

A study on the relevance of poverty to international labour migration

- the present situation of Bangladeshi migrants to the United States

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Abstract

This paper focuses on international labour migration, which in recent years has increased due to the rapid process of globalization. In particular, it examines the present situation of Bangladeshi labour migrants to destination countries through an analysis of previous studies, official data as well as field research in Bangladesh, the United Arab Emirates and New York City.

In 1976, just five years after Bangladesh independence, labour migration began in response to labour force demands by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, as well as the seeking of foreign currency through remittances by the government. GCC countries have been the top destination for Bangladeshi migrant labourers since then, with the UAE occupying the top position since 2006. However poor migrants' wages are kept low as unskilled labourers, and they are subjected to long working hours, with Kafara restricting their working conditions. Under these circumstances many Bangladeshis have tried to get the opportunity to migrate to the United States.

This study found that in recent years, almost half of new lawful permanent residences that come from Bangladesh migrate to New York State; especially they are concentrated in New York City. Many first-generation Bangladeshis have got part time jobs in the city due to labour demand. The first purpose of migration is almost always to find a job and then to send back remittances to family members, and it follows that many first generation migrants gradually bring their family members over for a better life and the opportunity of a higher quality education. In addition these migrants have re-created their Bangladeshi communities which provide them with mutual support. However, the occupation categories of the first-generation are limited. Accordingly, many of them have to work long hours, and for some, it has put strain on their family relations and health conditions.

Key words: Bangladesh, Poverty, International Labour Migration, Bangladeshi Migrants, the United States

I Introduction: Background of a study

An enormous amount of foreign aid has been provided to Bangladesh since its independence in 1971, and there has also been much large scale economic development of the country. Concerning bilateral aid, the two largest donors are Japan and the United States, which provided about 7 billion and 3.5 billion US dollars respectively until 2010.⁽¹⁾ Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) is, in fact, the largest source of bilateral aid. Despite this, Bangladesh still has numerous serious social problems that have been outlined in previous studies as well as the first author's own research since 1997.⁽²⁾ Economic and regional disparities have been widening in the country with growth unevenly spread across both urban and rural areas, and a limited number of people such as the propertied classes, administration officials and large entrepreneurs monopolize wealth and have vested interests to keep the status quo. Also, more than 30% of the population lives in a state of absolute poverty,⁽³⁾ with a rate higher in rural areas at 35.2% compared to 21.3% in urban areas.⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore half of people living in absolute poverty have no cultivated land or have holdings less than 0.05 acres (considered as non-farm holdings).⁽⁵⁾ Accordingly, there has been a substantial influx of low income people from non-farm cultivated areas or under unemployed people from rural to urban areas. According to a study by Begum (1999) the large-scale movement of the population in Bangladesh has been a feature for a very long time, with the most consistent form of movement being from rural to urban areas. The quest for better incomes, better lives and better jobs seems to be juxtaposed with a lack of cultivated lands and so on. The benefits of urbanization have failed to reach the majority of poor migrants.

The situation in Daka has worsened over the years, a result of development, mainly stemming from foreign aid that has been used in road and building construction. This has led to serious traffic jams, severe environmental pollution, health hazards and social problems. And there is still a lack of employment opportunities, or if there is work, it is often in hazardous working conditions with low wages. Indeed, many poor workers are forced to reside in inferior housing conditions, often living in slums, on fallow land, or even on roadsides or in abandoned buildings. Unfortunately, poor migrants from the countryside continue to pour into the Daka and other large cities, and live in more and more difficult circumstances. A result is that compulsory slum eviction, street children⁽⁶⁾ and child labourers are some of the most serious social problems in the large cities of Bangladesh (Suzuki, 2016). Due to such internal social circumstances, in recent times, numbers of international migrant⁽⁷⁾ labourers are increasing, and the country is increasingly relying on their official remittances as a source of income.

However, there is another side to this story. How do Bangladeshi migrant labourers get access to their destinations and find jobs? And in the countries they work in, what kind of communities

do they create? Is their well-being improved, are they empowered, and is awareness of their family members and community ties raised? Is international migration as a solution to social problems relevant to poverty in Bangladesh? An examination of these issues from a long range perspective constitutes the core preoccupation of this study.

The purpose of this study is to first analyze the tendency of international migration from Bangladesh since independence from the point of view of the present condition of migrant labourers, through an examination of data, previous studies and field research, before considering and analyzing international migration data from around the world. It will also clarify the existing situation regarding migrants who have come from Bangladesh to the United States through an analysis of the data and introduce the types of occupations that these first generation migrants undertake according to the first author's field research in that country.

II A tendency toward international migration from Bangladesh since independence

Following independence, in 1976, labour migration started in response to labour force demand from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.⁽⁸⁾ The Government of Bangladesh also states that international migration and the flow of remittances are important factors in economic development. The Ministry of Manpower Employment and Training was established in 1976 as an attached department of the then Ministry of Labour and Employment, and Overseas Employment Policy was formulated in 2006. A separate Ministry, the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment was formed in December 2001 to ensure the welfare of international migrants as well as to increase their numbers (Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, 2011, p. 33).

From 1976 to 2011, the GCC countries have been the commonest destination for Bangladeshi migrant labourers, and among them, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has occupied the top of the list for the total number of migrant labourers since 2006.⁽⁹⁾ Compared with incomes in Bangladesh, migrants' incomes in the UAE are clearly better; however, they still fall far below the average incomes of UAE citizens. There are only a limited range of options for unskilled labourers positions with low earnings, and they are also subjected to much longer working hours. Especially, Bangladeshi women migrant labourers are often limited to jobs such as toilet cleaners or domestic servants, and also have to endure long working hours.⁽¹⁰⁾

Furthermore, restrictions of Kafara (literally meaning guaranteeing and taking care of, in the Arabic system)⁽¹¹⁾ are imposed on migrant labourers. It is known as sponsorship, and is a core of international migrant policy and common throughout the GCC countries.⁽¹²⁾ Under Kafara, foreign migrant labourers (workers) receive an entry visa and residence permit only if a citizen of the host country sponsors them (UNDP, 2009; Longva, 1997; Ali, 2010). Immigrant sponsorship laws

grant employers extraordinary power over the lives of migrant workers (Human Rights Watch, 2010, p. 568). Other laws fail to protect workers' right to organize and to bargain collectively, provide punishment for workers going to strike, and exclude from coverage domestic workers employed in private households (Ibid). If a Kafeel (employer) withdraws sponsorship, migrant labourers have no legal right to stay in the country (Migrant News, 2012).

In addition, most of these poor migrant labourers do not have access to the employer as a sponsor. Accordingly, they are forced to pay significant amounts of money to international migration agencies in Daka in order to leave the country, and in order to finance the move, their family often goes into debt or has to sell off parcels of land, which means they lose the precious resource that had allowed them to cultivate fields and to be self-sufficient in food. One study found that migrant labourers were often required to allocate their income towards repayment of loans for almost for two years.⁽¹³⁾ Thus, the current working conditions and the labor policy that requires sponsorship are not suitable for labor migrants who come from developing countries.

In a recent study of international migration, Ali (2010) reveals that "prostitutes and the degraded conditions of the construction workers, maids, cleaners and others of the working class are all things that have helped to catapult Dubai into global fame and infamy. These are the things that, for good or bad, make up Brand Dubai" (p. 33). Besides, according to Human Right Watch (2010) many female domestic workers are subjected to unpaid wages, food deprivation, forced confinement, and physical or sex abuse (p. 568). Exploitation of migrant workers by construction companies include maintaining unsafe working environments that contribute to avoidable illness or death, and withholding worker's travel documents (p. 571).

Under these harsh conditions, in recent years many Bangladeshis have tried to gain the opportunity to migrate to the United States. Bangladeshis who submitted electronically for Green Cards to the United States on the Electronic Diversity Visa (D.V.)⁽¹⁴⁾ website numbered 7,667,030, along with 895,221 accompanying spouses and children the age under 21 for a total of 8,562,251 persons in 2012.⁽¹⁵⁾ Among them just 2,373 received Green Cards, meaning that just 0.03% got the chance to immigrate legally to the United States.⁽¹⁶⁾ The final result was that in practice, those falling under the Use for Visa Issuances and Adjustments of Status in the Diversity Immigrant from Bangladesh totaled just 295 people.⁽¹⁷⁾ Either way, the United States is still the top destination country in the world for large numbers of migrants (See Table 2). And in Bangladesh, the United States has all along been the most desired destination (Hassan, 2008, p. 56).

Ali (2010) states: "the United States offers a very important, if somewhat particular starting point for thinking about migration and migrants. The United States is one of those rare societies that thinks of itself as a nation of immigrants" (p. 3). Moreover, he reveals: "migrants, like people everywhere, have hope and dreams and desires for better lives for themselves and their

children, and they migrate with intention of fulfilling these. But they have to take a risk” (p. 66). “Many see working-class migrants as nothing more than disposable, interchangeable parts, factors of production, and little else.” In addition, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggests that mobility has the potential to enhance human development among movers, stayers and the majority of those in destination societies. However sometimes processes and outcomes can be highly adverse (2009, p. 112).⁽¹⁸⁾

An examination of trends in receipts of remittances from Bangladeshis international migrant labourers reveals that they have risen sharply recent years, and in 2011 alone, total official remittances reached 11 billion US dollars,⁽¹⁹⁾ almost equaling the amount of ODA by Japan and the United States given to the country since independence. Remittance inflows from the United States and United Kingdom grew significantly between 1999 to 2009 (Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment, 2011, p. 34). The Government of Bangladesh places a high value on this, and remittances are one of the largest sources of net income to Bangladesh from abroad (Choudhury and Habib, 2008, p. 233).

Incidentally, Azad (2005) discusses “how law and practice in Bangladesh strictly prohibit sending remittances through informal channels such as hundi (informal channels) (p. 126).” Furthermore, he laments, “The process of sending remittances through banks is comparatively complicated, costly and time consuming. Lack of knowledge about banking procedures and involvement of paperwork and documentation are notable hindrances for using the official channels” (p. 131).

In actuality, it has been found that while some migrant labourers sent remittances through official channels, many resort to hundi, relatives or friends, or carry the money home themselves when they return home for holidays (Siddiqui, 2003, pp. 35-36). Several previous studies also recognize that remittances have a positive impact to households (Siddiqui, 2003; Pradhan and Khan, 2001; Barai, 2001; Choudhury and Habib, 2008). Azad (2005) takes the perspective that, “remittances from migrant labourers are strong sources of foreign exchange earnings for Bangladesh, but Bangladeshis migrants are mostly semi or unskilled labourers whose earnings are low” (p. 131). If remittances are working well for poor people in rural Bangladesh, it is an important issue to consider the labourer’s situation. Also, in the first place, the background of migrant labourers needs to be put into context. There is no doubt that Bangladesh faces numerous problems and challenges regarding migration and foreign remittances and the government should come up with appropriate solutions.

III A synopsis of international migration and official remittances by the numbers

In this section we will focus on the number of international migrants, destination countries and official records of remittances around the world. According to the World Bank, in 2016, numbers of migrants will total more than 247 million people, or around 3.5 percent of the entire world's population.

Table 1 shows the top ten destinations for the number of people who migrate from their native country. Among these ten countries, only two, the Russian Federation and United Kingdom can be classified as high income. In 2016, the World Bank estimates that India will be the largest source of migrants, following Mexico, the Russian Federation, China and Bangladesh. It is also clear those developing countries in Asia, namely India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines are all high sources of migrants.

Table 1: Top 10 countries for numbers of migrants in 2013

	Country	Numbers of migrants (thousand)	The proportion of migrants from each country (%)
1	India	13,885.1	1.1
2	Mexico	13,220.3	10.7
3	Russian Federation	10,910.5	7.6
4	China	9,651.2	0.7
5	Bangladesh	7,512.1	4.8
6	Pakistan	6,170.4	3.4
7	Philippines	6,001.7	6.2
8	Afghanistan	5,632.2	18.4
9	Ukraine	5,583.9	12.3
10	United Kingdom	5,151.1	8.0

Source: World Bank (2016) *Migration and Remittances Factbook* (Compiled by the authors).

The top migrant destination country is the United States, closely followed by Saudi Arabia, Germany, the Russian Federation and United Arab Emirates (**Table 2**). The majority of migrant destinations are high income countries.

Table 2: Top 10 migrant destination countries in 2013

	Country	Number of migrants (thousand)	The proportion of migrants to each country
1	United States	46,136.4	14.6
2	Saudi Arabia	14,600.5	48.3
3	Germany	11,110.9	13.8
4	Russian Federation	11,048.1	7.7
5	United Arab Emirates	8,001.7	88.5
6	United Kingdom	7,838.8	12.2
7	France	7,456.1	11.3
8	Canada	7,404.2	21.1
9	Spain	6,618.0	14.2
10	Australia	6,468.6	28.0

Source: World Bank (2016) *Migration and Remittances Factbook* (Compiled by the authors).

The World Bank estimated that in 2014, global remittances totaled 592 billion US dollars (p. 21), of which remittance flows to developing countries were estimated to have totaled 431 billion US dollars (**Table 3**). Remittances to developing countries by migrants were equivalent to more than three times the amount of ODI. Also, in 1990, the amount of FDI was the smallest and ODA the largest in developing countries. However, FDI flows to developing countries have continued to increase rapidly over the past fourteen years, and in 2014, the amount of FDI was more than four times that of ODA (**Table 3**).

Table 3: Amount of recorded remittances, FDI and ODA flowing to Developing countries

	US billions											
	1990	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Remittances	29	73	194	229	280	325	303	336	378	401	416	431
FDI	19	125	284	361	480	541	385	529	630	583	671	662
ODA	53	54	108	105	105	123	121	129	135	127	135	135

Source: World Bank (2016, p. 17) *Migration and Remittances Factbook* (Compiled by the authors).

FDI=foreign direct investment. ODA=official development assistance.

The top recipient of officially recorded remittances in 2013 was India, followed by China, the Philippines, France, Mexico, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Germany and Bangladesh. Among these countries, the highest average remittance was from Nigeria, followed by France, China, Egypt, India, the Philippines, Germany, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Mexico. In contrast, the average

remittance for Bangladesh and Mexico was relatively low. Also, for example, though the number of French migrants was one third that of Bangladesh, the average remittance was about ten times higher. This data shows migration numbers are not always related to high average remittances. It is assumed that Bangladeshi and Mexican migrant laborers' wages are kept low and that they work long hours.

Table 4: Top 10 recipient countries of official recorded remittances in 2013

	Countries	Total remittances US dollars millions	Numbers of migrants (thousand)	Average remittance US dollars
1	India	69,970	13,885.1	5,039.21
2	China	59,491	9,651.2	6,164.10
3	Philippines	26,717	6,001.7	4,451.57
4	France	24,406	2,184.5	11,172.35
5	Mexico	23,433	13,220.3	1,772.50
6	Nigeria	20,797	1,117.9	18,603.63
7	Egypt	17,833	3,386.1	5,266.53
8	Pakistan	14,629	6,170.4	2,370.84
9	Germany	16,989	4,141.4	4,102.24
10	Bangladesh	13,867	7,512.1	1,845.96

Source: World Bank (2016) *Migration and Remittances Factbook* (Compiled by the authors).

The top sending country of officially recorded remittances in 2013 was the United States, followed by Saudi Arabia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Germany. However, average remittance from the United States was the lowest, followed by the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

Table 5: Top ten sending countries of official recorded remittances in 2013

	Countries	Total remittances US dollars millions	Numbers of migrants (thousand)	Average remittance US dollars
1	United States	56.3	46,136.4	12,203
2	Saudi Arabia	36.9	14,600.5	25,273
3	Russian Federation	32.6	11,048.1	29,507
4	Switzerland	24.7	2,480.9	99,561
5	Germany	20.8	11,110.9	18,720
6	United Arab Emirates	19.3	8,001.7	24,120
7	Kuwait	18.1	2,592.8	69,809
8	France	13.8	7,456.1	18,508
9	Luxembourg	12.7	229.4	553,618
10	United Kingdom	11.5	7,838.8	14,671

Source: World Bank (2016) *Migration and Remittances Factbook* (Compiled by the authors).

IV Migration to the United States

1 The number of migrants as lawful permanent residents.

In this section we will focus on the data regarding migration to the United States. For definition purposes, “a legal permanent resident is person who has been granted lawful permanent residence in the United States. They are also ‘green card’ recipients”.⁽²⁰⁾ In 2014, a total of 1,016,518 people obtained legal permanent resident status to the United States, of which, more than 40% came from Asia (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Persons obtaining lawful permanent resident status by region in 2014

Total	Africa	Asia	Europe	North America	Oceania	South America	Unknown
1,016,518	98,413	430,508	83,266	324,354	5,112	73,715	1,150

Source: United States, Department of Homeland Security (2016, p. 12) (Compiled by the authors).

Table 7 shows the number of persons obtaining legal permanent resident status by country during 2003 to 2014 and the top 24 countries at that point in 2014. Among Asia, the major countries of birth of new lawful permanent residents are India followed by China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea South and Bangladesh. On the other hand, Mexico tops the chart each year, and in 2014, comprised 13% of the total. Also the total number of the top fifteen countries, including Bangladesh is almost 60%, and the top twenty-four countries of all lawful permanent residents is 70%. If we focus just on Bangladeshis, the annual number was just 4,616 people in 2003 and it grew to 11,487 in 2005. Since then, the numbers have remained fairly steady (the largest was 16,651 in 2009) until 2014. Recently, the major destination of Bangladeshis to the United States is New York State, with almost all of them going there in 2014. This was followed by New Jersey, Michigan, California, Texas, and then Florida.

How did people obtain lawful permanent resident status to the United States? Almost 40% people obtained residence through an immediate relative who was a citizen, 22.5% from family sponsored preferences, and 15% from employment-based preferences. However just 5.3% came from Diversity and 13% as refugees and asylees⁽²¹⁾ in 2013.⁽²²⁾ For Bangladeshis, family sponsored preferences are major factors, occupying almost 60%, followed by 35.4% from immediate relatives in the United States, and 3.8% from employment-based preferences. Just 0.05% (only 7 people) came from Diversity, and only 0.78% were refugees and asylees.⁽²³⁾

Table 7: Persons obtaining legal permanent resident status by country from 2003 to 2014: arranged by top 24 countries for 2014

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total 03-14
Mexico	115,585	175,411	161,445	173,749	148,640	189,989	164,920	139,120	143,446	146,406	135,028	134,052	1,827,791
India	50,228	70,151	84,680	61,369	65,353	63,352	57,304	69,162	69,013	66,434	68,458	77,908	803,412
China	40,568	55,494	69,933	87,307	76,655	80,271	64,238	70,863	87,016	81,784	71,798	76,089	862,016
Philippines	45,250	57,846	60,746	74,606	72,596	54,030	60,029	58,173	57,011	57,327	54,446	49,996	702,056
Cuba	9,262	20,488	36,261	45,614	29,104	49,500	38,594	33,573	36,452	32,820	32,219	46,679	410,566
Dominica	26,159	30,506	27,503	38,068	28,024	31,879	49,414	53,870	46,109	41,566	41,311	44,577	458,986
Vietnam	32,784	30,691	22,087	31,524	32,784	30,691	28,691	31,497	29,234	30,632	34,157	28,304	363,076
Korea South	12,382	19,766	26,562	24,386	22,405	26,666	25,859	22,227	22,824	20,846	23,166	20,423	267,512
El Salvador	28,231	29,807	21,359	31,782	21,127	19,659	19,909	18,806	18,667	16,256	18,260	19,273	263,136
Iraq	2,450	3,494	4,077	4,337	3,765	4,795	12,110	19,855	21,133	20,369	9,552	19,153	125,090
Jamaica	13,347	14,430	18,345	24,976	19,375	18,477	21,783	19,825	19,662	20,705	19,400	19,026	229,351
Pakistan	9,415	12,086	14,926	17,418	13,492	19,719	21,555	18,258	15,546	14,740	13,251	18,612	189,018
Colombia	14,720	18,846	25,566	43,144	33,187	30,213	27,849	22,406	22,635	20,931	21,131	18,175	298,803
Haiti	12,293	14,191	14,524	22,226	30,405	26,007	24,280	22,582	22,111	22,818	20,351	15,274	247,062
Bangladesh	4,616	8,061	11,487	14,644	12,074	11,753	16,651	14,819	16,707	14,705	12,099	14,645	152,261
Brazil	6,331	10,556	16,662	17,903	14,295	12,195	14,701	12,258	11,763	11,441	11,033	10,429	149,567
Burma	1,193	1,379	2,095	4,562	3,130	3,403	13,621	12,925	16,518	17,383	12,565	11,144	99,918
Canada	11,350	15,569	21,876	18,207	15,495	15,109	16,140	13,328	12,800	12,932	13,181	11,586	177,573
Ecuador	7,066	8,626	11,608	17,489	12,248	11,663	12,128	11,492	11,103	9,342	10,591	10,960	134,316
Ethiopia	6,635	8,286	10,571	16,152	12,786	12,917	15,462	14,266	13,793	14,544	13,097	12,300	150,809
Guatemala	16,818	24,133	14,386	18,920	16,818	24,133	17,908	16,182	12,187	10,467	11,092	10,341	193,385
Iran	7,230	10,434	13,887	13,947	10,460	13,852	18,553	14,182	14,822	12,916	12,863	11,615	154,761
Nigeria	7,872	9,374	10,597	13,459	12,448	12,475	15,253	13,376	11,824	13,575	13,840	12,828	146,921
UK	9,527	14,915	19,800	17,207	14,545	14,348	15,748	12,792	11,572	12,014	12,984	12,225	167,677

Source: United States, Department of Homeland Security (2016, pp. 12-15 and 2012, pp. 12-15) (compiled by the authors).

Table 8: Bangladeshis obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status to the United States by region

Region	Year	2012	2014	Region	Year	2012	2014
California		812	827	New Jersey		1,022	1,020
Connecticut		203	271	New York		7,519	7,449
Florida		647	657	Pennsylvania		411	376
Georgia		382	373	Texas		682	712
Maryland		284	249	Virginia		572	487
Massachusetts		240	285	Washington		45	67
Michigan		892	846				

Source: Homeland Security Official website of the Department of Homeland Security, Supplemental **Table 1** in <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2012-naturalizations> (retrieved 28, August, 2016) and Supplemental **Table 3** in <https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics-2014-lawful-permanent-residents> (retrieved 20, May, 2016) (compiled by the authors)

2 The present situation of Bangladeshi migrants to the United States

Suzuki's present research was undertaken in Manhattan and Queens, New York City (see **Appendix**) over the summers of 2012-2015. The methodology involved gathering reference data, participatory observation and in-depth and open-ended interviews with Bangladeshis who lived in the city.⁽²¹⁾ Suzuki also conducted separate interviews with Bangladeshis as preliminary research in New York City and Washington D.C., in March 2010.

All participants accepted and agreed to be interviewed for this research. However, interviewees' had limited time, and it was necessary to carry out the interviews in both English as well as Bengali, as English was often not widely spoken. The research itself presented difficulties since for many of the participants the subject matter was quite sensitive and so all personal information is held in strict confidence. Moreover, since more thorough research is necessary, it is not possible to draw generalizations from the data.

This section discusses the results of collected data on the purpose of migration and occupations for first generation Bangladeshis coming to the United States. In recent years, half of new Bangladeshi lawful permanent residents to New York States, and almost people live in New York City. Within the confines of this research, the occupations of the first generation Bangladeshis became apparent and an analysis was carried out on labour demand within the city. Manhattan is a favorite destination for tourists the world over, and there are a host of souvenir stores, hotels, restaurants, convenient stores and franchise chains, and for that reason, first-generation Bangladeshis tend to seek work, due to the availability of jobs under the United States capitalist system.

First generation Bangladeshis tend to get jobs that require introductions such as souvenir store workers, doormen or restaurant waiters (male), bed makers (female), and franchise store workers (both female and male). None of the participants were regular employees, but rather paid a minimum hourly wage. Also, even these part-time jobs required introductions. Besides, there are street stalls for drinks, snacks and ice-creams set up for the spring, summer and autumn seasons in a certain large park, and in extreme cases, some of the participants resorted to setting up their own stalls there to sell drinks or food. There are also street stalls selling fruit and vegetables in the city and some the participants worked as mobile venders, almost always as seasonal workers. They also tend to work for long hours outside.

The study participants tended to live in rented apartments in the Bronx, Queens or Brooklyn. Those living in the Bronx had to commute an hour each way to Manhattan for work, due to high rent payments as real estate prices continue to rise in inner Manhattan, and more recently, in Brooklyn.

In one corner of Queens there were numerous Bangladeshi halal food markets and restaurants,

garment shops selling traditional items, a beauty and even a henna tattoo salon. Many participants had part-time jobs at these stores and several had even set up their own halal restaurants. Many Bangladeshis gather there to shop, especially for halal food, to eat or to talk.

Almost all the participants mentioned that the main reason they had come to the United States was for job opportunities which allowed them to send remittances back to family members in Bangladesh, this in line with one of the original purposes of migration. Furthermore, many of the first generation participants iterated how they had worked to gradually bring their family members to the United States in order to afford them better lives and education prospects.

Participants live separately from their family members and relatives in Bangladesh, keeping a binding relationship through remittances, telephone calls and a rare return home with lots of presents. After migrating to the United States, Bangladeshis try to establish close relations with their fellow migrants and attempt to try and preserve a sense of Bangladeshi community. However, since their working hours are very long, it has proved very difficult to preserve this community, and several of the participants of the study working as mobile vendors mentioned that after migrating to New York City they worked more than ever and felt tired. Due to having to constantly work, they had little time spare to spend time with family members and one female participant was suffering from poor health due to accumulated fatigue from the long working hours, as she struggled to secure an income against rising food, clothing and utility costs to provide for her family members.

V Conclusion

International labour migration is an ongoing issue for developing countries as labour migrants seek opportunities to find work in order to send remittances to their home countries, and in recent years this has become more of a worldwide tendency due to the rapid pace of globalization. Officially recorded remittances from migrants labourers to developing countries are increasing, with the remittances flowing to migrants' home countries equivalent to more than three times the total amount of ODA in 2014, within an analysis of the average remittances per person showing those from Bangladesh to be low and they also tend to work long hours.

The Bangladesh of Government should implement measures regarding international migration and the expected economic impact of remittances as a central pillar of national policy. Above all, the GCC countries has been the commonest destinations for Bangladeshi migrant labourers, with the UAE occupying the top of the list for the total numbers since 2006. However this is not necessarily the present condition for migrant labourers and the background to migration and the legal position of migrant labourers has should be clarified. Also, labour migrant agencies have accumulated much wealth from migrant's payments, including those of poor rural people. Not

withstanding, the range of options for poor people are limited, hard working conditions for low earnings and the Kafara system put restrictions on the legitimate rights of migrant labourers.

Under these circumstances, many Bangladeshis have tried to get the opportunity to migrate to the United States, and in recent years, they have particularly concentrated in New York City due to labour force demand. The United States is the top migrant destination and also top of the list for officially recorded remittances around the world. However, average remittances from the United States were the lowest of the top ten sending countries in 2013. From the view point of labour migration with the rapid process of globalization, the inflow to non-regular employment is currently increasing. Accordingly, many first generation Bangladeshis who want to find work require introductions even for part time work in the city. They trust migration to the United States will improve their well-being, they will become empowered and their self-awareness will increase.

They tend to be paid by the hour, and since there is no Kafara, it is possible for them to bring family members as lawful permanent residents, which is impossible in GCC countries. These migrants have re-created their Bangladeshi communities in the United States, which provide them with mutual support; however, occupations for the first-generation are limited, and accordingly, they have to work long hours, and for some, it has put strain on family relationships, or negatively impacted their health. Ali (2015) has pointed out the risk of working class migration to the United States, and this research has conformed this may apply to many international labour migrants from Bangladesh.

Finally, this study is just one step in this field, and there are a great many unanswered questions and obstacles remaining, some of which it is hoped will be addressed in a future, more detailed study. It further hoped that this research will spur interest in the issue of international migration, one which presents numerous challenges during a time of increased internationalization of labour in this age of globalization.

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Notes

(1) Economic Relations Division (2011) p. 97 and p. 113. The Fiscal Year in Bangladesh is from July to June.

- (2) Suzuki (2016). Suzuki has been carrying out a study on this subject through Grant in Aid for Scientific Research (c) by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology since 1999 and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science since 2005.
- (3) Bureau of Bangladesh Statistics (BBS) (2013) p. 512. This data employs the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) method.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Farm holdings are classified into small, medium and large holdings. They are sub-divided further into the following categories. Small farms encompass an area of 0.05 to 2.49 acres. Medium farms are 2.50 to 7.49 acres, and large farms are 7.50 to 25.00 acres and above. Also, Non-farm holdings are sub-divided into holdings with no cultivated area and holdings with a cultivated area up to 0.04 acres (BBS, 1999, p. 31).
- (6) The definition of street children, as used by the Approach Resources for Improving Street Children's Environment Project in Bangladesh is children below the age of eighteen years who are living, working, playing and sleeping on the street and are deprived of basic rights. They are classified into large groups: children below eighteen years who work and live on the street day and night without their family; those who work and live on the street with their family; those who work on the street and return to other family; and those who live on the street but later return to their family (Department of Social Services, 2000, p. 5).
- (7) In this paper definition of international migrations or migrations mean who move to a country other than of their usual residence for a period of at least one year, so that the country of destination effectively becomes their new country of usual residence (World Bank, 2011).
- (8) The Gulf Cooperation Council is composed of Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.
- (9) Internal materials in Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. Between 1976 until 2011, more than 7.6 million labourers migrated overseas (Suzuki accumulated these materials at Bangladesh on March 2012).
- (10) Suzuki's UAE research is based on previous studies, participatory fieldwork and interviews with migrant labourers who came from Bangladesh, the Philippines, India and other developing countries and was conducted in 2010 (A Study on the Globalization and Changes in Social and Economic Situation, with Grant in Aid provided by the Research Institution for Human Environment, Kanto Gakuin University in 2010), November 2012 and January 2014 (A Study on the Relevance of Bangladesh Poverty and International labour Migration, with Grant in Aid provided by Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) (2011-2013). Suzuki also conducted some interviews with Bangladeshis at Oman and Qatar in January 2014 (using the same Ibid, Grant in Aid).
- (11) UNDP (2009) p. 36.
- (12) In 2009, Bahrain became the first GCC country to scrap the sponsorship system to make the job market more flexible (Explorer Group Limited, 2011, p. 10). But it remained in place in fall 2011 (Migrant News, 2012).
- (13) From interviews with Bangladeshis in rural Daudkandi, Daka and UAE.
- (14) "The United States government issues 55,000 Green Cards every year through the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program, commonly known as the Green Card Lottery." USA GREEN CARD-Apply for the DV Green Card Lottery Today (<http://www.usagreencardlottery.org/gcl/register.jsp>) (retrieved 17 July, 2016).

- (15) Diversity Visa Program, DV 2007-2013: Number of Entries Received during Each Online Registration Period by Country of Chargeability (http://greencard.spar.ge/DV_Applicant_Entrants_by_Country_2007-2013.pdf) (retrieved 17 July, 2016).
- (16) USA GREEN CARD LOTTERY (<http://www.usagreencardlottery.org/>) (retrieved 17 July, 2016).
- (17) Immigrant Number Use for Visa Issuances and Adjustments of Status in the Diversity Immigrant (<https://travel.state.gov/content/dam/visas/Statistics/AnnualReports/FY2014AnnualReport/FY14AnnualReport-TableVII.pdf>) (retrieved 17 July, 2016).
- (18) UNDP (2009) focus on migration as a subject of *Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development* which is first time since first publication has released for Human Development Report since 1990.
- (19) Refer to footnote 9.
- (20) United States, Department of Homeland Security (2016) p. 1.
- (21) "Refugees and asylees are persons who sought residence in the United States in order to avoid persecution in their country of origin. Persons granted refugee status applied for admission while outside the United States. Persons granted asylum applied either at a port of entry or at some point after their entry into the United States" (Ibid., p. 1).
- (22) Ibid., p. 31. Compiled by authors.
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Numbers of Bangladeshi interviewees were 35 in 2012, 27 in 2013, 35 in 2014 and 35 in 2015.

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Appendix



Map: New York City

Reference: <http://www.nyctourist.com/map1.htm> (retrieved 25 August, 2016)