

## **Workplace Inclusion for the Persons with Disabilities in Dhaka, Bangladesh: Exploring the Context from Vocational Training Perspective**

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**Abstract:** *This study examines workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, focusing on the role of vocational training in enhancing employability and fostering inclusive work environments. Despite legal frameworks like the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013) and international commitments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), PWDs in Bangladesh face significant barriers to employment, including limited access to education, vocational training, and workplace accommodations, as well as societal stigma and discrimination. The study aims to explore current workplace inclusion practices, identify challenges faced by PWDs, and assess how vocational training can prepare and retain PWDs in the workforce. Using a qualitative approach, the study conducted 18 interviews with PWDs, their colleagues, and workplace authorities, along with one focus group discussion (FGD) involving vocational training instructors. Thematic analysis revealed that while workplace accessibility has improved with ramps, Braille-enabled lifts, and assistive technologies, these adaptations are not universally available. PWDs actively participate in workplace activities but face challenges in communication, promotion, and acceptance. Vocational training programs are crucial for preparing PWDs for employment, but there is a mismatch between training curricula and job requirements, and a lack of follow-up support post-placement. Key barriers to inclusion include inadequate infrastructure, employer reluctance to hire PWDs, limited awareness programs, and initial resistance or bullying from coworkers. Vocational training centers often fail to provide sufficient post-placement support, leaving trainees to navigate workplace challenges independently. The study recommends establishing clear disability-inclusive recruitment policies, improving physical accessibility, implementing accessible communication methods, and conducting regular disability awareness training. Vocational training programs should align with industry needs, incorporate soft skills training, and provide ongoing support to trainees and employers. By addressing these gaps, organizations can create more inclusive workplaces, empowering PWDs and contributing to a diverse, productive workforce. This study highlights the importance of vocational training and calls for greater collaboration among stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of workplace inclusion policies, moving Bangladesh closer to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*

**Keywords:** *Workplace Inclusion, Persons with Disabilities, Vocational Training, Special Education, SDG.*

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## 1. Introduction

In 1948, United Nations declared the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and as per the declaration the right to work is a fundamental human right (United Nations, 1948, Article 23). Access to employment is essential for every individual, including persons with disabilities (PWDs), as it enables social inclusion and economic independence. Ensuring equal employment opportunities for PWDs is not just a legal obligation but also a moral and social responsibility. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) emphasizes the importance of an open, accessible, and inclusive workplace to support the right to work for individuals with special needs (United Nations, 2006, Article 27). Discrimination based on disability should not exist in any aspect of employment, including recruitment, job continuity, career advancement, and workplace safety. Without such protections, PWDs remain at risk of exclusion and economic marginalization.

According to the World Health Organization (n.d.), 130 crore (1.3 billion) people around the world are living with disabilities, which is 16% of the world's total population. This means that 1 in 6 people are living with a disability. As per the National Population and Housing Census 2022 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2023) 1.37% of the total population are living with disabilities, amounting to 22,62,674 people. According to the National Survey on Persons with Disabilities (NSPD) 2021, 2.80% of the total population are living with disabilities (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Employment plays a crucial role in enhancing an individual's dignity, self-esteem, and overall well-being. When workplaces are inclusive, they foster diversity, create a sense of belonging, and drive productivity. The International Labour Organization (ILO) highlights that inclusive employment policies benefit not only individuals with disabilities but also the broader workforce and society as a whole (ILO, 2019). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development says that disability should not stop anyone from getting development programs or enjoying their rights. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have seven targets for people with disabilities and six more for vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities (World Bank, n.d.).

According to the Labour Force Survey 2022, just 27.29% of people with disabilities aged 15 and older were employed. The National Survey on Persons with Disabilities 2021 reports a slightly higher employment rate of 33.78%. The Labour Force Survey 2022 also shows that the highest number of employed persons with disabilities work in agriculture (52.61%), followed by the service sector (36.71%) and the industry sector (11.13%). Only 12.81% of people with disabilities are employed in formal jobs, while 87.19% work in informal jobs. Around 80.91% of individuals with disabilities do not have the basic educational qualifications needed to join vocational training institutes. Only a small number (0.21%) receive vocational training, and the participation of women with disabilities in these programs is even lower (0.13%). Negative views and stereotypes often prevent people with disabilities from securing employment. The lack of necessary accommodations, along with limited opportunities for skill development, quality education, and vocational training, makes it even more difficult for them to access education and obtain jobs (The Daily Star, 2024).

In Bangladesh, the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act (2013) ensures workplace inclusion and non-discrimination. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) often face significant challenges when seeking employment, particularly in Bangladesh and other developing countries. These challenges include accessibility barriers, limited job opportunities, and a lack of employer awareness (Razzaque & Hasan, 2024; Momin, 2004). Vocational training programs play a key role in preparing PWDs for employment, helping them gain skills and confidence (Rahman, 2024).

Vocational training helps people with disabilities become less dependent on family or government support by helping them find stable jobs. A study by UNICEF (2020) showed that individuals who completed vocational training programs experienced greater financial independence, which improved their overall quality of life (UNICEF, 2020). Vocational training also allows people with disabilities to contribute to society in a more meaningful way. The World Bank (2021) states that investing in vocational education for persons with disabilities not only benefits the individuals but also strengthens the economy by reducing dependence on government support and increasing diversity in the workforce (World Bank, 2021).

### **1.1 Rational of the Study**

This study is imperative since, even though Bangladesh has laws to include people with disabilities (PWDs) in the workplace, it's unclear how well these laws are being followed. Many workplaces are not accessible, and employers may not have the assets to make essential changes. Negative attitudes also prevent PWDs from being hired, and many lack the skills needed for jobs. Furthermore, there is little linking between employers and vocational training centers, making it harder for PWDs to find suitable jobs and maintain long-term employment. Vocational training is key to preparing people with disabilities for long-term, sustainable jobs. This study aims to explore current practices for forming inclusive workplaces, identify the challenges PWDs face at work, and examine how vocational training can help them secure long-term employment.

### **1.2 Limited Research on Workplace Inclusion Practices in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has policies that support workplace inclusion, but there is limited research on how these policies are actually practiced in workplaces. Most studies focus on the laws and policies themselves, not on how businesses hire and include people with disabilities. According to The Daily Star (2023), there is little research on how businesses in Bangladesh include people with disabilities in their workforce. Studies like the one by Mst. Reshma Parvin Nuri et al. (2021) show the impact of vocational training on employability. However, there is a lack of research evaluating the effectiveness of specific inclusion policies in workplaces, especially in Dhaka. More research is needed to explore how small and medium-sized businesses in Dhaka include people with disabilities. This research will help identify the challenges to achieving true inclusion in the workplace.

### 1.3 Barriers to Employment and Workplace Integration

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2022) transcripts that the specific employment challenges for people with disabilities in Bangladesh are not fully studied (ILO Report). A study on vocational training in Bangladesh found that 60% of participants with disabilities found jobs after training. Of them, 74% could improve their family's livelihood, 92% felt more socially accepted, and 83% saw better quality of life. However, 15% who didn't find work blamed training issues, 6% faced discrimination from employers, and 12% struggled with physical access (Mst. Reshma Parvin Nuri et al., 2021). More research is needed to explore the specific barriers faced by people with different disabilities in different jobs. This will help create better and more specific inclusive policies.

### 1.4 Underexplored Role of Vocational Training in Enhancing Employability

While studies like Newaz et al. (2021) highlight issues in vocational training in Bangladesh, they do not focus on how these programs help people with disabilities. The research mainly looks at general problems, such as poor planning and lack of skills, but does not discuss how vocational training can support people with special needs. There is a gap in understanding how vocational training can be designed to help people with disabilities find work.

### 1.5 Research Objectives

1. To understand the current practices related to workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities.
2. To identify the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in achieving workplace inclusion.
3. To comprehend the role of vocational training in preparing and retaining persons with disabilities for workplace inclusion.

## 2. Methodology

Instruments that used in this study were interview schedule and focus group discussion. By maintaining the interview schedule eighteen interviews were conducted, where eight interviews were conducted among the persons with disabilities (see table 1), six of them conducted among their colleagues and four of them conducted among their workplace authority. One focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in this study by maintaining proper FGD guidelines, where five vocational training center instructors joined the session as participant.

**Table 1:** Persons with Disabilities, Affiliated Organizations and Job Types

Sl	Types of Disabilities	Affiliated Organizations	Job Types
01	Person with intellectual disability	Internet service protocol company	Office assistant

02	Person with intellectual disability	Knitting manufacturing lab	Lab assistant
03	Person with hearing impairment	Educational institute	Office assistant
04	Person with hearing impairment	Educational institute	Office assistant
05	Person with hearing impairment	Educational institute	Office assistant
06	Person with visual impairment	Educational institute	Teaching staff
07	Person with physical disability	Knit composite factory	Machine operator
08	Person with physical disability	Knit composite factory	Machine operator

**Table 2:** Methodological Matrix

Research Questions	Data Type	Source of Data with Sample	Sampling Technique	Tools for Data Collection	Data Analysis Technique
What are the current practices related to workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities?	Qualitative	Interview (18) 1. Persons with disabilities (08) 2. Co-workers of the persons with disabilities (06) 3. Workplace authority (04)	Purposive sampling	Interview schedule, focus group discussion	Thematic analysis
What challenges do persons with disabilities face in achieving workplace inclusion?	Qualitative	FGD (01) 1. Vocational training center instructors (05 participants)	Purposive sampling	Interview schedule, focus group discussion	Thematic analysis
How does vocational training	Qualitative		Purposive sampling	Interview schedule, focus	Thematic analysis

contribute in preparing and retaining persons with disabilities for workplace inclusion?

group discussion

Purposive sampling technique was used in this study to collect qualitative data from samples. Purposive sampling is a nonprobability sampling. Usually, this sampling technique is used when the researchers have limited resources (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). After collecting qualitative data from interview and FGD, Braun & Clarke’s (2006) 6 steps of thematic analysis method was used for data analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes data set in detail (Boyatzis, 1998). At the first phase of thematic analysis data collected from interview and FGD were transcribed and by reviewing them initial codes were extracted. Then similar codes were combined and searching for themes started, where relevant code was gathered together. Then by reviewing themes many times a thematic map was generated. After some analysis, clear names for each theme generated. Then by the support of research questions and relevant literature final themes were generated in this study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After completing thematic data analysis, following themes and subthemes were generated:

**Table 3:** Theme and Subthemes with Key Points

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Key Points</b>
Current practices	Access	Infrastructural support and accessibility Workplace adaptations and assistive technology
	Active participation	Workplace participation and inclusion
	Achievement	Salary structure, promotion and increment Recommending co-worker as a support person
	Acceptance	Organizational policies and employment guidelines Co-workers’ attitude
Challenges	Access	Infrastructural support and accessibility Reluctance in hiring

	Active participation	Workplace communication and sign language
	Achievement	Promotion hinders by limited performance
	Acceptance	Limited awareness programs Initial resistance & bullying
Role of vocational training institute	Vocational training and workplace adaptation	Mismatch between training and job requirements Lack of follow-up and post-placement support Absence of job coach facilities

**Limitations of the Study:** Sample of this study was limited and they were selected only from Dhaka city, due to time shortage. Data were collected from only four types of persons with disabilities.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1: Current Practices of Workplace Inclusion for Persons with Disabilities

##### 3.1.1: Access

**Infrastructural support and accessibility:** Workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities in Dhaka has improved, especially in infrastructure and accessibility. Many offices now have ramps, lifts with Braille buttons, digital attendance systems, accessible washrooms and some of them offer transportation services. These changes help employees with disabilities move more easily and work comfortably. One participant shared,

*"I have a five-minute early pass to avoid the crowd. My company has provided an accessible toilet, and my supervisor ensures my workload is manageable"*

**Workplace adaptations and assistive technology:** Some offices have made efforts to improve the work environment for employees with disabilities. One organization provides assistive technology, like screen-reading software and voice command tools, to help employees perform their tasks effectively. Workspaces are designed to make movement easier, and special areas are set up for assistive devices like white canes. Despite improvements, these changes are not available everywhere. Through observation, the researcher found that employees with disabilities often have to request additional adjustments to meet their specific needs.

##### 3.1.2: Active Participation

**Workplace participation and inclusion:** Employees with disabilities actively participate in training, workshops, and company events. One participant shared,

*"my organization has a separate training wing, and they sent me there for training. Now I'm a machine operator"*

Employees with disabilities actively participate in social activities, such as picnics and celebrations, alongside their colleagues. Eight participants (PWD) mentioned joining these activities, and employers confirmed this involvement as well. In addition, most employees report receiving support from both coworkers and supervisors, which fosters a sense of inclusion and belonging in the workplace. However, inclusion practices vary. Some organizations have formal plans, while others offer informal support. Consistent approaches are needed for greater inclusion.

### 3.1.3: Achievement

Salary structure, promotion and increment: In terms of salary and other benefits, all four employers stated that their employees with disabilities receive the same salary and benefits as regular employees. One employer even mentioned,

*"In my organization, I offer food, accommodation, and medical support to my staff, so employees with disabilities also receive the same"*

All eight persons with disabilities and their colleagues also mentioned the same.

Recommending co-worker as a support person: One of the employers mentioned that soft skills and office decorum should be trained based on the office work system. She said,

*"a person with a disability needs supervision, so in my organization, I nominated a coworker to supervise him. However, we struggled to maintain his office decorum at times"*

From her answer, the researcher found that job supervisors are nominated in their workplace to make work easier for persons with disabilities. The other three organizations also align with this practice.

### 3.1.4: Acceptance

**Organizational policies and employment guidelines:** Four organizations in Dhaka mentioned that they follow the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013, and the Rules of 2015 to support workers with disabilities. This study revealed that two companies do not have specific policies regarding the hiring or support of employees with disabilities. There are no fixed guidelines on the number of persons with disabilities to be employed, nor are there structured job coaching or mentorship programs in place to assist them in the workplace. One company stated that its recruitment policy ensures equal employment opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race, religion, caste, or socio-economic background. However, beyond this general policy, there are no dedicated guidelines specifically addressing disability inclusion. An employee from this company shared,

*"apart from our recruitment policy, we do not have specific guidelines focused on disabilities. However, when we hire individuals with disabilities, we make efforts to create a suitable work environment for them. Additionally, we are working towards incorporating disability-inclusive policies into our company guidelines"*

Among the organizations surveyed, only one has a dedicated training wing that supports all employees, including those with disabilities. This organization ensures that

supervisors are well-informed and trained to provide necessary support, including workload management and workplace accommodations, to employees with disabilities.

Co-worker's attitude: Colleagues had different reactions to working with persons with disabilities. Out of eight employees, seven felt welcomed and supported. One employee shared,

*"my colleagues help me understand tasks. They are very caring and assist me in every way possible. Even our supervisor encourages them to guide me"*

However, one employee faced challenges with acceptance when she first joined. Most coworkers showed strong support and a willingness to help their colleagues with disabilities. An employer shared,

*"at first, our two hearing-impaired employees were not comfortable and hesitated to take on tasks. But with time, they adapted and became more involved"*

### **3.2: Challenges Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Achieving Workplace Inclusion**

#### **3.2.1: Access**

Infrastructural support and accessibility: While lifts have Braille buttons, they often lack voice announcements, making it hard for visually impaired employees to know their floor. One employee shared,

*"my workplace is welcoming, but a voice announcement in lifts would help. It's hard when the lift stops before my destination."*

Basic facilities like washrooms, canteens, basins, and switchboards are not always accessible according different disability. Employees with physical disabilities, including those with short stature, struggle with their height and placement. One employee admitted with shyness,

*"sometimes, ordering food at the canteen is difficult because the counter is too high for me."*

Another issue is that when employees shift to new departments, the accessibility may not be the same. This makes adjustment difficult and limits equal opportunities. While progress is visible, further improvements are needed to create a truly inclusive workplace.

Reluctance in hiring: Four organizations participated this research showed interest but found it hard to match job roles with candidates' abilities. A vocational trainer shared,

*"very few organizations are willing to hire persons with disabilities. Even if they are interested, they often struggle to create roles that fit their skills."*

#### **3.2.2: Active Participation**

Workplace communication & sign language: Two organizations have made their workplaces more inclusive by using written communication for employees with hearing impairments. One organization shared that they use writing because their hearing-impaired employee has good literacy skills. Another organization explained,

*“we cannot place individuals with special needs in every department because not all teams are prepared to communicate with them effectively”*

### **3.2.3: Achievement**

Promotion hinders by limited performance: The researcher found that one participant with a disability reported doing his best in his role. However, he believed that his work area might be limited due to his disability, may be the reason he has not received a promotion compared to his colleagues. He stated,

*“my colleagues who joined with me are receiving promotions, but I haven't”*

### **3.2.4: Acceptance**

**Limited awareness programs:** The research found a lack of structured awareness programs for workplace inclusion. Two organizations said they have no internal programs for disability inclusion. One organization celebrates national disability awareness days and special events but does not provide regular training. Instead, coworkers are simply told to offer support when needed. One employer said,

*“we place employees with disabilities in teams where colleagues are more accepting and can communicate with them easily.”*

One organization asked supervisors to support employees with disabilities and inform their teams. But they do not have a formal awareness program.

**Initial resistance and bullying:** The researcher found mixed levels of acceptance for people with disabilities in the workplace. One employee with a disability shared that they faced bullying and exclusion when they first joined. She said,

*“at first, my colleagues treated me differently, and I faced some bullying. But once they learned about my background, their attitude changed, and they started supporting me.”*

This suggests that awareness and understanding play a significant role in fostering inclusion.

## **3.3: Role of Vocational Training Institute for Persons with Disabilities**

### **3.3.1: Vocational Training and Workplace Adaptation**

**Mismatch between training and job requirements:** Vocational training centers help individuals prepare for jobs, but many trainees find it hard to adjust to real work environments. A vocational training graduate who now works as a lab assistant shared,

*“at the training center, I learned many tasks, but they were not exactly the same as my workplace. However, my office trained me, and now I can do all my work.”*

A vocational trainer highlighted the importance of a structured transition process. He said,

*“trainees need time to practice their work in the workplace before starting their jobs. At first, they should have less time, then gradually more time. Once they get used to the*

*work and the environment, they should be placed in their roles. Right now, they only get a few days for this transition, which makes it difficult for them at the beginning”*

**Lack of follow-up and post-placement support:** Researchers found that most training centers do not have a clear follow-up system to support trainees after they start working. Four trainers shared that vocational center don't regularly check in with their trainees. One trainer explained,

*“parents often step in when trainees face issues at work. The vocational center then gets involved to help solve the problem”*

Another trainer pointed out the need for better communication with employers, said,

*“when we place a trainee at a job, we give the employer an initial briefing. But there is no formal document about the trainee's needs.”*

**Absence of job coach facilities:** Among four employer one of the employers mentioned some challenges she faced in retaining persons with disabilities in her organization. She said,

*“some persons with disabilities have sensory challenges and behavioral issues, and as regular people, we don't always know how to handle them, so sometimes it becomes difficult to manage them.”*

She also mentioned job coaching support from vocational training institutes, where employers can get supervision services in times of problem escalation.

#### **4. Discussion**

Based on the three research objectives of this study, this section represents discussions and suggests some recommendation. The first research objective of this study covers the current practices related to workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities; the second research objective covers the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in achieving workplace inclusion and the third research objective covers the role of vocational training in preparing and retaining persons with disabilities for workplace inclusion. Based on these three research objectives discussion and recommendations are mentioned below.

Considering research objective one, it was found that from the perspective of access, workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities in Dhaka has improved. Where many offices currently have ramps, lifts with Braille buttons, digital attendance systems, accessible washrooms and some of them offer transportation services. Which is similar to another study (CSID, 2016), where they also found improvement in workplaces for the persons with disabilities. It was found that some offices have made efforts to improve the work environment for employees with disabilities. They designed their workspaces to make movement easier. But these changes are not available everywhere. From the perspective of active participation, it was found that employees with disabilities actively participate in training, workshops and office recreational activities. From the perspective of achievement, it was found that employees with disabilities receive the same salary and benefits as regular employees. Which was also similar to another study, where they mentioned about persons with disabilities who were receiving equal privileges (BRAC

James P Grant School of Public Health, 2022). From the perspective of acceptance, it was found that few employees faced challenges with acceptance when they first joined. Most coworkers showed strong support and a willingness to help their colleagues with disabilities. It was also found that some organizations follow existing government acts and policies for persons with disabilities, some of the statement of those acts and policies are related to workplace inclusion. But there is no dedicated inclusive employment government policy for the persons with disabilities (BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, 2022). On the other hand there are few organizations who do not have any specific policies regarding workplace inclusion, they follow general policy and guidelines for all employees.

Considering research objective two, challenges of workplace inclusion were identified. From the perspective of access, it was found that basic facilities such as washrooms, canteens, switchboards are not always accessible for persons with disabilities. Similar finding was found in another study where they mentioned lack of accessible infrastructure, lack of having inclusive technologies worked as crucial factors (BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, 2022). They also face difficulties when they transferred to new departments, which limits equal opportunities. Sometimes workplace authority show interest to recruit persons with disabilities but they do not find appropriate candidate according to job demands. But it was found from another study that some employers have a negative perception about recruiting persons with disabilities in their workplaces as many of them believe that they are not as capable as persons without disabilities (BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, 2022). From the perspective of active participation, it was found that sometimes co-workers face difficulties to communicate with person with disability if mode of communication is not verbal. But there are few organizations who made their workplace inclusive by using alternative communication strategy. From the perspective of achievement, it was found that limited work ability due to disability might be the reason for not getting the promotion like non-disabled worker. From the perspective of acceptance, it was found that sometimes persons with disabilities faced bullying and exclusion when they first joined the work place. Which is similar to another study conducted by BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health (2022), where they mentioned persons with disabilities face challenges such as lack of cooperation, negative attitude, continuous misbehavior from seniors and colleagues etc. in regular work activities, where 76.6% participant identified disability as the primary reason for such treatment. Awareness and events related to disability inclusion play a significant role in fostering inclusion (BRAC James P Grant School of Public Health, 2022) but limited awareness programs were organized by most of the workplace authority.

Considering research objective three, role of vocational training institute were identified. From the perspective of vocational training and workplace adaptation it was found that there is mismatching between the vocation training and job requirements, where trainees find it hard to adjust to real work environments. Lack of follow-up and post-placement support also identified. Most training centers do not have a clear follow-up system to support trainees after they start working, due to this challenge sometimes persons with

disabilities face a lot of difficulties. Sometimes workplace authority face difficulties to manage sensory challenging behaviors of the persons with disabilities. Where job coach facilitates from the vocational training institutes, can play an important role to overcome this challenge.

## **5. Recommendations**

Based on data analysis and findings of this study, the following recommendations can enhance workplace inclusion for persons with disabilities:

- Organization needs to establish clear policies about recruitment and employment guidelines focused on disability inclusion. These should include specific recruitment targets, mentorship programs, and job coaching initiatives.
- Organizations should be encouraged to make appropriate accommodations and modifications based on the type of disability of individuals, to enable them to perform their duties effectively rather than expecting them to fit into existing job structures.
- Employing organizations should develop and implement strong policies to prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying in the workplace, ensuring there are clear guidelines on how to report incidents and what actions will be taken.
- Organizations should improve physical accessibility by ensuring barrier-free infrastructure, including accessible facilities and adaptive technologies in their whole premises.
- Organizations need to implement accessible communication methods, such as sign language interpreters, using written communication for employees with hearing impairments who have literacy skills, and assistive listening devices, to ensure effective workplace communication for all employees.
- Regular training sessions for all employees on disability awareness, inclusive communication, and workplace sensitivity need to be conducted by the authority to establish an inclusive work environment, reduce stigma, and foster understanding.
- Vocational training curricula need to be regularly updated and improved. Additionally, training programs should be continuously revised based on feedback from trainees, employers, and industry experts.
- Vocational training should not only focus on technical skills but also on soft skills and workplace readiness. Teaching communication, teamwork, problem-solving, how to express personal challenges, and time management will help trainees handle professional environments with confidence.
- Collaboration with employers is essential in bridging the gap between training and employment. Vocational centers should work closely with employer organization to make sure training programs meet industry needs and create opportunities for internships and job placements.

- Vocational training Institute should create structured transition programs where trainees gain hands-on experience before starting full-time work and can adjust to a new environment and a new chapter of life.
- Vocational training centers should maintain regular contact with both trainees and employers. There should be a clear post-placement follow-up process by the vocational training institute, so that trainees with disabilities receive support when needed and can be fully included.
- Providing job coaching and mentorship programs can also be a game-changer. Having guidance from experienced mentors helps trainees develop their skills, adjust to the workplace, and grow in their careers over time.

## 6. Further Research Scopes

This study examined how vocational training contributes to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace. The research focused on identifying the existing opportunities and barriers in Dhaka and evaluated the effectiveness of current vocational training initiatives in supporting sustainable employment. Based on the findings, several potential areas for further research have been identified:

While the study highlighted the foundational role of vocational training, further research is needed to explore how SMEs in Dhaka can adopt more inclusive recruitment, training, and retention strategies. Special attention should be given to the structural and attitudinal barriers that exist in these enterprises. The study indicated that the nature of challenges varies according to the type of disability; physical, hearing, visual, intellectual, or multiple impairments. Future research should adopt a more disaggregated approach to understand and address the unique needs and barriers experienced by individuals within each category.

The researcher found that vocational training programs require further enhancement. Future studies could focus on curriculum innovation, with emphasis on soft skills development and workplace readiness, to improve employment outcomes for trainees with disabilities. Sustaining employment beyond initial placement remains a challenge. Further research is recommended to evaluate structured follow-up systems, mentorship and coaching models, and the integration of digital tools to support persons with disabilities in the workplace. While the current study touched upon the role of corporate social responsibility, further investigation is required into the motivations, practices, and impact of private sector engagement in promoting disability inclusion. Case studies of successful inclusive businesses could help establish best practices.

The Disability Inclusion Facilitator (DIF) model used in the UK, offers a potential framework for local adaptation. Future research could assess the feasibility and impact of implementing such models in the Bangladeshi context. The study identified gender-based disparities in access to vocational training and employment for women with disabilities. Future research should explore these issues in more depth, focusing on the intersection of gender and disability, and aiming to develop strategies to improve access and equity in vocational and workplace settings.

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