Does South-South Cooperation Really Work? Some Evidences from Korea's Bilateral ODA Programs to Facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh

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[Abstract]

While North-South cooperation (NSC) continues to play a considerably dominant role in international development cooperation efforts, there is growing criticisms across the world as to the role and effectiveness of the NSC to support the developing countries to meet their development needs. As such, South-South cooperation (SSC) has become a subject of discussion in recent years across the world in international development and has increasingly become popular as an effective aid modality. However, there is un-availability of sufficient empirical studies about the efficacy of the SSC in the context of Bangladesh. The present paper attempts to examine two KOICA's projects to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh taking into consideration of Korea as a southern country. The study revealed that Korea's bilateral development cooperation efforts have been effective so far to fulfill their objectives. The findings of the study put forward that SSC may work in the form of technical cooperation to support the developing countries, provided that technical cooperation is demand-driven, and that there is sufficient level of absorptive capacity and supportive policy as well on the part of developing partner country to utilize external skills and technology.

Key Words: Absorptive capacity, International development cooperation, Korea's bilateral ODA, North-South cooperation, South-South cooperation

I. Introduction

International development cooperation has long been recognized as a powerful tool for channeling development aid in the form of concessional loans, grants, technical assistance, or technical cooperation and such types of aid aimed at promoting economic and social development of the developing world. It is based on the belief that government interventions supported from outside are necessary in order to promote development in the poorest countries [1]. Thus, the main goal of international development cooperation is development-orient-

ed, to promote principally economic and social development of the developing countries, in particular, the least developing countries (LDCs) [1]. It is also administered so as to address human welfare of the poorest countries which are designated as the LDCs and other low-income countries in the global world. Hence, development aid, a pattern of international development cooperation, has been defined by Riddell as those resources received from donors that contribute to the fulfillment of the basic rights and freedoms of poor and vulnerable

people. It is always targeted to contribute to reduce human poverty, mitigate human sufferings and address development challenges of the developing countries and thereby step up their economic and social development. As such, development aid is defined in the context of its purpose for which it is given and received [1].

However, international development cooperation is usually viewed in the context of North-South cooperation (NSC), where the developed countries, particularly the OECD's development assistance committee (DAC) member-countries provide official development assistance (ODA) to the developing countries. The dominant argument behind this discourse is that the developed North possesses the capital resources and skills that the poor South lacks. Therefore, the North should promote international development by providing economic, financial, and technical assistance to the South. However, there are many countries in the South acting both as donors or recipients. In spite of being developing ones, many southern countries have a record of providing development assistance or technical cooperation to other developing countries for the last couple of decades, even for a long time, and have been playing a supporting role although their amount of aid is not comparable with that of the OECD's DAC member countries. These countries include Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, China, India, Korea, Brazil, Venezuela, Thailand, Malaysia, and so on [2, 3]. However, Korea has recently joined the OECD's DAC and has been committed to increase its development assistance as per the OECD's DAC policies and guidelines.

Therefore, international development cooperation should not be viewed merely in terms of North-South cooperation. It may also take place between two developing countries or between an emerging donor country or a middle income country and any other country belonging to South in the form of South-South cooperation (SSC) if the donor country shares its development experience, transfers its technology, expertise, skills, or provides its financial assistance or any other such resources to another developing country [2, 3]. SSC is, therefore, defined to include grants and concessional loans (including exports credits) provided by one Southern country to another to finance projects, programs, technical cooperation, debt relief and humanitarian assistance, and its contributions to multilateral institutions and regional development banks [3]. In the arena of development cooperation, recently SSC has been receiving a growing attention across the world so as to address the development challenges that the developing countries are facing, the philosophy of which is to share development experiences among themselves.

SSC is characterized by the principle of non-interference in internal affairs of the developing countries. It is based on the philosophy that we can learn from the experiences of developing countries. It is appreciated as it has lower transaction costs,

and is less donor-driven and comes with fewer conditions than assistance from many traditional donors. Therefore, it is depicted as more "developmental"—that is, detached from selfish, political, economic, or strategic interests of rich countries; "fair"—rooted in principles including self-determination and solidarity focusing on social justice and free of hidden governmental agendas; 'horizontal"—it takes place between developing countries in a relationship of equal, without the power asymmetries and conditionality usually found in NSC; "more effective"—based on more cost-effective instruments and resources, better adopted to the specific development needs and local contexts of recipient countries.

As such TT - SSC [4] has rightly noted that

"South-South Cooperation (SSC) has become the expression of collaboration and partnership among countries from the South, interested in sharing, learning, and exploring their complementary strengths to go beyond their traditional role as aid recipients. Knowledge sharing, one of the most dynamic dimensions of SSC, has developed into a third pillar of development cooperation, complementing finance and technical assistance. This changing context is allowing the emergence of a paradigm where "Horizontal Partnership", based on equity, trust, mutual benefit and long term relations, become an alternative way to do development cooperation."

Aid in the context of NSC has been often criticized for not being effective in the academia, that is, it has failed to meet its objectives [1, 5, 6]. Aid in the form of NSC is also often criticized as a neo-colonial tool to serve commercial, political and military interests of the developed countries by means of imposing tying aid, conditionality and such types of interference on policy issues to the developing countries [1]. Moreover, North's technical cooperation has been criticized for least effective to support institutional capacity building in the developing countries [7]. On the other hand, SSC aims to follow the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, equality among developing partners and respect for their independence, national sovereignty, cultural diversity and identity and local content. SSC is not presumed to be a substitute of NSC; rather it is viewed as a valuable complement to NSC. While there are sufficient studies or academic literature on the effectiveness of development cooperation in the context of NSC, there is unavailability of sufficient empirical studies so far that could reveal the effectiveness of development cooperation in the context of SSC. As such, the present paper attempts to explore whether SSC really works to meet the development objectives and support institutional capacity of the developing countries. However, the focus has been given on the assessment of Korea's development cooperation, in par-
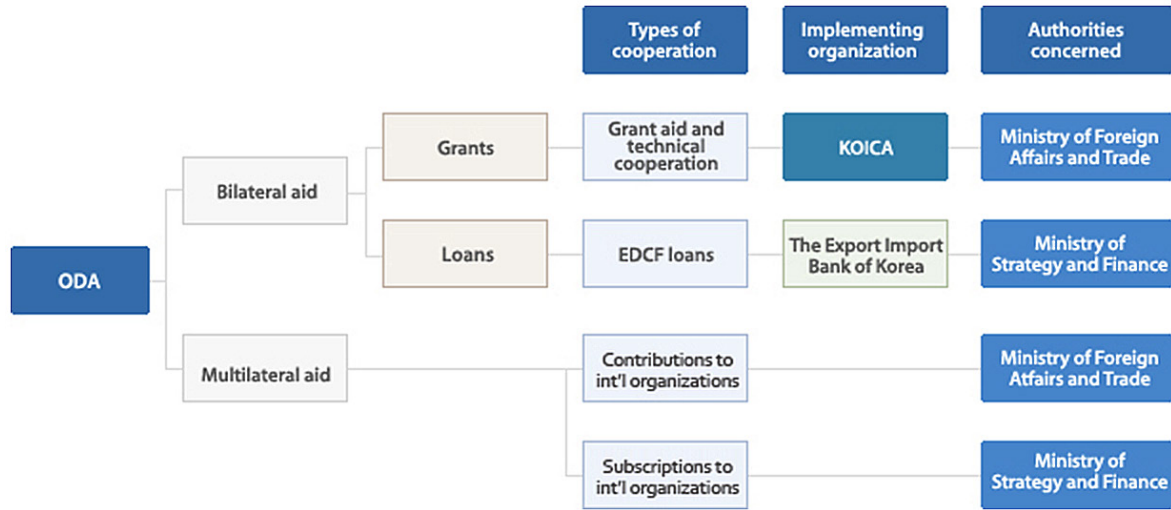
Fig. 1. Korea's official development assistance (ODA) System.

ticular, bilateral ODA programs provided by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh.

II. Framework of Korea's Development Cooperation

The Republic of Korea's development cooperation is commonly known as Korea's official development assistance (ODA) that is channeled through a number of official agencies or ministries in order to promote economic and social development to its developing partner countries. Korea's ODA consists of three types of aid: 1) bilateral grants, 2) bilateral loans, and 3) multilateral assistance. Bilateral grant aid consists of technical cooperation and various types of transfers (made in cash, goods, or services) with no obligation for repayment. Bilateral grants are mainly administered by the KOICA under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT). Bilateral loans, however, are provided based on concessional terms under the name of the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF). Bilateral loans, or soft loans which require repayment, are managed by the Export-Import bank of Korea under the guidance of the Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF). Thus, Korea's bilateral ODA consists of both bilateral grants and bilateral loans.

Multilateral assistance, on the other hand, is delivered either as financial subscription or contribution to international agencies. With regard to multilateral assistance or multilateral aid, the Ministry of Strategy and Finance is responsible for subscriptions to international development banks such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), while the MOFAT is in

charge of making contributions to international organizations such as the bodies of the United Nations. Fig. 1. illustrates the structure of Korea's official development assistance system.

III. Volume, Allocations and Trends of Korea's ODA

International community has set the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is making continuous efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development in developing countries through extending their development cooperation toward them. The Republic of Korea has been putting such efforts to support developing countries through its developing cooperation in the form of bilateral aid comprising bilateral grants and loans and multilateral assistance. In spite of being lower than the OECD/DAC average, the volume of Korea's ODA has steadily increased over the years. In 2004, Korea allocated $423.3 million ODA as shown in the Table 1 in total to the developing countries which was 0.06 percent of its Gross National Income (GNI).

In 2005, Korea's ODA totaled $752.3 million, or 0.10 percent of its GNI, reflecting a sharp increase in bilateral grants as well as in multilateral assistance due to larger contributions to the World Bank and a variety of regional development banks. However, in 2007, increases in both bilateral aid and multilateral aid contributed to a large increase in Korea's ODA to $699 million representing a 48.6 percent increase over 2006. The ODA/GNI ratio increased from 0.05% in 2006 to 0.07% in 2007. The bilateral aid involving grants and loans increased from $376 million in 2006 to $493.5 million in 2007. In contrast, in 2008, the volume of Korea's total ODA allocated was

$803.8 million in total, representing 0.09 percent of its Gross National Income.

Korea's ODA volume remains low in comparison to the DAC average ODA/GNI ratio of 0.31 as of 2008. However, the Korean Government is determined to increase Korea's ODA in relation to its ODA/GNI ratio so that it could play more effective role as an emerging donor to assist developing countries to promote their economic and social development. The Korean government set explicit targets to achieve in terms of its ODA/GNI ratio, that is, 0.15 % by 2012 and 0.25 % by 2015. In 2009, Korea disbursed a total of $815.5 million ODA to the developing countries. Of that, bilateral assistance was $580.6 million and multilateral aid was $234.9 million and achieved ODA/GNI ratio of 0.10.

IV. Need for HRD in ICT in Bangladesh

Information & communication technologies (ICTs) can be powerful tool for facilitating economic growth and HRD of the developing countries [8]. ICTs were recognized by the world leaders as a key development enabler in World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. As such, in the knowledge-based economy, ICTs can be an influential factor to facilitate HRD in Bangladesh and thereby step up its socio-economic development. HRD in ICT may be understood as ICT human resources capacity building which involves generating a knowledgeable workforce in ICT through providing people with better education and training in ICTs so as to enhance the employability of the people and promote the use and application of ICTs in all sectors of development. This will harness the benefits of ICT use across the country for sustainable economic and social development [9].

There is a negative correlation observed between the level of poverty and the level of ICT use. Poverty is higher in those countries where there are lesser accesses to ICT while poverty is lower in those countries where there are better accesses to ICT. As such, HRD in ICT can be an important instrument for Bangladesh to achieve UN MDGs, especially in eradicating

poverty and hunger, empowering women, ensuring environmental sustainability. HRD in ICT, thus, could support to create employment of the people, reduce poverty and accelerate economic growth and prosperity of the country. HRD in ICT would facilitate the use and application of ICT in government mechanisms which might have tremendous bearing on ensuring accountability and effective bureaucracy, eliminating corruption and establishing good governance as well which are usually the areas of concerns and are critical in the process of development in Bangladesh. Furthermore, HRD in ICT can enable the government organizations to facilitate their institutional works and provide better public service to the people.

V. Korea's Bilateral ODA to Facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh

KOICA as an official agency of the Republic of Korea is responsible for channeling Korea's bilateral ODA containing grant aids and technical cooperation to its developing partner countries. KOICA implements around 40% of the total budget of Korea's bilateral ODA. In consideration of Korea's comparative advantages and issues of global concern, KOICA has set eight sectoral priorities including education, health, ICT, governance, rural development, and so on to promote economic and social development of its developing partner countries. ICT is one of such areas where Korea has comparative advantage. As such, it seeks to help developing countries for narrowing their digital divide and facilitate HRD in ICT. Being one of the least developed countries, Bangladesh has been facing a number of development challenges of which narrowing its digital divide and strengthening its ICT training capacity for developing human resources are critical. As noted earlier, the use of ICT in all sectors of development has been imperative in Bangladesh so as to provide better public services to the people, establish an accountable and transparent bureaucracy, and above all good governance. Thus, HRD in ICT has become a key area of development interventions in Bangladesh.

Table 1. Korea's official development assistance (ODA): 2004-2008, ODA scale-up plan

Classification	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2012	2015
Total ODA	423.3	752.3	455.3	699.1	803.8		
Bilateral Aid	330.8	463.3	376.1	493.5	540.7		
Grants	212.1	318.0	259.0	361.3	370.2		
Loans	118.7	145.3	117.1	132.2	170.6		
Multilateral Aid	92.6	289.0	79.2	205.6	263.1		
ODA/GNI (%)	0.06	0.10	0.05	0.07	0.09	0.15	0.25

Unit: USD ($).

In view of its comparative advantage, Korea has extended its development cooperation to narrow the digital divide and facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh through implementing several projects relating to ICT. Specifically, KOICA's projects on ICT involving technical cooperation has primarily focused on building ICT infrastructure and training capacity of Bangladesh to facilitate ICT human resources capacity building. In 2006, Bangladesh was one of top five development aid recipient countries sharing 15% of the total KOICA's ICT aid allocations. With regard to KOICA's efforts in facilitating HRD in ICT in Bangladesh, the following projects are notable.

A. Project-1 (Establishment of BKIICT)

The first development project on the establishment of full-fledged IT training center in Bangladesh undertaken by the KOICA was titled as "Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea Institute of Information and Communication Technology (BKIICT)." The project was implemented during the period 2003 -2004 at the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC), a statutory body under ICT division of the Ministry of Science and Information & Communication Technology (MOSICT). To implement the Project, KOICA allocated $1.0 million. With Korea's technical cooperation, BKIICT has been a modern ICT training institute fully equipped with State of Art Technology for industry standard HRD in ICT to meet national and international demands [10]. KOICA provided necessary equipment, machines, furniture, and other supporting components for institutional arrangements along with invitational training in Korea for the instructors and officials of the BCC to conduct and operate training courses at BKIICT. The major objectives of the Project were: a) to establish an international standard training institute for HRD in ICT to meet the challenges of 21st century; b) to provide diploma and post graduate diploma training courses in ICT; c) to conduct standard certification courses in ICT for the development of the professional skills in ICT; d) to conduct customized courses for government officials [10].

Since its inception in 2004 until July 10, 2012, roughly 12,000 people have received training on various courses on ICT. Approximately 50% of the trainees were government officials coming from different governmental organizations and the rest 50% of them were the trainees other than government officials while a majority of the trainees were students. At present 4 categories of people come to receive ICT training on various courses from the training center. There are: a) students comprising both males and females coming from different colleges, private and public universities of Dhaka city; b) unemployed persons those who already finished their formal education and seeking for jobs; c) Employed persons coming from private and public organizations, and finally d) house-

wives (Lipi Akhter, Bangladesh Computer Council, personal communication, July 10, 2011). Moreover, the BKIICT is providing ICT training for the disabled persons such as blind.

B. The Project-2 (Establishment of BKITCE)

To develop an efficient ICT infrastructure or ICT training capacity for developing human resources and to promote and facilitate the use of ICTs in all sectors of economy in Bangladesh were central to the National ICT Policy in 2002. Hence, there was a need for building an ICT-driven nation to foster knowledge-based society. As such, in pursuance of the primary objectives of National ICT Policy in 2002, Bangladesh government sought to spread the use and application of ICTs and harness their benefits into the grass root level. To address such needs, Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) in association with the KOICA implemented the project entitled "Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea ICT Training Centre for Education (BKITCE)" during the period of 2006-2007. Korean government provided a grant aid of about $1.6 million to execute the Project though KOICA while Bangladesh government provided $0.18 million as part of the implementation of the project. As part of the implementation of the project, renovation and remodeling of Computer Division was established, and five ICT labs were equipped with PCs, servers, printers, and GIS equipment. Multimedia projectors and other necessary equipment were also provided [11]. To strengthen the training capacity of Computer Division of the BANBEIS, eleven professionals were trained in Korea focusing on Teachers' Trainer course and EMIS and GIS course. Moreover, four educational managers from the BANBEIS were trained in Korea for strengthening oversight management. The specific objectives of the project were: a) to strengthen the BANBEIS as the center of excellence in ICT training with adequate number of training labs and other facilities for HRD in ICT in education sector; b) to spread ICT education in the grass root level through training to the teachers of secondary and higher secondary level; c) to conduct customized courses for government officials and staff in the education sector as well as other sectors; and so on [11]. Since its inception in 2007 until June 2011, the BKITCE has trained 6500 people. The project attained 99.52% achievements in terms of component–wise physical and economic progress in accordance with Project Completion Report submitted to the IMED of the Ministry of Planning by the Ministry of Education. The BKITCE has paved the way to build an ICT-driven nation through developing country-wide ICT infrastructure and ICT human resources. It has also facilitated Government's efforts in initiating e-governance or the application of ICT in government mechanisms and thereby ensuring accountability and transparency in government.

C. Some More Projects of KOICA on ICT

KOICA executed the project entitled "Project for Strengthening and the ICT Training and System of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics" in 2008, for which it allocated $1.586 million. KOICA allocated $1.30 million to implement a project for ICT development of the Ministry of Establishment in Bangladesh. KOICA also implemented a project for developing the training capacity of Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy (BCSAA) in 2007-2008. In 2010, KOICA carried out a project for establishing electronic approval system in the human resource development. These projects have contributed to strengthening administrative capacity, establishing good governance and increasing the transparency of government. Korea has played also a supportive role to facilitate higher education in ICT in Bangladesh through implementing a project at Institute of Information Technology (IIT) of Dhaka University where KOICA has set up two labs and provided necessary equipment and furniture. In addition, KOICA has recently executed another project in Bangladesh associated with ICT education. The project entitled "Establishment of ICT and Web-Based Learning System in Bangladesh Open University." As part of the implementation of the project, KOICA has allocated $2.0 million. Moreover, KOICA has been taking active part to realize Government's vision of "Digital Bangladesh."

VI. Methodology of the Study

To examine the effectiveness of Korea's development cooperation, in particular, Korea's bilateral ODA programs to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh, the study briefly sought to examine two Projects of KOICA on ICT, one of which was titled as "Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea Institute of Information and Communication Technology (BKIICT)" implemented at the BCC and the other was titled as "Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea ICT Training Centre for Education (BKITCE) implemented at the BANBEIS. The study was mainly an evaluative study in nature. It employed mixed approaches, that is, both qualitative and quantitative techniques in order to investigate its designated research questions. The data for this study were generated from the fieldwork carried out by the researcher himself from June, 2011 to August, 2011 as part of his research project for PhD program at Korea University of Technology and Education. The study employed multiple data sources including interviewing, direct observations and document analysis. Out of a total of 22 officials, nine were selected from both the BKIICT and the BCC through purposive sampling technique and then, they were interviewed by applying semi-structured interview schedule.

On the other hand, of 15 officials, seven were also purposively selected from the BKITCE, and then they were interviewed by using semi-structured interview schedule. However, in semi-structured interviews, structured questions were supplemented by open-ended questions so that detailed information on the relevance and effectiveness of the projects could be gathered. The structured questions were measured in terms of 5-point Likert-type scales which were defined from lowest to the highest degree of favorableness or effectiveness where 1 equals 'not at all effective', 2 equals 'not effective', 3 equals 'somewhat or moderate effective', 4 equals 'effective', and 5 equals to 'very effective'. In this regard, this is to mention that San Jose State University carried out a study aiming to examine the Student Opinion of Teaching Effectiveness (SOTE) in 2011 by using similar type of 5-point Likert-type scale which was defined from lowest to the highest degree of effectiveness.

As such, altogether 16 interviewees/respondents were sampled and interviewed for evaluating two projects corresponding to HRD in ICT. This is noteworthy that most of the respondents were high or mid-level officers or instructors who were responsible for supervision and implementation of the projects. The primary data were substantiated by the secondary data that were collected from official statistics, brochures, conference papers, and other relevant documents. As the study employed mainly Likert-type scales for quantitative analysis, much of the data is ordinal. Due to ordinal nature of data, the study reasonably used median rather than mean. As Nachmias and Nachmias [12] suggest that median is suitable for use with variables measured at or above the ordinal level.

VII. Research Findings and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the project entitled "The Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea Institute of Information & Communication Technology (BKIICT)" was very relevant with a median value of 5.00. The study found that as far as the project's objectives were concerned, the project was totally need-based. The study identified three important reasons why the project was very relevant in view of the Bangladesh development needs. These were 1) to strengthen ICT training capacity of the public sector of Bangladesh, 2) to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Bangladesh Computer Council, and 3) to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh. These three important factors were very important in the context of Bangladesh to harness the benefits of ICT use and thereby step up the economic and social progress of the country.

The study found that Korea's development cooperation (project-type cooperation) was highly effective with a median value of 5.00 to enhance the institutional and training capacity of the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC). The study

identified that the dramatic increase of the institutional and training capacity of the BCC was largely attributed to Korean advanced 'Sate-of-Art' technology, demand-driven technical cooperation and other institutional and technical supports. In this regard, the study revealed that the BCC could utilize the external resources (e.g., knowledge, skills & tools received from Korea) by means of its sufficient absorptive capacity resulting mostly from qualified and dedicated faculty members. Mr. Enamul Kabir, one of the high officials of the BCC, noted that "we could make use of Korea's advanced technology and skills to increase our institutional capacity because we have quality and dedicated teaching staff, good policy, and continuous supervision and monitoring." As such, absorptive capacity of the BCC was pivotal to utilize Korea's technical cooperation.

In this connection, this is to note that the notion of absorptive capacity was first used by Cohen and Levinthal [13] to refer to the ability of a firm to recognize the value of new, external information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends. Omar et al. [14], on the other hand, put forward that absorptive capacity is the ability of a firm to assimilate the imported technology depending on its organizational technological capabilities where imported technology refers to knowledge, skills and tools that come through technical cooperation in the form of technology transfer. As such, absorptive capacity means the ability of an organization to utilize external resources including knowledge, skills and tools.

Before implementing the project, the BCC could train the people ranging from 200 to 500 per year. However, with the inception of the BKIICT, the BCC could train roughly 1,500 to 1,700 people per year. Moreover, before implementing the project the number of batches (classes) conducted was ranging from 5 to 35 per year whereas with the inception of the BKIICT, the number of batches dramatically increased, ranging from roughly 100 to 150 per year. This dramatic increase in the number of batches (classes) was due to a significant increase of the training and institutional capacity of the BCC

which was attributed to Korea's development cooperation involving transfer of technology and skills. Hence, Korea's bilateral ODA program has greatly worked in the field of ICT in Bangladesh.

The study found that the project has been very effective with a median value of 5.00 to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh. The study found that the Project enhanced institutional and training capacity of the BCC that has led it to organize and offer a number of short courses on ICT with modern facilities at comparatively low prices and thereby has attracted different classes of people involving students, employed and unemployed persons, government officials, and housewives to receive training at the BKIICT on various courses on ICT. By doing so, the project has been very effective so far to enhance the employability of the people and facilitate the use and application of ICT in the country.

The research findings suggest that the project has been somewhat successful with a median value of 3.00 to generate ICT professionals in Bangladesh. The study found that the BKIICT has offered diploma and post graduate diploma courses on ICT which could only generate ICT professionals and the other courses could not. However, a certain number of students undertaking undergraduate studies on ICT related disciplines in private universities or colleges often come here to receive some advanced courses on ICT so that they could complement their knowledge on ICT and become ICT professionals.

The Project has been very successful so far with a median value of 5.00 to conduct customized courses on ICT for the government officials of Bangladesh. The study found that the ICT training courses are designed as per the needs or requirements of different government bodies/organizations. Most of the government officials have come from various departments, bureaus, and the ministries of the Government of Bangladesh, such as the Ministry of Defense, Coast Guard, Bangladesh Police, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Public Ad-

Table 2. Evaluation summary of the establishment of BKIICT

SL #	Measurement Indexes (Project-1)	Median	SD	Rating
1	The extent to which the Project was relevant in the context of Bangladesh taking into account its development needs.	5.00	0.333	Very relevant
2	The extent to which the Project was effective to enhance the institutional and training capacity of the Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC).	5.00	0.333	Very Effective
3	The extent to which the Project has been effective to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh.	5.00	0.726	Very Effective
4	The extent to which the Project has been successful to generate ICT professionals in Bangladesh.	3.00	0.527	Somewhat Successful
5	The extent to which the Project has been successful to conduct customized courses on ICT for the Govt. officials of Bangladesh.	5.00	0.441	Very Successful

ministration (Former Ministry of Establishment), and so on, to undertake ICT training and thereby facilitating the use and applications of ICT in government's mechanisms in Bangladesh.

Therefore, it can be said that project has been significant so far to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh. However, the BKIICT presently has been passing through a number of problems which hamper its ICT training services in the face of intense demand for its training in the market. In this regard, four key reasons have been identified; first, the BKIICT does not have now sufficient training equipments in line with its increasing needs and to organize advanced training courses; second, most of the equipments provided by the KOICA have become old and require to be replaced as soon as possible to operate training fruitfully; third, lack of sufficient in-house teaching staff to operate various training courses in line with the demand from the market; and fourth, lack of sufficient funding from the Government in the field of research and development (R&D).

Table 3 shows that the Project entitled "Establishment of Bangladesh-Korea ICT Training Centre for Education (BKIT-CE)" was very relevant with a median value of 5.00 in the context of Bangladesh to meet the development needs. The BKITCE came into being in 2006-2007 with development assistance from the Republic of Korea through KOICA as a modern ICT training center fully equipped with 'State-of-Art' technology. The project was mainly aimed to facilitate HRD in ICT, particularly in education sector in Bangladesh through providing ICT trainings to the instructors or teachers of secondary and higher secondary level and associated officials in education sector and thereby facilitate the use and applications of ICT in education sector in Bangladesh. The aforesaid issues were very critical indeed in the context of education sector of Bangladesh.

The study found that Korea's development cooperation has been highly effective with a median value of 5.00 to enhance the institutional and training capacity of the BANBEIS. Before implementing the project, the BANBEIS could provide ICT training around 300 to 400 people per year. However, due to the implementation of the Project, the BANBEIS could train roughly 1,200 to 1,400 people per year, most of whom are ICT teachers of secondary and higher secondary levels of the education sector in Bangladesh. As such, the implementation of the BKITCE has enhanced the training capacity of the BANBEIS significantly.

The project has facilitated the institutional works and functioning of the BANBEIS to a great extent as an attached organization of the Ministry of Education. It has come to be one of the most important governmental bodies. The enhancement of institutional capacity of the BANBEIS has led it to deal with national educational information management and statistics, serve as the national documentation center for education and perform its other assigned jobs fruitfully and efficiently. The study revealed that due to proper monitoring and supervision, and absorptive capacity of the BANBEIS to utilize Korean skills and technology, the Korea's technical cooperation has been very effective to facilitate institutional capacity of the BANBEIS.

As can be seen from Table 3, that Korea's development cooperation has been very effective with a median value of 5.00 to facilitate HRD in ICT in education sector in Bangladesh. The study found that as of June, 2011, the project has allowed roughly 1,000 teachers of secondary and higher secondary levels so far of the education sector in Bangladesh, a number of officials and staff from various departments/ bodies under the Ministry of Education and other associated personnel working in the education sector in Bangladesh to receive ICT training on a variety of courses and thereby it has facilitated the use and application of ICT in education sector of Bangladesh. Hence, the project has been very effective to facilitate HRD in ICT in education sector in Bangladesh. The study identified three important reasons in this regard. These were suitable policy of both the governments of Korea and Bangladesh, need-based training or demand-driven training, and the institutional capacity of the BANBEIS.

Table 3. Evaluation summary of the establishment of the BKITCE

SL #	Measurement Indexes (Project-2)	Median	SD	Rating
1	The extent to which the Project was relevant in the context of Bangladesh taking into account its needs for development.	5.00	0.378	Very Relevant
2	The extent to which Korea's development cooperation has been effective to enhance the institutional and training capacity of the BANBEIS.	5.00	0.378	Very Effective
3	The extent to which the Project has been effective to facilitate HRD in ICT in education sector in Bangladesh.	5.00	0.488	Very Effective
4	The extent to which the Project has been successful to promote ICT education up to grass root level in Bangladesh.	3.00	0.378	Somewhat Successful
5	The extent to which the Project has been successful to provide ICT trainings for the Govt. officials in education sector and other sectors in Bangladesh.	5.00	0.535	Very Successful

Table 3 shows that the Project has been somewhat successful to promote ICT training into the grass root level in Bangladesh. In this regard, the study found that the BKITCE has been offering computer application courses and other such courses to the teachers of secondary schools, madrasahs (religious schools), and colleges as per curriculum of secondary and higher secondary level and thereby promoting ICT education into the grass root level in Bangladesh while it provides computer training for the teachers of secondary and higher secondary level of the Dhaka and its neighboring districts only. The study identified that the BKITCE has no hostel facilities of its own and has shortage of teaching staff that affect conducting training on a large scale for the teachers of secondary and higher secondary level across the country.

The BKITCE has provided training on computer applications so far for the relevant teachers of secondary and higher level coming from Dhaka, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Savar, Comilla, Tangail, Gazipur, Chanpur, and so on and, thus, is limited to Dhaka and its surrounding districts only. However, it is noteworthy that it is quite impossible on the part of one training center to cover all the districts of Bangladesh due to a limit to its training and institutional capacity. Therefore, the efficacy of the project to spread ICT education up to the grass root level in Bangladesh should not be assessed in terms of quantity, but in terms of quality within small scale.

However, the project has been very successful with a median value of 5.00 to provide ICT trainings for the government officials in education sector and other sectors in Bangladesh. The study revealed that the project has been so successful to provide a wide range of training courses on ICT encompassing computer basics and office productivity, open office software based on LINUX, customized courses on ICT, e-governance project management for the officials and staff working under different ministries and other such governmental bodies as the Ministry of Education, Directorate of Secondary and Higher education, Ministry of Land, ERD (Ministry of Finance), Bangladesh Police, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Public Administration, and so on, and thereby enabling them to deal with internet and utilize the benefits of ICTs in their respective official works.

In this way, the project has been contributing to the government's vision of promoting and facilitating the use and applications of ICT in all sectors of the country and thereby enabling the government to establish good governance, accountability, and good public management, and to provide better delivery of the services to the people. As such, it may be said that the project has been very effective so far to facilitate HRD in ICT in education sector in Bangladesh. In this regard, Mr. Abu Taher, one of the key persons to implement the project, put forward that "the project has become a very successful model of South-South cooperation due mainly to good policy from both sides—Korea and Bangladesh—to manage development interventions, demand-driven training, joint supervision and monitoring, and our dedicated faculty members." Hence, the successful implementation of the project offered a couple of lessons and examples of good practice on the ground:

- Demand driven project activities produce maximum results.
- Partnership approach is more effective than donor-recipient approach.
- Effective knowledge exchange can bring together better experiences for both the countries which can work as reference point or guideline in future SSC or even in North-South cooperation.
- Good blending of government ownership and joint supervision by both Govt. and donor works better.
- Recipient's need is the most pertinent basis of cooperation.
- Unambiguous agreement can ensure smooth implementation and effective M & E.

VIII. Conclusion

Given the efficacy of the KOICA's two projects, it may be said that the Korea's bilateral ODA programs have been successful to facilitate HRD in ICT in Bangladesh due to proper alignment among a number of factors involving Bangladesh needs, beneficiaries' needs, Korea's comparative advantage, Bangladesh government's policy, absorptive capacity of the recipient organizations, transfer of technology and skills, joint supervision or monitoring of both Governments, and so on. Hence, the effectiveness of the KOICA's projects suggests that South-South cooperation may work in the form of technical cooperation between a developing country and another southern country or an emerging developed country if it prioritizes developing partner country's needs, optimizes beneficiaries' needs, ensures absorptive capacity of the recipient organization. South-South cooperation may also work if there is suitable policy on the part of both- developed country and its developing partner to manage development interventions properly. The successfulness of the KOICA's projects also put forward that technical cooperation works to enhance the institutional capacity of the organization provided that there is sufficient absorptive capacity on the part of recipient organization to utilize external resources and skills, and suitable Government's policy as well.

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