Volume 13 Issue 36
Originally issued as C5



Global Journal of human social science
Sociology & Culture
Volume 13 Issue 5 Version 1.0 Year 2013
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

Rural-Urban Female Migration in Bangladesh: Need for Information Support and Institutional Responses

By Mohammed Mamun Rashid
University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

Abstract - This paper portrays lives and livelihoods scenario of female associated with rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. The techniques deplored are the interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) methods in collecting data. Internal migration of female has been increased with complexity. This micro level study finds that possible female migrants are enticed, in many cases, with promises of a better life and dream in cities due to lack of information. They are deprived from rights and entitlements; whatever engaged in formal or informal employment. But evidence pointing that voice of female workers is comparatively loud where protection framework exists. This paper urges to take collaborative initiative by stakeholders for developing and disseminating standardized information. Information will help female migrants to be informed and decision making. In concluding this paper, it is recommended that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) should develop a comprehensive national policy immediately on rural-urban migration; and gradually include informal employment under protection framework.

Keywords : *female, information, migration, protection framework, rights, well-beings.*

GJHSS-C Classification : *FOR Code: 160810, 160804*



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I. Introduction

Bangladesh has a land area of 147,570 square kilometers and a population of about 149,772,364; making it the most densely populated country in the world. It ranked 146th, out of 187 countries, of the UN Human Development Index and has been improving over the last decade (United Nations Development Programme 2013). World Bank (2013) finds that despite population growth, the population of poor households declined by 26 percent in 10 years. The number of extreme poor people also declined from 44 million in 2000 to 34.6 million in 2005, and down to 26 million in 2010 - a massive 41 percent decrease.

With a limited land area, the agrarian economy of Bangladesh is experiencing a very high rate of urbanization. Planning Commission of Bangladesh (2011) affirms that Bangladesh has been experiencing rapid increase in its urban population ever since its independence in 1971. Urban population as a percentage of total population increased from around 8% to nearly 23% during 1974-2001 periods. By the year 2015 nearly one-third or 33% of the population of Bangladesh will be living in urban areas.

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history. Begum (1999) asserts that migration is not new to Bangladesh. In this country, large-scale movement of the population has been a feature for a very long time. Increasing population is not the only factor responsible for rural-urban migration in Bangladesh since evidence shows that the overall lack of opportunities, lack of development seems to be increasingly associated with the rural areas. Alam (1996) cites that,

The Government is aware of the fact each day a large number of poor, landless people are pouring into the cities because of their landlessness. However, no steps have been taken to rehabilitate these people. As a result, the big cities are becoming crowded and turning into big slums. Because the Government has not decided upon any specific policy, NGOs are not able to make any impact on this type of migration. Women have less difficulty in finding employment in the cities than men, because the Bangladeshi garments and textile industries are growing very fast and earning considerable export income. These industries employ mostly female labor.

Ready-Made Garments (RMG) factories are located mainly in three cities: the capital city Dhaka, the port city Chittagong and the industrial city Narayanganj. RMG sector creates jobs in complementary industries or services, such as accessories, packaging, toiletries, courier, finance, transport and telecommunication services, etc. Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (2013) refers that 4.00 million workers were employed at 5,700 factories in 2011-12 comparing with 0.04 million workers at 134 factories in 1983-84. Out of 4.00 million manpower employed in BGMEA member factories, 3.20 million are women (80%), majorities of them are disadvantaged and economically poverty stricken womenfolk. Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh (2012) assures that RMG sector contributed 19,089.69 million USD in 2011-12, that is, 78.60 percent of total export.

Though RMG sector contributes Bangladesh economy in a distinctive manner but several tragedies

Author : Project Coordinator, Promoting Democratic Institutions and Practices (PRODIP) Project Community Development Centre (CODEC) Plot No-2, Road No- 2 Lake Valley R/A, Foy's Lake Chittagong, Bangladesh. E-mail : rashidmamuns@yahoo.com

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create gloomy image at home and abroad. As for example, a total of 1,131 people, mainly female garments workers, were killed on 24 April 2013 due to collapse of eight-storey building in Savar, Dhaka; known as Savar tragedy. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (2013) indicates that 1,629 people were killed and 3,900 injured in workplace related accidents between January and June 2013. After Savar tragedy, Pope Francis condemned as 'slave labour' the working conditions of the Bangladesh garments workers who died in factory collapse (theguardian 2013). Moreover, the US government suspended Bangladesh from Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facility for unknown time beings as a symbolic action due to poor working conditions. They want to see Bangladeshi workers in safe and appropriate working environment. European Union (EU), buyers, International Labour Organisation (ILO), humanitarian bodies, labour associations and civil society representatives are concern about labour rights, working conditions, safety & health at work, and responsible business conduct. They committed to stay and engaged with Bangladesh for improving labour standards. As a part of concerted advocacy efforts; Labour and Employment Minister of Bangladesh placed Labour Law (Amendment) -2013 bill at parliament on 15 July 2013, which was passed by voice votes by the treasury bench lawmakers in absence of the opposition Members of Parliament (MPs).

Bangladesh revised and adopted National Labour Policy in 2012. This policy committed: (a) to eliminate all forms of forced or compulsory labour, (b) to eliminate discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, (c) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the rights to collective bargaining, and (d) effective abolition of child labour. Along with other issues and concerns, this policy acknowledges that a bulk number of total labour forces are employed in informal sectors like, but not limited to, brickfield, *chatal* (rice processing mill), construction site, garage, house, poultry-farm, saw-mill, restaurant, and transportation. This policy also emphasizes to take initiatives for making law, if necessary, for well-beings of such labour.

Against this background, this paper takes a closer look on migration and urbanization, in nutshell, and the changing causes of female migration within Bangladesh. In general, there is lack of comprehensive national data, union or sub-district based accurate figure and exact trends regarding rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. Despite having shortage of reliable data on male and female migration from rural areas separately but it has been observed that more female are migrating now and not just as accompanying spouses. Based on primary research done by the author, this paper insights on pains and pleasures of female migrants, their problems in formal and informal sectors, and advocating with policymakers for developing protection framework. This paper also depicts role of respective actors for awareness building of females with information support which will help them to be informed, appropriate decision making, and protect themselves. A set of recommendations raised by respondents is given for future interventions.

a) Objective of the Paper

This paper aims to describe lives and livelihoods conditions of female migrants & returnees and aspiration of possible migrants. It also devises how supportive information and its strategic sharing contribute for safe migration. Specific objectives are-

A. To find out risks connected in migration process from locality to destination.
B. To depict different nature of works done by female migrants; particularly working conditions in RMG factories, construction sites, houses, and *chatals*.
C. To depict risks encountered in the place of residence and surroundings of female migrants.
D. To provide recommendations for improvement of safe female migration.

II. Methods and Materials

This research adopts a mixed method, applying both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in collecting, assessing and analysis data. In qualitative studies, through which respondents' observation, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and Key Informant Interview (KII) were conducted.

A total of 11 FGDs were conducted at several locations with attendance of diversified occupational groups. Total 102 females (migrants, possible migrants, and returnees) participated in selected FGDs. Table 1 shows participants and sites of FGD.

Table 1 : Participants and sites of FGD

Nature	Participant	FGD	Place
Possible migrant and returnee	36	4	Barisal and Kurigram
RMG worker	19	2	Arshad Nagor, Tongi, Dhaka
Construction labour	10	1	Mohammadia Slum, Dhaka
Domestic worker	18	2	Rayerbazar Slum, Dhaka
Chatal labour	19	2	Barisal and Dhamrai, Dhaka

A total of 25 KIIs were conducted. Table 2 shows categories of key informant and place of interview.

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Table 2 : Key informant and place of interview

Key Informant	No. of Interview	Place
Government officials	5	Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka
Women member of Union Parishad (UP)	2	Barisal and Kurigram
Secretary of Union Parishad (UP)	2	Barisal and Kurigram
Information unit of Union Parishad (UP)	2	Goronadi, Barisal
Women leader	1	Mirpur, Dhaka
NGO activist	1	Nagershori, Kurigram
Executive Director of NGO	2	Barisal and Dhaka
Supervisor of RMG worker	4	Tongi, Dhaka
Leader of RMG association	1	Tongi, Dhaka
Middleman of construction labour	1	Mohammadia Slum, Dhaka
Middleman of domestic worker	2	Rayerbazar Slum, Dhaka
Supervisor of *chatal* labour	1	Dhamrai, Dhaka
Tea stall owner	1	Gabtoli Bus Stand, Dhaka

A number of issues were addressed during FGD and KII; like areas of origin, causes of migration, livelihood options in village, role of middleman, information, age, education, monthly income, payment, leave, overtime, insurance, medical facilities, safety measures, training, discrimination between male and female, associated risks, physical and mental torture, sexual abuse, working environment, living places, existing laws, supports from duty bearer, and social inclusion. Although this study mainly focuses on qualitative analysis of respondents it will also examine some numerical data presented by respondents. So the statistics of this study should not be interpreted as statistically representative.

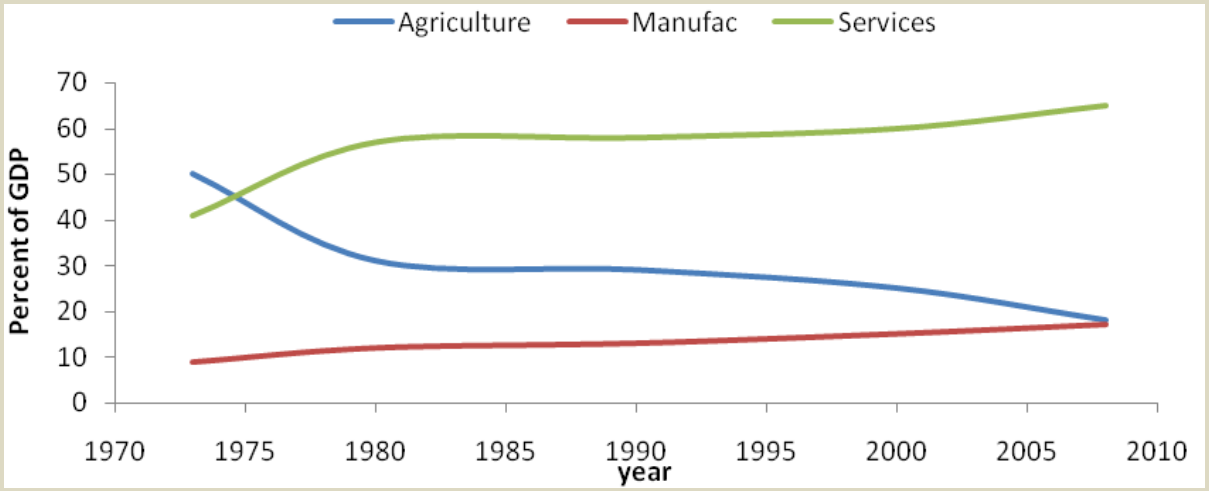
III. Results and Discussion

a) Migration and Urbanization

Afsar (2000) cites that rural-urban which has played a key role in the rapid urbanization process of Bangladesh will continue to increase in scale, complexity and diversity. Young adults, men and women, illiterate and highly educated who have support from social networks in the places of destination will migrate to maximize income opportunities generated by the city and minimize risks of uncertainties in the places of origin.

Labour Force Survey indicates that more than 95% of the 56.7 million individuals in the labour force (15+ Population) were employed in 2010. About 49% of those who are in the agriculture sector, 17% are in the industry sector, and 34% are in the services sector. Agriculture alone employs 49% of labour force, even though its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share is only 18.6% (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2010). Inability of agriculture sector to absorb surplus labour force is one of the major causes of rural-urban migration.

Structure of Bangladesh Economy, 1973-2008



Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

Vision 2021, Outline Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021, makes structural change and targets 85% sectoral shares of GDP from industry and services by 2021 (Planning Commission of Bangladesh 2010). But poverty zone pockets are neglected and located in remote areas, as for example disadvantaged

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coastal area, where hardly any industrial development takes place. Moreover, Bangladesh is at extreme risk of climate change. The impacts of climate change are already causing migration and displacement. A bulk number of displacees migrate to seek shelter and employment opportunities in big city though pull factors do not significantly magnetize them.

SFYP (2011-2015) of Bangladesh asserts that although income growth is higher and the poverty incidence is lower than the rest of Bangladesh, Dhaka still is a low income city with large numbers of poor when compared with most mega cities of the world. Holding the prospects for better income opportunities than most parts of Bangladesh, rapid migration is causing Dhaka's population to grow much faster than the rest of the country. This fast urbanization is putting pressure on the city's limited land, an already fragile environment, and weak urban services. The population density is now believed to have reached around 34,000 people per square kilometer, making Dhaka amongst the most densely populated cities in the world. Poor city management, low efficiency and massive corruption are exacerbating the problems. Urban traffic has reached nightmare proportions, often causing huge delays in covering small distances with associated productivity losses. Water and air pollution from poor waste and traffic management poses serious health risks. The already acute slum population is growing further, contributing to serious human and law and order problems. Similar problems are emerging in other major urban centers, especially Chittagong. The urbanization challenge unless managed well could pose a serious problem to the future growth prospects for Bangladesh. But urbanization is also an opportunity and an integral part of the development process.

b) Push and Pull Factors

Pushing and pulling factors are complex and inter-related. Those factors are differed from area to area as found in FGD findings. As for example, river erosion is the main push factor of displacement from Kurigram district. Migration is a safety net for affected households. But this push factor does not work in rest of the selected areas.

Total 78.43 percent of respondents specify that 'unemployment in village' is main cause of migration. Losing homestead and cultivatable lands due to riverbank erosion is another factor of forced migration that indentified by 7.83 percent respondents. Other push factors found in this study are domestic violence, early marriage, polygamy, dowry, social insecurity, low yield in agricultural lands, decreasing the productivity of per labour in agricultural sector, vicious cycle of *dadander* (moneylender), pressure from few NGOs to repay loan, food insecurity, inadequate access to *khas* lands (government owned lands) and resources, very little access to safety nets program and so on.

Searching employment opportunities; whatever odd, irregular or underpaid, is the main pull factor of female migration because they do not have ample employment opportunities round the year in village. Moreover, scope of employment particularly in garments factory, residential house, construction sites, dream of better living conditions, communication with relatives living in city, and social networks are other forms of pull factor.

c) Possible Migrants

One respondent said during FGD, "We need money for survival. We have hope and dream. Thus, we decide to migrate to free us from shadow of famine in village". Total 25.00 percent of possible migrants are below 20 years. Ten percent range between ages of 20 to 24 and 20.00 percent between 25 to 29 years. However, 15.00 percent is between 30 to 34 and 25.00 percent from 35 to 39 years. Five percent of possible migrants are over forty years. Noteworthy, possible migrants are adolescent girls and young adults. Majority (90.00 percent) of possible migrants have relatively low access and continuation to formal education and/or vocational scheme.

Though they are interested to migrate but do not know what will be job in city. Respondents said, "We want to do work in garments factory or house. Working in house or garments factory will be easy as we do not have education and set of skills". The place of destination is also unknown to them. They have planned to go in city through contact with relatives or neighbors.

Key informants, herein women member, secretary and information unit of Union Parishad (UP), said, "People come at Union Parishad (UP), lowest tier of administrative unit in Bangladesh, for many services like birth certificate, character certificate, cash and kinds support. But female migrants do not come at Union Parishad (UP) to know information about job, employer, middleman, terms and conditions, working environment, problems & prospects, living place and other facilities before migration". The most common forms of internal trafficking in Bangladesh are, among others: trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, domestic servitude, forced labour and other forms of exploitation. Possible migrants, in utmost extent, are lured or deceived with promises of a better life and more lucrative job opportunities in cities due to lack of proper information. Union Parishad (UP) can raise mass awareness by using visual materials to reduce internal trafficking. Capacity building schemes of Union Parishad (UP) can address prospective training courses for possible migrants like sewing in garments factory, office helper, security guard, and so on.

Non-government Organizations (NGOs) can address issues and concerns of 'safe female migration'

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in their regular program interventions. They can facilitate agenda based discussion in credit groups and other social forums. NGOs can mobilize grassroots people on safe migration issue.

d) Returnees

Returnees have mixed conditions after return from city. They told that their wages was low as comparison with volume of work and irregular payment. Wages ranges from Taka 500-4,000 (USD $6.25-$50, exchange rate $1 USD = 80 Taka). Low wages helped them to survive as a living thing not human beings. They were physically and mentally tortured and sexually abused at work place and living surroundings. They did not have any information before migration to city regarding workload, wage, overtime, and working environment. Now their workload is low and has enough time in village. But they do not have earning sources. They have to depend on their husband and other members; even in decision making.

Total 70.00 percent of returnees were moved to city by influence of middleman. Middleman gave them false promises of a better life with good employment. But they cheated with returnees. Middleman did not provide jobs according to verbal commitment. Key informants cite that middleman usually sells female migrants to brothels. Returnees also carry social stigma as some neighbors who say the returnees are bad, evil. Thus, respondents suggested for taking state-led initiative for re-integration of such returnees.

It is significant to note that female migrants mainly live at rented house in city but a number of relatives and neighbors of village are living in cluster. They are used to sharing food, practice own language and culture in city. However, densely populated & polluted slum, lack of potable water, noise pollution, congested living room, and not comfortably matching with city life are also causes of return from city.

e) Garments Worker

FGD participants said, "We were jobless in village. We were not able to eat regularly. But now we have a job. Working in garments factory protect us from hunger but kills our freedom. We start work at early morning but do not know the end time. It depends on decision of supervisor. Sometimes we work whole night without rest. Supervisors misbehave with us. Sexual harassment and violence, in some extent, exist in workplace".

They usually go in city through contact with relatives or neighbors. As for example, elder sister brings her younger sister or cousin from village. Sister brings the wife of her brother or sister-in-law. Aunt brings nephew, one brings her ex-classmate who drop out from school. Such mixing relationships are found that is used as a social capital to come in the city and secure job at garments factory.

Majority of them have to face many risks associated with their job and living places. Frequently fire and collapse of garments factory increase their tension. Garments authority sometimes arranges orientation on rescue management. But it is mostly lecture oriented. There have no sufficient stairs and instruments for emergency exit. Even they do not properly know use of extinguisher though those are usually seen beside wall. There are not sufficient essential facilities at work place like pure dirking water, hygienic mode to maintain some cleanliness during menstrual period. There are also problem of taking meal on time. Jaundice, peptic ulcer, and skin diseases are prevailed in majority of cases.

Female workers are more vulnerable than male because of their low voices. Supervisor of garments workers deprives them in many aspects. As for example, supervisor records less time in overtime sheet, absent one day if little bit late during entrance, and termination during pregnancy. Moreover, sometimes senior colleague (like supervisor) gives them ill-treated offer of sexual relationship. They also fall in trapped of false love by male co-worker.

One of the respondents said during FGD, "I work last eighteen years. Now my wages is Taka 6,000 (USD $75). There is no performance based remuneration system. Everything depends on decision of employer. We work hard but get less benefit. Supervisors habitually misbehave with us. But they cannot commonly do it with male workers. Male workers can easily react but we cannot; because we are female". Normally one female worker receives monthly remuneration Taka 3,000-3,500 (USD $37.50-$43.75).

They have to attend at early morning in work. But completion time is not fixed. In some extent, they have to depart during midnight. They face many social insecurities especially eve-teasing, sexual harassment, touching sensitive organ of body, ill-treated comments on street. A number of FGD participants (45.00 percent) mention that Bangladesh have law on 'violence against women'. Implementation of that law is low. Unfortunately, some members of law enforcing agency harass them on street. Participants urge to take necessary measures for improving mind set of such people. They also urge to arrange clean dining room and qualified doctor. They agree to work after evening if garments authority provides secured and gender-friendly vehicle or secured dormitory beside garments factory. Female workers urge that training (like sewing) and basic orientation before migration will be helpful to adapt with working environment.

f) Construction Labour

Selected participants of construction labour live in Mohammadia slum, Dhaka. Their living place is dirty. They share hanging latrine. Garbage, along with

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excreta, is dumped in canal which congests sewage system. Rats and cockroaches scurry across the floor of the damp, dark and poorly-ventilated room. Participants arrived from northern region of Bangladesh. Some of them used truck and roof of train to pay less fare.

The wages of female construction labour is not fixed. It depends on decision of employer and usually ranges from Taka 180-200 (USD $2.25-$2.50). The male construction labour usually receives from Taka 300-350 (USD $3.75-$4.375). There has common falsehood that females are physically less fit for construction work. This is main cause of discrimination. Participants said, "Despite having discrimination we get some money for continued existence. We were employed in agricultural work, especially for harvesting, in village. We received forty kilograms paddy for daily work. But we do not get such opportunity round the year in village".

Wages of female construction labours is not regular though they are verbally committed to be paid daily basis. They have to wait long hours; even days to receive wages. It is very difficult for them to buy daily essentials and manage cook & other works when wages is received at night like 10:00 pm. Female construction labours do not have job security. Their job is not also regular. Many factors are involved to get a job like number of construction sites, demand of labour, supply, season, and so on. Female construction labours usually have to pay 'commission' to *sardar* (leader of labours) for managing daily job. Thus, they can work on average sixteen days within a month.

Female construction labours work as a helper, digging mud, carrying brick, sand, cement, and other materials. They carry such items at different stages of multi-storey building. Safety measures undertaken in workplace is not totally at satisfactory level because- (a) mostly manual operation, (b) lack of sufficient instruments for safety, (c) no demonstrative instruction for safety, and (4) no basic training provided to labour about carefulness and safety in workplace. Construction work has 2D (difficult and dangerous) and accident occurred several times. But female labours do not get standard compensation. It also depends on willing of employer. Female labours are not aware about their rights. However, they propose to include them under insurance facility.

g) Domestic Worker

Selected participants work as housemaid at nearby residential areas. Total 27.78 percent (five persons) of them work permanently and others work part time. Those two categories have different nature pains and pleasures.

Female domestic workers do not have any formal contract with house owner. Amount of wages, nature of work, working hours, and date of payment are determined verbally. Everything depends on characteristics of house owner. Good house owner provides essential facilities for them.

Permanent housemaid usually stays in owner house. Majority of respondents point out that housemaid normally sleeps on floor of kitchen. There has no separate accommodation facility for them. As a wages such housemaid receives Taka 1,500-2,000 (USD $18.75-$25) monthly. They usually get leave especially during religious festival observation. Sometimes owners give them bonus and money of *fitrah* (In Islam, a portion of charity) & *zakat* (In Islam, a form of giving to those who are less fortunate).

Part time housemaid starts work at early morning or evening; or suitable time set by mutual discussion. Wages is fixed based on working hours and nature of work. They normally do all works like cooking, washing cloth, cleaning, and other household activities. Such housemaid receives Taka 800-1,000 (USD $10-$12.50) monthly and works from four to five hours. They also work at other nearby two or three houses. They live at low quality house like a temporary thatched shack in slum.

As noted earlier, appointment of domestic worker is verbal. Terms and conditions of work are not protected by law. Pains and pleasures of domestic worker depend on mind set of house owner. Total 38.89 percent of FGD participants have positive attitude on house owner. They mention that house owners do not torture them physically and mentally. House owners give medicine, cloths (sometimes old cloth), food and other supports. Unfortunately, they are at risk of mental and physical abuse by male domestic worker. They urge that, "We did not have knowledge about city life. We were not able to communicate; not being able to speak properly. Basic orientation, before migration, on household works will be helpful for us".

h) Chatal Labour

Chatal labours are engaged in all process activities for drying paddy. *Chatal* mills are usually located at sub-district centers, small towns, and outskirts. Nineteen participants of FGD and key informant said, "Male labours usually work at boiler of *chatal*. Female labours are employed for doing all activities like loading, unloading, collecting water & firewood, drying paddy, and so on. But there has serious discrimination between male and female labours regarding wages and other benefits".

There has no formal agreement between *chatal* labours and owner. Terms and conditions of employment are verbal. *Chatal* owners have association. Association determines the amount of wages. Each female labour usually receives Taka 90 (USD $1.125) daily but payment is made weekly. Male labours who normally work at boiler they receive Taka 300 (USD $3.75) daily. Their wages is calculated based

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on attendance. They do not have weekly holiday, leave, and other benefits. Even they do not get bonus during religious festival. Everything depends on decision of owner. As for example, last year each female labour received Taka 200 (USD $2.50) and one soap as an Eid (religious festival of Muslim) bonus.

Chatal labours do not get job opportunity round the year. They become jobless during rainy season. Environment of *chatal* is not gender-friendly. Male and female labours use one latrine. They mostly use unhygienic latrine, that is, hang latrine, open defecation, dug-well and hole. They have to wait in queue for long time for going to latrine. There has lack of potable drinking water. Female labours drag paddy on floor by legs and wood-made instrument. Pulling paddy is quite hard and creates serious pain on body and problems in waist, leg and lower domain of stomach. They are also at the risks of skin diseases as working whole day under sunshine. Unfortunately, female labours do not get any benefit for treatment. Female labours are terminated from job during pregnancy period. They do not obtain any benefit for that time. In *chatal*, absenteeism at workplace means no wages.

i) National Policies and Legal Frameworks

Though the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) adopts and reforms of a number of outstanding policies; there is still no national policy to comprehensively address internal migration issue. But concentration on shifted sectoral contribution to GDP, inability of agriculture to absorb surplus labour force, forced migration due to adverse effects of climate change, increasing labour force participation rate of women, and roles of other push and pull factors sharply increase rural-urban migration and claiming imperative institutional response to develop national policy on internal migration. Nonetheless Bangladesh has a set of policies, laws, plans and institutional settings that both directly and indirectly addresses a number of provisions of internal migrants. As for example-

j) National Labour Policy

National Labour Policy 2012 sets ten specific objectives mainly for well-beings of labour and enabling environment. Along with addressing globalization realities, this policy emphasizes on fixing minimum wages and review wages structure in accordance with price hiking. Elimination of wages discrimination between male and female labour has been addressed in this document. This policy also contemplates on amendment of labour law considering changes of labour market and upcoming issues.

k) National Labour Law

Bangladesh Labour Law (Amendment) 2013 was passed on 15 July 2013 in parliament. Immediate Labour (Amendment) Law 2010 was enacted on 13 May 2010. It amended mainly age, that is, sixty years instead of fifty-seven; nothing else. National Labour Law 2006 addresses, but not limited to, conditions of service and employment, age, maternity benefit, special provisions relating to health, hygiene and safety, welfare, working hours and leave, wages and payment, and workers compensation for injury by accident. Though newly amended labour law includes some sectors, as for example agriculture, ship-breaking, ship-building; but does not serve all sectors and segments like domestic worker. Right based organizations, labour unions and other actors are not fully satisfied with amendments of new law. They still raise voices to see a comprehensive national labour law. However, all respondents mention that labours do not know about their basic rights prescribed in law. They suggest for summarizing basic provisions and clauses of labour law and to orient labours and migration expectants.

l) Inadequate Information and Initiative

FGD participants and key informants point out that 95.00 percent female migrant (including expectants and returnees) did not have proper information about their job, lodging, and others. They are not aware about their rights and entitlements those prescribed in respective legal frameworks. Respondents also mention that implementation of such legal instruments are very slow and take longer to reach for female migrants. This is a clearly an infringement of their rights for protection and promotion lives & livelihoods. Table 3 shows major problems & concerns and corresponding recommendations proposed by the respondents.

Table 3 : Major problems & concerns and recommendations

Categories	Major Problems & Concerns	Recommendations
Possible migrants and returnees	• Possible migrants have low level educational qualification. • They do not know about possible conditions of their job after migrating in city. • They have limited set of skills. • Majority of female migrants do not go to Union Parishad (UP) to know information about their job in city.	• Development of easy training & orientation manual and review existing materials. • To prepare poster, leaflet, brochure, and sticker as an awareness development materials. • To prepare flipchart (with photo and easy sentence) for discussion at courtyard session and group

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Categories	Major Problems & Concerns	Recommendations
	• Possible migrants do not have formal training and orientation. • Majority (70.00 percent) of returnees went to city by influence of middleman. • Middleman cheated with returnees. • Middleman sells female migrants to brothels. • Returnees were physically and mentally tortured and sexually abused at work place. • Returnees have social stigma after comeback in village.	meetings. Develop flipchart according to educational qualification of possible migrants. • To establish billboard (with awareness development message) at public place. • To build mass awareness about negative role of middleman in migration process. • To sensitize respective stakeholders for social re-integration of returnees.
Garments workers	• Female garments workers usually do not get rights according to appointment letter. • Working hour is not fixed. As for example, they start work at early morning but do not know the end time. • At initial stage, one female worker usually receives Taka 3,000-3,500 (USD $37.50-$43.75) monthly. Increment depends on willing of employer. Female workers are being deprived from minimum wages. • Female workers are sexually harassed by supervisor & co-worker at workplace and on street. • Frequently fire and collapse of garments factory insecure their lives. • Garments factories do not have sufficient stairs for emergency exit. • Employers do not arrange sound training and orientation on rescue management. • Lack of potable water at worksite. • Female workers are suffering by different diseases like jaundice, peptic ulcer, and skin problems. • Majority of female workers are not aware about their rights.	• Summarize basic provision and rights of newly enacted Bangladesh labour law. Bullet points can be used in training and orientation session of migrants (existing and possible) to raise their voice and bargaining skills. • To address existing practices of wages structure, working hours, overtime, leave (with & without pay), incentive, mental, physical, sexual violence, health & sanitation, meal, and medical facilities in manual and other awareness development materials. • To ensure field test of every awareness building materials. • To facilitate consultative workshop along with participation of owners, policymakers, duty bearers, employers, management staffs (key level and operational), labour union, media and representatives of civil society organizations.
Construction labours	• Female construction labours are appointed verbally. • Living place of construction labour is dirty. • Female construction labour gets Taka 180-200 (USD $2.25-$2.50) daily whereas male labour receives Taka 300-350 (USD $3.75-$4.375). • They have to wait long hours; even days to receive wages. • They have to pay 'commission' to *sardar* (leader of labours) for managing daily job. • They can work on average sixteen days within a month. • They cannot enjoy leave, holiday, and other facilities. • Poor safety measures undertaken at workplace. • There has no insurance for female construction labours. • Injured or death labours get lump-sum compensation. It also depends on willing of employer.	• To include conditions of female construction labours like wages, irregular payment, exploitation by labour leader, job insecurity, poor safety measures, lack of accidental compensation and others in information handbook. • To ensure insurance and standard compensation for female construction labours. • Advocacy with employer for well-beings of female construction labours.
Domestic worker	• Female domestic workers do not have any formal contract with house owner.	• To inform female domestic workers about their rights.

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Categories	Major Problems & Concerns	Recommendations
	• No wages structure. • Terms and conditions of work are not protected by law. • Facilities of domestic workers depend on mind set of owner. • Female domestic workers are at risk of mental and physical abuse by male domestic worker and house owner. • Female domestic workers do not know about their rights.	• Capacity building of domestic workers (existing and possible) about areas of encountered risks and increase self-confidence. • Long-term advocacy for adopting comprehensive regulation for protecting female labours engaged in informal employment.
Chatal labour	• Female *chatal* labours are appointed verbally. • Serious discrimination between male and female labours regarding wages and other benefits. • Wages is calculated based on attendance. They do not have weekly holiday, leave, and other benefits. • They are not entitled to receive festival bonus. • Employment is seasonal and terminates from job any time without prior notice. • Female labours are terminated from job during pregnancy period. • Environment of *chatal* is not gender-friendly. • Pulling paddy is quite hard and problems on body. But they do not get medical facility. • They are at risk of sexual violence.	• To facilitate meeting with *chatal* owners & their association, and other actors to share situations of female labours. • To accumulate findings like wages discrimination between male and female, leave, termination, working environment, medical facilities, sexual violence, and others. • To address above findings in manual and other awareness development materials.

m) Government and Non-government Interventions

FGD participants and key informants mention that both government departments and non-government organizations do not have remarkable focus on safe female migration. They highly emphasize on GO-NGO collaboration in this regard. Government of Bangladesh (GoB) can develop comprehensive protection framework progressively for well-beings of female migrants especially who are engaged in informal employment. Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) of Bangladesh can propel existing initiatives widely at grassroots and play advisory role in this regard. As for example, they can adopt innovative awareness materials and use it through vertical and horizontal line agencies like information unit of Union Parishad (UP). BMET can also provide strategic direction to facilitate capacity building training and orientation for respective duty bearers in coordination with other departments.

Respondents suggest that NGOs can work in two tiers; a) awareness & capacity building, sensitization, and b) evidence-based policy advocacy.

NGOs can summarize basic provision and rights of Bangladesh labour law, women development policy, domestic violence (prevention and protection) act, eve-teasing, health policy, and tentative risks associated in female migration process. Findings can be used as an awareness development materials and policy promotion tools. They can take initiative for sensitization of duty bearers and other national & sub-national actors.

Respondents urge for capacity development of NGO activists on safe female migration issue. NGOs can facilitate courtyard session, drama, *jari* (folksong), video show, and other cultural activities. The respondents mention that involvement of youths will sensitize future generations as a change maker. Engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), voluntary groups, local club, opinion leaders, and media will help for effective and efficient functions. Testimonial case presentation like 'tale of a returnee' in group meeting or courtyard session will be helpful instrument. Involvement of private sectors, that is, under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is emerging for safe female migration.

IV. Conclusion

This small-scale field based study finds that females face many problems at each step of migration process. Protection and promotion the lives and livelihoods of internal female migrants is an integrated approach rather than scattered courses of action. This paper concludes that standardized information package will help them, especially possible migrants, to

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be informed, taking appropriate decisions and protect themselves. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) should develop a comprehensive national policy immediately to promote well-beings of internal migrants including female. State-led protection framework should be developed and put into practice progressively for ensuring rights of people with informal employment.

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