has taken a toll on the mental health of people. Also, as hospitals are overwhelmed with COVID-19 patients, many people are seeking online healthcare services. The digital e-health service industry is facing a surge in phone call consultations with Telenor health reporting 30% increase in phone consultation services. Organizations like Praava Health launch a low-cost video consultation services to tackle the upsurge in healthcare advice in demand.

Additionally, government has taken initiatives to ensure online healthcare through its COVID-19 hotlines and other healthcare initiatives online. Furthermore, this has created approximately 20,000 new jobs in private sector across online healthcare sector in Bangladesh. Moreover, organizations like PHWC (Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic), Mayalogy Limited, Praava Health are hiring counselors, IT experts, data managers, etc. to respond to overwhelming demand for healthcare including telehealth and counselling services. Moreover, various roles like telehealth consultant, mental health coordinator, online doctor and online counsellor is being created which will in turn produce thousands of new jobs. Also, as the outbreak evolves; we will require more medical equipment and along with that the demand for installation, maintenance and operation technicians will increase. Moreover, there is an increasing demand for biomedical technicians along with other technicians which has the potential to create additional 128,000 by the end of this year.



| Occupations                       | Jobs To Be Created by End of Year 2020 |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Online Counsellors                | 20,000                                 |
| Data Manager                      | 18,000                                 |
| Biomedical technicians            | 128,000                                |
| Maintenance/Operation Technicians | 45,000                                 |
| Telehealth Consultant             | 16,000                                 |
| Online Doctors                    | 13,000                                 |
| Mental Health Coordinator         | 10,000                                 |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b>         | <b>250,000</b>                         |

## 5.3.1

### RECOMMENDATIONS: HEALTHCARE SERVICES

1. Currently there are three Training Service Providers under Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) who are providing skills training on caregiver occupations in Dhaka and Barisal. As a response to the surge in demand for caregiver occupations; Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to expand training services in other districts across Bangladesh.
2. In order to assess and respond to industry demands; an Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to be formed by the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA).
3. Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) needs to form an association which brings all the industries of this sector under one umbrella.
4. Train call center operators, government doctors and other healthcare professionals to ensure improved efficiency and smooth transition into online healthcare services.
5. Work closely with counsellors to ensure they train other people to be para counsellors. Moreover, para counsellors or lay counsellors are not professionally trained counsellors. Teachers and opinion leaders in rural areas need to be trained through Muktopaath ([muktopaath.gov.bd](http://muktopaath.gov.bd)) to become para counsellors. Furthermore, ensuring accessibility of counselling services in rural areas may play an instrumental role in reducing domestic violence; which is on the rise during this lockdown.
6. Train retired doctors and develop their capacity to provide online healthcare services.
7. Bangladesh has no proper medical equipment technician; there is dearth of knowledge and skills related to handling and fixing medical equipment. Therefore, Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to work closely with its registered Training Service Providers to ensure that adequate skills training is provided for this occupation.



## 5.4 AGRO-FOOD



The demand for essential goods is already surging and after lockdowns end; the demand for all agro products will increase. Furthermore, items like lentils, processed masala, and rice are being produced on a large scale due to increasing demand but there is lack of manpower and logistical issues that halts distribution of these products. Therefore, after lockdowns are lifted these workers will be redeployed to essential goods production and distribution. Also, as demand for agricultural goods surges post-lockdown it will create additional 130,000 jobs in essential goods production. The demand for essential goods has created new jobs in agricultural and food processing service sector. This sector can contribute to reducing unemployment post COVID-19 as there is ample demand for workers. Moreover, new occupations like hot water treatment plant operator, dehydration plant operator, packaging operator and dry section operator are creating thousands of jobs in this sector. Production units like vegetable grading, food grading, packaging operator will require lots of new workers due to increased demand of agricultural and food products. Moreover, due to high standards of food security and hygiene in this sector, workers must go through a rigorous sensitization and training process. There are agro-business industries like agrochemicals, seeds, and farm machinery; separate policy to further bolster these aspects. The government needs to invest in digital platforms for this emerging sector. Moreover, these digital platforms can drive overall productivity and efficiency in the sector; investing in digitalization can ensure better traceability of supply chains, data-driven advisory to farmers and tracking of vendor payments.

Image Source © Arham Hossen Abir



| Occupations                        | Jobs To Be Created by End of Year 2020 |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Essential Goods Farmers            | 130,000                                |
| Processing                         | 39,000                                 |
| Hot Water Treatment Plant Operator | 23,000                                 |
| Dehydration Plant Operator         | 8,000                                  |
| Contact farmers                    | 6,000                                  |
| Packaging Operator                 | 20,000                                 |
| Dry Section Operator               | 9,000                                  |
| Food Technologist                  | 2,000                                  |
| Food Chemist                       | 5,000                                  |
| Vegetable Grading                  | 5,000                                  |
| Fruit Grading                      | 5,000                                  |
| Farmers                            | 40,000                                 |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b>          | <b>292,000</b>                         |

## 5.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS: AGRO FOOD

1. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA), Bangladesh Agro-based Product Producers & Merchants Association (BAPMA), Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to develop a database for emerging jobs in this sector through National Skills Portal. Moreover, National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to provide guidance in this regard.
2. There are three sub-sectors in agro-food sector – food production, processing and distribution. The Industry Skills Council (ISC) mainly focuses on food processing but they also need to focus on food production and distribution. The National Skills Development Authority needs to provide guidance in this regard.
3. Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB) needs to ensure that their Training Service Providers offer skills training on occupations like essential goods farming, processing, hot water treatment plant operator, dehydration plant operator, contact farming, packaging operator, dry section operator, food technologist, food chemist, vegetable grading, fruit grading and harvest machine operator.

Image Source © Arham Hossen Abir




- 
4. Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) needs to play a leading role to introduce short-courses on the emerging occupations based on the market demand in this COVID-19 situation.
  5. There is an increasing need to develop marketing standards in this emerging sector. Moreover, due to increasing demand for agro-food; it is essential to strengthen marketing and distribution efforts. Therefore, it provides an opportunity for people working in marketing department of other sectors to join this sector.
  6. Both public and private Training Service Providers need to focus on reskilling workers for automation in packaging.
  7. Due to high demand, many agro-food industries are actively operating during COVID-19. Therefore, it is essential that the workers are provided training on safety, hygiene and safe handling of products.
  8. In response to the increasing demand for agro-food; it is essential to train and develop food technologists. Moreover, these technologists will have knowledge about chemistry, biology and microbiology; which will in turn enhance their knowledge about processing special agro-food categories and industrial practice.
  9. The government needs to leverage financial and policy support to ensure increased production of agricultural equipment locally as there is high demand for automated processes in this sector.
  10. The Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) needs to provide institutional support to farmers through contact farming by connecting the supply chain including farmer, middleman, wholesaler, retailer and consumer.
  11. In case of processed agro-food products, packaging plays an important role in influencing purchase decision. Most foreign agro-food products have superior packaging and Bangladeshi products have lower quality packaging. Therefore, the government needs to decrease VAT on import of packaging related materials so that local agro-food companies can increase sales through attractive packaging.
  12. Government can ensure minimum price protection for farmers to enable them to continue production for next season.
  13. The goods produced by the local farmers needs to be channeled through Ekshop ([ekshop.gov.bd](http://ekshop.gov.bd)) for better distribution.

Image Source © Arham Hossen Abir



## 5.5 CREATIVE MEDIA



Amidst the lockdown many restaurants and hotels are providing home delivery services. Moreover, as companies transition and focus on selling their products virtually; the demand for better advertising and digital marketing services has increased. Moreover, companies which are not in the food business are also trying to improve their online presence and are seeking help of advertising agencies and digital marketers to enhance build their brand image online.

Moreover, this has created at least 10,000 freelance jobs in this sector as many digital marketing designers are working from home. The occupations being created are digital marketing consultant, digital content creator, social media coordinator, content designer, digital branding manager and digital campaign manager. The sub-sectors of creative media sector includes: advertising and marketing, design (graphic, interior and fashion), media (film, TV, video, radio, photography), IT (interactive leisure software), heritage (museums, galleries, libraries), music (performing and visual arts), publishing, architecture and interior design. Many of these sub-sectors will produce new jobs like digital marketing consultant, video editor and graphics designer, digital content creator, etc. As offices look to re-design their offices for social distancing, it is creating some additional work for interior designing firms who are hiring new employees and creating some new jobs. It is estimated that additional 1000 interior designing jobs will be created by the end of the year 2020. Moreover, more firms are communicating with their audience and bolstering their online presence through interactive videos; which in turn is creating more work for production houses. Therefore, production houses and advertising firms are hiring additional editors and graphic designers for video editing and info graphics. Moreover, advertising firms are coping up with creative advertisement concepts for leading organizations who are promoting their products online. It is estimated that 20,000 additional jobs will be created in production and advertising sub-sector by the end of the year 2020.

| Occupations                                 | Jobs To Be Created by End of Year 2020 |
|---|--|
| Digital Marketing Consultant                | 1,000                                  |
| Freelancer (Designers and Content Creators) | 10,000                                 |
| Interior Designer                           | 1000                                   |
| Video Editor and Graphics Designer          | 3000                                   |
| Digital Content Creator                     | 2,000                                  |
| Digital Campaign Manager                    | 1,000                                  |
| Digital Branding Manager                    | 1,000                                  |
| Social Media Coordinator                    | 1,000                                  |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b>                   | <b>20,000</b>                          |

## 5.5.1

### RECOMMENDATIONS: CREATIVE MEDIA

1. Employees working in marketing, customer service, bookings and reservations in various job loss sectors can be shifted to creative media sector.
2. Some of the unemployed workers in furniture sector can be shifted to interior design occupation which is part of creative media sector.
3. Many buildings have interior with intricate woodwork designs; therefore, there is demand for skilled woodwork technicians.
4. Industry Skills Council (ISC) needs to communicate with industries to assess market demand of emerging occupations in the COVID-19 situation.
5. National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) needs to play an instrumental role in developing capacity and ensuring increased activity of Industry Skills Council (ISC).

## NUMBER OF NEW JOBS CREATED BY 2020

| Sector                    | Number of New Jobs by 2020     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pharmaceuticals           | 51,000                         |
| ICT and E-Commerce        | 1,69,200                       |
| Healthcare Services       | 250,000                        |
| Agro Food                 | 292,000                        |
| Creative Media            | 20,000                         |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b> | <b>7,82,200 (0.78 million)</b> |

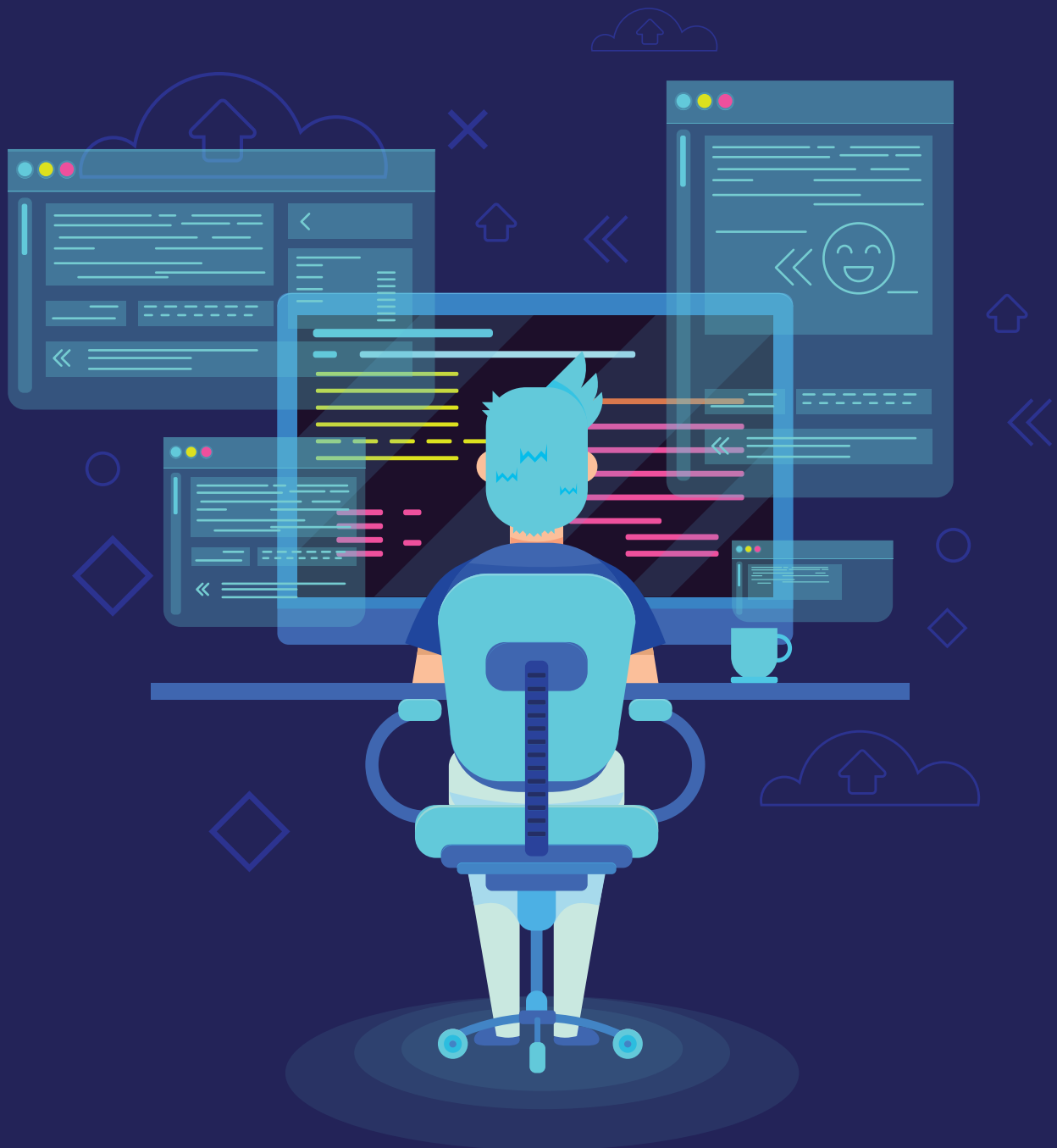
## NUMBER OF NEW JOBS CREATED BY 2021

| Sector                    | Number of New Jobs by 2021     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pharmaceuticals           | 4,50,000                       |
| ICT and E-Commerce        | 6,50,000                       |
| Healthcare Services       | 9,50,000                       |
| Agro Food                 | 1,000,000                      |
| Creative Media            | 90,000                         |
| <b>Total Jobs Created</b> | <b>3,140,000 (3.1 million)</b> |

Note: These assumptions are made considering that the economy will open/resume by 1st July, 2020. The numbers may evolve as the situation is very fluid and dependent upon multiple factors.



# HIGH DEMAND JOB SKILLS – THE POST-CORONAVIRUS WORLD



As the COVID-19 pandemic tightens its grip, the world economies are crumbling and the aftermath is already starting to become visible. Although there is unpredictability surrounding the situation and future of many businesses are in jeopardy. We still wonder what a post-coronavirus world will look like. It is still unknown how the world will transform once the virus is under control, but it is likely that we will see major changes. Furthermore, it is extremely unlikely that things will go back to exactly the way they were before. Therefore, our workplaces and the way we work are likely to change and along with it the skills required will also change. These are the top 8 skills that are likely to be in high demand in a post-coronavirus world:



## ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

It is certain that coronavirus will change the way we work; it will have an impact on how companies operate. The pandemic has accelerated changes to a world of work which was already rapidly changing. Therefore, employees may require to change jobs or learn new skills to adapt new roles. The adaptability to ever evolving workplaces and the ability to constantly refresh skills will play a pivotal role in determining the success of employees at work.

# TECH SAVVINESS

Having technology skills will significantly boost employability chances in a post-coronavirus world. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of businesses and global supply chains; as they hastily fast-track digital transformations to ensure more resilience to future outbreaks or disruptions. Therefore, it holds implications that technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, virtual/augmented reality, and robotics will make businesses more resilient. Moreover, any sort of technological know-how will put employees in a greater bargaining position post COVID-19. Technology will be embraced by every industry; either on a small or large scale. Therefore, it should be a priority for people to focus being tech-savvy and be able to work tech tools effectively.

# CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

As the pandemic tightens its grip on the world; creativity and innovation has taken the driving seat. Many businesses are adapting by providing additional services, shifting to making new products or making their products/services available virtually. For instance, companies like Mercedes F1 have shifted from making racing cars to innovative breathing aids. In the UK, an app called Streetify decided to bring high street shopping at the doorstep of shoppers. They launched an e-commerce platform connecting consumers with local stores to help businesses stay afloat. In Bangladesh, apps like Pathao have innovated extending their services to deliver groceries and medicines by connecting with retailers like Unimart, Shwapno and local pharmacies. In a world reshaped by coronavirus, employees with higher creativity and innovation are more likely to succeed. The human imagination required to invent, visualize new products and innovative ways of working will be highly valued by companies.

# CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is another skill which will be highly valued by companies as global economy rebuilds itself in the aftermath of the pandemic. During this pandemic, fake news and misrepresentations of data and studies have spiked up. It is important to have access to reliable data and studies to make informed business decisions. Therefore, people with the ability to objectively evaluate and scrutinize information from diverse sources to determine what is credible will be highly valued.

<sup>49</sup> Forbes (2020) Job Skills to Succeed in a Post-Coronavirus World, Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmar-r/2020/04/17/8-job-skills-to-succeed-in-a-post-coronavirus-world/#60b95d712096> (Accessed: 1st May 2020).

<sup>50</sup> Spring Wise (2020) 7 Innovative Business Ideas in Response to Coronavirus, Available at: <https://www.springwise.com/innovation-snapshot/coronavirus-business-ideas> (Accessed: 1st May 2020).



# DIGITAL AND CODING SKILLS

As coronavirus locked down two thirds of the world population, companies went through robust digital transformations. Furthermore, this highlighted the importance of people who can keep business running and thriving despite the economic downturns or pandemics; and people with such skills will be highly sought after in the post-coronavirus world of work. Therefore, professionals with digital skills including but not limited to coding, web development and digital marketing will become highly valued.

# LEADERSHIP

In a post-coronavirus world, maintaining social distancing and working from home might continue for the foreseeable future. Therefore, employees at all levels will be working remotely; leading teams while pushing for teamwork mindset and keeping employees motivated will be challenging. There is also high possibility that people will be working in affluent teams and different people will take the lead at different times. Therefore, professionals with leadership skills like inspiring employees, motivating them to give their best and encouraging collaboration will be in high demand at workplaces around the globe.

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Typically, intelligence was measured by IQ tests but modern businesses have stressed on the importance of emotional intelligence to succeed at the workplace. Emotional intelligence is the ability to be aware of, express and control emotions and be aware of others' emotion. Moreover, in challenging and uncertain times like a pandemic; people with high EQ are in an advantageous position. Individuals with strong EQ will be sought after by organizations of all sizes and in all industries.

# COMMITMENT TO A LIFETIME OF LEARNING:

There is no doubt that the world will go through major changes post-coronavirus. The world of work will change significantly and employees who are successful will have to be committed to continuous learning. Moreover, in a tight job market; professionals with advanced and expert job skills will be in high demand and are less likely to remain unemployed. Therefore, it is essential to start learning new skills and commit to a lifetime of learning so that we are always one step ahead of the others. Learning has been made easier in the technological forefront with many open courses, free tutorials, online degrees that can help individuals improve their skills.

## 6.1 HARNESSING THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

According to World Economic Forum, collective intelligence and technology can help developing countries by offering valuable insight into the pandemic and providing implications on efficient responses. Collective intelligence is a shared group of intelligence which emerges from collective and collaborative efforts of individuals and groups. The government can form collective intelligence platforms in different capacities like government policy makers, frontline and emergency responders, and experts from various industries and so on. For instance, frontline workers and emergency responders could use existing technology like Frontline SMS to report on missing or low supplies of key medical equipment and the information could go to a common website. Moreover, the data can be displayed on a map, showing shortage locations. This would enable governments to access information readily and see the needs of various health facilities. It would allow them to estimate existing capacity in real-time and make quick decisions to address gaps in healthcare. Moreover, it can also allow businesses, humanitarian agencies and local manufacturers to respond where supplies are low.

Moreover, the platform can be replicated in other areas like policy making to recognize real-time gaps and quickly drive resources to address those gaps. This can also be replicated in emerging sectors like agro-food to create a holistic real-time information repository and allow better connectivity between suppliers and producers. Also due to the evolving pace of the pandemic, data shared through peer-reviewed journal articles is often too slow and healthcare systems must mobilize the collective intelligence of healthcare professionals and humanitarian agencies across the world. This will speed up the generation and distribution of knowledge. The skills portal of government can play a crucial role in gathering collective intelligence through ensuring real time data updates between the supply side (training institutes) and demand side (industry). Moreover, the focus should also be to ensure that the collective intelligence platform considers the human aspect as well; therefore, the focus should be on developing Human Centered Collection Intelligence Platform (HCCI).

<sup>51</sup> World Economic Forum (2020) 5 ways collective intelligence can help beat coronavirus in developing countries, Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/five-ways-collective-intelligence-can-help-beat-coronavirus-in-developing-countries/> (Accessed: 13th May 2020).

## 6.2 CONCLUSION

This report gathered data about jobs lost in high impact sectors and also jobs created in the emerging sectors. All the data, policy recommendations and perspectives shared in the report can be compared and analyzed by policy makers and government actors to create a holistic strategy to redeploy the unemployed people from job loss sectors into emerging sectors. In 11 high-impact sectors there will be significant job loss throughout this year and next year. On the other hand, in 5 emerging sectors approximately 3.9 million jobs will be created by 2021. Moreover, the government needs to focus on creating entrepreneurship ecosystem in the coming years as the number of jobs lost far exceeds the number of jobs created. The entrepreneurship ecosystem includes the following:



Picture source: <https://www.idlc.com/purnota.php>



The government needs to have policies to motivate new entrepreneurs to join emerging sector and encourage self-employment. Organizations like Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI), Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), Department of Youth Development (DYD), Department of Cooperative (DOC), Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Center (BITAC), Small & Medium Enterprise Foundation (SMEF), Amar Bari Amar Khamar Project, Dhaka Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI) and National Association of Small and Cottage Industries of Bangladesh (NASCIB) and Bangladesh Engineering Industry Owners Association (BEIOA) can play an instrumental role in driving and creating entrepreneurship.

Informal sector and SME have suffered tremendous job loss and the government needs a comprehensive plan to revive this sector. Moreover, the government needs to work closely with private sector, NGOs and development partners to revive the informal sector and SME. Furthermore, the government needs to analyze how other countries have formalized their informal sector and our country can learn from these experiences to implement similar initiatives.

A large number of migrant workers have returned to Bangladesh and the number of returnee migrants in Bangladesh will keep on increasing throughout this year and next year. Therefore, the government needs to create a holistic plan regarding their reintegration. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment needs focus on accommodating returnee migrants in three areas: entrepreneurship, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and remigration. The National Skills Portal developed by a2i can play an instrumental role in registering returnee migrants and developing a comprehensive database.

It is essential to embrace collective intelligence platform to develop a real-time data sharing repository which collects data from both demand and supply side; for skills and employment. The government has already developed National Skills Portal; but the portal needs to be revamped to ensure real-time data is collected from both demand and supply side. Furthermore, this initiative will make the government more flexible and enable them to take quicker decisions.

The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) under the Prime Minister Office (PMO) has been established to coordinate the skills development efforts of 23 ministries. Furthermore, the ministries need to ensure demand driven skills in accordance with the demand for post COVID-19 jobs. The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) can play a significant role in this regard.

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