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LABOUR MIGRATION AND IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON LIVELIHOOD PATTERN IN SOME AREAS OF TANGAIL DISTRICT IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The present study was an attempt to analyze the impact of remittances on livelihood pattern of migrant family. In this study, Kalihati Upazila under Tangail district was selected purposively where migrant labours were available. It is based on primary data from three villages of Birbasunda union. The sample of the study consisted of 70 migrant families: 35 from semi-skilled labour migrant households and 35 from unskilled labour migrant households. Tabular as well as statistical techniques were applied to analyze the data. The study revealed that remittance money was the major source of income of the migrant families. Most of the migrant labour had brought positive changes in different types of livelihood capitals, such as financial capital, natural capital, physical capital, human capital, and social capital to their family. The study revealed that migrants paid US \$2343 for jobs, which remunerated them US\$ 3287 and US\$ 2152 per year for semiskilled and unskilled labour respectively. To collect the costs of out going, migrants used not only his own savings, he also used additional funds. They had taken financial assistances from relatives, friends, money lenders and also selling and mortgaging land and jewellers. Irrespective of countries of job destinations, the total financing in terms of loan received from relatives stands at amount of Tk. 140415 (22.01 %) was the highest contribution to financing of migration. The major problems were mal practices of middlemen and government officials and high collection and renewal costs of passport. More consciousness of the migrant as well as the timely government intervention could minimize some of the problems.

KEYWORDS

Cost and return of labour migration, impact, livelihood, remittance.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is a very old phenomenon. From the very beginning of human civilization people migrated for food and security. Now people migrate for economic opportunity and income security. The history of migration from Bangladesh is not more than one and half century (GOB, 2007). Migration from Bangladesh began as early as the 1940s, mainly to Great Britain for settlement, and again in the 1960s, for employment purposes. A sizeable number of Bangladeshi professionals, skilled, semi-skilled, un-skilled labour force is employed in different countries including Middle East. During 1976 to 2008 manpower having strength of about 62 lakh 66 thousand has been exported. A total of eight lakh seventy five thousand Bangladeshi had gone abroad for employment in the last year. Bangladesh has received 8.22 billion dollars as remittances during the FY 2007/2008. Globally migration takes place in more than 100 countries. Nearly 200 million people, or 3 per cent of the world population, live outside their countries of birth. In 2007, officially recorded worldwide remittance flows exceed US\$ 318 billion; of which developing countries received US\$ 240 billion. Among these amount Bangladesh has received US\$ 3.43 billion (BMET, 2009).

Bangladesh's second leading source of foreign exchange is remittances. Currently, garments manufacturing is treated as the highest foreign exchange earning sector of the country. However, if the cost of import of raw material is adjusted, than the net earning from migrant workers' remittances is higher than that of the government sector. In the year 2008, Bangladesh has received US\$ 8.22 billion. It is 10 per cent of our GDP and 10 times more than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The number of migrants leaving Bangladesh averaged 250,000 a year between 2001 and 2005, rose to almost 400,000 in 2006, and doubled to 875,000 in 2008 (BBS, 2006).

Remittances are crucial for Bangladesh's economy. The steady flow of remittance from migrant labour has resolved the foreign exchange constraints, improved the balance of payments and helped increase the supply of national savings and investment for capital formation and development. It is an important source of disposable income for thousands of migrant households. Remittances also constituted a very important source of country's development budget. From above discussion it is clear that labour migration and impacts of remittance become a key issue to deal in this century.

A sizeable number of people of Tangail district have been migrating abroad for employment and contributing much towards country's foreign exchange and changing the lifestyle of the respective families. To examine these changes of migrant households, there should have an intensive research. There are some studies on migration and livelihood pattern (Adams, 1991; Afser, 1995; Ali, 1991; Azad, 2004; Castro, 2002; Chaudhury, et. al., 1980; Cohen, et. al., 2005; Connell, et. al., 1995; Haque, 2004; Hasan, 2006; Lee, 1975; Mahmood, et. al., 1995; Mahmud, 1991; Murshed, et. al., 2001; Siddiqui, 2005) but few of them discussed about labour migration and its impact on their livelihood pattern absolutely. The present study was undertaken to generate empirical knowledge about impact of remittances on livelihood pattern in rural area. The overall objective of the study is to better understand the changes occurring in livelihood pattern in the Kalihati upazila in relation to labour migration and remittance. The specific objectives were: i. to identify the socioeconomic characteristics of the migrated labour households; ii. to study the costs and sources of expenses for migration; iii. to study the impact of remittances on household livelihood pattern; and iv. to draw some conclusions on the basis of findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

The area selected for the study covered 3 villages of Kalihati Upazila. The study area was selected purposively considering the concentration of different categories of migrant labour. Thus, from the 12 villages of Bir Basunda union, three villages Simultia, Singna, and Purba Sunda were selected randomly for collection of primary data. An interview schedule was prepared to collect the required information. Primary data were collected during the period from February to March 2009. Several visits were made during the period of data collection. Mainly tabular analysis was used to obtain specific objectives. Besides paired t statistics was done to find out the significance of the research.

TABULAR ANALYSIS

Tabular analysis is an analysis that is done to obtain the crude association or variations between variables. This technique applied with the help of some statistical measures like sum, average, percentage etc., to show the comparative performance of different categories of labour household. In this study tabular analysis was done to find the variation of income, expenditure, housing condition etc.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In order to arrive at meaningful results, data for the present study were analyzed with the following techniques:

To compare the variation in income and expenditure for the different sample groups at the study areas of Kalihati Upazila, before and after migration paired 't' test were employed.

The formula used for the paired 't' test is given as below

$$|t| = \frac{\bar{d}}{s} \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}} \text{ With } (n-1) \text{ d.f}$$

Where, \bar{d} = mean of change

S = standard deviation of change

n = number of observations

RESULTS DISCUSSION

In case of semi-skilled labour the average age was 26.71 years ranging from a minimum of 20 years to a maximum of 50 years. In case of unskilled labour the average age was 29.2 years, minimum age was 19 years and the maximum age was 35 years. It is also seen that, the aged between 20.01-40 years accounted for 94.28 per cent of the total migrant. That means the middle aged groups were the highest of total migrant labour. In case of respondents, the average age was 32.21 years ranging from a minimum of 19 years to a maximum of 65 years. The average family size was observed 4.39, 5.11, 5.84, 5.50 and 4.50 for the migrant family of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, U.A.E, Jordan and Kuwait respectively. It was also seen that each and every family was composed of both economically active persons and dependents. The dependency ratio was 2.35, 2.19, 2.02, 2.20 and 1.80 for the Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, U.A.E, Jordan and Kuwait migrant families respectively. The male female ratio was 111:100, 109:100, 105:100, 120:100 and 125:100 for the Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, U.A.E, Jordan and Kuwait migrant families respectively (Sultana, 2009).

TABLE 3.1: LITERACY STATUS OF MIGRANT LABOUR

Literacy level	Migrant Labour (Semi skilled)		Migrant Labour (Unskilled)		All labour	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
Illiterate	0.00	0.00	2	5.71	2	2.86
Able to sign only	20	57.14	33	94.29	53	75.71
Up to primary	10	28.57	0.00	0.00	10	14.29
Secondary and above	5	14.29	0.00	0.00	5	7.14
Total	35	100	35	100	70	100

Source: Sultana, 2009

In the case of both category of labour, only 2.86 per cent were illiterate. About 75.71 and 14.29 per cent of migrant labour had capability to sign and primary level of education respectively. Again, 7.14 per cent of migrant workers had secondary and above level of education. In case of semi skilled labour migrant family, only 8.96 per cent were illiterate while in unskilled labour migrant family it was 22.14 per cent and it was higher than semi skilled labour migrant family. On the other hand 14.18 per cent of semi skilled labour migrant family and 19.29 per cent of unskilled labour migrant family were able to sign only (Table 3.1). Previously, 65.71 per cent labour was employed in semi-skilled labour migrant family while in case of unskilled labour migrant family it was 80 per cent. This indicated more semi-skilled labour was engaged with education. Some of the household members were engaged in business which was about 8.80 per cent. While 6 per cent were involved in agriculture, 2 per cent were in service and 30 per cent were in other occupations.

The process of migration in Bangladesh is relatively difficult and expensive from other countries. The costs of migration include airfare, passport, visa, medical test, clothing, payments to recruitment agencies and intermediaries etc. It was found that total expenses for outgoing could be US\$ 2500 or more. To collect these amounts of money migrant's used not only his own savings, he also used additional funds. They take financial assistances from relatives, friends, money lenders and also selling and mortgaging land, ornaments. That is in order to send family members most of the family fall in to debts. Further more, these families and migrant also have to use the remittances to repay the debt they have made during the process of migration.

TABLE 3.2: COST OF MIGRATION IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES (Amount in Taka and US\$)

Cost items	Major Countries				
	Saudi Arabia	Malaysia	United Arab Emirates	Jordan	Average
Passport	2746	2437	3376	2200	2690
Visa and Intermediary	143443	97955	129247	105500	119036
Medical test	1371	2925	3729	1200	2306
Air fare	31200	26580	28743	29455	28995
Internal travels	919	868.75	920	2700	1352
Clothing	4089	4500	4235	4500	4331
Other preparation	257	306	380	325	317
Total cost for out migration	184025 (\$2706)	135571 (\$1994)	170630 (\$2509)	145880 (\$2145)	159344 (\$2343)

(Exchange rate: US\$ 1.00= Tk. 68.00)

Source: Sultana, 2009

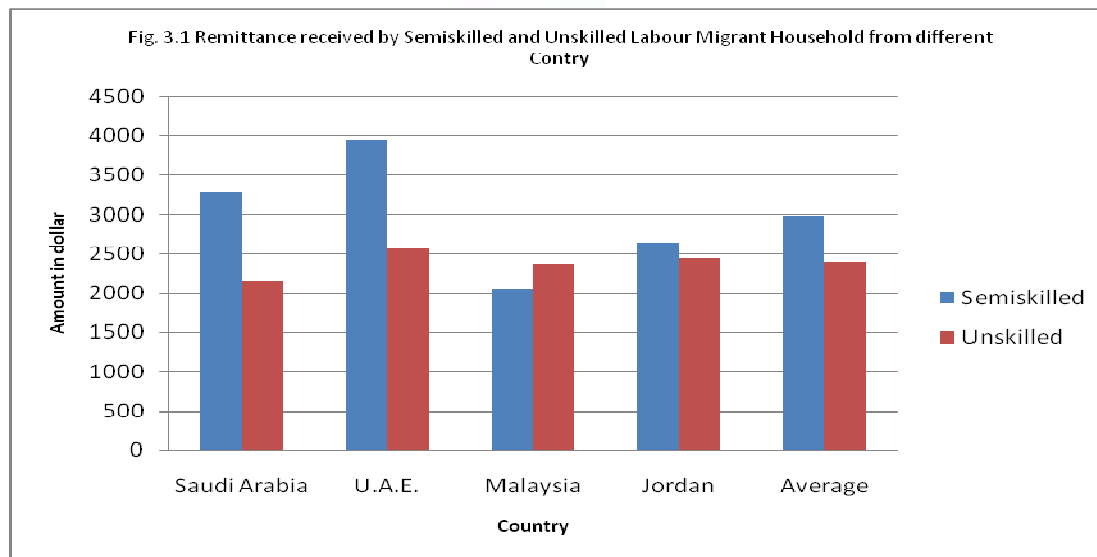
The study revealed that migrants paid US\$ 2706 for jobs in Saudi Arabia, which remunerated them US\$ 3287/year in case of semi-skilled labour and US\$ 2151/year for unskilled labour, and also they paid US\$ 1994 for Malaysia, US\$ 2509 for U.A.E and US\$ 2145 for Jordan and acquired US\$ 2059/year, US\$ 3945/year, US\$ 2647/year respectively in case of semiskilled labour and for unskilled labour US\$2380/year, US\$ 2560/year, US\$2451/year as mentioned

countries respectively; meaning that recruitment costs are equivalent to more or less a year's salary (Table 3.3). That means the highest remittance come from United Arab Emirates (U.A.E) among these four countries (Fig. 3.1).

TABLE 3.3 REMITTANCE RECEIVED BY SEMISKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOUR MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Sl. No.	Country	Level of remittance by category of labour	
		Semiskilled	Unskilled
1.	Saudia Arabia	3287	2151
2.	Malaysia	2059	2380
3.	U.A.E	3945	2560
4.	Jordan	2647	2451
5.	Average	2985	2386

Source: Calculated from Sultana, 2009



IMPACT OF REMITTANCE ON LIVELIHOOD PATTERN OF THE MIGRANTS

Five asset or capital such as financial capital, natural capital, human capital, physical capital and social capital were used for impact analysis. The analysis showed remarkable positive impact of remittances on crop farming in both semi- skilled and un-skilled labour migrant family. In case of semi-skilled migrant family it was 89 per cent and in case of unskilled migrant family it was 81 per cent. That is impact of remittance on unskilled labour migrant family is higher than that of semi-skilled labour migrant family in this regard. Impact on poultry rearing, fishing, homestead gardening, was positive. But the income received from livestock rearing decreased after labour migration. In case of semi-skilled it was 48 per cent and in case of unskilled it was 12 per cent and negative impact also observed on non farm income.

Migrant family at first used their remittances for repayment of loan. Distribution of household expenditure revealed that both semi-skilled and unskilled labour spent more money on food, cloth, health care, housing than they got before migration. They used up to 88.58 per cent of their total income in this purpose. That is most of the remittance money used in consumption purpose rather than production purpose.

Irrespective of labour groups, the land holding size had been increased by 55.86 per cent. In case of semi-skilled labour migrant family land holding size had been increased from 96.65 to 142.48 decimal and in case of unskilled labour migrant family total land had increased from 60.8-103 decimals. In terms of percentages it was 47 per cent and 69 per cent for semi-skilled and unskilled labour migrant family respectively (Sultana, 2009).

With the increase in income, the housing status of all labour groups has been increased. In case of semi- skilled labour migrant family the percentage of tin-shed building owners has been increased 25 per cent, the percentage of tin roofed with tin wall house owners has been increased 75 per cent. In case of semi-skilled labour percentage of tin roofed with non tin fence and straw roofed house owners have decreased in 100 per cent. In case of unskilled labour the percentage of tin-shed building owners has been increased 9 per cent, the percentage of tin roofed with tin fence house owners has been increased 74 per cent. The percentage of tin roofed with non tin fence and straw roofed house owners have been increased in 11 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. All labour groups could use safe drinking water from tube well. The uses of modern amenities like mobile, TV, Jeweler, and other physical assets almira, show case etc have increased manifold after labour migration.

TABLE 3.4 PAIRED SAMPLE TEST FOR SEMI-SKILLED AND UNSKILLED LABOUR MIGRANT FAMILY

Variables	After migration		Before migration		t-value with 34 df	
	Mean and standard deviation		Mean and standard deviation			
	Semi-skilled labour migrant family	Unskilled labour migrant family	Semi-skilled labour migrant family	Unskilled labour migrant family	Semi-skilled labour migrant family	Unskilled labour migrant family
Income	271986 (151851)	201997 (99257.2)	43459 (46676)	37073 (39341.4)	9.51*	16.77*
Land holding	142.48 (109.55)	103 (83.74)	96.66 (89.64)	60.80 (65.30)	3.85*	5.08*
Consumption	17184 (6231.26)	14129.43 (8182.25)	10195.71 (4958.5)	8158.371 (4157.08)	6.36*	4.79*
Education	1062.83 (1328.2)	931.43 (1567.08)	645.71 (936.2)	500.57 (779.43)	3.39*	3.32*
Housing	155007 (253344)	101548 (120453)	28000.71 (40531)	25000.45 (7935.90)	3.20*	4.88*
Health status	2097.14 (4556.9)	2211.43 (3651.41)	780 (1926.7)	600.43 (627.59)	2.60*	2.92*

* Significant at 0.01 level of probability (paired sample) (table value 2.44)

Source: Sultana, 2009

In case of semi-skilled labour migrant family, eighty three per cent of migrant family opined that their overall health conditions have been increased after migration. Eleven per cent of the family reported that their health status remained unchanged. Only six per cent of the family said that their health status was decreased because of irregularities of remittance money. Educational status has been increased sixty nine per cent; skill of the family members has been increased in sixty per cent reported by them. Mobile operation capacity got improved in sixty six per cent after migration while about thirty four per cent responded that no change in mobile operation. In case of unskilled labour migrant family, fifty four per cent of migrant family opined that their overall health conditions have been increased after migration. Thirty one per cent of the family reported that their health status remained unchanged. Only fifteen per cent of the family said that their health status decreased because of irregularities of remittance money. It was reported that educational status has been increased 71 per cent; skill of the family members has been increased forty per cent and mobile operation capacity got improved after migration in fifty four per cent while forty six per cent was responded that no change in mobile operation.

In case of semi skilled labour migrant family, eighty three per cent said that their decision making ability increased after migration, while the rest of seventeen per cent of them reported in favor of no change in their decision making ability. Eighty six per cent families reported that their social prestige has been increased after migration. In case of unskilled labour migrant family, eighty nine per cent said that their decision making ability has been increased after migration, while the rest of eleven per cent of them reported in favor of no change in their decision making ability. Eighty per cent families reported that their social prestige has been increased after migration while twenty per cent said that no change in their social prestige has taken place.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the findings discussed above a few conclusions may be drawn; (i) Remittance money is the major sources of income for the migrant family; (ii) Comparatively semi-skilled labours have been migrating abroad; and (iii) Two types of impact were visible.

Migration reduce unemployment problem and increase income in most of the migrant households. Migration works as a catalyst in the upliftment of the livelihood of migrants and their family because remittances have increased the consumption of food and cloth, improve health, education and housing facilities of sample families who earlier had little money. Decision making ability of women has been increased which was not possible previously.

This study has shown that, there is general decline in the supply of unskilled categories of labour than semi-skilled labour from Bangladesh. Presently, global financial crisis also slow down the expected remittances (expected remittances was 10 billion US\$). Under such conditions, a number of measures need to be taken such as i) Government should have a proper policy that should guide them to the identification of new market for workers and the continuation of old market with increasing facilities to the labour migrants; ii) Accordingly, training courses have to be organized to cater to such potential markets. Such training programmes should be imparted through government and private sector including non-governmental organizations for the potential labour migrants, so that they could get well paid job and also develop their skills; iii) Government to government relationships for labour agreement are required for the welfare of migrant workers.

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