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# SITUATION ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION CONTEXT AND POLICY FRAMEWORK IN BANGLADESH

REPORT



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসন সংস্থা (আইওএম)



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# SITUATION ANALYSIS OF MIGRATION CONTEXT AND POLICY FRAMEWORK IN BANGLADESH

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Commissioned By:  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)

*This publication has been produced under the IOM-UNDP Global Joint Programme on 'Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies' supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).*



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
আন্তর্জাতিক আফ্রিকান সংস্থা (আইওএম)

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This publication has been produced with the assistance of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and IOM through the Global Joint Programme on 'Mainstreaming Migration into National Development Strategies'. The contents of this publication can in no way be taken to reflect the views of SDC or IOM.

This report has been issued without formal editing by IOM.

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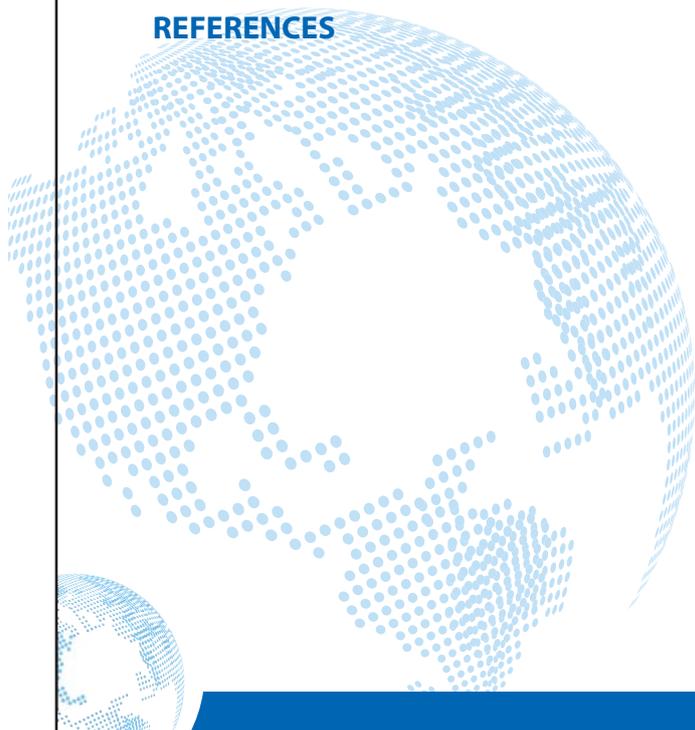
Published in December 2015.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>BBS</b>	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
<b>BCCSAP</b>	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
<b>BDT</b>	Bangladeshi Taka
<b>BMET</b>	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
<b>DEMO</b>	District Employment and Manpower Office
<b>FYP</b>	Five Year Plan
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Programme of Action
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NSDP</b>	National Skills Development Policy
<b>RMMRU</b>	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
<b>SDC</b>	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WEWF</b>	Wage Earners' Welfare Fund



## INTRODUCTION

In 2013, 232 million people were residing outside their countries of birth increasing from 175 million in 2000 (UN DESA, 2013). While migration results from aspirations to have better earnings and more agreeable environment to reside in, a significant portion of migration is compelled by natural and man-made factors. Migration has deep social and economic ramifications. It is estimated that in 2014, almost one trillion dollars were transferred as remittances, of which around half (USD 440 billion) was transferred to developing countries (World Bank, 2014).<sup>1</sup> In cases of many developing countries, this accounts for over 10 per cent of the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Yang, 2011). Furthermore, total remittances received in developing countries were three times that of overseas development assistance they received in 2013 (World Bank, 2013). Aside from the tangible aspects of it, migration also leads to substantial transfer of skills and knowledge between societies.

While migration has multiple economic and social advantages associated with it, it can also be very costly for the migrants themselves, their families and their countries. Migrants and their families may bear high costs, which are often not translated into financial gains. Many of the migrants who originate from developing countries migrate individually to their countries of destination, leaving their families behind. At an individual level, this can be associated with psychological costs arising from loss of social and familial networks. At a family level, the loss of an economic productive member of the household may pose issues related to social protection, which if left unaddressed, may lead to deterioration in the well-being of these individuals and households. Finally, at the national level, migration could also lead to labour supply shortages in specific sectors, which may have productivity implications.

Migration also impacts gender dynamics, the composition of families and societal structures at large. Finally, forced migration and displacement, high recruitment costs, violations of human and labour rights, restricted access to information and services, and limited socioeconomic participation in destination areas, all negatively impact the migration–development nexus (IOM, 2015).

Over the years, international migration has attracted the attention of policymakers and academics. A major portion of the total migration that takes place is internal in nature. This is typically driven by similar motivations as in the case of international migration, such as for

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<sup>1</sup> WB statistics are estimated from two standard components of the balance of payments (compensation of employees and personal transfers) relying on a distinction of residents from non-residents of a reporting economy. Therefore all of it is not necessarily related to international migrations.

better opportunities. However, internal and international migration is different in many regards particularly in developing countries where a nexus between them exists (Skeldon, 2006). Internal migration poses a different set of issues for domestic policy, often related to public goods provision and warrants careful analysis to have an integrated policy approach to address the opportunities and challenges it may present.

This report provides an overview of the migration context and policy framework relating to both internal and international migration in Bangladesh. In addition to providing a snapshot of the research that has been undertaken related to migration in Bangladesh, some of the research gaps that need to be addressed to better understand the development and migration nexus have been highlighted in this report. In formulating the research agenda, inputs of relevant policymakers, who shared their opinions in a half-day workshop in May this year, were utilized.

The report is divided into four thematic areas based on the Government of Bangladesh's priority areas: (a) Migration and poverty; (b) Migration and social protection issues; (c) Migration, environment, climate change and disaster management; and (d) Migration and human resource planning. The second section of the report provides an overview of the migration policy framework and importance of mainstreaming migration in the development agenda in Bangladesh.



## PART A : MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE FROM BANGLADESH

### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ISSUES IN BANGLADESH

With a huge labour surplus since the 1970s, Bangladesh has been participating in the short-term international labour market of Gulf and other Arab countries as well as countries in South-East Asia. From 1976 till now, it is estimated that over 9 million individuals have taken up work overseas, with around an annual average of 480,000 persons leaving Bangladesh over the last five years (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). The largest destination for most of these migrants is the Middle East, which accounts for about three quarters of the total migration out of Bangladesh. The second largest destination is South-East Asia, accounting for 22 per cent of the total migrant population (IOM, 2010b). Short-term labour migration accounts for most of the migration out of Bangladesh and most people engaged in migration are either semi or low-skilled workers (BBS, 2014). The participation of women in short-term international labour market used to be very low, with less than 5 per cent of the total flow up to 2011. However, in the last couple of years, female participation in international migration has increased rapidly and stood at 18 per cent of total migrants in 2014 (RMMRU, 2015a).

In 2013, Bangladesh was the eighth largest remittance receiving country in the world (World Bank, 2013). The total amount of remittances received by Bangladesh in 2014 was equivalent to 10 per cent of the GDP of the country (RMMRU, 2015a). While the traditional reason for total remittance growth was attributed to increases in the number of migrants, recently institutional and regulatory reforms in remittance transfer in Bangladesh have also translated into increases in remittance flows through formal channels (RMMRU, 2015a).<sup>2</sup> At a macrolevel, remittances play an important role in financing Bangladesh's imports and also help its currency to be stable, which contributes greatly to overall macroeconomic stability.

At the microlevel, the average amount of remittance sent back in 2009 was around BDT 80,000 (IOM, 2010b) annually, which increased to around BDT 200,000 in 2014 (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). Amounts remitted by female migrants were 41 per cent lower than that of male migrants (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). This is mainly because female migrants are employed as domestic workers, which pay significantly lower salaries, compared to the jobs

<sup>2</sup> Bangladesh Bank undertook several steps. This includes providing directives to Western Union to withdraw pay cash exclusivity clause while developing corresponding relationship with different public and private banks in Bangladesh. It introduced electronic payment and central cheque clearing system and organized several road shows in major migration destinations in the Gulf, Arab and South-East Asian countries to promote flow of remittance through formal channels.

male migrants undertake (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). However, in terms of percentage of salary remitted, women send significantly more than men (INSTRAW and IOM, 2000). It should be noted that the cost of migration is one third for females compared to males, so the net welfare effects of female migration may be larger than that for males.

Concerning the financial impacts of international migration, remittances are utilized to finance consumption of both durable and non-durable goods of remaining members of the migrant household. Migrant households also invest some remitted money in agriculture and agro-based industry at a higher rate than non-migrants. The resulting demand for these activities from migrant households has shown to indirectly stimulate the local markets and create employment opportunities for locals. Migrants also participate in philanthropy by contributing to community development by providing finances for infrastructure development (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015).

The average cost of migration in 2014 was estimated to be around BDT 300,000 for males and around BDT 100,000 for females (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). This is alarmingly high for poorer sections of the population in rural Bangladesh. In the absence of formal financial loan services, migrants often have to get into informal arrangements with relatives, community or informal money-lenders to meet the costs of migration (Siddiqui, 2010). Migrants also sell family assets to finance the cost of migrating, which might lead to overall welfare losses from migration. In fact, Das et al. (2014), show that international migration from Bangladesh is risky: one out of three migration attempts eventuate in failures leading to large financial losses for migrants. The Government had taken various steps to lower migration costs particularly through Government-to-Government (G2G) arrangements with Malaysia in November 2012. This however, did not bear much success.<sup>3</sup> In June of this year, the Government has signed a new agreement similar to arrangements that existed prior to the G2G arrangements (The Daily Star, 2015).

The number of individuals engaging in internal migration is estimated to be three times larger than that in international migration (Afsar, 2003b).<sup>4</sup> There are many factors that underlie this kind of migration. Firstly, a lot of the internal migration that takes place is driven by the seasonality in the agricultural labour demand. Secondly, a significant portion of the population undertakes migration in response to being displaced by extreme climate change/disaster-related events. However, most of them migrate to other parts of the country in search of better livelihood, which are affected by the two sets of factors

<sup>3</sup> As per this agreement 100,000 were to migrate as a part of these scheme in 2013, but according to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) records, the total number of workers that migrated under this scheme was only 4,458 in 2013 (New Age, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Overall national estimates of internal migration in Bangladesh are hard to obtain for recent years, but it is highly likely that the assertion in Afsar (2003b) holds even now.



mentioned above. Along with the traditional destinations of internal migration, origin areas of international migration, or migration hotspots, have become another major destination for internal migrants (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015).

People also migrate to Bangladesh from other countries. In the past, marriage, family reunification used to be the dominant reason for in-bound migration. Due to the growth in the service sector, garments and other manufacturing industries, people particularly from the South and South-East Asian countries migrate to Bangladesh for work. Currently such migrations are dealt under the (a) Foreigners Act, 1946; (b) Foreigners Order, 1951; (c) Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; (d) Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1966; and (e) Bangladesh Control of Entry Act, 1952. There is no scope for formal migration in unskilled and semi-skilled work in Bangladesh. It is very difficult to ascertain accurately the total number of foreign workers residing in Bangladesh because most short-term immigrants often enter the country in the guise of being tourists and then stay on to integrate into the labour force. According to the Government of Bangladesh, this figure for India could be over half a million (Syed, 2009). In terms of remittances, the official statistics report that total migrant remittance outflows from Bangladesh in 2013 was USD 20 million.<sup>5</sup> However, according to the data from State Bank of India, expats remitted USD 3.7 billion from Bangladesh in 2013.<sup>6</sup> If such estimates were accurate, this would bring Bangladesh among the top 10 remittance sending countries of India.

To complete the overview of the migration context in Bangladesh, it is worth mentioning that there are a significant number of refugees residing in Bangladesh from its neighbouring states. According to Brinham (2012), around 330,000 undocumented Myanmar nationals were residing in Bangladesh in 2010 (International Relief, 2011).

In the following sub-sections, an account of research that has been carried out with regards to migration in Bangladesh will be provided, focusing on: (a) Migration and poverty nexus; (b) Migration, social protection and rights; (c) Migration, environment, climate change and disaster management; and (d) Migration and human resource planning. The main focus is on internal and international migration from Bangladesh as there is hardly any research available on movements of skilled or unskilled workers to Bangladesh.

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<sup>5</sup> Based on data from World Bank, Migration and Remittance Data. Retrieved from <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTDECPROSPECTS/0,,contentMDK:22759429~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:476883,00.html>

<sup>6</sup> One of the reasons for this discrepancy could be due to the fact that the second report does not make a clear distinction between migrant remittance flows and corporate profit repatriation.



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## MIGRATION AND POVERTY NEXUS

The starting point of any analysis examining migration and poverty nexus should recognize that people move to ensure better livelihood.<sup>7</sup> While making this move, individuals imperfectly calculate the costs of migration with the perceived benefits of doing so. In the cases where the perception of the benefits bears out to be true, then migration becomes a fruitful endeavour. However, often these perceived benefits are not materialized and sometimes the calculations of the costs related to migration (particularly unforeseen ones) are underestimated. In such situations, migration leads to welfare reductions.

In this section, the following have been examined:

- (a) Is poverty one of the drivers of migration and does the high cost of migration prohibit poorer households from engaging in it?
- (b) Does engaging in migration directly lead to increases in the welfare of households and, conversely, are there cases where migration leads to the impoverishment of households?

Most of the studies that analyze the impact of migration on poverty (Siddiqui, 2001; Mahmood and Siddiqui, 2014) identified that for some households, poverty is one of the factors that influences migration decision. Mahmood and Siddiqui (2014) report that 80 per cent of respondents cite economic reasons behind their decisions to migrate.<sup>8</sup> In further examination of these economic reasons, they report lack of job in the locality, better work at destination, declining productivity in agriculture, and running away from debt as major drivers of migration. Similarly, in a recent study on migration patterns on 27 villages of two Hill districts (CHT) of Bangladesh, indigenous population identified that one of the main reasons for migration of their household members, was to climb out of poverty (Siddiqui and Billah, 2015). Environmental stresses play an important role in these livelihood considerations of migration and will be discussed in the next section.

While the livelihood consideration of migration is well documented in the case of Bangladesh, the choice of migration destinations can be heavily dependent on the poverty levels prior to migration. This is particularly true in the case of international labour migration, where costs can be very high. As mentioned in the previous section, an average individual is expected to spend BDT 300,000 to secure the ability to migrate out of

<sup>7</sup> While this migration may be voluntary or forced, the fact still remains: at the time of migration the person who decides to migrate believes that they will be better off by migrating. However, it is important to note that the outcomes of migration can often be at odds with the beliefs of migrants prior to migration. It is not uncommon that the migrants overestimate the benefits and underestimate the costs of migration.

<sup>8</sup> The survey was conducted on 1,200 households across 4 districts of Bangladesh. The survey included internal, international and non-migrant households.



Bangladesh for short-term contract employment. To put this number in perspective, the average per capita GDP of Bangladesh is BDT 85,000 a year. Thus, the average cost of migration translates to over three year average per capita GDP. Given that in most cases, the cost of international migration is borne by the person intending to migrate and not by foreign employer; this high cost of international labour migration can be alarmingly expensive for the poorer sections of the population. Not surprisingly, there is evidence that suggest international migrants are typically from the relatively better-off households of the rural areas of Bangladesh. Using data the Household Income and Expenditure Survey of Bangladesh, World Bank (2012) has estimated the impact of high cost of migration on access amongst different sections of the rural population in Bangladesh. According to this study, the percentage of the population who participate in international migration is lowest in the lowest income deciles (0.5%) and highest in the top three income deciles (around 7% for each). However, one needs to be careful in interpreting the results of this study as the data used in it only accounts for income levels after individuals migrated. Their estimates thus can be an artefact of the data they use which does not take into account pre-migration income conditions. One can always argue that the presence of higher migrants in the upper-income deciles because of remittances sent back by migrants, over the years may have pulled these households out of poverty in these upper deciles.

In addition to high costs, the presence of formal financing mechanisms, which can help households engage in spreading the costs of migration over time, is limited. This leads to households often engaging with informal moneylenders who charge exorbitant financing rates. Additionally, potential migrants seek finance from families and friends. While these loans from families and friends come at cheaper financing rates, in the cases of failed migrations poses a different problem. Failure to repay loans poses significant losses to individuals' social capital and informal social protection in the future. Another way potential migrants finance their migration costs is by entering into matrimony with the intention of raising funds to finance their aspirations to migrate overseas. They demand that part of the migration to be financed by the bride's family as a part of dowry payments. It is important to note that dowry payments are illegal in Bangladesh, but still prevalent. Thus, while the cost to migrate overseas might be very high, several informal mechanisms exist that potential migrants can leverage on in order to finance their migration (Siddiqui, 2010). In cases where migrants cannot participate in international migration, they often engage in internal migration (Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015).

The high cost of migration along with the different financing mechanisms poses great difficulty in terms of establishing a direct causal relationship between migration and poverty reduction due to this selection issue, that is, the choice to migrate as well as the



choice of different avenues being sought to finance migration costs is correlated with poverty conditions prior to migration. This is perhaps the reason why there is a dearth of research trying to establish the direct causal effect of migration on poverty reduction in Bangladesh. Instead, most studies that have examined the issue of migration in Bangladesh have focused on: (a) understanding the macroeffects of migration; and (b) an account of how migrant households spend their remittances and whether this leads to better living standards for households.

To understand the impact of migration remittance on household consumption and investment, three big surveys have been carried out in the last six years in Bangladesh. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2009 carried out the first survey. With a sample size of 10,673 households the survey covered in detail: (a) the background characteristics of migrant households (to understand the aforementioned selection issue); (b) decision, processing and conditions of migration (including choice of destination); and (c) remittance usage (consumption and investment). The survey reports that most of the migrants (98.3%) were males and had a little education (around 12% of the total responded finished tenth grade or higher). Most of the migrants owned their homestead land (97.8%) and 57.3% of cases reported to own other land. Most migrant households had access to improved water (98.8%) and sanitation (73.7%) facilities. The Middle East was identified as the major region in terms of migration destination. The main two sources of information about migration for potential migration were relatives and/or migration intermediaries. These two sources also were identified as major agents brokering migration out of Bangladesh. Most migrants (80%) had a contract of employment prior to emigration. The total cost of migration ranged from BDT 100,000 to BDT 300,000 and varied based on country of destination. While majority of the respondents (77%) faced no issues with completing the migration process, a significant portion of migrants faced difficulties related to delay in finding jobs, or facing fraud (job benefits lower than stated in contracts). In terms of income, the average migrant was earning about BDT 21,363 and saving BDT 13,210. On average these migrants sent BDT 81,710 in remittances annually, with the amount of remittance sent by female migrants being markedly lower than male migrants. Most remittances were sent through formal channels, namely, banking institutions. On average, remittance-receiving households spent BDT 109,130 on total households' expenses. The report claims that remittances led to improvements in the consumption of food among the majority of migrant households, educational opportunities and medical treatments.

More recently, in 2013, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) conducted another survey of 9,961 households to understand the usage of remittance amongst migrant households.



The survey looked at similar issues to what the IOM survey from 2009 did. The findings of both IOM and BBS surveys were qualitatively similar in terms of migrant profile (demographics and human capital, choice of destination and utilization of remittance channels). However, there are quantitative differences in terms of actual remittance value and its utilization within the households.<sup>9</sup> One of the key shortcomings of both surveys is that the target population (respondents) were solely migrant households and thus comparing data from these surveys to others, which include non-migrant households, is difficult.<sup>10</sup> To understand the effect of migration on well-being this sort of a comparison is essential.

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) conducted a survey in 2014,<sup>11</sup> which included both migrant and non-migrant households. This first round of the survey serves as a baseline and will be followed by two waves of repeat surveys within the next five years.<sup>12</sup> In the interest of brevity, we will focus on the results related to income and poverty from this survey, as it is the most recent one.

According to the RMMRU survey, the average income of migrant households was BDT 260,160 annually. This was almost two and a half times more than that of non-migrant households within their sample (BDT 114,827), as well as the national rural average household income of BDT 115,776. The incidence of poverty rates is also lower amongst international migrant households compared to non-migrant households who were of similar socioeconomic background prior to first migration of the migrant respondents.<sup>13</sup> The incidence of poverty was 13 per cent in these households compared to 40 per cent in non-migrant households. At the same time, the national rural poverty estimate was 26 per cent. However, given the inherent selection issues related to migration choices, this might just be a correlation and not actually causal.

In order to make causal claims about the effects on household level outcomes, Sharma and Hassan (2009) utilized a propensity score matching (econometric) technique to evaluate the returns to migration. Using data generated from a small survey they conducted for their study, they found that migration leads to increases in total consumption, savings (five times more for migrants than non-migrants), food expenditure (particularly on protein) and household durable goods. However, they found that migration did not lead to higher expenditures in health and education. This is perhaps not surprising as both basic health

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<sup>9</sup> Given that these surveys were conducted several years apart, quantitative differences are not surprising. What is reassuring is that overall numbers reported in these studies are qualitatively similar, that is the quantitative differences are not very large.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps it was not the intention of these surveys to get a comparison, in which case the word shortcoming is uncharitable.

<sup>11</sup> Funded by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that in the focus group discussion in May 2015, one of the key research gaps identified by policymakers was the lack of a panel data with regards to migration. In this regard, the RMMRU dataset will be very useful.

<sup>13</sup> Based on the national poverty line. According to this, any household with average per capita earning of less than BDT 1,544 per month is classified as poor.



and basic education at least in the rural levels are heavily subsidized by the Government. Finally, it was also found that members of migrant households were more indebted (possibly due to inter-temporal financing of migration) than their non-migrant counterparts. Unfortunately, Sharma and Hassan (2009) do not make any causal claims on poverty rates across migrant and non-migrant households. Additionally, the data utilized for their study is not nationally representative and may have issues related to generalizability.

While establishing direct link between migration and poverty reduction is quite difficult, there are ways through which migrants can affect poverty rates indirectly. Firstly, migration creates a shortage in unskilled labour which can be filled in by other members in the community or from outside the community. Secondly, with the increased household income and resulting savings, migrant households can create new opportunities for other members of the community. Data from the SDC and RMMRU survey sheds light on these issues. As a part of the survey, community level data was collected from different regions with varying level of migration intensity. This meant that the amount of labour shortage was more acute in some of the survey areas than others. The rate of internal migration during peak agricultural season was 79 per cent in the high international migrant sending-villages compared to 41.7 per cent in medium intensity villages and 33 per cent of low intensity migration villages. The effect of this was reflected in wage rates across these regions. Wages were significantly higher by about BDT 100 in high intensity migration areas compared to low intensity migration areas. This suggests that in the case of Bangladesh, international migration spurs internal migration and provides poor individuals in the society a pathway into earning a better living.

Relatedly, the SDC and RMMRU survey reported statistics on household level outcomes. They report that households with international migrants on average owned larger parcels of land than non-migrant households (financed by remittances). Additionally, when engaging in agricultural activities in these lands, migrant households utilize more daily labourers than non-migrant households, thus generating employment. In fact Afsar (2004) argues that international migration has been instrumental in bringing in increase in tenant farmers in rural areas between 1988 and 2000. Thus, the findings of the SDC and RMMRU survey validate these earlier claims. Households with international migrants also invested significantly more than non-migrant households on agro-based (poultry, livestock) small enterprises, which provide another avenue through which employment is generated. In terms of consumption, the international migrant households spend 24 per cent more than non-migrant households. They also spend 77 per cent more on construction material (house) compared to non-migrants. The higher levels of consumption as well as investment from international migrant households again lead to more permanent as well as temporary job creation.



Migrant households also have a key role to play in increasing the overall land productivity in the country. They are more likely to cultivate their lands and irrigate all their land compared to non-migrants, respectively. They are also 41 per cent more likely to utilize better quality seeds.<sup>14</sup> All of these have huge implications on improving average land productivity which has been highlighted as one of the main reasons for increasing overall labour wages in Bangladesh (Hossain, Sen and Sawada, 2013).

Another study that looks at the issue of impact of migration on household level outcomes is Bryan et al. (2014). This study examines household level outcomes of temporary and seasonal internal migration. They report that food and non-food expenditures of such households increased by 30–35 per cent, and caloric intake improved by 550–700 calories per person per day. In another related study, Afsar et al. (2002) also examines the cost benefit ratio of international migration in Bangladesh. They report that for every USD 1 invested in migration, households reaped benefits worth USD 2.9. While the results of these studies are very encouraging for potential migrants, the actual benefit of migration is dependent on the actual costs and risks involved in migration.

The cost of migration is an issue that has received a lot of policy level attention in Bangladesh in the last few years. As mentioned earlier, the Bangladeshis pay too much to migrate internationally and there has been a focus on reducing costs of international migration. One manifestation of this was the decision of the government to become an active player in this market. In November 2012, the Government of Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Malaysia to provide an opportunity to potential migrants to migrate to Malaysia at a fraction (one fourth – one sixth) of the cost they would pay if they were to pursue migration through private recruitment agencies and *dalals*. In fact, 1.4 million people signed up for 30,000 positions in 2012. In the interest of fairness, the Government utilized a lottery to determine who would get the opportunity to participate in migration in this scheme. However, the Government-to-Government migration MoU failed to create the desired outcome in terms of sending workers. Under this scheme up until mid-2015, only around 7,500 people could take up employment in Malaysia. The introduction of this scheme had a negative effect on the overall level of migration to Malaysia from Bangladesh. The failure can be attributed to various reasons. The Government of Bangladesh did not successfully sell the idea of recruitment of database to the Malaysian employers and as such these employers were reluctant to recruit workers from this database. Secondly, the employers also derive other monetary benefits by engaging with recruiting agents. In July 2015, the Government of

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<sup>7</sup> While the welfare effect of utilizing better technology (seeds and irrigations) for the investing households is not clear, it is clear that using these technologies lead to better wage rates for people who are hired, resulting in an indirect effect on pushing up wages.



Bangladesh signed another agreement with the Government of Malaysia (back tracking from the previous agreement) to prioritize sending 1,500,000 migrants to Malaysia in the next three years. The cost of migrating to Malaysia under this new scheme will be determined by market forces and should thus be equal to the high costs that exist in the market currently. What is clear from this entire set of policy changes is that there is an overwhelming demand within the population in Bangladesh to migrate internationally.

While there is exuberance in the willingness to migrate internationally amongst Bangladeshis, migration can often be quite risky. In study conducted over 496 villages in Bangladesh, Das et al., (2014) report that one-third of all attempted international migration leads to failures like the failure to migrate. They also report that the median loss from a failed attempt to migrate internationally is USD 250, which is about a quarter of the annual household income in rural Bangladesh. Furthermore, they also report that failure discourages potential migrants from trying to migrate again. Relatedly, Bryan et al. (2014) also show the behaviour of an average villager towards migration can be explained by a model of risk aversion. Households under invest in migration, as it is perceived as a risky investment. They also show that nudging migrants by providing a subsidy/access to credit facilities to migrate leads to higher migration rates leading to higher household level achievements/outcomes. However, it must be noted that in their study, there was no inherent risk from actually migrating (at no given point did any households, in the treatment conditions, have the risk of losing assets due to migration), so in that sense the external validity of their results can be questioned. However, the inherent risks from migration can potentially be reduced with insurance schemes and may be an avenue for future research. It is important to note that IOM does not advocate for expanding financial options to migrate, but for expanding decent work and fair recruitment systems, so that safe migration becomes a choice.

Below is a summary of the findings with regards to the poverty and migration nexus in the context of Bangladesh:

- (a) Poverty is an indirect driver of migration for some households, and often poor households migrate with an aim to get out of poverty.
- (b) The cost of migration has implications on the choice of destination particularly for poorer migrants. However, even when facing high costs there is active participation of individuals in overseas migration. They utilize various informal mechanisms, often at high cost, to participate in overseas migration. The welfare implication of this is not very well understood due to the lack of proper counterfactuals.



- (c) In case of successful migration, both international and internal, there is a positive impact on household level outcomes such as consumption and savings that can be attributed to migration. However, migrant households are also more indebted. Due to the inherent selection issue with poverty, making direct causal claims about migration affecting poverty is very difficult.
- (d) Overseas migrants impact poverty reduction in two different indirect ways. Firstly, when they exit the labour force, they create labour shortage. Secondly, the remittances they send back spur higher consumption, savings and investments in agro-based enterprises leading to demand for labour. In both cases, internal migrants (who typically migrate due to poverty related reasons) are employed to fill these newly available jobs.
- (e) Unsuccessful attempts at overseas migration, which is one third of the overall attempts, can severely affect the total asset holdings of households. Additionally, failure to migrate reduces the probability of engaging in overseas migration in the future.
- (f) While the high costs of migration have been discussed quite extensively in the last few years, policies aimed towards reducing it (particularly government-to-government agreements) have seen limited success.

While there are evidences on multiple issues related to migration and poverty, there are also gaps in the literature, which will help to understand the nexus more completely.

- (a) During the analysis, no studies looking at whether poverty reduction has any effect on household propensity to migrate were found. On one hand it can be argued that having guaranteed income locally reduces the need to migrate, but at the same time, the added income stability may encourage households to take risks in the form of engaging in migration.
- (b) More rigorous analysis on the impact of international migration, through labour markets as well as remittance investment on internal migration needs to be conducted. This has to be coupled with studies estimating direct causal impacts of migration on household level outcomes so that the true impact on international migration on Bangladesh can be understood.
- (c) The high cost of migration has been highlighted as an important issue in the focus group discussion with policymakers in May 2015. Understanding why the cost of migration is high is very important and necessary, especially in light of the failure of the policy options to reduce the cost of migration pursued by the government of Bangladesh. Additionally, it is imperative to conduct more research to understand why the Government-to-Government deals did not bear fruit.



(d) Given the inherent risk associated with migration in the case of Bangladesh, promoting insurance mechanisms to mitigate risks can potentially be beneficial. However, before proceeding with that, research needs to be carried out to test the efficacy of such mechanisms.



## MIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to disasters and climatic variability due to its geographical features and location. It lies at the terminus of several major South Asian rivers and two-thirds of its land area is less than five meters above the sea level. Approximately 80 per cent of Bangladesh's land area consists of floodplains of major rivers and it is not surprising that it has faced at least one catastrophic flood every decade and 26 major cyclones between 1970 and 2009. Almost 69 per cent of the total landmass of the country was affected by floods of 1998 rendering 45 million people homeless (Sarraf et al., 2011). Cyclones Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009 displaced 650,000 and 842,000 people respectively (World Bank, 2010). Another major source of displacement in Bangladesh is due to the dynamic flow of the Himalayan rivers which carry with it enormous amounts of silt. This silt often gives rise to new stretches of land called *chars*. At the same time these dynamic rivers also play a crucial role in destroying or sinking existing land and chars, leading to displacements (Zaman and Weist, 1991).

Given the high population density and the over reliance of Bangladeshis on primary production, natural disasters make the livelihoods of many people very vulnerable. Often as a response to disasters, a section of affected households or individuals of these households are forced to migrate (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013). In most cases, these migrations are short-term and short distance in nature (IOM, 2010a). In the same report by IOM, it was highlighted that climate change is expected to affect the movement of people in at least four ways: (a) the intensification of natural disasters – both sudden and slow-onset environmental changes - leading to increased displacement and migration; (b) the adverse consequences of increased warming, climate variability and of other effects of climate change for livelihoods, public health, food security and water availability; (c) rising sea levels that make coastal areas uninhabitable; and (d) competition over scarce natural resources potentially leading to growing tensions and even conflict and, in turn, displacement.

With an aim to understand motivations behind migration in Bangladesh, (Black et al., 2013) identified five macrofactors that influence the migration decisions of households. These are environmental, social, economic, demographic and political in nature. Successive studies were conducted by Sussex Center for Migration Research and RMMRU (Martin et al., 2014) and it was found that the biggest motivator to migrate for households is economic. However, further analysis of data also showed that there is a strong link between this economic aspiration and exposure to disasters. It is argued that in disaster-affected areas, the need to migrate to ensure economic well-being is greater than other areas. With effects



of climate change being readily felt in villages in Bangladesh through changes in weather patterns like rainfall and temperature (Islam and Neelim, 2010), in terms of sea level changes affecting soil salinity and increased amounts disaster events (Sarraf et al., 2011), migration of a few members of the family can be used both as a coping mechanism or one among many adaptation tools employed by the households. Thus, understanding how sensitive migration is to changes in climatic conditions will be key for policy making. It will also be important to understand the nature and intensity of migration related to climate change to ensure minimum welfare losses for people who choose to migrate, as well as for communities that host migrants, mostly against their will.

The first issue that needs to be addressed is whether climate related factors actually lead to migration and if so, what is the intensity of it? Using the 2001 and 2011 census data, Kniveton et al. (2013) show that the rate of population growth was lower in sub-districts, which are affected by floods compared to lightly affected sub-districts. They also show that areas affected by riverbank erosion have a 20 per cent reduction in the absolute population growth rates. Cyclone affected areas also had lower population growth compared to non-cyclone affected areas, suggestive of out-migration caused by disasters. Iqbal and Roy (2015) further show that changes in climatic variables such as temperature and rainfall affect migration through decreases in agricultural outputs/productivity. They empirically establish that fluctuations in temperature and rainfall contribute to decrease in agricultural productivity. Declines in agricultural productivity decreases revenue, which leads to higher out-migration rates.

There are also estimates with regards to intensity of migration caused due to changes in climate. Based on historical analysis of *upazila* level census data from 2001–2011 and utilizing estimates from the World Bank, Kniveton et al. (2013) projected that from 2011–2050, as many as 16–26 million people would migrate from places of origin due to floods, storm surges, river bank erosion and sea-level rise in Bangladesh. Similarly, Iqbal and Roy (2015) also estimate that the out-migration from climate-affected areas will be 22 per cent higher in 2030 compared to 1990. All of these suggest that areas of the country, which will not be affected by climate change, will have to host these extra people, which requires for sufficient planning to prevent negative outcomes.

The first step towards making such a plan would be to understand where people actually migrate. According to Afsar (2003), two-thirds of the total migration that takes place in Bangladesh is internal in nature, with movements occurring from impoverished rural areas to more prosperous urban areas. More recent evidence suggests that areas with very high rates of international migration are also big internal migration destinations (Siddiqui



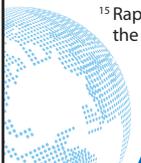
and Mahmood, 2015). While short-term international migration is one of the desired livelihood options for a large segment of the rural population in Bangladesh, the opportunity to migrate internationally in climate change affected areas is very limited. In fact, most of the migration from climate change affected areas is internal, specifically to urban areas or international migration hotspots.<sup>15</sup> Generally, the migrants are employed in the informal sector, particularly selling labour.

When migrants move from rural to urban areas, they typically end up in slums or unprotected areas of rural areas such as *hut-bazar* or schools. The slums are usually built up in areas, which are environmentally degraded and have very poor living conditions. Migrants residing in slums are also extremely vulnerable because these places are often erected illegally and can face eviction without prior notice. RMMRU (2015b) highlight some of the living conditions faced by slum dwellers in urban areas of the country. Besides being built up in environmentally degraded areas, the houses migrants resided in were made with very low quality materials. These households had poor access to water and sanitation facilities. While on average 75 per cent of these households had access to electricity, there is huge variation across different slums. These migrants often face retaliations from locals. It was reported that migrants find it extremely difficult to secure loans and grants from local people/organizations as they are viewed as outsiders. In addition, physical insecurity (such as forced participation at political rallies) was one of the problems identified by some of slum dwellers. While one of the main reasons for migrating in the first place is to reduce vulnerabilities to livelihoods, migrants often do not achieve it due to poor working and living conditions. It is often the case that the long-term outcome of migrating can potentially be negative.

Given that migration has been a viable adaptation strategy for some of the affected individuals, it is important to examine whether this evidence is reflected in development strategies/policies of Bangladesh. The issue of climate change has been very important in the framing of development policy and the agenda of bilateral and multilateral development partners of Bangladesh. However recognition of migration as a possible adaptation tool has been very limited. Instead, the focus has been on building infrastructure or local level adaptation programmes. In some cases, migration has been seen as a threat in terms of the development agenda related to climate change, especially when it comes to the issue of making cities more livable (RMMRU, 2014). However, now robust evidence exists that suggests that migration can be one among other adaptation tools for some households in response to climatic stresses.

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<sup>15</sup> Rapid screening survey, key informant interviews and in depth qualitative interviews of selected slum dwellers (RMMRU, 2015b) show that the majority of the slum dwellers migrate to urban areas due to factors related to climate change.



Only recently, the climate change adaptation strategies/policies such as the National Adaptation Programme of Action 2009 (NAPA) and Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009 (BCCSAP) is seriously examining the migration and adaptation linkage (Martin et al., 2013).

Few studies aimed at understanding the nexus between climate change and migration have been conducted, probably because this is a new research area. Further work needs to be carried out specifically with regards to thoroughly understanding the entire migration process. In what follows is a summary of the findings related to climate change and migration in the context of Bangladesh:

- (a) The impact of climate change has been apparent in many areas of Bangladesh and members of affected households have utilized (mostly internal) migration as one of the many adaptation tools.
- (b) As the impact of climate change becomes more prevalent, more people will use migration as one of the adaptation tools.
- (c) Most climate change induced migrants engage in internal migration; generally their destinations are urban slums, which have appalling living conditions.
- (d) While migration does increase overall incomes of some individuals, often these appalling conditions can in the long run lead to negative consequences, which may outweigh these short-term benefits.
- (e) The Government of Bangladesh and its development partners are yet to consider the possibility of livelihood migration as one of the adaptation tools for climate change affected people.

Regarding research gaps, focus group discussions with policymakers stressed the importance of examining the entire process of migration and the effects of climate change on migration behaviour, including:

- (a) Examine more rigorously the patterns of migrations that occur from climate-affected areas, with a focus on cross-border migration.
- (b) Examine the conditions of left behind family members of migrants who migrate from climate change affected areas. This is particularly important as the livelihood opportunities of left behind family members might not be similar to those in areas which are not climate affected.
- (c) Examine the policy implications of large-scale rural to urban migration due to climate change.



In addition to these questions, we have also identified various other research gaps. We suggest a few possible research avenues. These are presented below:

- (a) Understanding the needs of individuals living in urban slums (mostly migrants), with a specific focus on factors related to health and educational outcomes, which are quite poor. This is not a trivial task as there is evidence that the needs of urban poor are substantially different from that of the rural poor particularly due the differences in conditions they live in.
- (b) Examine the dynamics of the relationship between the migrants and the communities that host them with an aim towards finding avenues to improve integration of migrants into host communities.
- (c) Policy level analysis on integrating internal migration in the development agenda with a priority given towards inhabitants of climate change prone areas. This includes identifying solutions that aid those who choose to migrate and those who do not do so.



## MIGRATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Social protection aims to primarily protect the vulnerable segments of the communities with regards to basic consumption and social services. A major concept related to the issue of social protection is that of vulnerability (Sabates-Wheeler and Waite, 2003). However, the definition of social protection is not very settled as different stakeholders define vulnerability in different ways. Generally speaking, social protection is seen as a collection of policies that manage risk and thus improve or protect livelihoods. In this report, we use the International Labour Organization's ILO's concept of social protection. ILO considers social protection as one of the four pillars of decent work. According to ILO, social protection refers to certain assurance against vulnerabilities and contingencies when people are out from work. This includes protection of income for subsistence during old age, during sudden loss of livelihood due to closure of organizations or retrenchment, protection against loss of income due to sickness, accident or death. Assurance of treatment during sickness and following accidents are integral part of social protection. In this section, we have covered social protection literature in case of internal and international migrants within and from Bangladesh.

While examining international migration from Bangladesh from a decent work perspective, Siddiqui (2005) found short-term contract migrants enjoy certain benefits depending on the type of job they perform and the terms laid out in the job contracts. Professional and skilled workers employed in the service sectors, government and banking, enjoy various entitlement packages, for example, superannuation, gratuity and provident fund. However, such benefits are not equivalent to those enjoyed by the nationals of those countries. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the formal sectors enjoy benefits that are more structured than those available in the informal sector. In Malaysia, those who work in the manufacturing industries enjoy the provision of provident fund. However, workers' provident fund often remains with the employer. After completion of a contract, migrant workers hardly have the time to finish the paper work and withdraw their fund. According to Tenagania, a human rights organization from Malaysia, in large number of cases, such benefits have remained unpaid and unclaimed (Siddiqui, 2005).

The level of health care available to Bangladeshi migrants varies from one country to another. In some countries, primary health care is available in the major cities irrespective of the workers' status, whereas in other countries, the employers are supposed to bear the costs. Some companies and factories have their own authorized medical service providers that provide annual medical check-up for migrant workers, while in Malaysia and Singapore, health care is only provided if that is stipulated in the job contract.



Migrants are often employed in hazardous and risky jobs often resulting in accidents and in some cases, death. The Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) of Bangladesh data show that in recent years, the number of deaths in the countries of destination is increasing. From 2008 until 2013, 13,827 dead bodies were repatriated to Bangladesh, 84 per cent of them coming from labour receiving countries. However, the actual number of deaths is unknown as many dead bodies, particularly of migrants having irregular status are not sent back and are buried in the destination countries. In 2013, 25 per cent of the workers whose bodies were returned, died in accidents in the work place and on roads; 29 per cent died of stroke and another 18 per cent of heart related diseases. The average age of the dead workers was 38. Migrants are generally young and often go through medical examinations prior to departure. Therefore, such immature deaths may highlight the hazardous work and living conditions they face abroad. More so, for some migrant families, it takes years to receive the dead bodies. Receiving compensation is also a time consuming process. Some of the receiving countries require a family member of the deceased to file an application for compensation. The foreign office of Bangladesh and BMET pursue cases by securing authorization from the families, yet the process may take up to five years. The discussion above indicates that even though the system of social protection exists in different forms in the receiving countries, it is not accessible to all types of migrants. Besides, enforcing such systems is extremely difficult, especially for low-skilled workers.

In 1990, the Government of Bangladesh created the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) to ensure access to welfare to Bangladeshi migrant workers. The fund is financed by subscriptions from migrant workers and has eight specific goals: (a) the establishment of a hostel-cum-briefing centre;<sup>16</sup> (b) the organization of pre-departure orientation and briefing for departing migrants; (c) the establishment of a welfare desk at the airport; (d) the transfer of bodies of deceased migrant workers; (e) providing assistance to sick, disabled and stranded migrant workers; (f) providing financial help to the families of deceased migrant workers; (g) providing legal assistance to the migrant workers through the embassies and (h) the establishment of a recreation club and information centre under the auspices of the Bangladesh missions abroad. The WEWF helps providing 21 days training to female migrants<sup>17</sup> and pre-departure briefing to all migrants irrespective of gender. On the event of the death of a migrant worker, the family received the stipulated amount of burial costs and compensation. Overall, very little money is spent on direct benefits to the migrants. The resources from the fund are spent on areas that should be borne by revenue budget of the Government. In 2013, the Government enacted the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013. However, there is no meaningful mention of social protection in this legislation.

<sup>16</sup> This entails providing migrants with accommodation prior to departure. In addition, these centres also can be used as briefing/training centres for departing migrants.

<sup>17</sup> Male migrants receive training across 38 different technical training centres in Bangladesh. Part of the operating costs of these centres is financed by the WEWF.



In a recent study, Abrar et al. (2014) analyze the institutional capacity of the foreign offices in Qatar and Malaysia. Apart from providing legal assistance to migrants, the Labour Attachés have many other responsibilities, some of which include verification of employer documents, market exploration and provision of welfare and protection for migrants.<sup>18</sup> The report concludes that there are major capacity issues with the personnel of these offices. Firstly, these offices have a lower number of staff than what is required to fulfil their tasks, particularly with regards to providing legal assistance to migrants who typically are spread over multiple cities and towns across destination countries. Secondly, the officers who are assigned as Labour Attachés do not often have the required skills to fulfil their obligations. This is partly because of the recruitment policy of the Labour Attachés<sup>19</sup> and the inadequacy of training which follows. Careful selection of Labour Attachés along with more resources will perhaps allow them to fulfil their responsibilities.

Concerning internal migration in Bangladesh, a few studies on the related social protection issues that have been conducted. These studies defined social protection loosely to cover wider issues that have focused on examining the migrants' vulnerabilities, and, formal and informal mechanisms to address some of these vulnerabilities.

Kabir et al. (2008) provide an in-depth analysis of social protection, based on household interviews from rural areas in Northwest Bangladesh, highlighting some of the vulnerabilities that short-term internal labour migrants and their families face. They also provide an account as to how they address these risks. They report that illness, harassment over loans and finding adequate amount of food posed a substantial burden for many households. For migrants, finding safe passage to their destination, proper living facilities and particularly well-prepared food were factors that affected their well-being. In response to these vulnerabilities, the biggest source of short-term social protection came from relatives and friends for both migrants and their families left behind. Successful, long-term internal migrants had established routes, practices and contacts, which made their migration experience bearable. In addition to social networks, the resourcefulness of family members help manage migrants to stay for longer periods of time away from their households. This is important, as there was evidence of benefits of migration accruing with time spent away from households. Longer-term migrants were reported to have earned more, which they invested in livestock and land to provide social protection for their families. Unfortunately, the migrants work in the informal sector and have little contact with formal systems of protection, especially with regards to the regulation of wage rates or the conditions of work.

<sup>18</sup> For example: assisting with repatriation of dead bodies, securing compensation on behalf of workers, employing lawyers and interpreters for labour courts, providing shelter to runaway female workers, among others.

<sup>19</sup> Labour Attachés are not permanent staff of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE). Through internal advertisements and selection processes, they are deputized from other ministries for a stipulated period. Once they finish their deputation they return to their previous Ministries. They do not have prior experience, neither can the MoEWOE benefit from the experience that they gain during their deputation.



Seeley and Gardener (2007), based on a survey of relevant literature in Bangladesh, provide a list of vulnerabilities that internal migrants and their families left behind face. Generally, they argue that migrants face very difficult conditions at their destinations, whether urban or rural areas. This is further exacerbated by the fact that migrants are often viewed as outsiders and treated unfavourably. Furthermore, as internal migrants are the main liaison between the households, local government and NGO officials at home. Their migration often leads to reduced access for the families to formal social protection measures, such as food relief programmes, ration cards and so on. Kabir et al. (2008) reports about the vulnerabilities faced by families left behind by internal migrants. They argue that migration can contribute to ensuring social protection as it can generate enough income for households to invest in long-term assets. For example, Islam and Maitra (2012) show how investment in livestock acts as a safety net for households against negative health shocks.

Further research can be of use in providing an in-depth understanding of social protection with regards to migration in Bangladesh on the following areas:

- a. On extent of enforcement of existing social protection measures in the countries of destinations of Bangladeshi short-term male and female migrants working particularly in construction, manufacturing and low ends of the service sector;
- b. On Bangladeshi lower-skilled contract migrants' access to health care services in destinations;
- c. On the extent of natural and unnatural deaths and process of attaining compensation services, as well as work related accidents, injury and compensation practices;
- d. On effectiveness of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund in providing social protection to the distressed migrants and migrants in irregular status;
- e. Internal migrants' access to social protection, particularly those who are working in the informal sector.

In addition to these observations, policymakers recommend:

- a. Carrying out a comprehensive analysis of the formal social protection entitlements in the Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013;
- b. Analysing the status of access to social protection of immigrants in Bangladesh, which at this point has not been researched;
- c. Studying the situation regarding access to social protection upon return of Bangladeshi migrants.



## MIGRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

This section deals with the type of human resources that are required in international and local labour markets and their availability in Bangladesh. Sen and Rahman (2015) argued that different types educational human capital play different roles at different stages of economic growth. The economic growth in Bangladesh in the last few decades was achieved by relatively unskilled labour. This has reduced the demand for secondary and higher education in the country, jeopardizing skills development in the country.

The majority of the students mainly enrol in mainstream schools and Madrassa education. Very insignificant sections of the population enrol in vocational schools. In other words, the supply of human resources possessing vocational skills as per the domestic and international market demand is very poor. Those who pass out from mainstream schools are skilled for other types of jobs, but not the types of skills required in service, manufacturing or industrial sectors of destination countries. In such a scenario, Bangladesh mainly participates in the unskilled and semi-skilled international labour market, where exploitation is higher and return is low (Sen and Rahman, 2015). Therefore, almost all government documents, the Sixth Five Year Plan, Seventh Five Year Plan, Overseas Employment Policy 2006 and the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013 emphasize the need for reformulating the education system to increase the proportion of vocationally skilled human resource, which would ultimately serve both of the job markets, domestic and international.

Studies have been conducted to analyze the effect of education on migration. The evidence is mixed. On one hand, studies show that remittances lead to increase in educational expenditure (IOM, 2010b; Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). On the other hand, it may act as a disincentive for individuals to invest in education, as migration (unskilled) provides an avenue for a better livelihood. In a different country context, it was shown that in the case of short-term unskilled labour migration, the marginal benefit of being educated becomes limited (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011). In the context of Bangladesh, Sward and Rao (2009) examine this issue and find that educational attainment of family members of international migrants is strongly related to the quality and cost of education provided. They also report that in the absence of these factors educational attainment is not valued and individuals instead of investing in education, invest in other areas.

The second important question is related to returns on education with respect to migration. Compared to less educated labour migrants, migrants with some levels of primary



education do not remit more. However, completion of secondary education (even enrolment) led to at least 34 per cent increases in remittances compared to illiterate migrants. These estimates were even higher for individuals with higher levels of education. However, relying on the capacity to send remittances as an indicator of returns to education is rather questionable, as it cannot be assumed that increased volumes of remittances necessarily imply that migrants' qualifications are recognized, that they enjoy better conditions of work or that they earn incomes that correspond to their level of qualification. The paper proposes an added emphasis on the part of the Government in promoting higher levels of education, with a focus on technical and vocational education. Investing in promoting post-primary education will also help with the skills requirement the country will have going forward once it achieves middle income status, as ambitious in the Seventh Five Year Plan.

The importance of enhancing the skill levels of the population has been on the policy agenda of Bangladesh for quite some time. As a result, a National Skills Development Policy (NSDP) has been developed in 2011. This policy mostly concentrates on vocational skills and not on primary, secondary, tertiary or non-formal education. The objectives of the policy are to enhance employability, improve productivity and profitability of firms and strengthen national competitiveness and reduce poverty. Skills development efforts under this policy include: (a) pre-employment and livelihood skills training and apprenticeships in technical and vocational education training; (b) education and training for employed workers in areas of increased demand; and (c) employment oriented and job related short courses that are not affiliated with the Bangladesh Technical Education Board.

The NSDP identified measures for improving the quality of existing skills development programmes, suggested ways to make them market oriented, as well as inclusive (particularly across gender and disability). Along with skills requirement within the country, it also incorporates overseas labour market needs from Bangladesh in Section 18 of the document. It suggests the development of a coordinated strategy to locate labour market demands of major destination countries for different categories of skilled workers and the alignment of national qualifications with international standards, and the development of a system of dissemination of labour market information to overseas employers. Some of the specific activities suggested are: (a) improve the capacity of trainers to international standards; (b) enhance regulations and monitoring to assure quality; (c) communicate to overseas governments and employers of the meaningful changes in skills policy; (d) provide information to prospective migrants/employers with skills demand in overseas markets and its availability in Bangladesh; (e) focus on addressing issues to safe migration prior to departure; (f) establish links between better qualifications and job outcomes



overseas; (g) provide skills training to potential migrant workers; and (h) establish a system of skills certification for returnee migrants. There will also be an emphasis on improving female participation rates in international migration. A National Skills Development Committee has been formed in this respect and it is working with the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training to implement the overseas labour market section of the policy.

While improving the skills of potential migrants is important, ensuring that their qualifications are recognized overseas is also vital. Currently, there is no bilateral agreement on this; there is a private sector initiative among Bangladeshi training centres and employers of Singapore for certification of relevant construction skills. In a recent report, ILO (2014) examines the issues of skill recognition and certification in Bangladesh. The report highlights that the biggest challenge towards the task of winning recognition status for the skills of Bangladeshi migrant workers involves achieving common skills assessment and certification systems between training centres (technical) in Bangladesh and destination countries. To achieve this goal, the skills gap between major destination countries and Bangladesh, training must be assessed, after which a common curriculum could be developed for all training centres within Bangladesh. The report recommends that once the required skills are identified, appropriate investments in existing training centres be made to meet certification conditions abroad.

In 2014, women accounted for 18 per cent of the total international migrants. This is a marked improvement from previous years, when women participation was less than 5 per cent. Both ILO (2014) and Sen and Rahman (2015) stress the need for providing appropriate training for women. The NSDP has a separate section on skills development of female migrants, which needs to be implemented. This will help diversification of jobs carried out by female international migrants.

While enhancing the skills level of potential migrants is important, it is also vital to ensure that skills that returnee migrants acquire during their time abroad are appropriately integrated in the economy. While there has been some work in collating information on skills of returnee migrants and using that database to market these skills by RMMRU,<sup>20</sup> there is very little research analyzing the economic reintegration of overseas workers.

Siddiqui and Parvin (2012) conducted a qualitative research on circulation of the highly skilled professionals of Bangladeshi origin. Through analyzing individual case studies they

<sup>20</sup> With financial assistance from Migrating out of Poverty Consortium, in 2010 RMMRU placed CVs of 10,000 emergency returnee migrants of Libya in a local job portal named bdjobs.com. It also sent letters to local employers requesting them to employ the workers from this portal but there was hardly any response.



show that by circulating among home and host countries as well as by returning permanently, the highly skilled professionals have made significant contribution in some specific areas. The returnee professionals established certain standards in private universities. They also contributed to the establishment of research networks between institutions of their host and home countries. Networks of scientists, physicians and entrepreneurs have resulted in improved delivery of health services, decoding of jute genome, cultural diversification and development of enterprises. Given that Bangladesh is aspiring to achieve a middle-income country status by 2021 and a developed country status by 2041, integrating highly skilled returnee migrants into the economy will be important.

The issue of human resource planning for the purposes of migration has received some importance in policy making in Bangladesh in recent years. In this section, we provide a review of research which has been carried out in this area. The salient points are listed below:

- a. The economic growth in Bangladesh in the last few decades was achieved by relatively unskilled labour. This has reduced the demand for secondary and higher education in the country, jeopardizing skills development in the country.
- b. The majority of the students mainly enrol in mainstream schools with very insignificant sections of the population enrolling in vocational schools, where the skills generated has high demand in both domestic and international labour market. In such a scenario, Bangladesh mainly participates in the unskilled and semi-skilled international labour market, where exploitation is higher and return is low.
- c. The evidence on the impacts of migration and, in particular, financial remittances, on education is mixed. On one hand studies show that remittances lead to increase in educational expenditure (IOM, 2010b; Siddiqui and Mahmood, 2015). On the other hand, remittances may act as a disincentive for individuals to invest in education, as migration (unskilled) provides an avenue for a better livelihood.
- d. Higher levels of mainstream education do not translate into more remittances sent back. However, it is not clear whether higher levels of education leads to better job conditions and better standard of living for migrants.
- e. Highly skilled professionals have made significant contributions in some the areas in tertiary education in terms of both teaching and research. Additionally, networks of scientists, physicians and entrepreneurs have resulted in improved delivery of health services, agricultural innovation, cultural diversification and development of enterprises.



While there is some research that has been carried out in this area, it is not significant enough to undertake evidence-based policymaking. This view was also shared by policy makers during the discussions we had with them in May 2015. The following are proposed as potential research avenues:

- a. A comprehensive analysis of education policy and its action plan is required to identify the drivers behind mismatch between choice of skills acquisition and skills demand both in Bangladesh and abroad. This should have a special focus on technical education feeding into specialised jobs in manufacturing and public works, which often employs overseas skilled workers from other countries.
- b. It is also important to understand why a large number of Bangladeshi workers are willing to take up unskilled and semi-skilled jobs in the Gulf and other Arab countries, but not to enrol into vocational schools which would ensure better pay. In other words, it is important to understand the factors that hinder enrolment into vocational stream of education.
- c. Research is also required to find out avenues to encourage return or circulation of highly skilled. In this respect an action research can be designed where academic researchers and government functionaries can jointly learn from the experiences of China and India in encouraging return or circulation of their highly skilled migrants. Based on the findings, a national strategy can be developed in this area.



## PART B: MAINSTREAMING MIGRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

At a global level over the last decade, there has been an increased interest in international migration's effects on development and often there is an effort to mainstream migration in the development agenda. Conversely, the issue of how development goals affect migration has received less attention. Both issues are particularly important for countries that have a large number of migrants and where remittances account for a significant portion of the national income (in Bangladesh, remittances make up 10% of the real (GDP).

The process of mainstreaming migration in development planning generally entails assessing both the implications of migration for the achievement of development or sectoral goals, and the migration implications of such development or sectoral goals, as well as integrating migration considerations in all relevant policies and programmes, fostering better coordination among government entities ("whole-of-government" approach), as well as between government and non-government actors with a view to achieve policy coherence.

Utmost attention to remittances' macroeconomic effects in Bangladesh has resulted, among others, in the creation of institutional mechanisms to address migration (especially overseas labour migration), including the creation of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in 2001. Additionally, international organizations like the IOM and the ILO, national NGOs such as BRAC, research centres like RMMRU and migrant organizations such as the Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants (WARBE), *Ovibhashi Karmi Unnayan Programme* (OKUP), and *Bangladeshi Ovhibashi Mohila Sramik Association* (BOMSA) are active participants in the migration sector. One of the key pillars that will sustain the process of mainstreaming migration into development planning is greater and better coordination among these actors.

In this section, an overview of governance of migration within the country has been provided.



## MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN BANGLADESH

There are five acts that provide the legal framework under which immigration is regulated in Bangladesh, these are: (a) the Foreigners Act, 1946; (b) the Foreigners Order, 1951; (c) the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; (d) the Registration of Foreigners Rules, 1966; and (e) the Bangladesh Control of Entry Act, 1952. Immigrating into Bangladesh for work purposes require applying for a visa at the Bangladesh Embassy/Consulate in the home country. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this process can be quite cumbersome. Moreover, work visas are often short-term in nature and are provided mostly to professionals. Once foreigners do enter the country, they have to report and register with departments within the Ministry of Home Affairs. For foreigners, pathway into Bangladeshi citizenship is quite uncertain, as these decisions are made at the government's discretion. However, any foreign nationals legally residing in Bangladesh for five years has the option to apply for naturalization. The Ministries that are tasked with governance of immigration in Bangladesh are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. Unfortunately, we could not find research looking at the specifics of immigration related acts and their effects on the lives of foreigners entering the country. Therefore, the following sections will focus on labour emigration from Bangladesh.

The major legislation that provides the framework of governance of emigration is the Overseas Employment and Migration Act of 2013. The aim of this act is to govern emigration with a specific focus on migrant rights. The law is divided in nine sections dealing with recruitment of workers, registration of workers, licensing of private recruitment agents, migrants' work contracts, role of labour welfare wing in destination countries, MoUs with labour receiving countries, migrants' rights, crime, justice and punishment. This law upholds the principle of non-discrimination. It also makes provisions for emergency return of migrants in case of crisis in a destination country. To reduce fraudulent practices and to ensure accountability of recruitment agencies, the law introduces conditionality with renewal of license on the basis of performance. Bangladeshi migrants, under this law, can directly go to court against the misconduct of a recruiting agency to file civil and criminal cases in any court within the country, if the Protector of Emigrant (the concerned government official) fails to file a case within the prescribed period. Earlier cases could only be filed in four special labour courts within the country.<sup>21</sup>

Labour recruitment from Bangladesh involves various Ministries and agencies of

<sup>21</sup> It is unfortunate that hardly any case was filed against those who commit fraudulence against the migrants under this law. In December 2014, RMMRU filed a public interest litigation in the High Court Division of the judiciary against different organs of government for explaining why prosecution is so poor. In March 2015, the Court issued a rule to all relevant Ministries and law enforcing agencies to explain. However, to the best of RMMRU's knowledge, till date none of the relevant agencies have responded to the Court order.



government, private recruitment agents, their local and international intermediaries, potential migrants and their families. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism are the five key Ministries dealing with international labour migration. The BMET Technical Training Centres (TTCs) and district level Manpower offices (DEMO) and the Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) are the organizations involved in regulating and processing migration. Private recruitment agencies, associations, medical centres and their associations, grassroots NGOs and civil society bodies also play an important role (Siddiqui, 2010).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Created in 1976 to regulate private recruitment agencies, the BMET is the executing agency of the Ministry Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in respect to processing labour migration. Since the promulgation of the Emigration Ordinance of 1982, it has been working as the implementing agency of the Ordinance. The Ordinance is now replaced by the Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013. Currently, BMET is involved in regulating recruitment agents, collecting and analyzing labour market information, registering job seekers for foreign employment, providing emigration clearance to job seekers, developing and implementing training programmes in light of specific labour needs in national and international labour markets, implementing apprentice and in-plant programmes in existing industries, organizing pre-departure briefing sessions, resolving legal disputes and managing the programmes of the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund. BMET has offices at the district level (DEMOS), currently in 42 out of the 64 districts in Bangladesh (Siddiqui, 2010). In terms of recruitment, private agents/agencies are the major actors. They must obtain a license from BMET to operate. These agent/agencies collect information on demand for foreign employment and after taking permission from BMET, they recruit workers from different parts of the country. Almost all recruiting agencies are based in Dhaka, as it is not financially viable for them to have offices all over the country. As such, they recruit through a host of informal agents and sub-agents (*dalals*). It is estimated that there are more than 10,000 *dalals* in different migrant prone villages and districts of Bangladesh. These informal agents perform most of the recruitment functions, namely, provide information on migration opportunities, recruit workers and conduct financial transactions related to migration. Operation of recruitment at the local level is conducted verbally and payments are made without receipt. Thus, it becomes very difficult for the government to monitor the activities of recruitment intermediaries, which lead to situations where both recruiting agents and/or their sub-agents can commit fraud and evade responsibility (Siddiqui, 2010).



## MIGRATION MAINSTREAMING IN THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF BANGLADESH

The major development strategy for Bangladesh are the Five Year Plans (FYP). The Seventh edition of this plan will be the major policy document that will guide the national development agenda. The Ministry of Planning (Planning Commission) is in charge of overseeing the process of writing this strategy document. It commissioned eminent researchers and policy advocates to write up 30 background papers. The recommendations of these papers provide the basis on which the Five Year Plan has been written.<sup>23</sup>

The concept note of the 7th FYP has highlighted that the main focus of this plan would promote accelerated economic growth by empowering every citizen with a core objective to achieve middle-income country status by 2021. Focus would be on generating jobs, and achieving an economic growth target, higher than 7 per cent. The plan has 14 thematic areas to be addressed<sup>24</sup> and 83 indicators to be monitored to ascertain progress.

As a starting point of the analysis of the extent to which migration is mainstreamed and could be mainstreamed in this national development strategy, the policy recommendations from the background papers of the 7th FYP were reviewed. Only in four cases, the issue migration was directly highlighted. The chapter on education highlighted the importance of education, particularly technical and vocational training in enhancing overseas employment outcomes. In the chapter on export diversification, it was argued that while remittance boom in the last few years has been good for the economy of Bangladesh, over-reliance on remittance is a risky strategy as overseas employment opportunities are driven mostly by domestic conditions in the countries of destination. In the background paper on climate change and disaster management, migration was highlighted as an outcome of climate change; including warning of the fact that if not managed properly, migration would pose threats on resources in urban areas, to where most internal migrants move. In the chapter on lagging behind areas, one of the policy prescriptions put forth was to increase international migration from those areas.

<sup>23</sup> This report was conducted and completed when the 7th Five Year Plan was in its preparation phase. Only the background papers were available at the time of our analysis. Therefore, the review we conducted is based on the background papers. Recently the Government of Bangladesh has shared the draft of the 7th Five Year Plan. Our report has not reviewed that document.

<sup>24</sup> The thematic areas include (1) Macroeconomic Stability, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction, (2) Employment Growth, (3) Agriculture, (4) Education, (5) Health, (6) Water and Sanitation, (7) Transport and Communication, (8) Energy, Power and Mineral Resources, (9) Gender and Inequality, (10) Environment, (11) Information and Communication Technologies, (12) Urban Development, (13) Governance and (14) International Cooperation and Partnership. Improvements in these thematic areas have the ability to affect migration sector by either affecting migration decision (both immigration and emigration) or outcomes achieved by current migrants.

While in many of these chapters the issue of migration is not addressed directly, it has impacts on either migration decisions or the outcomes of migration for individuals who have already taken this step. In what follows is a chapter-wise presentation (for most relevant chapters) of the policy goals of the background papers and our assessment of their migration implications. The chapters, which cannot be directly linked with migration and development issues such as forestry, environment and biodiversity conservation, land administration and management and tourism, were excluded.

- 1. Chapter on Access to Financial Services (Mujeri, 2015):** The main point of this chapter was to highlight ways in which financial services can be extended to segments (including urban slum dwellers and migrants) of the Bangladeshi population which currently do not enjoy access to these services. The main ways in which this would be achieved would be by improving adoption of technology (digitalization) in provision of these services and tying them up with already existing institutions (such as the post-office). The paper highlights the need for innovation in the provision of financial services tailored to the needs, behaviour and aspirations of different segments of the society (mentioning small and marginal farming households). *How does access to financial services affect migration?* The availability of formal and more inclusive financial services, not only for migrants but for the population in general, can have different implications related to migration. Firstly, better access to formal financial services may help potential migrants having an alternative to financing their choice to migrate overseas. Similarly, access to insurance services may help reducing the risks associated with migration and reduce incentives to migrate to overcome risks in contexts where formal social protection is inefficient or inexistent. Secondly, access to financial services may provide further options to remittance-receiving households to utilize their resources. Key to this is the development of tailor-made products that cater to their needs, financial behaviour and aspirations. Besides, remittance-receiving households' have higher savings compared to non-migrant households. Expanded access to financial services may provide remittance-receiving households with formal options of credit savings and investment services. Finally, given the focus on innovation, investment and technical skills will be required in the development of the sector. Similarly, providing incentives to highly skilled persons of Bangladeshi origin to return temporarily or permanently to Bangladesh or to circulate between origin and destination may be considered.



**2. Chapter on Improving Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Sector (Bakht and Bashar, 2015):**

The chapter highlights the importance of SMEs for economic development and provides a snapshot on the state of SMEs in Bangladesh. Based on global and Bangladesh's experiences, the chapter recommends for an environment where the discriminatory provisions against women are removed and all the laws and sectoral policies to uphold and enforce women's rights are prioritized; development of the SME sector in Bangladesh the government should: (a) create an enabling environment for private investment including a differentiated taxation system without bureaucratic red tape; (b) provide easier access to imports; (c) target public expenditure towards increasing demand for SME output; (d) ensure access to credit; and (e) focus on appropriate human resource development.

What are the migration-related implications of SME development? The development of SMEs is likely to have positive effects on rural job creation potentially reducing incentives to migrate. However, given the emphasis on human resource development, potential migrants may have better income potentials abroad. As mentioned earlier in the report, remittance-receiving households who already engage in agro-based SMEs will greatly benefit from the adoption of these policy prescriptions.

**3. Chapter on Education, Schooling and Human Capital (Sen and Rahman, 2015):**

This chapter presents the state of the art and trends concerning human capital development *vis-à-vis* demand over the last few decades. It also highlights the human capital needs of Bangladesh's economy as it transitions into middle-income status. The paper recommends: (a) extending scholarships up to secondary school; (b) promoting remedial schooling for individuals who discounted education in early life; (c) prioritizing technical and vocational schooling; (d) supporting income mobility of educated female workers; (e) providing social protection for educational human capital in urban areas; (f) aligning learning tests with international standards; and (g) bridging the gap between madrasa and non-madrasa education.

*How do education goals affect migration?* Most of recommendations of this paper if achieved will mean a more educated labour force. The impact of this on migration decisions is not clear a priori. However, if a person chooses to migrate with having better education (technical or otherwise) that is recognized by overseas employers, there is a higher likelihood for her to secure better salaries. In order for females to move up the income ladder, overseas migration might be a viable avenue, particularly if the Bangladesh economy cannot provide opportunities for them. If females do pursue such options, it is imperative that the state provides enough arrangements to ensure their rights for decent living.



#### **4. Chapter on Lagging Behind Regions Study (Khondker and Mahzab, 2015):**

This chapter conducts a district level analysis to understand the economic differences across districts in Bangladesh. Based on this analysis (and relevant literature), the paper puts forth four policy recommendations: (a) narrowing the infrastructure gap; (b) manufacturing opportunities in laggard districts; (c) expanding agriculture and rural economic activities; (d) creating opportunities for international migration, by providing special financial schemes and better training facilities.

*How do lagging regions' development affect migration?* The fourth recommendation specifically advocates for promoting migration from lagged behind regions of the country. If the 7th FYP follows through on this recommendation, then there should be more migration from these regions. It is imperative that public offices (BMET) are present in these areas to ensure proper governance related to migration. All the other three recommendations emphasize local employment creation in these lagged behind districts, which should have a dampening effect on the choice to migrate internally. Also for family members left behind of international migrants currently residing abroad, access to better infrastructure and basic service provision may enhance the quality of life and hence, welfare.

#### **5. Chapter on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (Begum, 2014):**

This chapter focuses on various avenues to strategize gender equality and women's empowerment in the 7th FYP. It recommends: (a) increasing access to human development opportunities, including better healthcare and education opportunities; (b) enhancing access to and control over productive assets including employment overseas and opportunities for higher value self-employment; (c) increased participation in decision making at the national and community levels; (d) establishing conducive legal and regulatory environment with removal of discriminatory provisions against women and prioritizing all laws and sectoral policies to uphold and enforce women's rights; (e) improving institutional capacity, accountability and oversight; (f) increased protection and resilience from crisis and shocks including social protection addressing gender inequalities; and (g) influencing social norms and changing how women and girls are valued.

*How does gender equality and women's empowerment affect migration?* There is a large disparity between male and female migration participation (particularly overseas). This also means that most families left behind have females as household heads. The policy recommendations of this chapter are likely to have



positive effects for both potential female migrants and females in families left behind by providing female migrants who wish to engage in migration with a pathway to overseas employment as well as employment at home. The recommendations, if they were adopted, would imply having a gender equality focus in any future migration sectoral policy, which again would affect female migration outcomes and experiences in a positive way.

*Special note on social protection:* This was not addressed in any particular chapter within the 7th FYP background papers, although it is one of the proposed goals of the development strategy. The issue of social protection is of particular importance for migrants and their households who account for a significant part of the population of the country. Given the nature of their family structure (where one member of the household stays away from the family), issues of social protection become crucial. In addition, for the migrant (who often is trying to integrate into a new environment), understanding his/her rights and information on access to social protection mechanisms can be difficult. Thus, if the government were to ensure social protection, understanding the needs of the migrants, and an analysis of the capacity to ensure the fulfilment of these needs would be key. Perhaps once the 7th FYP plan document is made publicly available, such an exercise can be carried out.



## STRATEGIC POLICY DOCUMENTS IN BANGLADESH

In addition to the Five-Year Plan, there are other policies in Bangladesh, which can potentially affect migration decisions and outcomes.

In this section, an overview of how migration has been featured in some of these documents, are highlighted:

- a. *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) and Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP)*: NAPA in its first rendition, treated migration as an undesirable outcome of climate change and generally portrayed it in a negative light. In the updated NAPA, the negative connotation was dropped, however this revised NAPA still did not envision migration as an adaptation strategy (Martin et al., 2013). The BCCSAP, unlike the NAPA, focused on medium and long-term goals with regards to climate change in Bangladesh. The document highlights that climate change related events would lead to mass displacements, urban slums being the most probable destination. The policy outlines that in order to cope with this mass displacement, a viable strategy would be to seek settlement for displaced people abroad. None of these documents had evidence-based understanding on the impact of climate change on migration. Therefore, it is only since 2012 that the Government of Bangladesh, as well as its development partners initiated various studies on the issue (Foresight, 2011; Martin et al., 2013) These studies through empirical evidence, establish that migration should not be treated as one of the threatening impacts of climate change, rather it can be transformed into one of the tools of adaptation to climate change. The impact of climate change on migration will be of different types. A section of affected population may be displaced, while others may just lose their livelihood. Therefore, different type of interventions are needed to be planned for the different categories of affected people. Accordingly, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is in the process of formulating a national strategy document only for those who will be displaced due to climatic stresses. However, other relevant Ministries who are responsible for creating jobs are yet to look into short-term international contract migration as one of the employment generation options for those who have been affected by climate change. The aforementioned studies suggested for establishment of skills development training centre and DEMOs of BMET in climate change affected areas so those who have lost their livelihood can access short-term international migration (Martin et al., 2013).



- b. *The National Skills Development Policy (NSDP)*: The NSDP provides the framework for the technical and vocational training in Bangladesh. We provided a review of this in the previous section. Migration is an area that the policy discusses extensively and, more importantly, the policy provides a framework with specific goals that, if achieved, will improve the skills level of individuals willing to migrate as well as those returning after migration. The NSDP also has a focus on improving the technical skills attainment of females with an aim to enable them to participate in both the domestic and the international labour market. This coincides with the recommendations of the background paper on education and human resource development of the Seventh Five Year Plan. Therefore, the rolling out of the NSDP is likely to have positive effects for potential migrants.
- c. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*: The 193-Member United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015. According to this Agenda, there are 17 goals with 169 targets. Migration has featured quite extensively in this policy document, where migration has been linked to climate change highlighting that over the next few decades it will lead to mass migrations into urban areas of the country. The document highlights that this migration pattern will pose social protection as well as marginalization issues at both the destination (particularly in urban) and the origin (where females will face greater risks). Additionally, the document highlights that provision of proper urban social services will be present a challenge. Migration has also been linked to the shifts in demographics within the country. Over the next few years, Bangladesh will enter a phase where it could reap rewards from the demographic dividends. The document points out that international migration, which brings in remittance flows for households, who in turn invest in consumption, education and health, can help to achieve the development goals of the government, namely, migrants can be the drivers in achieving the development outcomes of the country. However, the inherent risks of migration have also been highlighted. Therefore, the need for making migration safe, particularly in destination countries where (informal) social protection is very weak, has been raised.



## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper reviews a diverse range of available literature on migration in Bangladesh and its implications for development. The literature ranges from impact of migration on poverty, national and local development; climate change and migration; social protection of migrants and their left behind families; and human resource and migration. It mostly concentrated on studies on international migration from and internal migration within Bangladesh. Paucity of literature precluded us to review implications of international migration to Bangladesh for livelihood, as well as to review in a more comprehensive way the migration implications of sectoral goals outlined in different policy documents of Bangladesh.

Migration can impact in both ways. It can contribute to the development of individuals, localities and communities and it can also create new conditions of poverty. Climate change can lead to displacement and dislocation of a large number of Bangladeshis. At the same time, migration of a few members of the family concerned may reduce the vulnerabilities of those households to livelihood losses due to climate change. Attempts at developing human resources in line with international labour the market demand may lead to participation of Bangladeshis in skilled professions and reduce the exploitations that they experience as unskilled workers.

Based on the review, it can be concluded that migration is multidimensional and a complex phenomenon. In mainstreaming migration, one has to integrate it with all the relevant sectoral policies with sensitivity. A national strategy for mainstreaming migration into development would be crucial to ensure that practical measures are undertaken for taking the mainstreaming agenda forward. The whole concept of mainstreaming migration into development planning lies on a "whole-of-government" approach where coordination between different Ministries, and government entities, including local authorities take up an active role to frame their own policies integrating migration considerations in relevant sectors with a view to achieve policy coherence. BCCSAP and NSDP are good examples of such strategy and action plan in climate and skills development sectors. Development partners including UNDP, IOM, ILO and others can play a role in supporting a cross-sectoral resource group to frame such a strategy on mainstreaming migration followed by an action plan. Along with policy-makers and experts, civil society organizations should also be made a part of it.



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