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By Md. Wahidul Haque & Norizan Abdul Ghani
University Sultan Zainal Abedin

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The Effects of Migration Management and Community on Quality of Life; A Study on Bangladeshi Construction Workers in Malaysia

Md. Wahidul Haque [α] & Norizan Abdul Ghani [σ]

Abstract- Despite having substantial strategy and policy on human resource development, Bangladeshi (BD) workers in Malaysia mostly migrate in the unskilled category. Their capability development training in Malaysia takes place in an informal and unorthodox way through Community of Practice (CoP). This research attempts to investigate the effect of migration management and the workers training and community activities of Terengganu, the east coast of Malaysia, on the QoL of BD migrant workers. Thematic analysis is used in this qualitative research, with the help of atlas ti version seven for data analysis. The research could hardly reveal any existence of community resilience, though hundreds of them are staying together in many construction sites. Meaning, they are staying together but forming a 'Solitary Community' and leading a lower QoL. The outcome of this research will be useful for experts to further enhance migration, capability expansion, and community development philosophy to improve the migrant workers QoL.

I. Introduction

Over a few decades, labor migration is occupying an essential part of the global economy (Islam, 2014). Worldwide, the number of international migrants continued a rapid growth in recent years, reaching 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 (United Nations, 2017). Around the globe, BD workers are engaged in 143 countries, but about 90% of the migration takes place in Islamic countries like the Middle East and Malaysia (Islam, 2014). According to an estimation of the Malaysian Employers Federation, around six million documented and undocumented BD labor work mainly in the labor-intensive sectors (Tan Heng Hong, 2017), which might include the Rohingyas without UNHCR card (migrated following unsafe route). Whereas, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030 aims to promote safe, regular and orderly migration to reduce their vulnerabilities (Smale & Hilbrecht, 2016).

BD migrant workers in labor-intensive sectors of Malaysia are mostly unskilled and leading a poor QoL (Sultana, 2008). Researchers found 71% of BD migrant workers draw a salary between RM 800 to RM 1200. It was also revealed that 57 % of the workers left their first job due to lower wages and employers' misconduct (Rahman et al., 2014). After leaving the first workplace, workers remain floating and keep looking for a better opportunity. In this initial unstable condition, somehow, they learn the trade from older BD workers informally. It takes a varied amount of time, depending upon the situation, to learn simple job traits. A digital device like mobile could be an aid of learning, by which they primarily keep communication and connection. On the other hand, the virtual community of friends and family pulls them out of the community (of Malaysia). This research aims to investigate the effect of migration management, and community life in Malaysia on QoL. The study is limited to the BD migrant workers in the construction sector of Malaysia who are staying for less than ten years.

Author α: Ph.D candidate, Faculty of Applied Social Science, University Sultan Zainal Abedin, Terengganu, Malaysia.
e-mail: wahidorion5155@gmail.com
Author σ: Professor in the Faculty of Applied Social Science, University Sultan Zainal Abedin, Terengganu, Malaysia.
e-mail: norizabd@unisza.edu.my

II. Literature Review

a) Migration Management

To manage the migration system, a set of norms, rules, principles, decision-making procedures are implmented for ensuring safe, orderly, and regular migration (Kunz, R., Lavenex, S., Panizzon, 2011). Overall safety mainly depends upon the team of actors who are involved in translating rules and regulations into actions. A wide range of performers such as individuals, governmental and non-governmental bodies, and private sector organizations constitute migration governance to manage the system (Betts, 2011).

Irregular migration is the result of the bad governance. In a governance-deficient system, migration management is taken over by unscrupulous recruiting agencies (Zehadul Karim et al., 2015) by pumping in huge money down the channel. This situation increases the risk of migration; irregular migration soars up, which ultimately victimizes the migrants (Laczko, 2014). Dishonest recruiting agents naturally manage this influx of money from the potential migrants. As a result, workers try to recover the money by extending their stay with documented or undocumented status. Alongside the unsafe and illegal route of entry, documented workers also many a time become undocumented because of unscrupulous agents' and employers' misconduct, and the high cost of the visa renewal fee (Rahman et al., 2014).

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Researchers found that migration management in BD is tumbled-down by unscrupolous recruiting agencies. Complains against them are taking excessive fees, pushing migrants into unsafe journey, a false offer of job and wage (Wickramasekara, 2016). Lack of actions against them soared up the level of migration-related crimes in BD. The migration sector in BD suffers from a myriad of governance challenges ranging from legal, institutional, and procedural limitations, coupled with rampant corrupt malpractices by intermediaries (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2017). Unauthorized transactions of money at every level of the migration process adds extra financial burden to the potential migrants. This burden has a long-term impact on the financial state, leading them to borrow money from multiple sources on unfavorable conditions (Rahman et al., 2014). High cost in labor migration also instigates unsafe overseas passage as alternative means.

Migrants rights include access to basic social services, rights of the family, the right to work, residency permit and paths to citizenship (Misafir, 2019). Orderly and safe migration include border control and law enforcement mechanisms, combat human trafficking, and re-integration system (Rahim, 2015). Labor migration management includes policies for managing labor migration, skills and qualification recognition schemes, migration regulation, bilateral labor contracts, and remittance issues (Manolo Abella, 2005). International and regional co-operation and other partnerships are the dimensions of migration for analysing of international conventions, treaties and laws, and bilateral agreements.

b) Community and Capacity Expansion

Community implies an undifferentiated identity, with the emphasis on unity, spontaneity, reasoning, and cohesion. Bettez (2011), Nowell & Boyd (2010) and Townley (2011) noted that community is an individualistic and collective concept, addressing the needs of individuals as well as providing an opportunity for promoting responsibility and contributing to every ones' well-being. Chavis (2000) defined community building as the machinery for the bottom-up approach to social change, which can promote personal growth and enhance the community. Chavis referred to a set of criteria relating to community development, including creating opportunities for members to influence their community, having needs met, and developing and sharing emotional ties and support.

The UN defines community development as "a process of community members coming together and solve common problems through collective action." (Intellectual 2017). It is a broad term given to the practices of civic leaders, activists, involved citizens and professionals in improving various aspects of communities, typically aiming to build stronger and more resilient local communities. "Community development is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes sustainable development, democracy, economic prospect, equality, human rights, and social justice, through the education, organization, and empowerment of people." The International Association for Community Development (www.iacdglobal.org).

Community capacity building, on the other hand, focusing on helping communities obtain, strengthen, and maintain the ability to set and achieve their development objectives (United Nations Development System, 2009). Community engagement is a concept used in higher education contexts as an umbrella term to include various activities pursued in partnership with local communities (Lazarus, Taliep, Bulbulia, Phillips, & Seedat, 2012; Seedat, 2012). Universities and communities are increasingly forming partnerships to address various social needs while offering students the opportunity to engage in community or civic activities, gain practical experience and link theory to practice in their specific field of study (Göransson, Maharajh, & Schmoch, 2009; Suárez-Balcázar, Harper, & Lewis, 2005).

The community of Practice (CoP) also known in various other terms, such as learning networks, group learning, or tech clubs (Wenger, E., & Wenger, 2015). Many practitioners and academics have defined the concept of CoP in different ways (Agrifoglio, 2015). Learning or training is not only the acquisition of knowledge, but rather it occurs through certain forms and types of social co-participation and embedded within both a social and physical environment (Lave, J., & Wenger, 1991). According to Etienne Wenger, the proposer of CoP has identified three major components, like (a) Members interact and establish norms and relationships through reciprocated engagement. (b) Bound together with a sense of a joint enterprise. (c) Through artifacts, routines, stories and language produce a shared repertoire of communal resources (Wenger, 2011).

Today, computer mediated communication is presenting us a Virtual Community (VC), where the people with same interest share information related to activities, events, entertainment and even history (Mulyadi & Fitriana, 2018). VC is somthing, which connects through a social network of persons without any geographical limit. The aim of VC is to achieve socialization like sharing a personal feelings, an opinion and knowledge, breaking the boundaries of conventional community. Geographically dispersed frontierless community of people and organization connected via internet or other network are called Virtual World or Web World or VC (Somani, 2012).

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III. Methodology

A qualitative study was conducted in Terengganu, east cost of Malaysia to find out the effects of migration management and community on QoL of BD migrant workers. Two focused group discussions (FGD), 12 in-depth interviews and two years observation triangulated the research. One FGD took place in the construction site of the University of Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) hospital complex at Gong Badak, and the other one in the accommodation of construction workers at Marang, Terengganu. Eight workers and four intellectuals from the field of migration management, community developemnt, and QoL from home and abroad took part in indepth interview. This reaesarch used Atlas ti version seven to conduct the thematic analysis of the primary data.

IV. Findings

a) Come from Different Communities

Though the BD government is focusing on less progressed districts for migration, people from all over the country are migrating, not forming any pattern (R-2). So, there is almost no forecast or mutual communications before migration. Some are following Network Theory and communicating with relatives and friends at Malaysia, and getting some advantages of reduced costs and risks. Unfortunately, many of them finally come through fraud the agents and undergo sufferings (R-1).

b) No Training and No Connection Established

Ministry of Expatriate's Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) of BD are doing gigantic works including policy, strategy, and research activities through the government officials, scholars, academicians and NGOs on overall migration management around the globe (R-1). International bodies like World Bank (WB), European Commission (EC), International Labor Organization (ILO), Asian Development Bank (ADB) are funding for capacity building and improving QoL of BD migrant workers (R-3). Unfortunately, the quality output of these strategic, gigantic, and relentless efforts for BD workers is not visible in Malaysia because Malaysia is mostly importing unskilled workers (R-1). So, many people migrating to Malaysia are untrained and unskilled and not grouped in BD before coming here. If there would be a training season before migration, there could be a possibility of communication and understanding one another in BD, which could ultimately lead to a better community engagement and better QoL in Malaysia.

c) Mistrust and Frustration in BD

Trust is one of the most significant quality to build a community. False commitments of unscrupulous agents create distrust and bring barriers to a harmonious community after the migration (R-2). Mismanagement of the migration process provokes agents in BD to recruit workers with various false commitments from the beginning. Following are some example (R-1):

a. They showcase older migrants and commit big amount of salary.
b. Promise a higher category of skills.
c. Promise a little time required for migration.
d. Collect money much before the actual time of departure.
e. Commit a new date every time they meet but fail to keep the commitment.
f. One the process, many give up hope and go back to the village, losing all or a big part of the money deposited.

d) Theme of Migration Management in BD

Mistrust, no community affiliation, no training, and irregular migration tends to single out people in the destination country and lowers QoL. Table 1 shows the theme and sub-themes developed from the pre-migration primary data.

Table 1: The Theme and Sub-themes of Migration Management in BD

Ser	Theme	Sub-themes
1	Theme 1. Irregular migration tends to single out people from his community in the destination country.	1. Comes from different communities, not knowing anyone. 2. Mistrust and frustration grew in BD for the sub agent's false commitment and fraudulence. 3. No formal training in BD 4. No mutual network established before migration

Source: Theme Emerged from Primary Data of Field Survey

e) Mistrust and Frustration in Malaysia

Many of the irregular migrations occur following unsafe routes with a lot of hardship and pain; it might even take 40 days to reach Malaysia from BD (R-6). After the long battle, once a worker migrates to Malaysia, he again gets the shock of his life. The ground reality is different from the promised job, salary, and the skills category. Many of the older migrants' sufferings, low pay, insecurity, and low life standard drops him from the sky (R-5). Dreams fall apart, so as the trust and faith towards the people. Because of the agent's and his counterpart's false commitment many of the migrants workers switch from the initial job placement in search of better opportunity. Community building possibility again

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crashes down and the migrant become lonely though surrounded by many BD workers around him.

f) Relation with Instructors

As most of the migrants are unskilled and get lower pay then the expectations, they continue to thrive for learning and being trained (R-7). Because of the unfamiliarity with the modern-day free facility of m-learning or e-learning, these are unreachable to them. The only way that remains open to them is through Community of Practice (CoP) or on the job training (R-6). Some believe that better learning opportunity exists in big projects because mistakes are not noticed everytime, and there are diversities of jobs with a variety of experts. On the other hand, some believe that small projects offer better learning opportunities because a better tie is possible with the Guru/ instructor (R-5). The relation between Guru and the trainee is the most significant element for better training because the trainee is not paying in cash. Showing respect to the Guru, obeying his words and helping him in the accommodation are the intangible payment (R-6). This attachment with the Guru in the workplace and house, detach them from the co-workers and singles out them. Workers carry forward this attitude throughout the migrant life, which creates a hindrance in increasing community engagement and in turn the better QoL.

g) Better Management of Daily Life

In the process of mismanagement of migration, migrant workers are frustrated and dears to believe others. Training through CoP further detaches them from other co-workers in the workplace and living area. Field study observed that they feel better to manage their daily life (for cooking and dining) alone or at the most two to three men together (R-7). Though there is a huge arrangement of dining and cooking facilities in the UniSZA under-construction hospital site, multiple groups of only two/ three men use those facilities. These workers can not make a bigger group, shop, and cook together to improve the QoL.

h) Effect of Virtual Community

During the leisure time, most of the BD workers talk either to family and friends back home or fiddle social media like Facebook (R-5). Cheaper and free communication platforms like Facebook, IMO, and Viber in this era of digitalization allow them to form a virtual community and a means of recreation (R-9). 200 BD peoples' community at UniSZA under-construction hospital complex meet and greet each other only during cooking and dining. Engagement in this virtual community is the final step of making them apart, individualistic and pushes them towards a community less world, which is a 'solitary community'.

i) Theme of Capability Expansion and Community Engagement in Malaysia

Table 2 shows the theme and sub-themes of capability expansion and community engagement in Malaysia. Frustration in Malaysia for visa agent's false commitment; relation with instructors during the learning process through CoP; forming a small group of two to three persons for better management; and communicating through the smartphone in the virtual community are the steps of getting separated. So, during the process of irregular migration, informal training through CoP, ease of small group management and engagement in Virtual Community, BD migrant workers get separated and live in a 'solitary community' in Malaysia, lowering their QoL.

Table 2: Theme of Capability Expansion and Community Management in Malaysia

Ser	Theme	Sub-themes
1	Theme 2. In the process of irregular migration, informal training through CoP, ease of small group management and engagement in virtual community, BD migrant workers get separated and live in a 'solitary community' in Malaysia.	1. Frustration in Malaysia for a visa agent's false commitment makes them switch from the initial workplace and look for better opportunity. 2. Relation with instructor during the learning process through Community of Practice (CoP) detach them from co-workers. 3. For better management of daily life, forming a small group of two to three persons. 4. Engagement in the virtual community and communicating through smartphone drag the workers out of the real community.

Source: Theme Emerged from Primary Data of Field Survey

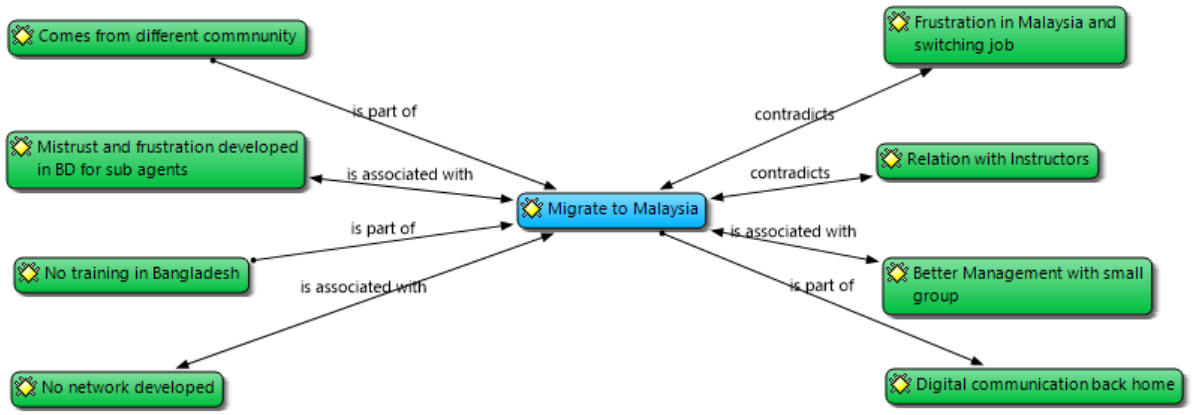
V. Discussion

In the migration management, a set of norms, rules, principles are followed to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration (Kunz, R., Lavenex, S., Panizzon, 2011). Irregular migration is the result of poor governance and mismanagement, where dishonest recruiting agencies take over the system (Zehadul Karim et al., 2015) and push out workers without formal training and mutual networks. Reinforced by secondary data, theme one also figure out that irregular migration tends to single out people in the destination country, because of mistrust, no community affiliation in BD, and no training before migration.

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Training or learning, on the other hand, is not just the acquisition of knowledge, rather occurs through certain, methods and natures of social co-participation and embedded within both a social and physical environment (Lave, J., & Wenger, 1991). Unskilled BD workers learn the trade and get the training through the social co-participation, meaning Community of Practice. This training process (informal and free) forms the psychology of the trainees to create solid bondage with the instructors rather than other co-workers. Community development, on the other hand, is a bottom-up approach to promote personal growth and enhance the community (Chavis, 2000). Though CoP is promoting personal growth, it is not bonding and creating the community of BD workers in Malaysia. Field study of this research observed that they are not coming close to solve a common problem of being cheated by the employers or agents; whereas, community development is a process of community members coming together and solve common problems through collective action (Intellectual 2017).

Frustration in Malaysia for visa agent's false commitment (R-5); relations developed with instructors during the learning process through CoP (R-6); forming a small group of two to three persons for better management (R-7); and communicating through the smartphone in the virtual community are the steps of getting separated (R-9). So, during the process of irregular migration, informal capability expansion, and engagement in the virtual community, BD migrant workers get separated and live in a 'solitary community' in Malaysia. Figure 1: shows a combination of both the themes and their relations with migration. Four factors before migration, including mismanagement and four factors after immigration, including capability expansion and community engagement, lead the workers towards a solitary community and ultimately lowers their QoL.



Source: Output of Atlas ti from primary data

Figure 1: Migration to Malaysia and Related Issues

Figure 2 is showing that the community of practice (as a means of capability expansion) is overlapping on the community of Malaysia. A virtual community is further overlapping on the mutual space resulting solitary community and ultimately lowering the QoL. The same phenomenon is also observed with students in a hostel, soldiers in a barrack and religious workers of most of the religions who spends quite a bit of their lifetime in the solitary community. They spend majority of that time behind learning and training, staying without a family.

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Source: Researchers' Concept Developed from the Research

Figure 2: Effect of Community of Practice and Community of Malaysia on QoL

VI. Conclusion

Mismanagement of migration, informal way of capability expansion through CoP, and community activities in Malaysia are leading the workers towards a new community, named as the solitary community. Initially, unscrupulous and fraud agents recruit unskilled workers from different backgrounds and places. They are not grouped and trained before migration, further more, mistrust leads them towards a lonely life. Frustration after migration, attachment with the Guru for their informal capability expansion training through community of Practice (CoP), easy management of two or three persons, and engagement in the virtual community through digital platform farther apart them and push them towards a solitary community. In a nutshell, when the CoP intersects the BD migrant workers community of Malaysia and further overlapped by the virtual community, they form a solitary community.

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