

## INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION AND VOLUNTARY INTERNAL MIGRATION IN BANGLADESH

Anwar Hossain Choudhury

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Chittagong,  
BANGLADESH.

anwarch500@yahoo.com, anwar.socio@cu.ac.bd

### ABSTRACT

*International labour migration is increasingly attributed to be a pushing factor for voluntary internal migration in Bangladesh. This analysis finds that contractual international migration of Bangladeshi labour to Non-western Countries causes voluntary internal migration. The results also imply that presence of nuclear family structure and existence of school-going children of international migrants cause voluntary internal migration. This paper supports the argument that international labour migration in individual level is a process by which voluntary internal migration in household level takes place.*

**Keywords:** Voluntary internal migration, international labour migration, New economics of labour migration

### INTRODUCTION

International labour migration is greatly associated with voluntary internal migration in Bangladesh. As a country in transition, in Bangladesh, international migration, internal migration, industrialisation and urbanisation have become a single process. Considering economic, socio-cultural and political transformation, crucial changes in pattern of internal and international migration have been noticed. As far as internal migration is concerned, environmental degradation, economic condition and social strife cause forced mobility of rural people to urban places while voluntary internal migration causes for better standard of life. As for international labour migration from Bangladesh, highly skilled labour mainly observed migrating to European, East Asian and American states permanently with families whereas unskilled and Semi-skilled labour mainly reported to migrate to Middle Eastern States contractually without families. This study covers voluntary internal migration in household level as an outcome of international individual labour migration in Bangladesh.

Among the various causes of voluntary internal migration reported so far, gross international labour migration can be significant one. Permanent or contractual international labour migration may be a pushing factor of elective internal migration. As it is known that expatriates from Bangladesh are basically men staying in a foreign country for a long time keeping their families in their own country, they shifted their family (most often consists of one or two children and wife) from ancestral village to a safe place most specifically to suburbia. As one male expatriate do so, he suggest others to follow his path. In some cases they buy land side by side and build a residential area consists some luxurious buildings by costing huge unused remittance.

Apparently, study found a place like that in Chittagong, Bangladesh. The place named Kamalpara is in the middle of triangular routes among three districts namely Chittagong, Rangamati and Khagrachori, exactly at Hathazari sadar upazila. Kamalpara residential area is increasingly transforming to an artificially created rural place with urban setting and facilities. The total area is about 780 acre. It has around 132 households and 534 inhabitants,

mainly women and children. The square is newly built residential area consisting of near about 78 buildings, a great proportion are of multi-storeyed.

The main goal of this study is to examine the correlations of international labour migration and voluntary internal migration. The two main hypotheses are –

- Contractual international migration to Non-western Countries may cause voluntary internal migration.
- Existence of nuclear family structure and presence of school-going children of international migrants may cause voluntary internal migration.

Using the New Economics of Labour Migration theory, the study wants to show that migration to urban area is not decided in individual level but in household level. The factors behind this internal migration are neither the wage difference nor the environmental degradation and so on. The fact is sending one of the family members to foreign state and contributing for one's funding, family members wants to shift in better place after getting huge money within short time. They prepared to shift in better place as soon as their household income increases in great volume. As expatriates have been sent to the foreign country backed by family, they take decision of migration to new place by discussing the matter with their family members.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Research studies published so far that highlighted the correlations between international and internal migration in Bangladesh are extremely rare. Various attempts that have been made to explore the determinants of internal migration generally focused socio-economic development of urban area and pushing factors in rural area. Chaudhury (1980) explored positive association between level of urbanisation, industrialisation and facilities in urban areas and causes of internal migration from rural areas. Nabi (1992) in his article analyzed the relations between traditional agrarian socio-economic structure and patterns of inter-regional migration. Krishnan (1978) associated internal migration with high population pressure while Jannuzi (1988) got change of rural land ownership is greatly attributed to internal migration. Some studies (for example, Chaudhury and Curlin, 1975; Begum, 1979) explored better job facilities in urban area make people move to such areas. Afsar (2000) concerned how economic development of a country depends on migration highlighting the process of migration as heterogeneous. Distinguished research papers have been conducted on internal forced migration due to environmental causes (e.g., Siddiqui, 2003; Hossain et al., 2003; Amin, 2010; Marshal and Rahman, 2011). Very few have linked internal voluntary migration to gross international labour migration that this study focuses on.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN: METHODS**

As a qualitative research, interpretative approach and hypothetico-deductive method have been used to conduct the study. Population size is 132 and sample size is 120. Informants for study are obtained by Snowball sampling method. In-depth interview with structured questionnaire are used to know perceptions on international migration and internal migration correlations from the key respondents. Participant observatory method is used and focus group discussion is arranged to make the session more interactive.

## **STATEMENT OF RESULT**

It is found that 62.7 percent of the study population are contractual international labour migrants, 27.3 percent are permanent international labour migrants and 10 percent are

irregular international labour migrants. Among the respondents, 79 percent are migrated to Non-western states, and others are to western states. Among contractual migrants, 86 percent destined to Non-western states and 14 percent migrated to Western states. For permanent international labour migrants, 83 percents went to Western states and others are to Non-western states. A significant portion of irregular international labour migrants, which is 77.3 percent, migrated to Non-western states. Among contractual international labour migrants 72 percent respondents have school-going children, while 15 percent and 13 percent are for permanent and irregular international labour migrants respectively. 80 percent of the contractual non-western migrants keep their families in their native country. Among the contractual non-western migrants, 79 percent have single family whereas only 21 percent have joint family.

This study reveals that being contractual labour migrant to non-western states, living in nuclear family structure and having school-going children are all positively correlated with voluntary internal migration.

### **Other Crucial Findings**

Commencement of international migration of a single member pushes household internal migration to semi-urban place with fully urban setting that lengthen the durability of international migrants to meet the huge unproductive cost due to migration.

Foreign Livers decision making on international migration will be influenced by household when family structure is patrimonial and whole household living costs depend on foreign remittance.

If internal migration raises social status of the respective migrated family, the continuation of internal migration will increase and other families with expatriates will follow the same path.

A major proportion of remittance goes to buy new lands and build new houses. Low social protection of productive investment and absence of incentives for cash failure in Bangladesh are also contributing factor for using remittance in land buying and house building.

As the household have relations neither with agrarian nor with industrialised society, for social security and status international labour migrants decided to keep their family permanently in suburbia.

If there is no one in the household who can invest the remittance in risk free sector or no one to share his risk, expatriates decided to build a multi-storeyed house and rent some of its apartment and uses it as a risk-free income source.

It is also found that the sooner the economic status of expatriates developed the earlier the initiation of internal migration happens.

Household head thinks that without the income of expatriates it is not possible to meet the new cost and needs creating after migration. It is their perception that if foreign livers come back, they will have to go back to their native villages.

If there are more than one expatriate from a family, they migrated and build their separate houses after marriage.

### **DISCUSSION**

Study found that a lion's share of the buildings in this area is under-construction. Owners are basically expatriates of Middle Eastern countries. Particularly for security purpose, expatriates are building their own houses by spending a large sum of amount for their families. Most of them have shifted this locality from a stone throwing distance, mainly from

Goddoya, not very far from this area. Most of them have their forefather's home with all necessary conveniences and amenities, but immediate bumper foreign economic flow make them concerned for more security and better schooling and healthcare facilities. It is under probe that gross international migration may cause internal migration of the same class into a same locality. Those who are living there without anyone of expatriate, mainly service holders are facing some unavoidable problems. Gross flow of expatriate families to a selective area has made some visual impacts on the surroundings, like new highly paid English medium school, multi-storeyed markets, and new private banks are opening by keeping the residential area at the centre. Interestingly, a new kitchen market has been opened which name is "Bou Bazar"( Kitchen market for only wives) as mainly wives of those expatriates usually come to buy over there. Wives don't bargain with the sellers and eventually market price is unpredictably higher than the Hathazari kitchen market which is slightly away from the area. It is found on the survey that price of necessary commodities at Bou Bazar are thrice the price of anywhere else. This unacceptable reality makes the local people surrounding the area annoyed. This practice also happens in case of shopping at multi-storeyed market. Wives of expatriates don't care for the price. Most of them have single family and have single child. Some of them left town and prepared to live permanently in this area because they don't want to live in rented house by keeping their own built home empty. In some cases, husbands have plan to settle them in the foreign country where he is living, as the way is a bit costly and procedural that's why they are living here. Here, international migration of husbands has been a pushing factor and a catalyst for internal migration of their existing family members. They have no future plan to go back to their native villages. It is found from the survey that prices of land have been fivefold within last 10 years. Life standard is quite costly. Research found that those families prefer to recruit university students as house tutor by paying better salary. Not only that, rent of apartment has been also increased in a great deal within short time.

Local peoples argued that the wives of expatriates don't bargain with the seller that's why they face problems in buying daily necessary commodities, from the nearest market that is Bou Bazar, because price on every goods is very high. They have to go to the Hathazari Bazar which is far from them. Another point is house rent is getting higher because all are luxurious buildings. Schooling fee, house rent, daily cost, even conveyance cost also rapidly mounting. The major problem is reported that as there is no male person in those houses, an increasing in robbery and snatching is observed here and there at the locality. Another thing is that there is a cultural gap between the families with expatriates and without. For this reason, harmony in the society will not be possible because those people have come from different origin and localities. A girl shifted from town to Kamalpara added "it has neither the simplicity of village nor the luxury of town". She said "when we lived at village we used to have lots of friends and well-wishers. And when we live at city area we have to have some entertainment places". She added "this area has nothing and I do not like it. I want to go back either town or village".

This type of migration cannot be in Macro level because everyone cannot afford to migrate to a new place or they have no intention to shift. Migrants don't want to migrate to urban area because of distance. They migrate to a new place where they can settle as they want. Building new house, they create an environment of urban area with all facilities but want to stay not very far from their ancestral house. Through urbanisation in rural area they create every environment in the locality and try to keep different in every walk of life from others. Family migration to the new area with huge cost makes the expatriates' international migration lengthen as the daily cost increases. Foreign livers think that they will not afford to keep pace with the increasing cost that's why they stay in foreign country continuously. Without the

family decision expatriates cannot decide to come back and leave the job. Family's internal migration will rely on foreign liveers' continuation. So from inception to continuation there has been relation between internal and international migration.

## CONCLUSION

All of the results found in the study signify the correlations between international labour migration and voluntary internal migration. Thus it can be revealed that international labour migration is relevant in elective internal migration in Bangladesh. It is also reported that contractual international migration to Non-western Countries causes voluntary internal migration. It is also reported that existence of nuclear family structure and presence of school-going children of international migrants affects voluntary internal migration.

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