

**BANGLADESH**  
**OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT POLICY**  
**(BOEP)**

**Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment**  
**The People's Republic of Bangladesh**

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## INDEX

1.0	Preamble	1
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Principle	2
4.0	Policy Framework	2
5.0	Implementation Activities	4
5.01	Protection of the Rights of Migrants <i>Abroad</i> <i>Within Country</i>	4
5.02	Preservation of the Current Market and Exploration of New Labour Markets	4
5.03	Human Resource Development	5
5.04	Processing Recruitment	5
5.05	Welfare of the Expatriates	5
5.06	Remittance flow and investment in official channel	6
5.07	Economic and Social Reintegration of Returnees	6
6.00	Responsibility Ministries and departments related to overseas employment	6
6.01	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	6
6.01.1	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET)	7
6.01.2	District Employment and Manpower Office (DEMO)	8
6.01.3	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL)	8
6.01.4	Technical Training Centre (TTC) & Bangladesh Marine Technology Ins.	9
6.02	Home Ministry	9
6.03	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Missions	9
6.04	Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism	10
6.05	Ministry of Finance and Bangladesh Bank	10
6.06	Ministry of Education	10
6.07	Ministry of Planning	11
6.08	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	11
6.09	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	11
6.10	Ministry of Commerce	11
6.11	Ministry of Housing and Public Works	11
6.12	Ministry Information	11
6.13	Privatization Commission Bangladesh	12
7.0	Institutional Framework for Policy Implementation	12

## **Preamble**

According to articles 14, 20 and 40 of Bangladesh constitution, the state is pledge bound to assist all citizens irrespective of gender in human development and in fetching employment as per qualification. In performing this constitutional duty, the government is conducive in creating employment within the country as well as enabling Bangladeshi citizens to participate in international labour markets. Realising the close link between migration and economic development, the eighth parliamentary government created a separate ministry named the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE) to ensure efficient management of the migration sector. This ministry has drafted the "Overseas Employment Policy" in cooperation with other ministries and experts.

The relationship between migration and employment has been recognised for centuries. Recently, UN organisations, the World Bank and the IMF have identified migration as an important tool to expedite development. In the context of negative population growth in the developed countries, encouraging migration is essential for sustaining current rates of economic growth. The emerging economies of South-East Asia and the oil economies of the Middle East are largely dependant on immigrant workers. While international migration was growing annually at a rate of 1.3% in the 1960s and 1970s, it stood at 3% in 2000. Labour migration is playing important role in the economies of labour sending countries as well. In 2003, migrants across the world sent remittance worth USD 80 billion, 60% of which were directed to developing countries. Remittance is considered a more stable source of capital for developing countries. They are least affected by the changing economic cycle. Labour migration can be economically and socially beneficial to all parties, the labour receiving, sending countries and the migrants themselves. However, due to various dynamics at the operational level both in sending and receiving countries, long term and short-term labour migration have become extremely complicated. Those countries are benefiting from migration are those that have been successful in efficiently managing the sector.

Bangladesh is a labour sending country in the international labour market. Labour migration has provided employment and livelihoods to a large group of people both within and outside the country. The remittances sent by migrants provided stability to the foreign exchange reserve and reduced the country's dependence on foreign aid. Remittance worth USD 3.063 billion was earned in 2003. Under such circumstances, the government initiated the formulation of an overseas employment policy for strengthening Bangladesh's participation in the competitive international market.

## **Scope**

All types of voluntary migrants fall under the scope of this foreign employment policy. Male and female Workers who were employed or currently employed or will be employed in future in overseas job for a particular period on contract basis and Bangladeshis Diaspora population, who have taker or interested to take citizenship of another country but are involved in the socio economic development of Bangladesh in different ways.

## **Principle**

The government of Bangladesh will provide assistance to both male and female workers to freely choose quality employment. The government will be committed towards ensuring universal human rights and, rights at workplace permitted under the labour laws of the receiving countries and social protection of all workers, who are processing overseas employment or are already working aboard. It will pursue recognition of the worker's social identity along his/her economic identity. It will assist the workers to establish their right to form or become members of associations, both in Bangladesh and in the countries of employment.

### **4.0 Policy Structure**

- Ensure the prospect of regular migration both of long term and short term any citizen both men and women from all parts of Bangladesh in a rational cost.
- Ensure complete abolition of any scope of irregular migration.
- The Government will be sincerely committed to protect the rights, dignity and security of all migrant workers in and out side the country.
- Along with expanding the markets of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, the government will be committed to explore scope of migration for professional and skilled workers.
- The Government will take measures to ensure the social protection to the lift behind families and properties of both short-term and long-term migrants.
- Ensure measures to maintain the existing labour market and explore new markets in the developed world and Asia.
- The process of making recruitment procedure more efficient will be continued. Encourage participation of new public and private institutions in recruitment of workers.
- The Government will consider misconduct in the recruitment process as an act against national interest and will be firmly committed to make the concern persons, governmental and private organizations accountable,
- Successful recruiting agencies will be rewarded, for their achievements (on the basis of discovering new markets, sending skilled workers, sending female workers, collection of demand notes with good wage at lower cost etc.)
- Will cooperate in expanding markets for Bangladeshi goods in labour receiving countries in accordance with the need of emigrant workers.
- Initiate different projects to ensure well being of migrant workers through utilisation of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund.

- Incentives towards encouraging remittance flows through official channels will be expanded and support to the workers and their families to ensure effective and efficient use of remittance will be provided.
- Steps toward encouraging investment of long and short-term migrants for economic development of Bangladesh will be strengthened.
- Asssts social and economic re-integration of returnee migrant workers.
- Will ensure allocation of necessary resources and will strengthen the existing institutional infrastructure and personnel will be skilled for the implementation of the above policies.
- Coordination among various ministries, government and semi-government organisations including BAIRA and other international and multinational organisations. non-government organisations and migrant workers' associations involved with labour migration management will be institutionalized.

## **5.00 Implementation Activities**

### **5.01 Protect the rights of migrant workers**

#### ***Abroad***

- Signing of bilateral accord or memorandum of understanding with labour receiving countries.
- Collection of human rights and labour laws of receiving countries and their review and dissemination of information to the migrants.
- Legal support to the workers/labourer fallen in trouble.
- Articulation of common demands along with other sending countries regarding migrant workers' rights to the labour receiving countries in international forums.
- Active participatory meetings organised by various international bodies including ILO and IOM.

#### ***Within Country***

- Dissemination of information regarding migrant workers' rights in host country, increase time duration of pre-departure briefing, expansion of briefing programmes in different regions of the country, moderation of curriculum, publication of booklets with necessary information and their distribution.
- Fixation of practical labour standards and its regular evaluation.
- Enlistment of practical labour standards and its regular evaluation.
- Enlistment of working hour, payment for wage, over time, leave, health service, entertainment, freedom of movement in the work contract.

## **5.02 Maintenance of current labour market and exploration of new markets**

- Identify the sectors where Bangladeshi workers can participate under the “Movements of Natural Persons.”
- Collect information from the website and prepare report on future development programmes and consequent plan concerning future labour recruitment. The reports will be distributed to concerned ministries of government and private organisations involved in human resource development and hosting in the website of Expatriate Ministry.
- Send high-powered delegation in potential long and short term labour receiving countries to create employment opportunity for Bangladeshi workers.
- Regular publication of Labour Market Information (LMI) bulletin.
- Dissemination of information in host countries on availability of different categories of human resources in Bangladesh.

## **5.03 Human Resource Development**

- Assessment of demand for human resources in the developed countries, and the Middle-Eastern and South-East Asian countries.
- Review of the national human resource development policy in terms of the demand of labour international market.
- Identification of the need to incorporate vocational training in the current curriculum.
- Human resource development according to the demands of developed countries.
- Introduction of quality English language education from the primary level.
- Ensuring international standard in the areas of specialised training.
- Enhancing foreign employment of woman through creation training opportunities for professions such as nursing, housemaids, care of elderly people, childcare etc.
- Creating human resources in emerging sectors including information technology.

## **5.04 Processing Recruitment**

- Determination of labour standards and their regular evaluation.
- Set specific standards for issuing and renewing license of the recruiting agencies.
- Manage recruitment through registration on a computerised database.
- Legal actions against the illegal recruiters.
- Provide legal aid to the deceived workers both home and abroad.
- Create a database on all types of migrants, both short term and long term.
- Recognition of the role of the private sector in creating foreign employment.

### **5.05 Welfare of the Expatriates**

- Manage the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) created in 1990 according to the 2002 regulations.
- Manage the hostel complex to provide a one-stop service to the migrants.
- Provide effective briefing to migrants about do's and don'ts in their countries of destination.
- Operation of welfare desks in the embarkation and disembarkation points in the airports.
- Repatriation of the dead bodies and handing them over to the relatives.
- Collection and distribution of compensation in case of accidents and deaths, and provide grant in special cases.
- Steps to repatriate Bangladeshis who have been arrested and imprisoned abroad.
- Provide medical aid to the sick workers.

### **5.06 Remittance flow and investment in official channel**

- To continue different programmes of Ministry of Finance and Bangladesh Bank to increase the remittance flow through official / regular channel.
- Motivation/Inspiration of migrants both within the country and in the countries of migration to remit money through banking channel.
- Supply the information to the migrants and their families about the investment opportunities / bond instruments in foreign currency.
- Provide the information to the migrants and their families about various remittance investment instruments offered by different private banks and micro-finance institutions.
- Assist the migrants and their families to invest their remittances in productive sectors.

### **5.07 Economic and Social Reintegration of Returnees**

- Registration of returnees.
- Provide information on employment opportunities.
- Effective use of the returnees' skills in national development.
- Assist to develop links with private sector.
- Adopt sustainable projects and provide credit facility to returnees.

## **6.0 Responsibility of different Ministries and departments related to overseas employment**

### **6.01 Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment**

- Protect the current foreign labour market of Bangladesh and explore new market.
- Bring legislations on formulation of new laws, or amendment of the existing ones under the jurisdiction of the ministry.
- Monitor the activities of public and private institutions that deal with overseas employment including BMET.
- Supervise and monitor all activities of Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Ltd.
- Recruit and administer the officers and staffs of labour wing of Bangladesh Missions.
- Administrative monitoring of Wage Earners Welfare Fund
- Perform all the secretarial responsibility including financial aspects of the ministry.
- Maintain relation with different international organisations that has collaborative relation with the ministry and other international agencies.
- Establish research cell on statistics.
- Collect governmental fee (except the fee of Court) for the issues that are under the directives of the ministry.
- Adopt different special projects and programmes to show respect to the migrants (Mark the Bangladeshi Migrants Day or International Migrants Day, honour migrants as commercially important persons etc.)
- Provide assistance to different migrants associations
- Take initiatives to introduce Bangladeshi culture among 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation emigrants.
- Encourage Migrant community to invest in Bangladesh
- Create opportunity to use the skill of long term migrants
- Develop links with long term migrants to influence the policies of migrant receiving countries through them.

#### **6.01.1 Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET)**

- Prepare a quarterly report on labour market based on the information collected by the Foreign Mission.
- Collect the demand from different labour receiving countries and increase the overseas employment
- Half-early evaluation of the performance of Labour Attachés

- Draw attention of concerned ministries about the areas of human resources development according to the short-term and long-term demand of the global labour market
- Develop database of potential migrants according to their profession and skill and ensure labour recruitment from the database
- Capacity building of human resources training institution of BMET
- Inform different public and private training centres about the demand of foreign labour market
- Provide information on safe migration to the potential women migrants
- Provide outgoing migrant workers pre-departure briefings, and development and distribution of a booklet with information on the workers' rights in the destination country, their responsibility, behavior, language, etiquette and culture of the concerned state, salary and work condition, health services, formal channels for sending remittance etc.
- Manage programmes for protection and welfare of migrants
- Check illegal migration at the airport through on-line emigration clearance

#### **6.01.2 District Employment and Manpower Office**

- Registration of potential migrants who are willing to migrate through computer according to their profession
- Capacity building of district level officers in registration process
- Registration of returnees according to their profession in the computer
- Assist rehabilitation of workers who became victim of accident
- Assist transportation of dead workers to their own village and funerals.
- Distribute compensation to the heirs of the dead or to the wounded workers.

#### **6.01.3 Bangladesh Overseas Employment & Services Limited (BOESL)**

- Identify the barriers in respect to competitiveness of BOESL
- Set examples of reduced service charge
- Use BMET website in exploring market
- Collecting more demand on skilled human resources export.
- According to the demand collect workers from BMET database.
- Explore employment opportunities for the female worker and process recruitment.
- Training to the BOESL workers to ensure appropriate use of marker information.

#### **6.01.4 Technical Training Centre (TTC) and Bangladesh Marine Technology Institute (BIMT)**

- Provide appropriate training, modernisation of the technical training centres.
- Create skilled technical worker considering the internal and external labour market demand.
- Launch new and modern vocational training to fulfill the demand of external labour employer.
- Proper training of the female workers according to the demand of foreign labour market
- Create naval technicians through technical and vocational training
- Expand the range of training in the electronics and information technology sector according to the international demand.

#### **6.02 Home Ministry**

- Eliminate the complications regarding the collection of passport and ensure rapid delivery
- Modernisation of passport to restrict fraudulence (fake, photo changed passport etc.)
- Training for increasing skill and consciousness of workers engaged in emigration process.
- Collect information on different illegal means of emigration through research and take measures to eliminate them.
- Ensure the accountability of emigration officers in the airport.

#### **6.03 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Missions**

- Cooperate with the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in exploring external labour market.
- Prepare quarterly report on market related information.
- Investigation and attestation of the demand paper collected by the recruiting agents.
- Training of the Foreign Service officers in the Foreign Service Academy on management of workers abroad.
- Training of the officers engaged in foreign mission regarding the social, cultural and legal system of the states.
- Provide advice to the emigrant workers and receive complaints.
- Visit workplace of the workers.

- Provide legal aid to the workers who lost their job and assist them to find alternative employment.
- Arrange repatriation of detained and imprisoned workers.

#### **6.04 Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism**

- Exhibition of big samples of filled up embarkation and disembarkation forms in the airport.
- Description of different steps of formalities in the airport in wall in Bangla.
- Establish complain centre near emigration clearance booth and exhibit rules of complaints in Bangla.
- Exhibit the information regarding transport facilities provided by the MOEWOE.
- Training of the airport workers to create sense of sympathy and cooperation with the emigrants.

#### **6.05 Ministry of Finance and Bangladesh Bank**

- Manage remittance transfer through banking channels according to the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1947 and Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2002.
- Fix minimum time for bank officials for remittance transfer.
- Encourage the electronic fund transfer measures.
- Increase the number of exchange houses in the immigration prone countries.
- Media campaign.
- To introduce US Dollar Investment Bond, US Dollar Premium Bond and other similar opportunities of investment by migrants.
- Make the investment instruments for migrants tax-free.

#### **6.06 Ministry of Education**

- Identify the need for inclusion of vocational education in the present curricula.
- Identify the areas for changes at the primary and secondary for providing a standard vocational education.
- Introduce standard English education from the primary level.
- Take initiative with the target to ensure capacity of communication in English by every citizen by the year 2020.
- Introduce a quota system for the children of migrants at the educational institutions.

#### **6.07 Ministry of Planning**

- Give importance to overseas employment in drafting and approving the Annual Development Programmes and adopting policies.

- Ensure adequate resource allocation.
- Collect information on current and returnee migrants in the population censuses undertaken by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

#### **6.08 Ministry of Women and Children Affairs**

- Ensure rights of unskilled and semi-skilled female workers to migrate.
- Motivate BMET, private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in verifying the need for female labour in overseas labour markets and provide training accordingly.
- Make the different ministries and NGOs accountable in ensuring social security to the migrant workers' left behind wives and families, and raising awareness.

#### **6.09 Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**

- Take initiative in raising awareness on health issues before migration.
- Raise awareness on diseases including jaundice, heat stroke and tuberculosis.
- Raise awareness on the consequences of AIDS and the methods of its prevention.

#### **6.10 Ministry of Commerce**

- Encourage migrants' investment through commerce policy.
- Provide information in websites on investment opportunities in Bangladesh.
- Organise trade fares of Bangladeshi goods in foreign countries.

#### **6.11 Ministry of Housing and Public Works**

- Give quota to migrants in distributing government owned plots and flats.

#### **6.12 Ministry of Information**

- Telecast issues of safe migration in public media.
- Provide guidelines on broadcasts on migration issues in the government and private channels.
- Telecast documentary and magazine programmes on migration issues.
- Telecast news on migration issues.

#### **6.13 Privatisation Commission Bangladesh**

- Provide opportunity to migrants in purchasing de-nationalised industries a lower cost.
- Offer special discount in case of full payment in purchasing the industries.
- Provide special rebates in case of payment in foreign currency.
- Provide information in websites on sectors to be de-governmentalised in near future.

## **7.00 Institutional Infrastructure for Policy Implementation**

International labour migration from Bangladesh is governed under the auspices of the 1982 Emigration Ordinance. According to this Ordinance the responsibility of implementing the ‘Overseas Employment Policy’ lies on the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment. On behalf of the Ministry, BMET will ensure the implementation of this policy. Apart from the MEWOE, other ministries, government non-government and private organisations, institutions and associations are also linked in migration process. Their activities are interlinked. Under the circumstances, inter ministerial and inter agency coordination among these organisations is extremely important.

The MEWOE will establish a council with other ministries, government, non-government and civil society organisations in order to implement the Overseas Employment Policy. The MEWOE will act as the council’s secretariat. It will oversee the implementation of the policy decisions taken by the council, and evaluate its progress and activities at national and international level. The Ministry will increase the qualitative standard of its service through providing training to the officers engaged in such activities, institutional capacity will be enhanced.

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