

HELD Academia-Industry Nexus Report, Volume 4

Thinking out of the Matchbox Job Matching for the Bangladeshi Youth



PROJECT

Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)

IMPLEMENTED BY

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

COMMISSIONED BY

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

CONSULTANCY

REED Consultancy Bangladesh (RCB)

RESEARCH TEAM

Mohammad Abbas Uddin, PhD, Team Leader

Abul Kalam Azad, Expert

Arafat Abubakar, Expert

Kazi Farhan Hossain Purba, Youth advisor

Md. Sakib Al Montasir, Youth Advisor



PREFACE

As part of the project Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD), implemented by GIZ, we emphasized fostering meaningful dialogue between the education sector and private industry on sustainability within the textile and education spheres. At the core of this initiative is the Academia-Industry Nexus, which focuses on strengthening collaboration between academic institutions and industry stakeholders.

This initiative is brought to life through a structured cooperation network that brings together representatives from higher education, vocational training institutions, government bodies and the textile industry. As part of these efforts, we have organized multiple events addressing contemporary issues related to higher/vocational education and industrial growth. The insights and discussions from these events are compiled as a series of report volumes.

This report has been prepared by Reed Consultancy Bangladesh (RCB) and published by GIZ Bangladesh. We extend our sincere gratitude to RCB, the speakers, participants, and panelists for their invaluable contributions to this publication.

Bikash Chandra Sarkar
Technical Advisor HELD
GIZ

Dr. Christian Bochmann
Head of Project HELD
GIZ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. Methodology	2
3. Background study	3
3.1 Job matching	3
3.1.1 Skill mismatch	3
3.1.2 Information mismatch	5
3.1.3 Network mismatch	5
4. Workshop findings	7
4.1 Group activity	7
4.2 Panel impulse discussion	8
5. Recommendations	9
5.1 Role of the stakeholders	9
5.1.1 Role of government	9
5.1.2 Role of educational institutions	9
5.1.3 Role of employers	10
5.2 focus points	10
5.2.1 Skills mismatch	10
5.2.2 Network mismatch	11
5.2.3 Information mismatch	12
6. Conclusion	13

ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Assistant General Manager
AUST	Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BUTEX	Bangladesh University of Textiles
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HELD	Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh
HR	Human Resource
IT	Information Technology
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training

1 INTRODUCTION

The economy of Bangladesh is rising, creating a growing demand for plenty of working people across various sectors such as the garment industry, agriculture and public sectors. With Bangladesh's growing economy, new job fields such as Information Technology (IT), renewable energy etc. are also offering high growth opportunities. However, there is an inconclusiveness in connecting job seekers to job providers because of several challenges in conventional job matching. Job matching is a connecting service between applicants and employers by directly helping a job seeker secure work and a job provider fill a vacancy. Job matching can alter the current situation for young job seekers as they experience several parallel nonlinear life-cycle transitions as they attempt to enter the world of work.¹ It is a matter of urgency in Bangladesh due to almost double economic growth compared to the world average with a forecasted unemployment rate of 5.09% of the total forecasted labour force of 78.26 million in 2024.²

The Asian Development Bank published a report that identified three factors, essential for ensuring the effective functioning of the job market, namely information mismatch, skill mismatch and network mismatch.

Based on the youth job matching scenario of Bangladesh and several other Asian countries along with some of the countries from the Pacific region, the Asian Development Bank published a report that identified three factors, essential for ensuring the effective functioning of the job market, namely information mismatch, skill mismatch and network mismatch.³ There is an imbalance in bridging the job seekers to the job providers due to skill mismatch as the academic education system may not always align with the industry, information mismatch caused by insufficient access to information on available opportunities and network mismatch due to the reliance on informal networks perpetuating inequalities and favouritism, all of

which can be mitigated by proper job matching. Currently, job matching is not effectively serviced by publicprivate partnerships at the national level, and especially the young people in rural regions are typically underserved by job matching services due to the dispersed layout of support systems.⁴ This report is based on insights gathered from a network as part of the work under Output 4 (Academia-Industry Nexus) of the bilateral project "Higher Education and Leadership Development for Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)", to strengthen the application-oriented competencies of future specialists and managers in the textile industry and related sectors in Bangladesh.

1 <https://www.adb.org/publications/job-matching-youth-asia-pacific>

2 <https://www.statista.com/outlook/co/socioeconomic-indicators/bangladesh>

3 <https://www.adb.org/publications/job-matching-youth-asia-pacific>

4 <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/117747/1/7th%20Sem.pdf>



2 METHODOLOGY

The report has been prepared based on the network session and literature review of existing reports, publications, websites, and other publicly available resources of related organizations on job matching in Bangladesh. In this regard, a network session on job matching, 'Academia Industry-Nexus Session on Job Matching,' was held on 6 November 2024 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The session was organized by GIZ and Reed Consultancy, Bangladesh, and attended by 25 participants for an in-depth analysis of job matching in Bangladesh.

25 participants from different sectors participated in the event representing Bangladesh Technical Education Board, Department of Textiles, Bangladesh University of Textiles, Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Central Women's University, DBL Group, Urmi Group, Design In Global, GIZ and Reed Consultancy Bangladesh

3 BACKGROUND STUDY

3.1 JOB MATCHING

Job matching is the process of connecting the right job seeker to the right job provider based on the individual's inherent strengths and weaknesses, either matching the job to the person or the person to the job, which requires understanding both of the job and the person under consideration.⁵ According to a 2023 World Bank report, one in three graduates in Bangladesh remains unemployed one or two years after graduation due to

According to a 2023 World Bank report, one in three graduates in Bangladesh remains unemployed one or two years after graduation due to inadequate job matching.

inadequate job matching.⁶ Around 2 million young people join the job market annually, and they do not fare much better in the current practices.⁷ According to the BBS, the share of youth, 'Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)' conveys the number of young people not in education, employment, or training as a percentage of the total youth population, providing a measure of youth who are outside the educational system, not in training and not in employment, and thus serves as a broader measure of potential youth labour market entrants than youth unemployment since it also includes young people outside the labor force not in education or training. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) released the outcome of its latest sample vital statistics

report in June 2024, showing the current NEET at 39.88%.⁸ A report by the Asian Development Bank identified three factors essential for ensuring the effective functioning of the job market: skill mismatch, information mismatch, and network mismatch, which was further elaborated in the network session by the keynote speaker.¹

3.1.1 SKILL MISMATCH

There is an imbalance in bridging the job seekers to the job providers due to skill mismatch as the academic education system may not always align with the industry.

Complete skill, knowledge and passion mismatch: In the current job market, a common scenario is found which is that job seekers with certain skill sets cannot find a proper match with the skill requirements of the recruiters. It can happen in both ways - either the jobseekers are overqualified for skills or lack the required skills. The gap between the jobseekers' knowledge and employers' knowledge requirements is often significant. Moreover, many job seekers struggle to align their passion with the jobs they are applying for or get recruited into.

⁵ <https://www.agediversity.org/course/social-care-jobmatching/#:~:text=Job%20matching%20is%20the%20process,and%20the%20person%20under%20consideration.>

⁶ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/endpovertyinsouthasia/voices-bangladeshi-youth-preparing-world-work>

⁷ <https://tds-images.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/the-job-market-crying-reforms-3715406>

⁸ http://nsds.bbs.gov.bd/storage/files/1/Publications/SVRS/SVRS%202023%20Final%20Report_web.pdf

Underutilization and under-recognition of skills: Underutilization of skills hinders many employees in Bangladesh from leveraging their educational qualifications or acquired abilities in the labour market, turning into a multi-faceted issue generated by misalignment between educational institutions and industries. Under-recognition of skills in Bangladesh is slowing down both individual career growth and the broader economic development of the country, leading to the failure to properly acknowledge and validate the skills of job seekers, particularly those who have acquired competencies outside of formal education or those who work in the informal sector.

Lack of diversity in skills as desired by the recruiters: Recruiters often look out for conventional skillsets in the applicants, leaving a wide gap in the pursuit of diversity in the workplace. People with diversified skill sets not only incorporate new ideas into the mix but also have the potential to increase overall productivity and efficiency.

Lack of good centres/ experts to develop much-needed soft skills/ hard skills: Despite the wide recognition of the imbalance in skill requirements, there is a lack of skill centres/ experts to develop much-needed soft skills and hard skills. There are some

common soft skills requirements in job recruitments such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, creativity, time management skills, teamwork, leadership skills and professional networking skills. Hard skills are also playing a critical role in job matching. For example, subject-specific technical knowledge, general knowledge and awareness about current affairs, computer literacy, language skills, numeracy and mathematical skills, operational skills, and business skills are some of the common hard skills requirements.

Under-recognition of skills in Bangladesh is slowing down both individual career growth and the broader economic development of the country,



Keynote speaker: Ashik Sarwar, CEO, WINGS Learning Centre

3.1.2 INFORMATION MISMATCH

Bangladeshi youth and job seekers do not receive and access the right information at the right time due to information mismatch: Difficulties in getting the right form of information at the right time and in the right place to the right people are common in the current job market. Insufficient and unavailability of relevant information may lead to mismatched skills of the applicants and job requirements demanded by the recruiters.

No specific centre/ expert in offering the right information in remote/less privileged areas: People from the remote/ less privileged areas are lagging as there are no specific centres/experts to offer the right information. Limited access to information in remote areas/less privileged areas often leads to limited awareness of job opportunities, a lack of personalized career guidance and centralized resources for employment information.

Lack of sufficient internet coverage and high expense: In the ever-changing digital world, the ability to access job listings, apply for positions, receive career counselling, or participate in online training programs depends heavily on reliable and affordable internet access. Many people do not get adequate access to internet coverage due to insufficient network coverage or the high expense of the internet. The ratio of internet expenses to the earnings of the masses in Bangladesh is very high compared to other South Asian countries.⁹

Limited access to information in remote areas/less privileged areas often leads to limited awareness of job opportunities, a lack of personalized career guidance and centralized resources for employment information.

Cultural Norms: Existing cultural practices and societal norms impact the information matching between job seekers and recruiters. Family and/or social expectations, attitudes towards work and professionalism, such as cultural attitudes toward work ethic, punctuality,

hierarchical deference or formality in communication, and language barriers significantly impact the current job matching spectrums.

3.1.3 NETWORK MISMATCH

The 'Network' of a person can be considered as one type of 'Net Worth' of the person. In the Bangladeshi job market, network mismatch happens primarily due to the reliance on traditional networks perpetuating inequalities and favouritism. The other reasons are Improper usage of alumni network: Most fresh graduates or job seekers cannot benefit from the existing alumni network due to incorrect approaches/goals. Exclusivity and lack of access to the helpful and effective alumni network, over-reliance or underestimation of the alumni network and limited access to relevant connections are some common aspects that lead to network mismatch.

⁹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/internet-cost-by-country>

Lack of career service support: In most universities in Bangladesh, there is no career service center or support mechanism to connect job providers and job seekers. These shortcomings can lead to significant network mismatches in job matching, especially for job seekers who rely on career services to navigate the complex job market. Career service/ support centers can play a crucial role in guiding individuals through the job search process, connecting them to relevant opportunities, providing career advice, and facilitating networking with potential employers.

Lack of the attitude to attend social, CSR, and charity events, student clubs, job fair activities to broaden the circle:

A common scenario in Bangladesh is the majority of university students do not find interest in attending social, CSR, and charity events, student clubs, job fair activities to broaden the circle until they are in the very end of their academic life, even after the competition of graduation. Such practices can lead to mismatches between job seekers' qualifications, career goals, and the requirements of available job opportunities.

In most universities in Bangladesh, there is no career service center or support mechanism to connect job providers and job seekers.

4. WORKSHOP FINDINGS

4.1 GROUP ACTIVITY

After the keynote speech and Q&A on "Thinking out of the Matchbox – Job Matching for the Bangladeshi Youth" was facilitated, a group activity consisting of three specific questions was divided among the groups separately.

All the teams brainstormed and discussed within the group and presented the findings. The findings of the group activity are incorporated in section 5. The questions for the group activity were

Question 1: What short- and long-term measures can mitigate the **information mismatch**?

Question 2: What short, and long-term measures mitigate the **network mismatch**?

Question 3: What short, and long-term measures can mitigate the **skill mismatch**?



Different groups brainstormed and discussed during the group activity



Panel discussion

4.2 PANEL IMPULSE DISCUSSION

The panellists of the panel impulse discussion include Dr. Eng. Ahmed Tanvir Anam, AGM, OD and Academic Collaboration, Corporate HR; Iffat Ara Ananaya, Lecturer, Chair for Sustainability and Textile Innovation, Department of Textile Engineering, AUST; Mrittunjoy Kumar Mohanta, Assistant Director, Ministry of Textiles and Jute; Ashfi Mosfiq, Strategic HR, Urmi Group and Md. Ashiqur Rahman, 3rd-year student, Department of Dyes and Chemical Engineering, Bangladesh University of Textiles. The panelists discussed on:

- Ways to reduce the existing job matching gap by balancing between job market demand and the number of prospective graduates each year;
- Ways to mitigate the complaints of the youth and experienced job seekers for not getting calls for interviews or not being satisfied with the offer even though they are selected by job matching;
- Ways to alleviate the existing skill mismatch by enriching the right candidates with the right type of skillset;
- Role of educational institutions in Bangladesh to adapt the curricula to better equip graduates with the necessary skills, network, and information demands;
- Challenges to be forecasted in job matching in Bangladesh, and ways to be addressed to create a sustainable job market.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Bringing dimensional shifts in job matching within a developing country like Bangladesh may seem chaotic and require extensive support initially. However, job matching in Bangladesh is increasingly gaining attention for acquiring economic growth and environmental sustainability, aligning with global trends and consumer demand. Our recommendations to focus on this transition are based on the role of the stakeholders, and focus points are incorporated with the findings of the literature review and network session.

5.1 ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

5.1.1 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

To provide improved learning opportunities, the government should invest in education and training for the youth. It should collaborate with the private sector and invest in improving the quality and quantity of public educational institutes so that a greater number of students from low-income households may acquire quality education. The government should include skill-based curricula and emphasize practical and real-life situations in the syllabus rather than theoretical scenarios. The government should also redesign skill development curricula, such as technical and vocational education (TVET), based on the market demand.

5.1.2 ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

A comprehensive reform of the education system is required for the students to develop soft skills along with hard skills. To promote learning, course content must be revised and updated regularly. Educational institutes should address the gap between recruiters' demand and/or expectation from the graduates and the skills that the graduates possess. Academic institutions should align their curriculum with market demands, ensuring students are more equipped for the job market. Short courses on diverse skills, including soft skills, must be organized to boost the relevance of education in the job market. University teachers should encourage and motivate students to participate in discussions during class lectures to improve their communication skills. All educational institutes should have career counsellors who help students identify their strengths, prepare curriculum vitae (CV) and job applications, and engage in entrepreneurship early on. Educational institutions should also encourage students to take part-time jobs and training programs.

5.1.3 ROLE OF EMPLOYERS

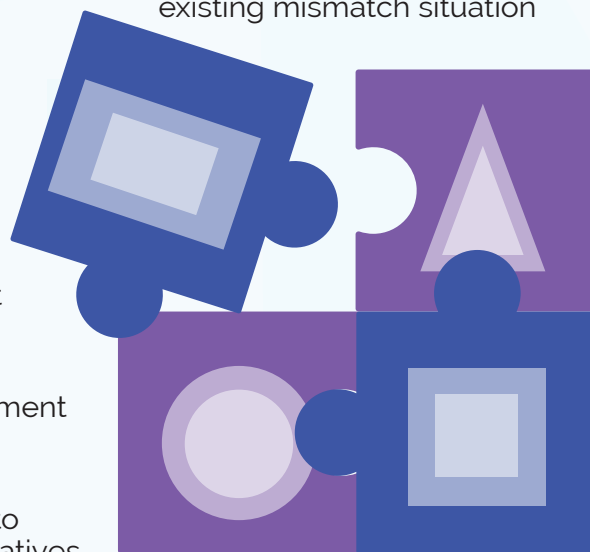
Companies can arrange trainee programs for the graduates to prepare them for work. They also need to create a positive work environment for all, especially women, and encourage innovation among the employees. Trainings help improve soft skills like communication, networking, and leadership skills. Employers can provide technical and vocational training to upskill young individuals. The recruiters need to remember there is no 'right fit'. They have to extend their hands to employees to grow and become the right fit in their organization's culture.

5.2 FOCUS POINTS

5.2.1 SKILLS MISMATCH

Short-term Measures: Taking short-term measures based on academia and industry collaboration can pave the way to improving the existing mismatch situation by

- Availing short-term skill development courses incorporated with real-life/task-based experience learning to mitigate the skill mismatch from the academic and industry perspective;
- Promotion focusing on skills-based workshops on skill diversification and skill mapping to boost mismatch minimization;
- Investing in online platforms and digital tools to provide affordable and accessible skill enhancement opportunities for job seekers for upskilling and reskilling;
- Awareness-building or promotional campaigns to inspire localized/regional skill development initiatives, resulting in skill demand and skillset of the job seekers.



Long-term Measures: With a view to addressing the skills mismatch in Bangladesh in the long term, more comprehensive structural reforms and a shift in the approach to education, workforce development, and economic planning are needed by aligning the country's workforce with emerging industries, advancing technological capabilities, and fostering a culture of lifelong learning by

- R&D on future skill requirements for the development of skill-based assessment systems in academic institutions and industries through curriculum overhaul for most wanted soft and hard skills;
- Establishing advisory boards comprising industry leaders to guide educational institutions on emerging trends, skills in demand, and necessary curriculum changes;
- Setting skill assessment centers, collaboration with the industry and on-the-job skill-building training to make skill-based job matching more effective.

5.2.2 NETWORK MISMATCH

Short-term Measures: To address network mismatch in Bangladesh in the short term, immediate actions should focus on improving digital access and in-person communication, fostering stronger linkages between various stakeholders, for example, government, industry, academia, alumni network and job seekers as

- Proper utilization of the alumni network can be the missing piece of the puzzle in minimizing the existing network mismatch;
- Collaboration between industries and career support centers focusing on the benefits of networking can make job matching more effective and efficient;
- Arranging mentorship and counselling programs and allowing internship and industry visits for existing students and fresh graduates can help in building a connective network between job seekers and job providers.

Long-term Measures: Mitigating network mismatch in Bangladesh can result in an increasingly well-balanced job sector and prosperous economy by addressing both infrastructural and social challenges in the long term by

- Governmental support programs on networking with long-term vision to alter the existing network mismatching;
- The addition of networking skill enhancement-based courses in the academic curriculum, area/industry-based partnerships and arranging job fair and job placement programs to decrease the network mismatch from the academic and industry perspective;
- Developing implementable digital infrastructure for improving necessary skills development by focusing on affordable technological access for the teachers, students and professionals.

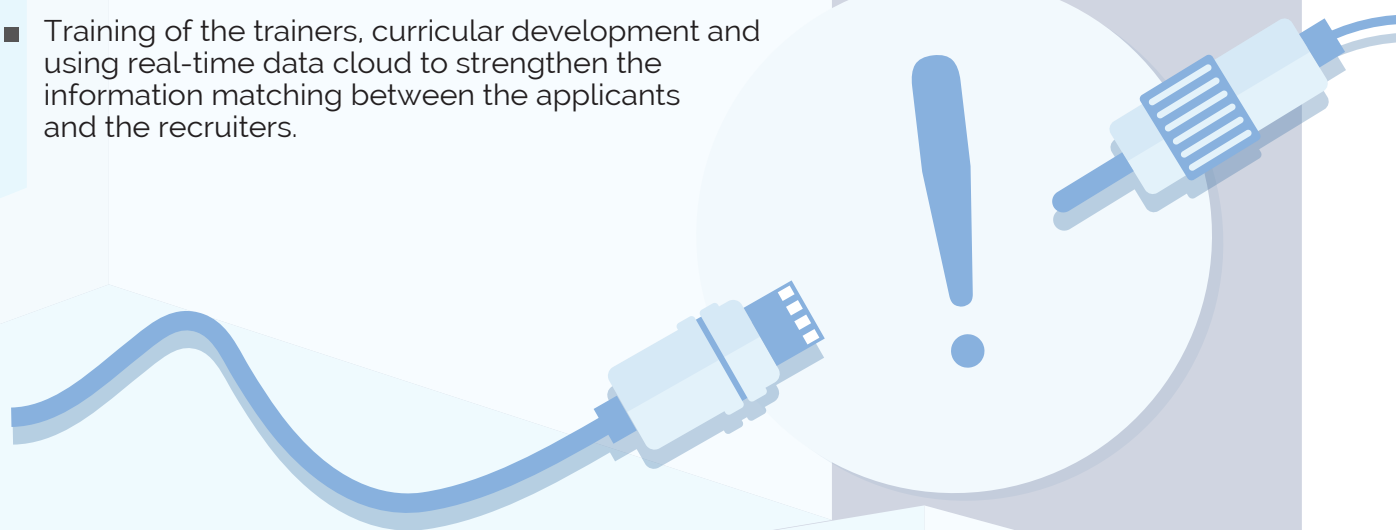
5.2.3 INFORMATION MISMATCH

Short-term Measures: Information mismatch in Bangladesh can hinder economic growth, social development, and governance, as both recruiters and applicants may make poor decisions due to a lack of access to the right information at the right time. Alleviating information mismatch in Bangladesh requires quick, targeted actions to improve access to accurate, timely, and relevant information for all stakeholders, which can be done by

- Making user-specific promotions and using a feedback loop to decrease the irregularities in information matching between job seekers and job providers;
- Setting up information and research wings in the education institutions to prepare the students to utilize information in job matching from an early stage of their career.

Long-term Measures: Information mismatch in Bangladesh over the long term can be acquired through comprehensive, systemic strategies to ensure that all academic career centers, industries, and applicants have access to accurate, timely, and relevant information focusing on

- The creation of an information exchange hub aligned with industry professionals to mitigate the information mismatch from the academic and industry perspectives;
- Professional subscriptions to trend-setting websites to keep students updated with the everchanging world of fashion trends and norms;
- Training of the trainers, curricular development and using real-time data cloud to strengthen the information matching between the applicants and the recruiters.





6 CONCLUSION

Around the world, well-structured systems of job matching are making a notable difference in employment by ensuring job seeker and job provider satisfaction, increased organizational productivity and efficiency, reduced turnover due to sacking/resignment, and diversified inclusion. With the huge number of employable youths and high potential economic growth, the job market of Bangladesh can experience rapid amelioration by mitigating skills mismatch, network mismatch, and network mismatch. The network session on job matching emphasizing the focus of the industries, educational institute-based career centres and job seekers of Bangladesh towards the current mismatches in job matching of Bangladesh has analysed the issues, facts, and statistics and focused on conventional and unexplored job fields. The findings of the network session emphasized on a long-lasting collaboration among the government, academic institutions, and industries.

With the huge number of employable youths and high potential economic growth, the job market of Bangladesh can experience rapid amelioration by mitigating skills mismatch, network mismatch, and information mismatch.

**Published by the**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Registered offices
Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

Higher Education and Leadership Development for
Sustainable Textiles in Bangladesh (HELD)
GIZ Bangladesh
PO Box 6091, Gulshan 1
Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh
Phone +880 9666 701 000
Email giz-bangladesh@giz.de
www.giz.de/en

As at

Dhaka 2025

Design

Fahud Khan
Dhaka

Photo Credit:

Bikash Chandra Sarkar, GIZ

Author:

Reed Consultancy Bangladesh
Laura Sophie Schnieders, GIZ
Bikash Chandra Sarkar, GIZ

Responsible:

Dr. Christian Bochmann

On behalf of the
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and
Development (BMZ)