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ON
Youth Labor Migration and Future of Agriculture in Bangladesh

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YOUTH LABOR MIGRATION AND FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN BANGLADESH¹

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Abstract

Bangladesh has sent huge number of workers during a period of more than three decades since the mid-1970s. Most of these workers migrate to work in Middle East and Southeast Asia for a specific period of time. This mass movement of temporary migrant workers has loosen unemployment pressures on the over loaded labor market in this highly populated country. But this labor migration has a significant effect on our agriculture. In Bangladesh there is a serious scarcity of agricultural labor in agriculture. Due to this reason overall agricultural production is decreased. Many farmers give up agricultural farming due to labor shortage. There are many reasons behind this rapid labor migration. The most important factors are push and pull factors. Migration not only adversely affect the agriculture but also have some advantages. When the migrants sent remittances this supplements the input in agriculture.

Key words: Labor migration, remittance, labor market,

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh has attained rapid economic growth of 6% annually, and the number of people living below the poverty line has decreased by 26% over the decades. On an average 53% of youth population was in labor force and 7.5% of them was unemployed in 2010 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2010). In urban areas youth unemployment rate was higher than that in rural areas. Only 17% of youths found paid employment whereas around 40% were unpaid family workers in 2010. Most young people work in the informal economy, particularly in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries sectors which are combined with lower wages, poor working conditions and confined career prospects. In this case overseas employment is very important to Bangladesh economy and large number of Bangladesh workers work abroad particularly in the Middle East. Generally rural youths are more involved in external migration compared to urban youth as less job opportunities in their own communities. Huge numbers of migrants move within countries and across international borders. Such migration influences not only the lives of migrants but also the development and growth prospects of the sending and receiving areas. Most of the migrants to the Middle East and other Asian countries are young, unskilled and semi-skilled, with few years of schooling. Migration, industrialization and urbanization are a single symbiotic process, and the underpinning forces are hard to resist. Population movements are motivated by various economic factors (livelihoods, poverty and opportunities). Movements are directed by the quality of public services (schooling and healthcare) and poor environmental conditions, including extreme climatic events and disasters. The flows of migrants leaving the country have not only fulfilled the command of the government policy to encourage out-migration as a means of easing unemployment pressure on Bangladesh's ever exploding labor market but also the remittances received from the migrant workers have had important impact on the economy. The international migration of workers has taken some pressure off from the domestic labor market and has enhanced the economic well-being of the families left behind by the migrants. Migration has very important role in redistributing the population size between rural and urban areas and between rural areas of low potential and those of higher agricultural potential. One of the most remarkable demographic phenomena faced by many developing countries in the world is the deficit of skilled labor and food security and also the rapid population growth in the urban areas

which is largely caused by the advancement of rural-urban migration (Agesa & Kim, 2001). Temporary migration is the major form of labor mobility (Beals and Menezes 1970). In Bangladesh the overall transfer of workers to nonfarm sectors from agriculture is executed and show that migration reinforces a situation of labor shortage (Hossain, 2011).

Objectives

1. To identify the causes of migration.
2. To diagnose the internal and international migration in Bangladesh
3. To determine the effects of migration on agriculture.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This term paper is exclusively a review paper. Therefore, all the information was collected from secondary sources like various relevant books and journal, which were available in the library of BSMRAU, BRRI. For collecting recent information internet browsing was also being practiced. Good suggestion, valuable information and kind consideration were taken from honorable course instructors and resource personnel to enrich this paper. After collecting necessary information, it has compiled and arranged chronologically for better understanding and clarification.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons of labor shortage in Bangladesh

- Internal migration
- International migration
- Low labor wages
- Education
- Change in rainfall pattern
- Poverty

Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

Youth unemployment and underemployment is one of the most vital reasons of youth migration. Nearly 53% of youth population was in labor force and 7.5% of them was unemployed in 2010 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010). In urban area youth unemployment rate was higher (9.9%) than that in rural area (6.7%). only 17% of youths found paid job whereas almost 40% of young people were unpaid family workers in 2010 ((Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Maximum young people work with lower wages, poor working conditions and limited career expectancy (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

Causes of Migration

Push factors

The push factors are considered to cause migration includes searching for employment, excessive poverty, homelessness, landlessness, river erosion, natural disaster, too many family members, loss of income source, failure to repay loan, religious cause (minority, conflict etc), personal maladjustment in the community or family, death of guardian, famine, poor health service, poor educational service, low income, and saving, political instability, bad quality of housing, poor crop yield and unemployment (Mahama.W. B.2013).

Pull factors

The factors perceived to attract migrants include the following;

- More job chances
- Better health services
- Better educational service
- Urban facilities and way of life
- Easy access to informal sectors
- Higher income possibility
- Positive information about the city

(Mahama.W. B.2013).

Beside the push and pull factors, migration is also taken on as risk aversion technique. The factors regard as to cause out-migration here are listed below:

- To overcome the limitations on economic and investments in rural areas
- To increase their income and
- To increase their sources of income

(Mahama,W. B. 2013).

Types of migration

Migration can be multidimensional; long-term, short-term, voluntary, internal and international migration etc

- **Temporary and permanent migration:** The temporary migrations are usually due to economic reasons. Temporary migrants are mostly highly skilled and skilled workers and replaced more and more long term migrants over the years (Salt, 1992). Laborers are in short term category.

- **Internal migration:** This is one of the ancient forms of migration. In Bangladesh, around two thirds of migrations happen from rural areas to urban areas. Other South Asian countries mark similar pictures (Haque, 2005).
- **International migration:** The movement of migrants from one country to another country for employment.
- **Voluntary or forced migration:** Voluntary migration means that the free movement of migrants with an expectation of better quality of life. A better quality of life may be better employment, better climate etc. When the migrant has no other choice but to move because of reasons like natural disaster, racial discrimination, wars, religious and political persecution is known as forced migration.
- **Illegal migration:** Illegal migrants appear a country with minimum belongings and without personal documents such as passports. It has been estimated that without proper documents almost one million Bangladeshis are working outside Bangladesh (International Organization for Migration, 2005; The Bangladesh Human Rights Network, 2003).
- **Circular migration:** Circular migration is the new collection to the migration pattern. The repeated movement of a migrant worker between home and host countries is known as circular migration.

(Bangladesh Employer`s Federation: 2015).

Internal migration in Bangladesh

It is obvious that migration is a major feature of Bangladesh's recent history. Successive studies and policy papers have documented extensive movements both within and outside the country. Internal migration has been concerned of as an urbanization phenomenon and the urbanization rate has been recovered at 3.03% over the period from 1975 to 2009 and this is one of the highest in the world.

There are four types of internal migration: rural-urban, urban-urban, rural-rural, and urban rural migration.

Table 1 gives indicative evidence of economic benefits playing a role in population change and migration patterns in last two decades. Within the table, a positive difference indicates stronger growth in the economically favored districts.

Table 1: Core Districts Population Change versus national change

	Core Districts	Average Change	Difference (+ve greater growth; ve lower growth)	
Decade 1	Urban	+36%	+30%	+6%
	Rural	+5%	+7%	-2%
	Total	+17%	+12%	+5%
Decade 2	Urban	+13%	+15%	-2%
	Rural	+36%	+16%	+20%
	Total	+26%	+16%	+10%
Overall	Urban	+55%	+49%	+6%
	Rural	+43%	+24%	+19%
	Total	+47%	+29%	+18%

(Source: Marshall, R. *et al.* 2013)

However, there are variations between the two decades, with the urban differential being highest in the first decade (+6%) and the rural differential in the second decade (+20%). This is supportive of the changing pattern of population dynamics.

Environmental effects on internal migration

This is typically explained by an intense shift from agricultural to industrial production and population flight to areas exposed to serious environmental challenges. In addition, changes in living conditions have also emerged as an issue of random movements (Tavares, 2010). It is necessary to differentiate between seasonal and longer term population movements. However, it is identified that differentiating between these two considerations is often difficult in practice. Environmental challenges play a big role in these two considerations. Bangladesh has a long established seasonal pattern of periodic rural worker movement related with the annual cycle of rainy and dry periods. This affects three regions in particular (Marshall, R. *et. al.* 2013).

- The Monga prone districts in the northwest which suffer prolonged and severe drought during the winter.
- The north-eastern Haor-affected areas, which face flooding and water logging during the monsoon.
- The coastal zone, which is beset with cyclone and other climatic risks and slow onset challenges such as salinization and sea water invasion.

Table 2: Migration due to environmental effects

Direct climate change	Indirect climate change	Type of movement
Gradual climate change	Chronic disasters such as drought, degradation	Seasonal labor migration, temporary circulation, contract labor migration
Sudden or gradual climate change	Natural disasters, severe drought, famine, floods, extreme temperature, sea level rise	Forced, distress migration, permanent migration

Source: Salehyan, I. *et. al.* 2008

The areas which are controlled by subsistence agriculture, workers have always moved to ensure their livelihoods, although temporarily. This was primarily to neighboring agricultural localities, but in the last twenty years this cycle has extended to involve working within the core urban centers. Some proof has shown that these migrations have become more permanent in nature. A huge numbers of rural Bangladeshis providing the labor force for rapidly growing industrial activities, Ready Made Garments and serving in the large informal sector which has established itself in the region of these industries(Marshall, R. *et al.* 2013).

International Migration from Bangladesh

There are two major types in international migration from Bangladesh: one to the developed west that includes the United Kingdom and the United States and another to Middle East and Southeast Asia. Present accounts put the number of external migrants per year at above 600,000 and the level of interior remittances is near to 10% of GDP. The migration to the developed countries is regard as to be long term or permanent in nature while migration to Middle East and Southeast Asia is mostly for short term. The Bangladeshi immigrants living in the industrialized countries of Europe and North America can be divided into two distinguished groups: a group of well-educated, high or middle income people of Bangladeshi origin, and the other belonging to the low income or unemployed part of the population. The origins of migration to these countries can be marked back to the British colonial period. Most of these early migrants were employed as low-skilled workers and there has been scarcely any upward economic mobility. However, a very small number of Bangladeshis during the colonial period moved to the U.K. to search higher studies. In current years, larger number of students and professionals migrated to the U.K. and the U.S. and select to live there permanently. The government does not have any regular record of the extent and composition of this long-term migration (Khawaja A.M.*at. al.* 2010). However, according to an unofficial calculation, more than a million Bangladeshi immigrants live in the industrialized countries of the west (Siddiqui, 2004).

International labor migration

International migration to the countries of Middle East, North Africa, and Southeast Asia took place predominantly after the independence of Bangladesh. The increase in oil prices in the 1970s increased the requirement for low-skilled workers to work in the infrastructure development projects in the Middle Eastern countries. Later, there were similar demands from the recently industrialized countries of the Southeast Asia. Migration to these regions has been characterized by short-term employment with appointed job contracts and migrants returning home after fulfillment of the contract period (Khawaja, A. M. *et al.* 2010).

Flow of migration

Nowadays, Bangladeshis are engaged in overseas employment over 100 countries. Bangladeshi migrants are prevailing over five continents: Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and North America. Geographical form of the flow of migrants varies with time and it is fundamentally dominated by nature of demand.(Islam. N. 2014)

Country wise overseas employment

From 1976 to 2009 the overall number of Bangladeshis working abroad as short-term migrants stands about 6.7 million. The important destination countries for these short-term migrant workers include Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Malaysia, Kuwait, Oman, Singapore, Bahrain, Qatar, and Libya. Saudi Arabia singly hosts about 40 percent of the total short-term migrant workers from Bangladesh (Fig 1).

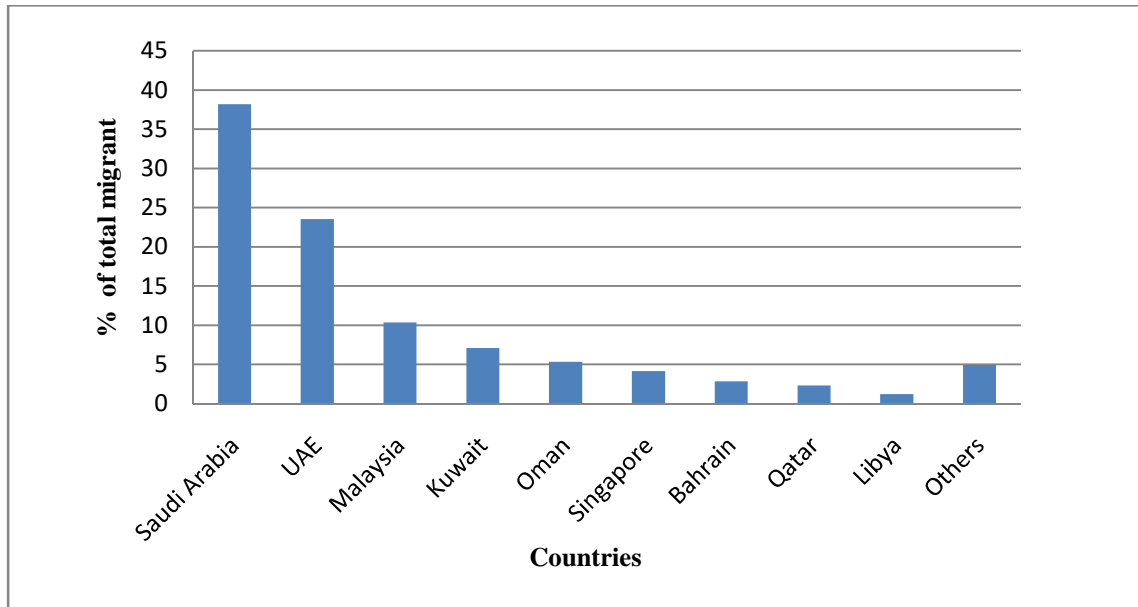


Fig 1: Country wise migrant workers from Bangladesh.

(Source: Khawaja, *et al*, 2010)

Year wise migration

From 2003 to 2009, there was an actual increase in demand for migrant workers in the UAE. During 2007, the market for Bangladeshi workers increased significantly in Malaysia as well. The significant decrease in the number of Bangladeshi workers in 2009 is the direct fallout of the economic slowdown caused by the recent global financial crisis (Fig 2).

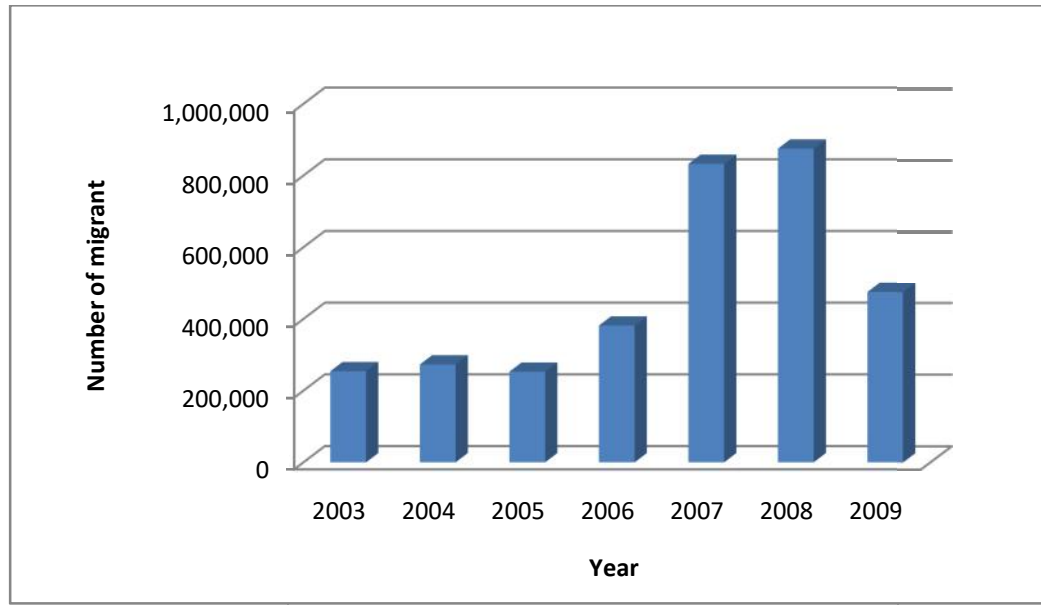


Fig 2: Year wise migrant Workers from Bangladesh.

(Source: Modified from BMET, Bangladesh)

District wise migration

An analysis of on the migration taken place from several districts of Bangladesh from 2004 to 2006 shows that only 5 among 64 districts are very important in the abroad employment market. These 5 districts constitute about 40% of the total migration. In which Comilla rank the highest position (11.48%) (Fig 3).

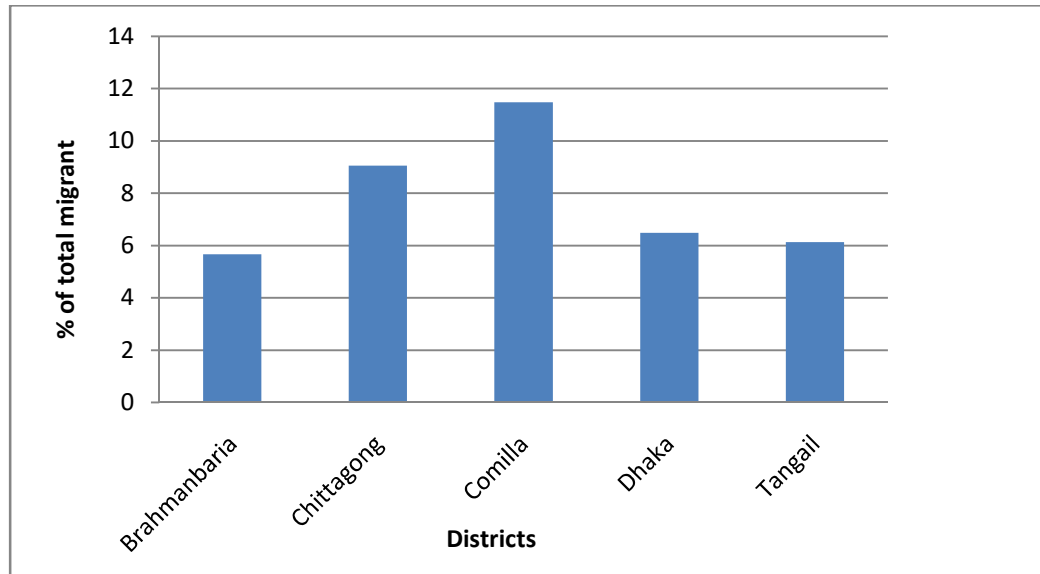


Fig 3: District wise flow of migration from Bangladesh.

(Source: Modified from Islam, N. 2014)

Overseas employment by skill group

From 1976 to 2007 about 48% of the total Bangladeshi workforce in different countries especially in the Middle East countries and Malaysia are unskilled or less skilled workers. They have very little or no educational background and have not obtained any kind of training. Semi skilled workers are counted for 15.15% and rest of the migration associated to the professionals and skilled workers, which come to an average value of 4% and 33% respectively (Fig 4).

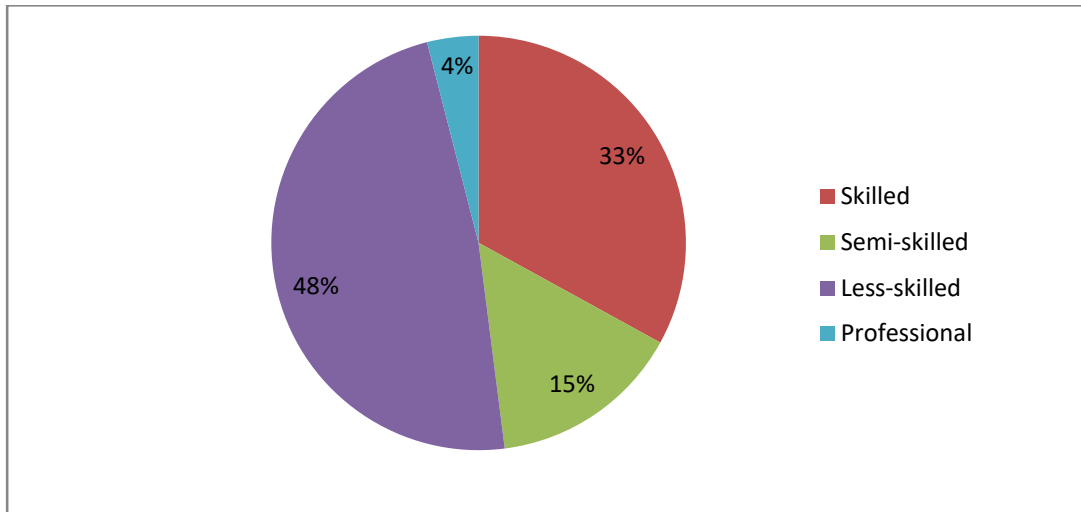


Fig 4: Migration from Bangladesh by skill group.

(Source: Islam, N. 2014)

Effects of Migration on Agriculture

Rural-urban migration is a double-sided problem affecting the rural community as well as the urban destinations. The primary effect of migration on agricultural productivity might indeed have been negative, because of severe lack of family labor. Rural community is affected because the youths and adults that are assumed to remain in the community and contribute to the development of agriculture in particular and the community in general go away from the rural areas for other destinations. The lost labor of able-bodied (migrated) men and women is imposed a fundamental role in the process of agricultural downfall. Internal migration is associated with rural and agricultural stagnation or still decline (Regmi and Tisdell, 2002). This has significant implications for agricultural production because maximum work which would have been done by the youths is now left for the aged to do (Angba, 2003). Migration does not usually lead to fundamental transformation of rural agriculture but it often hold a central part to support the rural people's livelihoods (De Haan, 1999). Households have less labor to allocate to local production activities while migrants are away. If a migrant household's ultimate product on the farm is positive, crop production will decline when the household sends out a migrant. The adverse effect of loss of labor may be high when migrants suppose to be younger and better educated

than the average rural laborer (Taylor et al. 2003). Migration occurs a serious and negative effect of loss of labor on production (Rozelle et al. 1999). Household crop income is negatively affected by the loss of household labor (De Brauw and Rozelle 2003). For policy makers and governments migration has been a challenging issue particularly in developing countries. Out-migration may result in severe decrease in the labor which in turn decrease total cropped area and quality of work that reduces food production. Out migration lowers the household wealth that causes to increased vulnerability in many rural areas which may cause food insecurity. The impact of rural migration may result in the rapid decline of the rural economy and it leads to persistent poverty and food insecurity (Mini, 2000). This arises for disproportionate outgoing of the youth from the rural areas leaving only aged members and children to generate the labor force (Mahama.W. B.2013)

Positive effects of out migration on agriculture

Though out-migration results in loss of agricultural labor which afterward affects productivity and level of farm income, some scholars have argued that out-migration has positive effects on agriculture. They have argued that loss in yield due to the reduction in available labor may be recoup for partially by remittances from the migrants. Remittances are used to purchase additional inputs or rent alternatives for labor in cropping (Taylor, et al. 2003).

Primarily, the migrants cannot send remittances until they are well settled. Eventually, and after an adjustment process, this agricultural decline has often been turn over through agricultural investments made possible by the inflow of remittances (De Haas 2001). Sometimes current migrant households de-intensify agriculture but return migrants can play an advance and production-increasing role in agriculture (Bencherifa, 1996). The migrants sent remittances that partially compensate this lost-labor effect and directly contribute to household incomes and also indirectly stimulate crop production (De Brauw and Rozelle 2003). Probably migration generate a positive income effect on the sending households, increase the household's ability to add important nutritional inputs like food among others (IFAD, 2007). This may conduct to increase cultivation and afterward increased productivity.

Year wise remittance inflow

Inflow of remittance shows an increasing trend since 2008. In 2009, it was 9.44% and in 2010 it increased in 9.52%. Remittance flow decreased in 2011 and it was 9.05%. In 2013 it was 9.64% and it was the highest. After 2013 it started to decrease and in 2017 it was 5.17% of GDP (Fig 5).

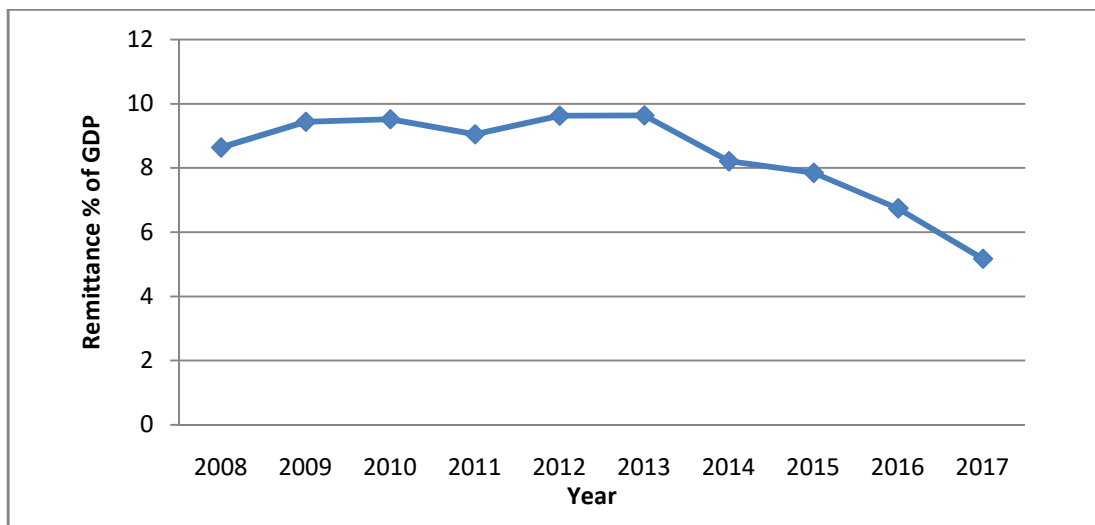


Fig 5: Year wise remittance inflow as percentage of GDP in Bangladesh.

(Source: Bangladesh Bank, 2017)

Country wise remittance inflow

Country wise remittance inflow in 2017 shows that the largest amount of remittance has been received from KSA which is 17.5% of total remittance inflows followed by UAE (15.2%), Malaysia (7.2%), Oman (6.8%), Kuwait(5.4%) and other countries (26.4%)(Table 3).

Table 3: Country wise remittance inflow

Countries	% of remittance
KSA	17.46
UAE	15.18
Malaysia	7.05
Kuwait	5.37
Oman	6.78
Others	26-36

(Source: Bangladesh Bank 2017)

Measuring effects of migration on agriculture

Table 4 shows that agricultural output decreases with the number of household members migrating. This is due to the reduction in agricultural labor. However, aggregated income for farm household's increase when migrants sent remittances.

Table 4: Statistics of agricultural output by migration distribution (in million Vietnam dollars)

Predicted output	Observed output	Remittances	Agricultural output With remittance	Differences in income
(x)	(y)	(z)	(r=x+z)	(p=r-y)
27.92	26.73	4.89	32.81	6.08
23.03	18.60	6.02	29.05	10.45
17.60	14.88	6.72	24.32	9.44
18.93	14.67	7.28	26.21	11.54

(Source: Huy H. T. *et. al.* 2016)

Food security and migration

Due to absence of the directly engaged young workers agricultural production and productivity is decreased. The absence of young workers is also a loss of skills and talents, which may cause a serious decline of the economy. There is a triangular relation among migration, agriculture and food security. Food security needs to be mainstreamed into the migration agenda since the food security issue is related with migration. Similarly, within the agricultural development and food security agenda migration needs to be mainstreamed (Crush-2012). Female migration is also an equally important concern due to the adverse impact that the matter has on agriculture and food security. Most female members take care the farm and chores like rearing chicken, goats and cattle. This female departure has an impact on reduction of production in these sectors. In protecting or enhancing domestic agricultural production outward migration is a serious problem. Seasonal migration to urban centers into the country and to nearby cities may not be bad because this kind of migration supplements the income and the farmers are back during their own farming season. But, absence for more than three to four months in a year results in labor scarcity in agricultural productivity and affect food security (Ojha. P. 2015).

Migration and Agriculture

Nearly, 75% of the world population lives in rural areas and depend on agricultural activities (IFAD, 2007). Migrants play an important and advanced role in the development of persistence and commercial agriculture through the purchase of land, modern agricultural equipment, such as the introduction of new crops and techniques and the establishment of new farms. The impacts of migration are not the same for different areas over time and space. Regions where cultivable land is relatively abundant, where irrigation water is sufficiently available and which are situated near to roads and other public infrastructures, often attract the investments of international migrants (Mahama.W. B. 2013).

Development indicators

Although many disadvantages of migration in agriculture there are some advantages also. Migration increase the livelihood status of people, improve life expectancy at birth, increase literacy rate, increase GDP per capita and Human Development Index (HDI) (Table 5).

Table 5: Development indicators of migration

Development indicators	Year			
	1990	2000	2010	2013
Life expectancy at birth	60.0	65.3	69.4	70.7
Literacy rate	35.3%	47.5%	57.7%	60%
GDP per capita (in US dollars)	529	842	1625	1883
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.36	0.43	0.51	0.52

(Source: United Nations Development Program 2013).

Effects of migration on agricultural performance

Agricultural performance is measured by the following parameters

- changes in time taken for undertaking specific farm related activities
- changes in income from farming
- changes in availability of labor and
- changes in agricultural productivity

These measures are indicated by

- decreased time spent in farming
- decreased farm incomes
- labor shortages and
- low agricultural productivity

(Mahama.W. B.2013).

Solution of labor constraint

- Hired labor
- By working with other
- With the help of extended family
- Reducing fragmented agricultural land

Legal and institutional reforms for making agriculture an attractive business

Legitimate rules concerning landownership, contract farming, technical and marketing support for large farms and support for subsidized agro-inputs, agricultural credit and extension services are important in motivating small farms to become a developing sector (Ojha. P. 2015).

Socio-economic impact of migration

- It reduces the existing unemployment problem of the country and leads to poverty mitigation.
- The remittance promotes the economic condition of the migrant workers which ensure the overall economic improvement of the country. The highest amount of real foreign currency is achieved by this sector for the economy.
- Frustration is decreased with the help of overseas employment among the youths, drug addiction, social unrest, etc.
- It expands the ability of investment for self employment.
- Earning through overseas employment improve the financial capability and acquiring power of the migrant workers which makes suitable the economic activities and promotes the standard of living.
- It improves the transfer of technology through technical knowledge. It creates inspiration and develops perception of the migrant workers towards neatness and healthy environment, etc.

(Islam. N. 2014)

Estimation of agriculture with access to migration

Agricultural output obviously depends upon household labor but household labor depends upon migration and that may be affected by domestic agricultural income.

Effects of migration on labor force structure

The results of migration on labor force should properly be viewed from both the origin and destination areas. The types of migration control the kinds of impact these put on the labor force. The effects of migration on both the origin and destination areas are determined to a large extent on the characteristics of the migrants. Thus, the migration of young people normally has harmful effect on family labor, farm productivity and population growth in the rural areas. The increasing flow-out of the family labors through out-migration adversely affects labor supply and food production in the rural areas.(Adepoju. A.1986). The out-migration of young persons and the ageing of the labor force seriously inhibit technological change and lowers agricultural productivity (Adepoju, 1986 ; Okereke, 1975 ; Standt, 1985 ; Palmer, 1985). The increasing dependence on migrant labor, which has become increasingly rare and costly, has not improved the situation satisfactorily during the peak periods of crop production. Whereby migration creates shortages in the agricultural labor force is actually unacceptable of the migration process (FAO, 1984).

The relationship between out-migration and agricultural land accessibility and availability

Individual ownership of land is reported as the effect of out migration and agricultural land accessibility. There is positive connection between out-migration and land availability. There is another effect of out-migration on land availability is that; out-migration releases more farmlands for the non-migrants in the communities to utilize. (Mahama.W. B.2013).

Government policies on labor and distress migration

Table 6 summarizes the strategies and policies designed to hinder or encourage migration specially. The policies regarding distress migration are somewhat ad-hoc in developing states and are perhaps related to the availability of outside aids.

Table 6: Government policies on labor and distress migration

Goals	Strategies
Strengthen rural urban connections	Encourage rural investment via remittances, encourage circular, temporary migration
Reduce controls on movement	Restrictive movement policies
Increase urban employment	Increase opportunities in national and regional cities
Treat disaster victims	Redesign relief infrastructure Compensation opportunities Community support, encourage state involvement in relief, de-politicize aid
Safer relief camps	Reduce restrictions on movement, reliable and safe movement
Relocation and resettlement assistance	Forced relocation, temporary relocation and local work

(Source: Salehyan I. *et al.* 2008)

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The push and pull factors are responsible for migration. This push and pull factors are mainly responsible for migration. Nowadays agriculture is not a profitable activity. Input cost is higher than output cost. Due to these reasons the labors are migrating to other jobs.

Due to internal migration overall population is not change. Population pressure increases in the core urban areas. Due to population pressure agricultural land accessibility is gradually changing from the traditional communal land authority system to the system of individual ownership of land. The international migration makes more farm land available to be used by the non-migrants.

Migration causes labor shortages. The indication of this situation is reduced agricultural productivity. Labor scarcity lead to increased use of hired labor for the most farm operations such as tiling the land, weeding etc. Labor shortage creates as a consequence of migration, affects agricultural performance negatively.

CHAPTER V

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