

Migration & Status Achievement: Study on Slum Dwellers in a Metropolitan City in Bangladesh

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***Abstract:** Due to multiple-factors, bracketed popularly in 'push-pull' category, migration, both internal and external, is taking place in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the dominant form of migration is from rural to urban centers. For, Bangladesh is predominantly an agrarian rural society for 80.0 percent of the total population lives in 87319 villages. The urban centers of Bangladesh are developing rapidly at the coast of the rural people. Lack of opportunities in the rural areas have compelled the rural poor to migrate to the urban centers, especially to the metropolitan cities where one can have relatively more opportunities to enhance their life style, which to many, remains a myth. In fact, the lack of opportunities, including others factors, pushed the rural people to abandon their forefathers' homesteads to settle in the urban centers with a hope of raising their status. The present paper sharply attempts at revealing the causes behind migration as well as stating the status achievement, if any, of the migrants living in a metropolitan city of Bangladesh, based on primary data. The result of this study indicated urgency of job as well as expectation of higher income was significant determinants behind migration. Young people were more likely to get migrated. Male principal migrants were more prominent. As far as status achievement is concerned, migrants were found to achieve their dreamt status horizontally rather than vertically.*

Keywords: Rural- Urban Migration; Urban Poor; Slum Dwellers; Chittagong District

Introduction

Bangladesh emerged as an independent state fighting against the occupying Pakistani forces in 1971. After liberation the government took all possible measures in rebuilding the nation but due to multiple factors, internal and external, the desired changes, based on the spirit of *Liberation War* have not yet been possible. Among other problems, population growth is the one that created multi-dimensional problems. Being a rural society based of agrarian economy, it was expected that planners and policy makers will take up rural development as prior sector as out of her 14,23,19000 population with growth rate 1.34%(Census,2011,priliminary result) almost 80.0% are living in rural areas that deserved to be developed as early as possible but things happened in reverse way. More than 62% of working populations are directly or indirectly involved in agriculture. But most of the agriculture workers can't be related to agriculture sector for the whole year. Main reason for this is landlessness, seasonal slackness, flood, drought etc. Some

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time river erosion also creates rural population being unemployed in different parts of Bangladesh. The urban centers are developing at the coast of the villages and this has created situations for forced migration, mostly from rural to urban centers as opportunities are primarily confined in the urban areas. These huge rural people are compelled to migrate to the urban centers with the expectations to raise their socio-economic status to the higher direction. Rural-urban migration is considered to be beneficial both socially and economically as it consents rural people to shift from their living area with low socio-economic profile to places with rapidly growing socio-economic status. Many factors are pushing slum dwellers to move to urban areas from which some major determinants are taken into consideration which can be seen from data (Table 1). Though deaths of parents, landlessness are also important in this respect but mostly due to better economic life migration do take place. However, in addition to major occupation, usually people pursue subsidiary occupation/s to meet the growing economic crises of the family. Here we have defined occupation after Taylor "... as that specific activity with a market value which an individual continually pursues for the purpose of obtaining a steady flow of income; this activity also determines the social position of the individual" (Taylor, 1968:8).

The migrants and their family members usually pursue low-status occupations in the urban areas that determine their marginality and they had lower positions in the place of origin (village) also. The Indian sociologist Professor V. S. D'Souza in an article titled "*Socio-Cultural marginality: A Theory of Urban Slums and Poverty in India*" pointed out that the limitations of the studies on slum people and poverty saying: Attempts at stating slums and poverty rarely go beyond their description and the so-called explanations consists in regarding some features of the phenomenon as the causes of the other features without providing the logical basis for the particular causal connection" (D'Souza, 1979, 1981:156). He based on empirical data came forward with the conclusions that read: "... that in a city, the slum-dwellers who represent the urban poor, are socio-culturally marginal to the community in which they live; they are not merely at the bottom of the of the scale of socio-economic inequalities, but also they belong to ethnic groups which are socio-culturally marginal to the community" (D'Souza, 1981:157).

However, it is been clear that, migration is the movement of people from one place to another; can be permanent, temporary, voluntary or forced. It occurs due to some push factors which force a person to move like civil war, famine, lack of jobs etc while there are some pull factors behind migration like chance of a better job, better education, standard living etc. Rural-urban migration occurs at varying rates in every country. This paper focuses on the major determinants of rural-urban migration of slum dwellers as well as to the status achievement after being migrated.

Materials and Methods

The sample of size 100 was selected using simple random sampling technique from different slums of Chittagong metropolitan city. The respondent of the study was the principal migrant. Data of 100 slum dwellers were taken from slums of four different areas– Battali Station road slum, Tiger pass over bridge slum, Pahartali slum and Shersha Barisal slum of Chittagong. The study was conducted using an *Interview Schedule*, consisting of both structured and non-structure questions. The *Interview Schedule* was constructed in English but keeping the literacy rate of the respondents, the same was translated in Bengali, which is the mother tongue of the respondents. The Interview Schedule was protested for necessary additions and omissions as well. In addition to this, we also used observation and in some cases participant observation methods to assess their real life patterns. A *Code Design* was prepared and using the same, quantitative data was transferred to code sheets. Data were coded, tabulated and finally tables were prepared. Here, multiple linear regression model was utilized for the analysis. Keeping in mind the main objective of the study i.e. to find out the main determinants of migration some variables were taken into consideration. Relevant data were collected to assess the post migration condition of the slum dwellers.

Table 1. Major Determinants behind Rural Urban - Migration of Slum Dwellers

Variable Name	Illustration
SEX	Sex of the respondents; a dummy variable (1 if principle migrant is male, 0 if female)
REL	Religion of the respondents (1 if Muslim, 0 otherwise)
AGE	Age of the respondents; a continuous variable
FAM	Family type ; a dummy variable having two categories (1 if nuclear, 0 otherwise)
EDU	Educational status of the principle migrant; a dummy variable (1 if the migrant can sign and more, 0 if uneducated)
OCC	Change of occupation; a dummy variable (1 if principle migrant planned to change his/her current occupation, 0 otherwise)
INCOME	Expectation of higher income; a dummy variable having two categories (1 if principle migrant was in need of better income, 0 otherwise)
JOB	New Job ; a dummy variable (1 if respondent was seeking for a new job, 0 otherwise)
LAND	Landlessness, a dummy variable (1 if principle migrant is landless, 0 otherwise)
PAR	Parental death; a dummy variable (1 if parents of the principle migrant died within 1 month of migration, 0 otherwise)
FEAR	Fear from dominant class/people; a dummy variable (1 if the respondent was a sufferer, 0 otherwise)

Results and Discussion:

From the collected data, it was also found that almost 50.0% of the respondents migrated from the rural areas of Chittagong, and also from the adjacent districts such as, Comilla, Chandpur, Noakhali, Cox's Bazar and Barisal district. The local ones are psychologically stronger as they belong to this soil and sharing the same culture, while others. By and large, there are differences between the locals (*Chittagonians*) and the *non-chittagonians*(people coming from other districts, also the outsiders born and brought up in Chittagong, are also treated as *non-Chittagonians*). This trend was observed among the local people living in this slum. The outsiders have to accommodate themselves with these conditions but at the same time there are hatreds and disliking between the locals and the non-locals. Here it is needed to mention that the rural people, particularly, the elders do not support migration because the existing system of education could not create *mobility ethics*; they feel more comfortable to live within their own surroundings. This trend was observed during the field work and in the slum the locals are more dominant due to their local origin.

Table 2. Respondents districts of origin

Districts	Total
Chittagong	49
Comilla	16
Chandpur	14
Noakhali	11
Barisal	04
Cox;s Bazar	06
Total	100

The objective of this study is to find out the main causes behind rural - urban migration among slum dwellers as well as to see the status achievement of the slum dwellers after migration to Chittagong Metropolitan city.

Respondents are the principle migrated person that means the person who attempted to migrate from rural to urban area. As mentioned earlier multiple linear regression model is used for the study as it looks at the combination of all variables to predict the outcome variable. The model specification is as follows

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_{\text{SEX}} + \beta_{\text{REL}} + \beta_{\text{AGE}} + \beta_{\text{FAM}} + \beta_{\text{EDU}} + \beta_{\text{OCC}} + \beta_{\text{INCOME}} + \beta_{\text{JOB}} + \beta_{\text{LAND}} + \beta_{\text{PAR}} + \beta_{\text{FEAR}}$$

Here, Y = Total migrated members in the household

Total household members
= Probability of Migration.

Table 3. Output from Multiple Regression estimates of Rural- Urban migration

Determinants	Regression Coefficients	t – value
Constant	.983	4.503
SEX (Sex of the principle migrant)	.051	1.006*
AGE (Age of the respondents)	.004	1.563***
INCOME (Change of income)	.022	.305**
EDU (Educational status of the principle migrant)	.186	3.365
REL (Religion of the respondents)	-.099	-1.996*
PAR (Parental death)	-.185	-3.394
JOB (New Job)	.037	.643**
FAM (Family type)	-.029	-.510**
FEAR (Fear from dominant class/people)	-.003	-.057***
LAND (Landlessness)	.163	3.212
OCC (Change of occupation)	-.028	-.487**
$R^2 = 0.377$		$F = 4.849**$

* Significant at 10% level of significance

**Significant at 5% level of significance

***Significant at 1% level of significance

Table 3 reveals that ‘Age of the respondents’ possesses a highly significant relationship with the students bearing a positive sign. That means Young people are more likely to shift from one place to another. But when it comes to family people having nuclear families are not very likely to migrate in our study .An expected variable, ‘change of income’ significantly contributes to rural-urban migration with a positive sign. It means that migration from rural to urban areas occur due to urban higher wage, higher income attracts rural people to migrate to the urban areas. However, Bhuyan *et. al.*(2001) on a study of rural- urban migration found earning differences before and after migration followed a negative relation with the probability of migration. The study shows that religion of the principle migrant bears a significant but negative relation with migration

i.e. non Muslims are more likely to get migrated from rural to urban areas though in many studies it is seen that Muslims are more flexible to migration. Sex is another important variable which relates significantly and positively with rural – urban migration. It means male principle migrants are more interested to go for migration. Another important variable is search for a new job which is significantly relation to migration as people are more excited to migrate because of getting jobs in urban areas with higher wage. ‘Educational status of the respondents’ and ‘landlessness of the respondents’ are also positively related with rural – urban migration but no statistical significance were found. On the other hand, the variables such as ‘parental death’ and ‘fear from the dominant class’ bear negative relation with probability of migration.

Our study found the factors or causes behind the rural-urban migration in Chittagong Metropolitan city. But question arises, have they reached to that dream for which they got themselves migrated to urban areas? Let us see the conditions of slum dwellers after they got migrated to the urban areas. The following table shows the occupation that the people adopted after being migrated from rural to urban area.

Table 4. Occupations followed by the respondents

Occupations	Total	Subsidiary occupations	Total
Agriculture	--	Without	88
Business	04	With	12
Service(Govt.)	07		
Service(Private)	15		
Garments Workers	27		
Day Laboures	42		
Domestic workers	05		
Total	100	Total	100

The table represents above 40% of the migrants are pursuing day labouring. Next to the day labours 27% of the respondents became garment workers after migration that means in terms of occupation they have not achieved their dream for which they migrated. It was found that 12 slum dwellers are pursuing subsidiary occupation indicating the non-availability of jobs in urban centers. As far as income is concerned, it is found that more than 50.0% belong to mid income group less than Taka 4000. With this meager most of them cannot meet their basic human needs. In this connection we also collected data about respondents’ household income that also show the same trend. That is most of the

households do not have moderate income varied from Taka 4000 to 6000. In the urban areas, people have to maintain their family members with this income. The female members also earn working as maids/garments' workers and also as day labourers. But even they are in economic crisis, that they treat as a life long problem. A problem, they believe, only God can solve, a belief that can never be solved within this exploitative social structure based on private ownership of the means of production. These are create opportunities for the low income group to adopt unfair means in earning the extra-money needed for the society. They are also involve in different anti-social activities, crimes, drug addiction, violence etc. This can be explained taking ideas from 'theory of social structure and Anomie' propounded by R.K.Merton, that states, anomie and other anti-social activities derive from the society where means and goal are unequally distributed among the people. In other words, society set goals and also the means for achieving the goal. But the same society, in reality, cannot ensure same means and goals therefore, society gives birth to anti-social activities.

Table 5. Monthly income of the respondents

Income categories	Respondents
Below Taka 4000/	51
Taka 4001-5000/	28
Taka 5001-6000/	17
Taka 6001-7000/	01
Taka 7001+	03
Total	100

Among the respondents, rice, potato, and vegetable are common items, while fish and meat are rare and this trend can be understood taking the income of the people. In fact, they cannot ensure the calorie they need daily. There are differences as far as food and rice are concerned. The local people are relatively very fond of beef, fried fish (locally known as *Shutki*, while the non-locals usually do not take *Shutki* fish. Moreover, the local people take *Atosh* rice (not boiled) but the non-local mostly eat boiled rice (*Shidho chal*). The local people are fond of chili, but not the non-locals. This is a common trend among the poor people of Bangladesh

Table 6. Weekly consumption of food items by the respondents

Times/Foods	Rice	Pulse/Dal	Wheat	Egg	Potato	Vegetable	Fish	Meat	Tea/ Biscuit	Total
Morning (Breakfast)	11	02	14	02	19	15	00	00	24	87

Noon(Lunch)	31	15	00	00	21	48	10	02	02	12 9
Night(Dinner)	33	10	05	00	24	33	03	00	00	10 8
Total	75	27	19	02	64	96	13	02	26	32 4

After migration people usually face many problems in the landing place. Of them, sanitation, water crisis, extortion and irregular payment, cultural and food habit are worth mentioning. The local people always get the privilege as compared with non-locals. In solving these, to them, WASA and law enforcing agency can play a vital role. But this is not always possible due to population-police ratio, and over urbanization. Here a larger section pointed out that they do not have any problem. In fact, these people are/were always in problems having no idea about better life; they also treated these as inseparable part of their life. One of them pointed out that “*we are born poor, will die as poor, Allah (God) does not look to us*”.

In solving the problems they are facing, people living in the same area help each other and lead an inhuman life due to problems mentioned. Since slums are increasing rapidly, therefore, the government has to take some immediate steps to improving the conditions of the slum people, at the same time, steps also are to be taken to creating facilities in the rural areas that will discourage migration from rural to urban areas.

Conclusion

From our discussions, based on empirical data and observation also, it can be said that people migrated to this 2nd largest metropolitan city, Chittagong, with the hope of improving their social status but data did not support that. In fact, there has not been any mobility among the slum dwellers in terms of income, living conditions, education and other facilities after migration. These do suggest that though migration has taken place but the social status of the migrants remained unchanged. Before migration, they were at the marginal level in the rural areas, after migration they are also in the same position in the urban areas indicating no upward mobility that can be related to exploitative social structure that does not create and ensure equal opportunities for people belonging to different sections, particularly the urban-rural poor of the society. Migration seemed to be horizontal rather than vertical for the slum dwellers in our study. However, more studies are carried out for making generalization on the issue under reference.

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