

# ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A KEY TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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## Role of education in shaping employees of the future

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- A gig economy in place which goes by the logic of the free market, and makes use of temporary positions and contract jobs. In many countries including the USA, gig economy job model is currently trending, raising fears that by 2020, as many as 40 percent of US workers will be individually contracted as short-term employees. Bangladesh will feel the heat sooner or later.

- Executives will find themselves under pressure to show convergence capacity, meaning an interdisciplinary learning and a blending of skills. Single skill opportunities will become rarer.

- Desk jobs will largely lose out to dynamic, on-site, hands down jobs that will need a greater mobility on the part of the executives as well as vastly superior communication skills.

- Even government jobs will see different recruitment and training models necessitated by the new eco-system. Job watchers predict that many impor-

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tant ministries will directly hire specialists who will be needed to head important projects, replacing the current BCS recruitment practice. Such areas as agriculture, water resources, roads and highways and health—to name only a few—will need executives with subject specialisation and advanced ICT and other skills, including management and communication, to deliver what the country will need to remain globally competitive.

- Service industry will opt for super managers who will come with a basket of abilities and skills.

An important aspect of the future of work will be the connectivity factor: countries will be regionally and globally connected, creating standards of performance that all countries will have

to attain. We certainly can persist with our existing models of work, but at the cost of exclusion. If we cannot benefit from the connectivity dividend—our workers, for example, if suitably skilled, can find work in other countries, as managers from India, Korea, and other countries are finding lucrative jobs in our country now (because of our inability to provide quality graduates) and taking home a hefty 3-5 billion dollars every year—we will be left to rue missing the opportunity bus.

### FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Our job market today is more diversified than ever, but our aim should not be to define work narrowly as salary jobs. Work should also mean any profitable activity allowing workers to earn enough for their and their families'

upkeep. Work in that broad sense can mean an intellectual or artistic pursuit, a personal entrepreneurship, an individual outsource position and so on. Education of the future (which, in fact, ideally begins as soon as tomorrow but cannot certainly be postponed beyond 5-10 years) should thus opt for:

- Fostering effective cognitive, analytical and intellectual skills, cultural awareness and communicative abilities among learners

- A broad-based approach that teaches learners a mix of disciplines with appropriate specialisation pathways, so that liberal arts students may pick up knowledge of other fields such as the environment and ICT, and vice versa

- Instilling learner agency and devel-

oping learners' adaptability, intellectual curiosity, integrity, crucial thinking skills, social engagement and a sense of equity and justice

- An increased emphasis on ICT so that all graduates can face the challenges of the world of advanced technology and automation

- Superior linguistic skills

- Opportunities for life long education, which, incidentally, is a key target of the SDGs

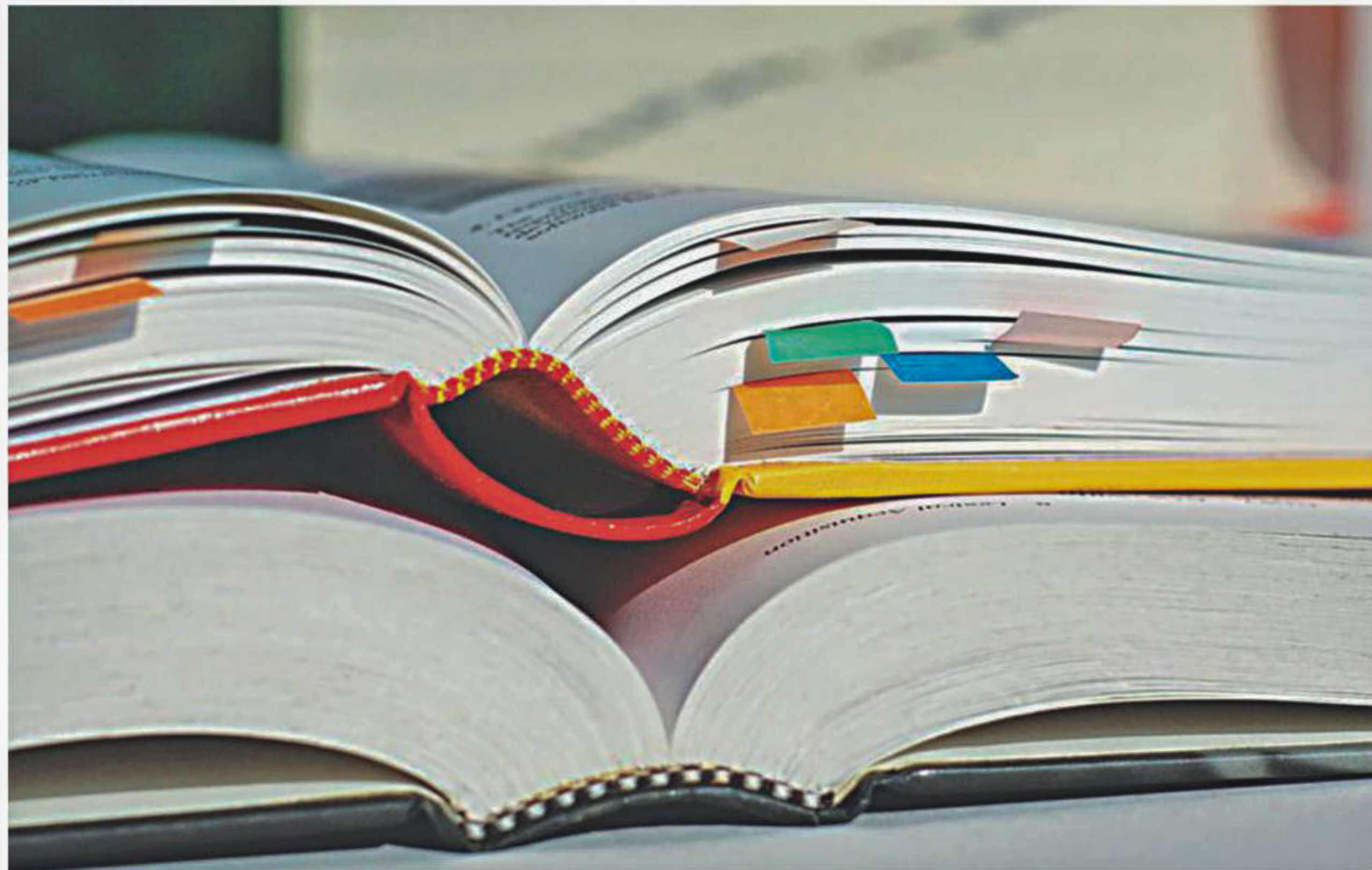
- Upgrading technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

- Substantial investment in recruiting qualified teachers and their development and training

- Investment in laboratories, libraries and other currently fund-strapped areas that are vital components of quality education.

The role of education in shaping the future of work is one that should not be viewed through the lenses of our existing education policy, in whatever form it exists. The role, as I have briefly outlined above, needs to be understood in the context of a fast-changing world, where artificial intelligence is expected to make many existing jobs redundant, and where advanced competencies—such as to the ones possessed by graduates in the developed world—empower innovative and pathbreaking enterprises. We can begin by turning all our primary schools into centres of excellence and work to transform the higher levels into high-performance educational zones. This of course will need large financial and other investments which the government has no option but to grant if it wants Bangladesh to be in the ranks of developed nations by 2041.

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