

Cause and Impact of Unemployment on Graduates: A Study on Govt. Colleges and Public Universities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study aimed to identify the causes and consequences of graduate unemployment in the Noakhali District of Bangladesh. For this study, primary data were collected from 17 unemployed graduates through purposive sampling and semi-structured interview schedules. The study identified several key factors behind unemployment, including corruption and lobbying, oversupply of graduates, insufficient technical education, outdated curricula, a lack of essential skills, limited employment opportunities, inadequate work experience, unclear job preferences, and the absence of job specialization. The study highlighted that the significant psychological, social, and financial impacts of unemployment include stress, depression, frustration, deteriorating family relationships, and loss of self-esteem. Graduates, particularly those from middle and lower-middle-class families, reported mental health challenges due to prolonged unemployment and societal pressures. The study highlighted a significant gap between academic training and labor market demands, particularly in technical and soft skills. The study recommends comprehensive reforms, including updating curricula, promoting technical and vocational training, fostering collaboration between industry and academia, and encouraging entrepreneurship. Addressing these systemic issues is vital to reducing unemployment and ensuring the employability of graduates in Bangladesh.

Keywords

Graduate, Unemployment, Causes of Graduate Unemployment, Impact of Unemployment, Skill Mismatch

1. Introduction

The development of skilled and knowledgeable employees largely relies on the

quality of higher education (Verma et al., n.d.). Education is essential for eradicating unemployment since it transfers knowledge and skills (Malaiya et al., 2024). The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that 172 million people were unemployed globally in 2018, which translates to an unemployment rate of 5.0 percent, even though education is crucial in lowering unemployment (International Labour Organization, 2019). Unemployment remains a persistent challenge in Bangladesh. The addition of almost one million new graduates to the existing pool of jobless individuals exacerbates the situation (Rahman, n.d.). The Economist Intelligence Unit reports that graduate unemployment in South Asia is alarming. Bangladesh records a 47% graduate unemployment rate, the second-highest in the region (Asadullah, n.d.).

In 2011, the youth unemployment rate was 7.27%. In just five years, the youth unemployment rate rose to 11.37 percent in 2017 and 15.74 percent in 2023 (Rezvi, n.d.). A growing percentage of graduates have struggled to find long-term employment in their field of study since 1971 (Rafi et al., 2019). Compared to 3 out of 10 graduates in India and Pakistan, about 5 out of 10 graduates in Bangladesh are unemployed (Asadullah, n.d.). Unemployment in Nigeria climbed from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2011, youth unemployment surpassed 50%, and the overall jobless rate surged by approximately 16% between 2011 and 2013 (Uddin & Uddin, 2013). In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, 11.2% of young individuals with postsecondary education were unemployed, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), approximately 15.74 percent in 2023 (Statista, n.d.). But in 2023, the young unemployment rate is around four times higher than the 3.6% national average. The unemployment rate among recent graduates is 38.5%, and it is increasing every day (Yearbook, 2024).

Miah (2022) found that the primary causes of unemployment are ignorance, misalignments between supply and demand, and misalignments between university curricula and the job market. Rezvi (n.d.) identified that Bangladesh's education system and lack of inclusive participation contribute to a shortage of social scientists, researchers, and academics, as well as inadequately trained graduates who fail to meet market demands. Rashid & Islam (2020) claimed that outdated curricula, skill mismatches, lack of job-specific specialization, and graduate incompetence as key factors contributing to unemployment (Hossain, 2022) identified a small job market, an overabundance of graduates, and political affiliations as significant factors. Rahman et al. (2022) found that unemployment leads to increased drug and alcohol abuse, reduced social engagement, and a rise in mental health issues. Kidwai & Sarwar (2015) found that unemployment especially involuntary joblessness, is linked to poorer mental health, including increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide. Dean et al. (2021) stated that unemployment can lead to criminal behavior, mental health issues, and strain on family life. Wadud (2018) asserted that despite Bangladesh's consistent economic growth, economists have noted that the country has entered a phase of jobless growth, where no new jobs have been created. Unemployment can lead to suicide, the ultimate conse-

quence of joblessness. Among Bangladeshi medical graduates, the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression is alarmingly high, with rates of 59%, 65%, and 54%, respectively (Rashid & Islam, 2020). Existing literature on unemployment primarily relies on statistical data and expert analyses, with limited focus on mental health issues such as depression, stress, and anxiety, particularly in the context of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, no study has been conducted that focuses on how unemployment affects students in the Noakhali region. The objectives of this study were to explore the key factors contributing to graduate unemployment and to analyze the elements influencing unemployment among graduates in Bangladesh's Noakhali region.

2. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To explore the main causes behind the state of unemployment among graduates in the Noakhali area.
- 2) To investigate the impact on graduate youths' well-being.
- 3) To seek suggestions on how to reduce the graduate unemployment problems.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study Area

This study was carried out in the Chittagong Division's Noakhali district, four institutions like Noakhali Government College, Chowmuhani Government S.A. College & Noakhali govt. Women's College, as well as public university like Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU), were purposively chosen because these institutions represent the primary higher education pathway for middle- and lower-middle-class families in Bangladesh. Unlike elite private universities, government institutions are more likely to encounter systemic challenges such as resource constraints, outdated and less market-oriented curricula, and limited linkages with industry. These challenges are particularly relevant when examining the structural causes of graduate unemployment. Moreover, given practical considerations of time, cost, and institutional accessibility, data collection was concentrated in these institutions.

3.2. Research Design

A qualitative case study design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the causes and consequences of graduate unemployment. This approach made it easier to thoroughly examine individual experiences, viewpoints, and socioeconomic variables that affect unemployment.

3.3. Study Population and Sample

The study targeted unemployed graduates who completed their education at the selected institutions. A total of 17 unemployed graduates (11 from a public university and 6 from government colleges) were intentionally chosen through pur-

positive sampling. Participants were from middle and lower-middle-class families and had been unemployed for a minimum of one year after graduation. The respondents' ages ranged from 23 to 30 years, and both male and female graduates were represented. Although the study involved a relatively small purposive sample of 17 unemployed graduates, the selection was consistent with a qualitative case study design, where the emphasis is on depth rather than breadth. Data collection continued until data saturation was achieved, meaning no new themes or insights were emerging from subsequent interviews. Participant diversity was ensured by including graduates of varying ages (23 - 30 years), genders (both male and female), types of institutions (government colleges and a public university), and different durations of unemployment (ranging from 1 to 6 years). This heterogeneity strengthened the credibility of findings despite the small sample size.

The participants' sociodemographic details, including their age, gender, length of unemployment, and kind of institution, are presented in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics.

Respondent No.	Age	Sex	Years after graduation	Type of institution
1	25	Male	2	Public University
2	26	Male	3	Public University
3	24	Female	1	Public University
4	27	Male	3	Govt. College
5	24	Female	1	Public University
6	28	Male	5	Public University
7	29	Male	5	Govt. College
8	25	Male	2	Govt. College
9	23	Female	1	Govt. College
10	23	Male	1	Public University
11	27	Male	5	Public University
12	30	Male	6	Govt. College
13	25	Female	3	Public University
14	28	Male	4	Govt. College
15	27	Male	4	Public University
16	25	Female	3	Public University
17	26	Female	4	Public University

As illustrated in **Table 1**, respondents' ages ranged from 23 to 30. With regard to sex, out of 17 respondents, six were females (35.3%) and the rest were males (64.7%). A total of 4 respondents were unemployed one year after his/her graduation. Accordingly, 2, 4, 4, 3 & 1 respondents were unemployed 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 years after his/her graduation. A majority of the respondents (a total of 11) were students of a public university, while the rest (n = 6) were students of Government colleges.

3.4. Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from the participants through face-to-face interviews by using semi-structured and unstructured interview schedules. In-depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 17 graduates who were unemployed for a minimum of 1 year after their graduation. Secondary sources, on the other hand, used pertinent books, journals, reports, papers, newspapers, and other materials to support primary data. After transcription, interview data were systematically coded to identify recurring patterns. No specialized software was used. Manual thematic coding was conducted following **Braun (2022)** six-phase framework. Initial codes were generated independently by both researchers, followed by collaborative code comparison to ensure reliability. Inter-coder agreement was achieved through discussion of discrepancies until consensus was reached. Themes were refined through multiple iterations, with participant quotes reviewed to ensure accurate representation of lived experiences.

4. Findings

Above case study, we find out different reasons behind the unemployment of graduate students and its impact on the unemployed students. Here, The perception of respondents 1 & 16 are corruption & lobbying, respondents 1, 3, 13, 16 & 17 are oversupply of graduates, respondents 1, 5, 6, 9, 14 & 15 are lack of technical education, Respondents 2, 9, & 15 are outdated curriculum, respondents 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 12 & 14 are lack of required skill, respondents 3 & 13 are limited job opportunity, respondent 4, 7, 10 & 14 perceptions are skill mismatch and emphasizes theoretical knowledge over practical application that's are responsible for graduate unemployment. Also, some respondents' perceptions are that out-migration, job experience, Quota system are responsible for unemployment after graduation. The respondents' perceptions of the effects on unemployed graduates are psychological pressure, stress, and financial crisis, deteriorating relationships with family and friends, & impact on health (**Table 2**).

5. Thematic Analysis

After analyzing several cases, I have discovered important themes that need to be followed. These themes are as follows:

Table 2. Case analysis.

No.	Participants Code	Institutions	Reasons for Graduate Unemployment	Effects on Unemployed Students
1.	“I believe our problems stem from weak technical education, lobbying, degree oversupply, and corruption. As the eldest son, I feel responsible for supporting my elderly farmer father-but now, after finishing my studies, I hesitate to ask for financial help.”	Public university	Corruption & Lobbying, Oversupply of graduates Lack of technical education	Embarrassed. Stress and financial crisis. Psychological pressure.
2.	“I failed the test due to a lack of the necessary skills, and my department’s outdated curriculum didn’t prepare me for today’s job market. It’s disheartening to see friends and family secure jobs while I haven’t, and watching my younger siblings succeed professionally adds to my frustration.”	Public university	Outdated curriculum Lack of required skills	Frustration Deteriorating Relationships with Family and Friends
3.	“In today’s economy, unemployment is driven by a lack of job opportunities, making competition tough for many. Whenever I return home and see the disappointed looks on my sister’s face, I feel useless. I hope to find a job soon”.	Public university	Limited job opportunities Oversupply of graduates	Mental pressure. Deteriorating Relationships with Family and Friends
4.	“My math skills are weak. I feel embarrassed when people know about my unemployment”.	Govt. College	Lack of required skill. Skill mismatch	Embarrassing
5.	“When I began my journey, I had high hopes for the future. After graduating, I was eager to learn and secure a job. However, I faced many difficulties along the way. Our department lacked sufficient study materials because of financial constraints. This situation has left me feeling stressed”.	Public university	Lack of study material Lack of technical education	Feeling stressed and in a financial crisis
6.	“I feel even more embarrassed when people ask me, ‘What are you doing now?’ It shakes my confidence and sense of potential. I believe unemployment stems from a lack of job specialization and technical education. I am experiencing significant psychological stress”.	Public university	Lack of technical education. Absence of job specialization	Feeling psychological pressure.
7.	“I’ve attended several private company interviews, but I have lacked the required experience and skills. Family members often feel they’ve done their part, leading to neglect. I also avoid social gatherings with friends, but this weakens our relationships”.	Govt. College	Work experience Skill mismatch.	Deteriorate Relationships Feeling stressed and in a financial crisis Impact on Health
8.	“I’ve faced repeated rejections from foreign companies because our education didn’t prepare me for global competition. Foreigners often hold top positions here. Since graduating over two years ago, my anxiety and stress have grown, especially due to unemployment. I felt frustrated when my brother called me useless, which led to an argument—and since then, I’ve been avoiding him.”	Public university	Out-migration Lack of required skills No job preference	Depression Impact on mental health. Feeling stressed and having a financial crisis

Continued

9	“I disclose that our country’s government job selection heavily relies on rote memorization of textbook knowledge. I don’t engage in that approach anymore and have stopped trying to pursue a government job. As a result, my relationship with my family is deteriorating daily, and those around me view me as a failure.”	Govt. College	Outdated curriculum Lack of technical education. Absence of job specialization	Deteriorate Relationships. Mental pressure.
10	“I attended several interviews with private companies, but they rejected me because they preferred candidates with experience and strong English communication skills. I am currently working on improving my English, but I’m struggling to cope with the mental stress this situation is causing me.”	Govt. College	Work experience Skill mismatch Communication Barriers in the Job Market Lack of required skill	Mental pressure.
11	“Each job vacancy requires a recent graduate with relevant experience, which I lack. Since my qualifications don’t align, I feel stressed”.	Public university	Lack of relevant work experience Lack of required skill No job preference	Feeling stress and financial crisis
12	“I’m not being hired despite my grades and qualifications. I rarely get shortlisted, and when I asked the employer, they said my qualifications don’t meet the requirements. This mismatch has left me feeling stressed and depressed.”	Govt. College	Lack of skills. Work experience No job preference	Mental pressure Feeling stress and financial crisis
13	“I believe the rate of graduate unemployment in Bangladesh is rising because more graduates are entering the job market while job opportunities remain limited. For the 47th BCS exam, over 250,000 graduates applied for just 3140 positions, and I was eliminated in the preliminary stage. I’m anxious and frustrated—my goal is to build a stable career, settle down, and support my parents financially.”	Public university	Limited job opportunities, Oversupply of graduates	Deteriorate Relationships, Feeling stressed and in a financial crisis, Degradation of personality, and frustration.
14	“I bear society’s expectations and the pain of repeated rejection. Outdated curricula, limited technical skills, and few job opportunities fuel my anxiety and frustration. I urgently call for educational reform and closer alignment with the job market to restore our dignity and hope.”	Govt. College	Lack of technical education. Skill mismatch Emphasizes theoretical knowledge over practical application Lack of required skill	Deteriorate Relationships Feeling stressed and in a financial crisis
15	“I struggle with English communication, lack the skills to navigate today’s job market, and face limited opportunities as a social science graduate, which makes me feel helpless. Seeing the disappointment on my parents’ and sister’s faces weighs on me. I truly hope to find a job soon.”	Public university	Outdated curriculum Lack of technical education. Absence of job specialization	Deteriorate Relationships Feeling stressed and in a financial crisis
16	“After graduating, I applied for several government jobs, but most positions around 60% are reserved for quota categories. Students have little time to relax, and positions often go to those with lobbying or connections. Now, it feels impossible to get a job without a quota or quick money, and I feel deeply discouraged.”	Public university	Corruption Lobbying, Oversupply of graduates Quota system	Depression Feeling stressed & a financial crisis

Continued

<p>“Women’s employment in the private sector is challenging. I’m applying for government jobs, but competition is fierce and few roles suit me. My family would prefer me to stay unemployed. I’m under mental strain, and this has made my relationship with my spouse and their family toxic.”</p>	Public university	Oversupply of graduates Competition	Deteriorate Relationships Mental pressure
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5.1. Reasons for Graduate Unemployment

5.1.1. Corruption, Lobbying

Every industry in Bangladesh has evidence of corrupt practices. It is impeding the growth of the nation as a whole (Hossain, 2022). Systemic problems like corruption and discriminatory hiring practices were cited by a number of participants as job obstacles. Participant 1 stated that “I believe the main reasons for our current situation are the lack of technical education, lobbying, an oversupply of degrees, and corruption”. So, corruption is a factor in getting government positions, according to those who had to go through awkward situations during the hiring process (Rashid & Islam, 2020). The government should also act right away to combat corruption and politics, even in the private sector.

5.1.2. Oversupply of Graduates

Graduate unemployment is rising globally, even in fast-growing economies, due to an oversupply of graduates and insufficient job opportunities. The study identified that the quantity of graduates and available relevant career possibilities is out of balance, which increases unemployment and competition. To address this issue and reduce graduate unemployment, experts recommend making higher education more accessible and of higher quality in Asian countries (Sharma, 2014).

5.1.3. Outdated Curriculum

An outdated curriculum is one of the things causing graduate unemployment. According to one of the graduates, “I believe I failed the test because I lacked the required skills, and my department’s curriculum was outdated and not suited for today’s job market.” The study identified that some participants voiced worries that certain job categories are not adequately prepared for by the curriculum, which do not represent the demands of the industry today. The lack of collaboration between business schools and industry leads to outdated curricula, leaving graduates underprepared. So, aligning academic programs with market needs enhances employability and reduces graduate unemployment.

5.1.4. Lack of Skill

Few applicants said they were unprepared, especially in English and arithmetic, which are crucial for landing a job. “My math skills are weak”, said participant 4. According to a 2021 CPD (Center for Policy Dialogue) survey, 46% of employers reported difficulty finding qualified candidates for professional roles. Additionally, the World Bank noted that 69% of companies struggled to fill highly skilled positions such as managers, technicians, and professionals (Chowdhury, 2022).

The study identified that many graduates lack the practical skills employers require, such as proficiency in English, communication abilities, and technical competencies. The education system often prioritizes theoretical knowledge over practical application, leaving graduates unprepared for the workforce. To reduce graduate unemployment, it's essential to integrate practical skills through internships, project-based learning, and real-world problem-solving activities ([Education and Employment: Preparing Graduates for the Workforce, n.d.](#)).

5.1.5. Lack of Quality Education

The main cause of this high unemployment rate is a lack of high-quality education. Information technology expertise is a prerequisite for students. Many advanced studies are no longer relevant. The issue is that even if there are no qualified teachers available, several colleges offer honors courses ([Rahman, n.d.](#)).

5.1.6. Limited Job Opportunities

Rapid population growth has intensified competition for limited jobs in Bangladesh, where the economy remains heavily reliant on agriculture, with only modest diversification into manufacturing, technology, and services ([Finance News: Latest Financial News, Finance News Today in Bangladesh, n.d.](#)). The study identified that there aren't enough jobs on the market to handle the increasing number of graduates, especially in some sectors. Participant 3 stated that unemployment in today's economy is caused by a shortage of work options, which makes it difficult for many people to compete.

5.1.7. Lack of Technical Education

In Bangladesh, the majority of individuals face a serious shortage of skilled workers, as most people lack adequate technical knowledge and expertise in the latest technologies and skill set ([Hossain, 2022](#)). Despite the establishment of over four engineering colleges and technical schools in 100 upazilas, Bangladesh's technical education system faces challenges due to outdated curricula and a lack of focus, hindering its potential to improve the country ([Rahman, 2019](#)).

5.1.8. Defective Education System

Bangladesh's education system often emphasizes theoretical knowledge over practical skills, leading to graduates who are ill-prepared for the workforce. This misalignment contributes to high rates of underemployment and unemployment among educated youth ([Hossain, 2022](#)).

5.1.9. Work Experience

Because firms are more inclined to hire experienced individuals, unemployment occurs. New graduates who lack experience are left behind and contribute to unemployment ([Dean et al., 2021](#)). Participant 10 stated that "I attended several interviews with private companies, but they rejected me because they preferred candidates with experience and strong English communication skills". The partici-

pant draws attention to a discrepancy between their credentials and the particular abilities that private companies require.

5.1.10. Out-Migration

Migration plays a crucial role in Bangladesh's economy by reducing unemployment and boosting remittance income. However, when many skilled workers emigrate, it can lead to brain drain, potentially hindering economic growth and increasing unemployment levels (Islam, n.d.).

5.2. Impacts of Unemployment on Graduates

5.2.1. Psychological Pressure

Since many graduates find it difficult to express their emotions, they might not be able to articulate the impact on their psychological well-being. Unemployment and mental health are correlated. "What are you doing now?" is the question that embarrasses me the most, according to participant 1. I lose confidence and my potential. The physical and emotional health of those who suffer from depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem is negatively impacted over time by stress related to unemployment (Heather & Finch, 2021).

5.2.2. Stress and Financial Crisis

Being unemployed may put people and economies under a lot of stress and result in financial catastrophes. The majority of participants said that they have experienced the difficult financial effects of unemployment. Unemployment strains finances, diminishing life satisfaction, and making it harder to maintain desired living standards. Lower income levels inherently reduce overall life satisfaction (Conroy, 2010).

5.2.3. Deteriorating Relationship with Family and Friends

Unemployment often strains family relationships. Many participants report increased tension with friends and family, and some recent graduates avoid seeking financial help due to feelings of shame. Despite these challenges, most still have supportive networks of parents and friends.

5.2.4. Impact on Health

Our bodies are deeply interconnected. Unemployment often leads to mental health issues that show up physically (like headaches or heart disease), especially when stress-related sleep problems are factored in. Many people also resort to alcohol or smoking to cope with the stress (Heather & Finch, 2021). The study identified that unemployment significantly elevates the risk of anxiety and depression, often due to the disruption of daily routines, loss of social connections, and financial instability. Unemployment adversely affects health such as men experience increased hospitalization rates, higher prescription use, and greater substance abuse. Conversely, women are more susceptible to physical illness, psychological stress, and family breakdown (Wilson & Walker, 1993).

Figure 1 demonstrates a causal link showing how deficits within educational

institutions, particularly government colleges and public universities, contribute to graduate unemployment, which leads to significant challenges (such as emotional, social, and psychological) for individuals. This figure highlights two main types of educational institutions, such as government colleges and public universities, that play a key role in producing graduates. A range of systemic and structural issues stemming from these institutions contribute to graduate unemployment, including: corruption and lobbying, which lead to biased job opportunities and favoritism, oversupply of graduates, lack of technical education, outdated curricula, absence of required skills, skill mismatch—such as no job preference, lack of work experience, out-migration, and high competition. These factors collectively lead to graduate unemployment. Due to the above factors, a significant number of graduates remain unemployed after completing their education. Unemployment leads to various negative consequences on graduates' lives, including increased stress levels, low self-esteem, depression, poor living standards, deterioration in relationships with family and friends, mental pressure, and frustration.

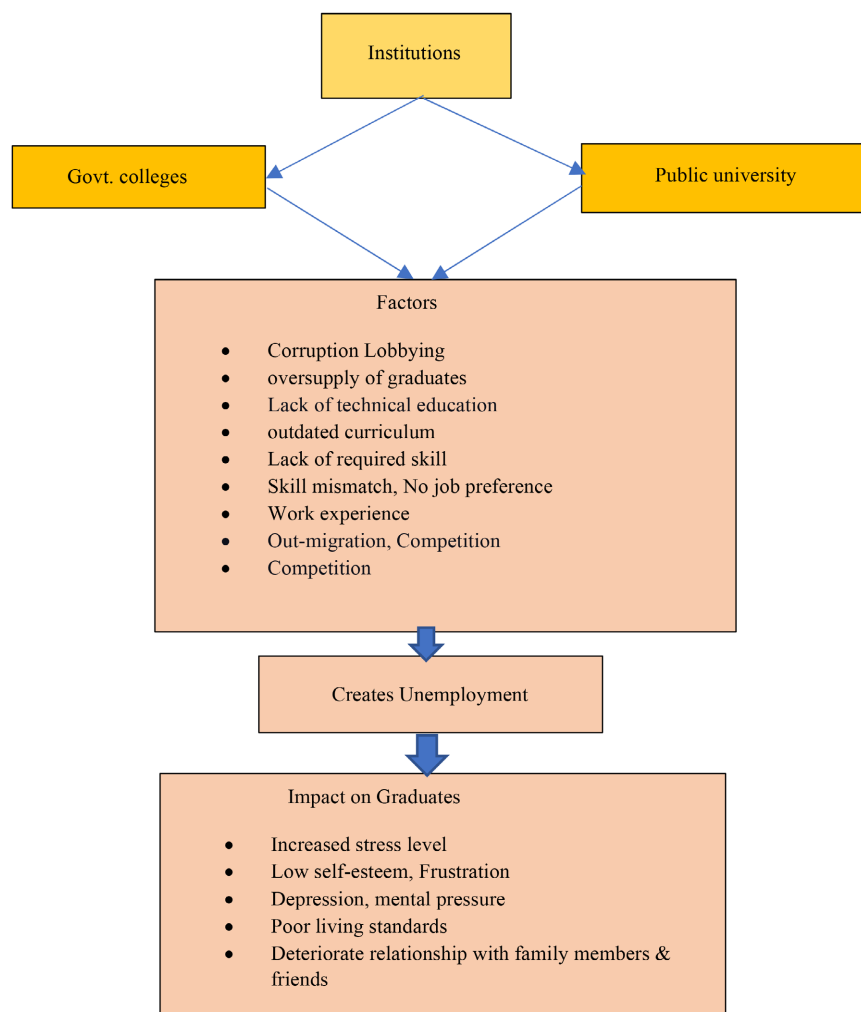


Figure 1. Factors leading to graduate unemployment and its impacts.

6. Discussion

The results of this qualitative study reveal the complex and layered nature of graduate unemployment in Bangladesh, specifically among graduates from government colleges and public universities in the Noakhali district. These findings are consistent with both national and international research, highlighting the deep-rooted systemic issues contributing to this growing problem. The study identified several key factors behind unemployment, including corruption and lobbying, oversupply of graduates, insufficient technical education, outdated curricula, a lack of essential skills, limited employment opportunities, inadequate work experience, unclear job preferences, and the absence of job specialization. The mismatch between the abilities of graduates and the demands of the labor market is a recurring problem. The qualitative data point to an abundance of general graduates, out-of-date curricula, and a dearth of technical and practical education as the main causes of this gap. Several participants, like Respondents 2, 5, and 14, expressed concern that their university curriculum was outdated and failed to prepare them for modern job roles. These results align with previous research (Rashid & Islam, 2020; Hossain, 2022), which reported that capacity mismatches, inadequate specialization, low job market absorption ability, and a poorly relevant curriculum are leading contributors to graduate unemployment in Bangladesh. Another major worry was the overabundance of graduates combined with the formal economy's slow job growth. Several participants mentioned applying for competitive jobs, such as the BCS, where thousands of people apply for a limited number of openings. This finding supports the claims made by Sharma (2014) and Wadud (2018) that graduate employment chances are constrained by sectoral imbalances and the phenomenon of "jobless growth." Many participants highlighted the lack of technical and soft skills, such as problem-solving abilities, internet literacy, and communication proficiency. The study found that out of the 17 respondents, the most frequently identified reasons for unemployment were the "lack of necessary skills" and the "absence of technical education." These findings have been supported by Chowdhury (2022) and World Bank reports, which indicate that over 46% of employers in Bangladesh face difficulties in hiring qualified graduates, mainly due to the lack of industry-specific training and essential soft skills like communication, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Unemployment is widely recognized as a contributing factor to various psychosocial problems that can adversely impact mental health. Youth who encounter unemployment suffer from stress, embarrassment, loss of self-identity, and a sense of worthlessness (Wani & Ahmed, 2024). Psychological distress was found to be significantly predicted by both perceived financial danger and financial hardship. Youth without jobs have mental health problems that are made worse by the stress and uncertainty that come with financial instability (Mamun et al., 2020). The study showed that many respondents commonly expressed stress, anxiety, depression, and deteriorating relationships. Psychological distress levels were found to be influenced by several factors, including age, gender, socioeconomic situation, and educational back-

ground (Rafi et al., 2019). Peer and family pressure exacerbate mental health issues and frequently result in anxiety, depression, and, in severe situations, suicidal thoughts. These results are in line with earlier studies (Rahman et al., 2022; Dean et al., 2021), which link extended unemployment to worsening mental health, less social engagement, and more dangerous conduct. The study revealed that out of 17 participants, six female respondents shared that they faced emotional stress due to societal and family restrictions. Respondent 17 pointed out that her family did not support her interest in private-sector employment, illustrating how conventional gender norms can limit personal autonomy and the ability to make independent career choices. Several participants also described the negative impact of prolonged unemployment on their personal lives, including increased mental stress, strained family dynamics, and unhealthy domestic relationships. These findings have been supported by (Mamun et al., 2020; Rafi et al., 2019; Dean et al., 2021; Kidwai & Sarwar, 2015; Chowdhury, 2022). It's interesting to note that the study highlights the distinctions between government college graduates and public university graduates, which are frequently missed in national publications. Even while both groups experience the same systemic problems, college graduates frequently experience more severe effects and resource limitations (such as a lack of financing or supplies). Given these results, a multifaceted strategy is required. This covers merit-based hiring practices, entrepreneurship promotion, technical and vocational education improvement, and curriculum reform. The unemployment rate will keep rising. Bangladesh's graduate unemployment problem threatens social stability and national productivity and impedes personal goals. The educated unemployed should receive technical training to become self-sufficient in order to address the unemployment issue. They ought to be given the chance to start their own business by offering them interest-free financing with flexible terms (Islam, 2024).

7. Limitations

This study has some limitations. It focused only on Noakhali, so findings cannot be generalized to all of Bangladesh. Reliance on self-reported data may have caused recall bias. The small sample size, though suitable for qualitative work, limits representativeness. Moreover, the study lacked comparisons with private universities or other institutions, which could show differences in unemployment patterns. Future research should use comparative designs to better capture the national situation.

8. Conclusion

In Bangladesh, graduate unemployment has become a major socioeconomic issue with wide-reaching effects, especially in government colleges and public universities. This complex problem is clarified through this study's qualitative case analysis of 17 unemployed graduates in the Noakhali district. The study examined the underlying causes and impacts of graduate unemployment in Bangladesh's Noakhali

district's public universities and government institutions. The findings reveal several interconnected reasons for graduate unemployment, including outdated and irrelevant curricula, a lack of technical and practical skills, corruption and lobbying in the hiring process, a mismatch between labor market demands and academic training, an oversupply of graduates in some fields, and limited job opportunities. Additionally, the problem is worsened by a strong preference for government jobs, a lack of work experience, and a limited entrepreneurial mindset. Graduate unemployment also has significant psychological and social effects. Participants experiencing prolonged unemployment reported extreme psychological stress, shame, low self-esteem, and frustration. Many faced social isolation, declining mental health, and strained family relationships. Their feelings of helplessness were intensified by social expectations and financial instability, with some reporting symptoms of anxiety and despair. The study particularly highlights a disconnect between employment readiness and higher education achievements, especially for students from resource-limited institutions. The study highlights a significant mismatch between higher education achievements and actual employment readiness, especially among students from resource-poor institutions, where academic qualifications alone are insufficient without practical and market-oriented skills. To address this issue, future research should adopt comparative frameworks to explore unemployment trends across public, private, and specialized institutions. Employing mixed-methods approaches integrating quantitative job-tracking with qualitative insights from graduate experiences would provide a more comprehensive understanding of unemployment challenges. Moreover, longitudinal research is essential to monitor graduates' career pathways over time and assess the sustained impact of policy measures. A comprehensive approach is urgently needed to address this crisis, including curriculum reforms, increased funding for technical and vocational training, enhanced industry-academia collaboration, transparent and merit-based hiring practices, and psychological support for unemployed graduates. Furthermore, a cultural shift is needed to promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and skill-based employment, reducing overreliance on government jobs. Although the study covers a limited geographic area and participant pool, it provides valuable qualitative insights into the real experiences of unemployed graduates in Noakhali and emphasizes the urgent need for holistic governmental solutions.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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