

Contemporary Perspectives on Migration in the Context of Bangladesh through the Media Lens

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Abstract

This paper discusses the condition of migrant workers in Bangladesh along with the influence of media in their life. Besides, it depicts the reason, purpose, advantages and disadvantages of migration from Bangladesh to other parts of the world. Throughout the paper, several documents, news articles and a documentary *Deshantori* are analyzed in order to understand different perspectives of the migrants (laborers, students, doctors, teachers and some other profession people) of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a highly populated country with a huge migration rate and this rate is increasing every year. These migrants have an important contribution in the national economy of Bangladesh. Behind this migration, media such as television, radio, internet, and also the mobile phone system play an inevitable role. Hence, considering migration as a significant perspective, in this paper I have depicted the notion of migration and the impact of media on it.

Introduction:

Migration is generally described as the movement of people from one country to another due to the purpose of quality higher education, better job, advanced living style, and also to ensure a successful future for next generation (Human Migration Guide, p 1-2, 2005). People who migrate to other countries are to work or study defined as “a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged” as an employee in international organizations, development, and cooperation programs, or as government officials, investors, refugees, stateless persons, students, trainees, and workers, “in a State of which he or she is not a national” (The International Convention on Migrant Workers and its Committee, p 4, 2005). Among the total population of 150 million people of Bangladesh, each year approximately quarter of a million people migrate abroad either to study or to find job; appropriate to their skills and qualifications. Also, these people migrate to become a citizen of the migrated country (Bangladesh Country Specific Information, 2013). According to the World Bank report of 2008, nearly 5.8 million workers were sent to foreign countries by 2013 (Sharma & Zaman, p 281, 2013). From the early period of 1980s, international migration became a common factor for Bangladesh. Bangladeshi people mostly migrate to The United Kingdom (UK), The United States of America (USA), and also to Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia (Farid, Mozumdar, Kabir, & Hossain, p 387, 2009). For the purpose of migration, people collect information from various sources; among them different media plays an important role in providing necessary evidence related to migration as a global issue. Media, as an important factor represent foreign world in a lucrative way, which fascinate people to move abroad in the hope of wealth and prosperity (Restrictive migration policies and the role of the media, 2011). However, in some cases, media representation of irrelevant information regarding issues of migration creates unwanted trouble in peoples’ life (Public

perceptions about minorities and immigrants: the role of the media, p 1-2, 2011). Conversely, people related to media such as journalists, sometimes represent news in modified ways which create confusion among general people in knowing the information (Chareton & LaPorte, p 1-3).

Reason behind Choosing this Topic:

Bangladesh is a country with a high rate of migrant workers. Because of this large number of migrant workers, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, has asserted several initiatives that have been undertaken recently for these people. During the meeting with the Director General (DG) of International Organization for Migration (IOM) Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Prime Minister (PM) affirmed that the Bangladesh government sends migrants through government channels. Besides, she insisted the government will prioritize job opportunities for migrants and assure financial assistance for migrants from the Prabashi Kallyan Bank (Expatriate Welfare Bank) when they are abroad. It was mentioned over the meeting of IDM DG and the PM of Bangladesh that IDM will ensure secure and safe returns of migrant workers to their home country at the time of severe crisis in their migratory countries. As a result, IDM highly supported the migrants in Libya to come back safely in 2011 during the political crisis (Senior Correspondent, 2013). IDM also stated that migrant workers are not meant to be used as commodity (UNBconnect, 2013).

Despite all these facilities introduced by government, there are many incidents which exemplify difficulties faced by the migrant workers while living abroad. From my personal experience I have seen two of my relatives who are living abroad struggle a lot in terms of getting jobs after reaching foreign countries. In some cases, they face trouble and were under threat of being fired from job just because they are Asians. Additionally, they lived in a very

pathetic condition and were always under pressure of landlord for paying advance, even if they were not given proper facilities such as gas, electricity, and heating system sufficiently. Along with these troubles, in most cases it was hard for them to get treatment from doctors as it was not easily accessible to them.

Hence, from these view points, it is understandable that even though there are many steps taken by the government in terms of ensuring a better living of the migrants, still there remains numerous lacking in its implementations. However, it is true that the condition have been improved because the government is more concerned about migrant workers as migrants play an important role in the national economy of Bangladesh. Analyzing these situations different conclusions can be made. First of all, as through governmental process these workers are migrating to different parts of the world, migrants might have higher faith built that everything will be ensured by the government. Also, migrants will not face any trouble after reaching their respective countries; even if they have trouble government will protect them by any means. On the other hand, if people have knowledge about the process and life in abroad from someone familiar, then they may think differently about moving abroad. Thus, migration depends on how people visualize and understand it and also how it is being presented in front of people by the government or any other source. Depending upon various perspectives consequences regarding migration differ from person to person.

In this case, throughout my paper I will be analyzing the condition of migration and the migrant workers in Bangladesh. As there are different perspective regarding migration it might be helpful to understand a better picture by looking into this subject deeply. Also, from the experience I have from my relatives, it made me interested to research the complexities of migration, which is an important thing in the context of Bangladesh. There are various things that influence migration; however, in this paper I will focus mainly on media and its

contribution towards shaping migration. I think different types of media including, television, advertisement, newspaper, internet, have direct and indirect influences on migration.

Hereafter, analyzing the notion of migration through media lenses will allow me to understand a better picture regarding migration.

Why People Migrate from Bangladesh:

There are several reasons behind people from Bangladesh migrating to other parts of the world. People mainly move to other countries in order to ensure a better livelihood for themselves as well as for their family members. It is because these migrants believe that they are able to save more money by staying abroad. Hence, they can send that money back to their family to help financially (Sharma & Zaman, p 281, 2013). The reason behind this unstable remittances supply and migrants moving to other countries in different division depend on the amount of social capital or lack of network with migration facilities in that specific area. In some cases, migrant workers from different divisions are mostly unskilled in terms of competing with the 'global labor market' (Sharma & Zaman, p 282, 2013). In order to verify the condition of the migration in different division of Bangladesh, Sharma and Zaman conducted a survey on 20 selected communities from various divisions. According to their survey, they have found a result which shows that approximately 11% people have migrated in last 10 years from those 20 villages (Sharma & Zaman, p 284, 2013). Besides, people also migrate in search of better-off places away from insecurity, conflict, and problems of natural disaster and environmental hazards (Human Development Reports, 2013 & Hunter, p 273-302, 2005).

Yet, it can be stated that due to these problematic situation in the home country, people tend to move to other places in order to have better living environment. They believe,

countries with higher facilities will have opportunities for quality education as well as security and scope for sufficient income. People in general crave to have a gorgeous and luxurious life and when they find all these in the foreign countries by seeing in television or newspaper, they become eager to move to that part of the world by no means. In most cases, rather thinking about the consequences people specially youths and villagers move abroad in search of higher education, money, and to have a resourceful life.

Highly Preferred Migratory Countries:

As a highly populated country, Bangladesh is historically renowned for the constant supply of labors to foreign countries. These unskilled laborers mostly move to US and Middle Eastern countries for the betterment of their livelihood. Presently, number of labor migration has increased annually by six million (Farid, Mozumdar, Kabir, & Hossain, p 387, 2009).

Besides, there are students who migrate to different countries such as UK, US, Australia, Cyprus, Japan, and Malaysia for higher studies. Among these countries, the number of students moving to UK has increased from 634 to 1300 and the rate has increased in Australia as well. Due to several restrictions on US visa policy, students are now more interested to move to the UK or Australia. As a result, US have lost its reputation as the top highest student migrants' receiver country and this rate has fallen down in comparing to other countries (Sriskandarajah, p 06-16, 2005). According to these data it can be stated that students from Bangladesh, mainly focus on those countries where they face less trouble and can conduct their higher studies in a productive way. It is because, students move to other part of the world leaving everything behind in order to study hard, improve their knowledge and to be a better citizen of his or her country. In such case, they prefer countries with less

trouble so that they can concentrate properly on their studies to assure brighter future for themselves as well as for the country.

People who migrate from Bangladesh are mostly laborers or students. Among the labor migrants, there are two types of workers, unskilled or low-skilled and skilled workers. These unskilled or low-skilled workers mainly move to Middle Eastern and South-East Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore (Buchenau, p 8, 2008 and Mamun & Nath, p 2, 2010). These workers are also known as temporary migrants; as they move to other parts of the world to eradicate their unemployment and become an economical contributor in this over-populated country (Mamun & Nath, p 1, 2010). Because of high demand for labor migrants, unskilled or low-skilled workers move to these respective countries (Mamun & Nath, p 2, 2010). These unemployed workers of Bangladesh mainly target Middle Eastern countries because it is the region from where they can send the highest amount of remittances (Mamun & Nath, p 2, 2010). People move to these for shorter period, to eradicate unemployment, and to earn large amount of money within a very short amount of time.

Conversely, it is mainly professionals such as doctors, engineers, teachers, nurses and students who move to Europe, Australia, North America, and US (Buchenau, p 9, 2008 and Mamun & Nath, p 5, 2010). These migrants are not temporary workers; they move there for higher studies and with target of becoming a permanent resident of the particular migratory country (Buchenau, p 9, 2008 and Mamun & Nath, p 4, 2010). In the country of huge population there are different categories of professionals who move abroad each year. However, the type of migration depends upon skill and profession, which differs from country to country. People who move to foreign countries struggle at their very best in terms of assuring their own as well as their family members' and countries' economic development.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Migration:

The trend of student migration results in both ‘brain drain’ and ‘brain gain’ (Sriskandarajah, p 07-15, 2005). It is ‘brain drain’ for the sending countries as they are losing their talents and ‘brain gain’ for the receiving countries as they are receiving extra benefits to have these talented students in their own country. However, when less educated or illiterate people migrate, there is a loss of manpower for the sending country. At the same time, it is beneficial in terms of ‘brain drain’ as country is not losing any talent (Sharma & Zaman, p 285, 2013). Furthermore, there are some exceptional cases of ‘brain drain’ at present days. Presently, students are mostly eager to work for the benefit of their own country. If students return to their home countries’ after completing higher studies, sending countries accomplish ‘brain gain’ and receiving countries face the effect of ‘brain drain.’ Students of Bangladesh, at present days are motivated towards their homeland’s economic prosperity. They believe, after achieving higher studies, it is their responsibilities to work for the development of their own country rather serving for other nations. Thus, student migrants, who moved to US, Canada, Europe, and Australia return to Bangladesh with the hope of uplifting their country with their valuable knowledge (Sriskandarajah, p 01-30, 2005). In accordance to the World Migration Report (2005: 304), ‘the future well-being of nations depends on their ability to compete in the global, knowledge-based economy’ and competition is no longer tied to physical capital and raw material, but relies on the human capital associated with creativity and innovation’ (Sriskandarajah, p 01-30, 2005).

Sending a large scale of unskilled labor might impact negatively on the sending country. However, due to large number of population, Bangladesh as an underdeveloped country is unable to provide adequate and relevant jobs for every citizen. In such case, Bangladesh has managed to send a large number of people abroad as labor migrants. This

situation has benefited citizens of Bangladesh by reducing unemployment and ensuring citizens receive high rates of remittances. Both of these occurrences are helping the development of country's economy (Hadi, 1999 in Farid, Mozumdar, Kabir, & Hossain, p 387, 2009). Bangladesh has huge number of manpower, but this developing country does not have enough resources and sufficient scope to train these people and provide job for them. In this case, the alternate of sending labor and bringing remittances is a constructive solution, which ensures good relations with international and it helps to uphold the country's economy.

Hence, analyzing this situation it can be stated that migration has both negative and positive impact not only upon the sending countries, but also on the receiving countries. It benefits the receiving countries by having more laborers as well as students workers. Also, it is advantageous for the sending countries in terms of laborers with skilled knowledge and students with higher degrees who are recognized as pioneer in the way of development of Bangladesh. In accordance to report of daily *The Guardian* in *Prothom-Alo*, Bangladesh is a populous country and this country has huge number of young generations who are the future of this developing country. Its huge population is able to uphold country's economy through their work and knowledge. Thus, it is believed by major economist, John Hawksworth of Pricewaterhousecoopers (PWC) that by 2050, Bangladesh will overcome its difficulties and will ensure its prosperity in a higher scale than the western developed countries. As, these young generations and enormous number of laborers are presently moving abroad at a high scale it is highly necessary to ensure the security of migrants workers and students so that they can have adequate facilities to have better working environment to earn sufficient money for them, their family, as well as for the country.

Migrants-Change Maker of the Country:

These migrants of Bangladesh are no less than a change maker for the country's economy. These people move to other part of the world, leaving their near and dear ones at their home country. Also, after enormous struggle and sacrifice these people live a hectic life for earning money in foreign countries. Starting from the year 1970- 80 till now, number of people migrating abroad has increased and it has a positive correlation with remittances. As more people are migrating, the amount of remittances they are sending back to Bangladesh is increasing day by day (Mahmud and Osmani, p 1-2, 1980 & Buchenau, p 2, 2008). The remittances sent by the migrants are largely beneficial in terms of importing capital goods and essential inputs (Mahmud and Osmani, p 3, 1980). Besides this economic development, remittances are largely helpful for the family members of the migrants as it is a huge financial support for them. Additionally, in Center for Policy Dialogue article, Ratha (2005) asserts that remittances have improved national income, living standard of the respective household and has increased savings, which is a source of capital (p 3, n.d & Azad, p 1, n.d). Migrants are able to earn more while staying abroad rather than working in Bangladesh. It is because, in abroad they can earn large amount and save money by sending it as remittances to their family (Buchenau, p 4, 2008). Hence, it can be stated that through remittances, gradually Bangladesh is overcoming its economical discrepancies, unemployment, and financial imbalances of marginalized family. Besides, from 2001 to 2002, remittances earnings were nearly 35% of export earnings. Therefore, remittances have reduced the dependency over foreign aid of Bangladesh (Siddiqui, p 8, 2004). According to the report of Asian Development Bank, by 2003, net earnings from remittances were US\$3.063 billion (Siddiqui, p 8, 2004). Also, in the excerpt of Center for Policy Dialogue it is mention that by 2007 the amount of remittances was US\$ 4 billion (In, The Micro Level Impact of Foreign

Remittances on Incomes in Bangladesh, p 1, n.d the *Daily Star*, 27 February, 2007).

Furthermore, according to the Finance Minister of Bangladesh the rate of remittances can be up to \$14 billion by 2012. Contribution of remittances to the national GDP is 11%, according to the Welfare Minister of Bangladesh (Star Business Report, 2012). Hence, it is necessary for government to ensure a secure transaction of remittances throughout the country.

Role of Media on Migration:

While travelling to other parts of the world, migrants collect information regarding the process related to travel, life-style, food, as well as other necessary information from different sources. Various types of media are one of the major sources, which help migrants to get information constantly (Immigrants and their Media, p 52, n.d). In such case, it is necessary to have information in the media in the migrant's own language, which makes the information easily understandable. Besides, media should provide clear and correct information to the migrants (Immigrants and their Media, p 53, n.d). Through new communication technologies of media, migrants easily get news and information from their home (Immigrants and their Media, p 58, n.d). It makes the migrants feel that they are not too far from their home country and familiar people as they are in a constant connection between home and abroad.

Internet- Connecting Home and Abroad:

The article by Adela Ros, mainly focuses on the migrant workers and their way of communication with their families and relative who are living far away from the migrants. Stepping in the 20th century, this method of communication among people has changed overtime. At present people have different media such as Skype or video conferences through

telephone and internet, various online chatting systems, email, SMS interchange, and so on (Ros, p, 2, 2008). Presently, this communication has become easier due the progress in information and communication system (ICT) and new inventions in this section. According to this article, it is noticeable that the amount of ‘teletraffic’ is higher among the countries, which are highly connected in terms of migration. This growth was highly visible in 1995 and 2001. This growth of using ICT is increasing day by day and it is like a blessing not only for the migrants, but also for the citizens who are staying back at home. Internet for migrants is not only a media for chatting or contacting with others; whereas, this media is broadly used in terms of getting proper and updated information about travelling abroad, job offers and living condition. It is because, proper information should be known before travelling. Also, it helps migrants to get familiar with the new place, people and culture (Ros, pp. 14-16, 2008). According to the research of this article, it is mentioned that use of technological materials are mostly visible among young generation as they are the major group who migrate. Thus, government should emphasize attentively to make internet services available, accessible, and affordable for the migrants.

Mobile Phone- As a means of Communication:

Migrant workers are highly motivated through an elegant representation of developed countries in media. Starting from day to day purpose and in order to keep in touch with near and dear ones, also to make financial transfers they rely on different media such as internet cafes or telephone centers. Services provided by information and communication system are highly preferable by the migrants as it is more reliable and also due to its variety of applications in terms of communication (Ros, p, 8, 2008). Because of these new and advanced communication facilities, interaction among the migrants with their families living

back home have become stronger and migrants staying abroad are less worried about their families as they are aware of each and every situation all the time (Ros, p, 9, 2008). Among many means of communication, mobile phone is highly used by the migrants as it is easily portable and also useful for communication purpose with owners, families and also to keep connection with any updates about job or living facilities through communicating with other migrants (Ros, p, 11, 2008). Communication service of mobile media is highly preferable because it helps to get connected with people they might know in the new country where migrants are moving (Ros, p, 17, 2008). For the migrants, these media of communications are very important. Without these devices they feel unsafe and lost in an unknown world. Because of this situation, in many countries such as Senegal and Mexico numbers of cyber cafes have increased. Thus, it facilitates migrants to get information easily and in a time controlled way (Ros, pp. 18-19, 2008). Similar to Senegal and Mexico, at present there are huge numbers of cyber cafes in Bangladesh and also calling through mobile phone is highly available. Due to its cheap calling rate and a means of employment for young generation, it became easy for people to make a call through mobile any time they want. Small shops on the roadside are famous for people to call wherever they want, as a result people can now a days easily contact with others from any part of the world and get information. These facilities are highly beneficial for people in terms of communicating with people and organization related to migration purpose. Depending upon the preference made by the migrant workers, telecommunication companies also provide different services in different rate, which allows migrants to save money (Ros, p, 21, 2008). Cheap calling rates are highly valued by the migrants as it allows them to contact more often than usual. Additionally, during some specific occasion such as Ramadan, migrants from Morocco tend to contact families frequently as it make them feel they are at home and not far from their loved ones (Ros, pp.

20-22, 2008). These valuable services enable migrants and also their relatives living in the home countries to have a blithesome life in abroad.

Migrants' Life without New Media:

Before the emergence of mobile and internet services, people faced troubles in communicating with their family members. Also, they were unable to track updated information every single time. The only means of communication were letters and in some cases land phones. In case of sending letters, people faced trouble in getting reply as it was time consuming. In most cases, it used to take longer than a week to reach the recipient and similarly to get reply. In newspapers and television channels, they just saw the outer part of the foreign world, which is gorgeous and glamorous with its high-rise buildings, clean roads, and different options to enjoy life. In such case, troublesome and hard working abroad life remain unknown to them. Due to lack of proper information and accessibility to specific necessities, people were in trouble in case of any need. Conversely, for phone calls through land line was really hard to get connection and also it cost really high rate. For this reason, people couldn't communicate very frequently and in case of any emergency these communication systems were not that beneficial.

Advantages of New Media:

The era of ICT has emerged with a higher opportunity for the migrant workers in terms of getting proper information and staying connected with families. In previous era, telecommunication or internet facilities were not available to everyone in every part of the world because of its higher cost. However, at present this service is affordable nearly by

everyone living in different part of today's world. Thus, it plays an important role in creating stronger bond among migrants and their family members. Migrant workers can easily get connected now a day by using different ways of communication media. Moving to a different country it is really difficult for migrants to concentrate in work without having connection with their families, near and dear ones. Pressure of work, difficulties to cope with new environment, people's mentality and culture make the life of the migrants hard enough to live without their family. In such case, different services of media such as video chat, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *LinkedIn*, *YouTube*, and *Flickr* help them get connected whenever and from wherever they want. Besides, by using calling cards phone calls have become easier and less costly, which allows people to keep in touch more frequently. Additionally, video calling service Skype enables to talk and see people living in any part of the world. This service of telecommunication media is highly preferable as it allows people to feel lively while chatting or talking (Bacigalupe & Lambe p, 12-14, 2011).

Drawbacks of New Media:

Furthermore, there are several cases where migrants face trouble in terms of using different media of communication such as Skype, mobile phone, and internet service. For instance, Fatima a journalist from Barcelona uses to contact through Skype with her family members living in different part of the world. Both she and her family members are happy about this communication service as they get to know each other's situation every day. While using this communication service Fatima sometimes get unwanted call from the center where she gets the service of internet (Ros, pp. 1&10. 2008). Similarly, migrants suffer from several disrupting problem by using mobile phone services (Ros, p, 24, 2008). In some cases these problem become very severe, this makes mobile phone users to change their numbers

frequently. Migrants are always attracted to the new and cheap facilities of internet and mobile phone services. As these situations are known to the service provider, they sometimes mislead migrants by providing them false information. During such condition, migrants being in a new country face trouble by losing huge amount of money in the hope of getting more benefits. These workers stay abroad, away from their family and friends that make them feel lonely. Thus, new and modern technological innovation, is highly preferable to migrants to get any kind of information starting from the selection of country, travelling process, living style and standard, food and all other necessary information that a migrant worker needs. Taking benefit of these new comers in the country, service providers harass them by asking extra or unnecessary amount of money.

There are several cases where this communication media become a burden for the migrant workers. As migrants and their family members are always connected with each other, family members keep asking about the migrants' job, their life style, and also it makes the people living back home keep asking for money over and over again. It happens as it is usually hard for people to understand the reality without facing the situation. Migrants living abroad lead a life of struggle and hardship and they spend higher number of hours for earning money. Sometimes these conditions are not believed or understood by people who are living in home countries'. As a result, it creates a complicity between the migrants and their family members. Women working abroad face trouble in such cases as they are the care givers of the families. If they are unable to call every day it results into a broken relationship. However, sometimes men also face similar condition as they are the bread earners of the family. Losing connection with them makes family members think negatively about those men and it ends up with a bad family bonding. Parents in the home country remain worried about the student migrants. Thus, they keep calling their child over and over again in order to keep track of

their study, health, and everyday life style (Bacigalupe & Lambe, p, 9, n.d). However, in many cases parents domination create mental pressure upon students and they remain scared of their activities. This circumstance may create severe threat in the life of the student which can be a reason for ruining his/her life.

Similarly, to the previous article, an example from this excerpt about Filipino migrants show that they are also motivated through the new and advanced system of communication in terms of gathering diverse information regarding migration. For instances, they use this media for finding out the process of migration and also to translate necessary things which are important for migratory purpose (Johnson & McKay, p, 182, n.d). However, Filipino migrants are highly related to new media which enables them to lead a better life abroad staying connected with others. Besides, through internet facility these migrants are able to visit different websites for job opportunities, which is really important for them. This media helps them to figure out specific job choice and make a better earning there (Johnson & McKay, pp. 185, 192, & 194, n.d). In similar to the Filipino migrants, internet facilities also became famous among Bangladeshi migrants as it helps them to get updated information frequently. Also, it has made their life easier as there are several options for the migrants to apply for job or to get admitted in college or universities through internet. Besides, due to availability of cyber cafes and cheap rate mobile internet service people from Bangladesh are now more connected to abroad. However, insecure mobile services which are a common problem in Bangladesh harass mostly female customers by calling unnecessarily. Also, in some cases unwanted calls create fear and lead towards unintentional problem, which ends up as a major trouble in the life of the migrants.

Thus, it can be stated that as long as migrants have adequate facilities to stay connected with their families, near and dear ones they are willing to move to other places of

the world. Besides, these people always seek for proper information as they otherwise have to struggle inhumanly in working place and also for living purpose. For this reason, specific information from different websites is really helpful and encouraging for these migrants.

Analyzing Media Role on Migration through the Documentary- *Deshantori*:

Taking example from one of the documentary named *Deshantori*, produced by Mridul Chowdhury and directed by both Sujan Mahmud and Mridul Chowdhury, overall facts of migrants can be proved. The movie starts by showing the black and white historical image of liberation war of Bangladesh (VTS_01_1, 11-16 sec). It also illustrates some of the cultural aspects, '*pohela baishakh*' of the country, as well as picture of various monuments for example, '*Smriti-shoudh*' in Bangladesh (VTS_01_1, 22-34 sec). These images are mainly collected from the past which shows our national flag, people fighting with guns etc. (VTS_01_1, 14-16 sec). The documentary mainly demonstrates different perspectives of life of different people for instances taxi drivers, students, rickshaw-pullers and many others. The major focus in the overall documentary was to represent people's dreams and aims towards their life. While interviewing the students it came up that they have a higher desire in life to become a teacher, general officer, banker, news presenter, chartered accountant and many more. Whereas, there are some who just want a high salary job and some other look for respected job. In other cases, there are people as restaurant workers or unemployed people along with several students who are really eager to go abroad and settle down there (VTS_01_1, 18 sec). This documentary is a representation of the overall aspects of the migrants of Bangladesh and the role of media on them. Hence, this documentary is a great source of understanding the life and thoughts of Bangladeshi migrants about their and countries' future.

Example of Student Migrants:

Due to the advertisement of foreign countries as a dream land in media, people are kept in the dark about the reality of the outside world. Because of this when people think of foreign world, rather thinking about foreign life Bangladeshi's get attracted with high-rise buildings, river, wider road, lots of shopping complexes and delicious food in abroad (VTS_01_1, 3 min 08 sec-3 min 26 sec). Thus, according to various intelligence of the country, people are excited to move abroad in order to know the unknown, enjoy life by earning huge amount of money and they think in foreign countries there is high living standard and they have better and higher education opportunity. In Bangladesh, people face problem of kidnapping, smuggling also shortage of electricity, water resources and there is huge traffic and political unrest in the country which disrupt students' education. Most people believe if they are able to go abroad they won't face these troubles, which makes them crazy about foreign countries. Students face difficulties in completing studies, pursuing knowledge till higher education, and managing better jobs in future. It is because there is a lack of job opportunities in the country, which makes a large number of people remain unemployed for a long time (VTS_01_1, 4 min 05 sec-4 min 08 sec). As Bangladesh is a country with large population it is extremely difficult and nearly impossible for the government to ensure job for every single inhabitant living in the country. Therefore, this huge number of unemployed people from various sectors and skills find it effective to go abroad.

Female and Male Perspectives towards Migration:

Besides these, generally there is trouble face by everyone especially by the girls who goes abroad; they are eve teased or harassed all the time (VTS_01_1, 4 min 36 sec). Additionally, people do not have the ability or scope to express own ideas and thoughts,

which make people feel they are confined from outside world. Girls are mostly restricted with some family tradition in terms of going abroad, or getting married right after finishing undergraduate education. These situations make undermine them and thus as soon as the girls get a way to go abroad they feel they are escape from all these troubles (VTS_01_1, 7 min 06 sec-7min 13 sec). Conversely, boys face trouble in terms of getting married if they do not have high scale job, or not highly educated and in most cases if they did not go abroad either for study or to do job or if they do not have citizenship in a foreign country (VTS_01_1, 7 min 15 sec-7 min 37 sec). These are some obvious cases where boys realize nothing can be a better solution to these problems rather going abroad.

Brain-Drain:

In consequence of this, Bangladesh gradually is losing its talented generation, which is creating a greater loss for near future. This situation can be explained as ‘brain-drain’¹. Doing a job in Bangladesh, people do not get respect and salary according to their skill and ability; whereas, the situation is better in foreign countries. People do not see any better future of Bangladesh due to its political instability, which is going on for years and years. People who do not have the ability to continue education they get involve in low salary job. Even though these people have dream to become highly qualified they do not have that scope also they are unable to do any unwanted job as it hampers family reputation and undermine their as well as their families’ position in the society (VTS_01_1, 9 min 43 sec-9min 55 sec). However, when these people go abroad and do unwanted jobs and send large amount of money to their home, their family and friends, they do not face any kind of hatred

¹ Definition of ‘brain-drain’ according the Merriam-Webster dictionary- the departure of educated or professional people from one country, economic sector, or field for another usually for better pay or living conditions.

(VTS_01_1, 10 min 39 sec-10 min 41 sec). The family members of the migrants care for their migrated member, but they always look for the amount of money they are receiving from that person as it is major thing they need for their life. Therefore, the migrated labor or the student both need to work hard when they are abroad as they are under pressure of sending remittances to the country.

Dreamland of the Lower Middle Class:

There are different people from different section of the society who are willing to go abroad. Several examples are visible where some people risked their life to fulfill their wish to go abroad, as they did not have enough money. For instances, in the documentary, from a renowned personality, 'Anisul Haque's interview and interview of an unknown male, we came to know that a man named Mahbub tied himself with the wheels of the plane so that he can reach to his destination; whereas, he died due to severe cold (VTS_01_2, 01 sec-30 sec). Besides, lack of information about abroad sometimes creates trouble while travelling which is visible in the example of few Bangladeshi workers who were trying to go to Spain. Media plays important role in shaping the migrant worker of Bangladesh. Media representation of information motivates people to go abroad; whereas, lack of specific information creates difficulties in most cases. For example, there are many people similar to Robiul who dreamt of going abroad as they have seen people earning lots of money and building nice houses in their area by going abroad and earning money (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). He did not even think of the process or the suffering and working pressure while living in abroad. In this way many people from Robiul's place, which is Dohar in Bangladesh went abroad and made a huge amount of money, which is recognized from their newly build houses with the remittances. From Robiul's perspective "Right from my

childhood I dreamt of doing something similar. I'd grow up and go abroad. I'd relieve my parents' sufferings' (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007)

Similarly, Mosaddek and Himel who had well established business in the country, but they went abroad in the hope of becoming rich as their neighbors (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). These people believe by going abroad and earning lot of money they will be able to ensure better future for their next generation. They feel working in Bangladesh will not allow them to save more money; however by going abroad they can earn as well as save a lot for them and their future generation. Sometimes, people just get influenced by others and they do not even think of the consequences about their journey and living in abroad. Lack of proper information and watching too many positive things about foreign countries make people mostly low paid workers to go abroad in the dream of becoming rich.

Delinquent Middle Men:

Many people similar to Rubel, Mosaddek, Himel and others, who have less knowledge and access to necessary information are always misled by some middle men who are involved in sending workers illegally to foreign countries. These middle men mostly take a large amount of money from the workers and keep them giving hope and show them dream about their dream countries. For the middle men, it is always a business where they are the beneficiaries and poor workers are the sufferers. These things are visible in the beginning of the movie. However, the participants just describe the incidents from their experience as the documentary has interviewed people after they passed these situations. However, the middle men were hidden as they usually remain hidden as well. These middle men give hope to migrants without showing any evidence and asking any qualification of the migrants to go

abroad. Thus, when these ignorant migrants like Rubel, MOsaddek, and Himel ask middle men's help to go abroad by any means he said, "Yes, you can go to Spain. I have sent many people there" (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). In such cases, when these eagerly willing people find assistance they feel a situation like dream come true and without seeking detail information they blindly follow the middle men.

Blind Belief, High Desire and Dreams of Migrants:

Going abroad generally needs a huge amount of money and also these middle men they also captured a large amount of money as well. In such case, it is a pressure both for the worker and his family to manage that large amount of money as they are mainly farmers or small business owner. However, these people get help from neighbors who has adequate money as they went abroad and also they feel happy to give money for going abroad rather than for other purpose (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). In case of the migrants who started their journey towards Spain without having proper information, faced lots of trouble while travelling. These people are mostly from lower middle class who did not have any other option rather going illegally because they did not have money to pay plane fair. However, these people spend a lot of money, which was mainly captured by the middle man. Even though they have given a huge amount to the middle man they did not have a comfortable journey rather they did not get to do the job they were hoping for. As these people dream of foreign countries in an extensive way they always imagine they will be able to earn a lot of money if they can go abroad. In this case, media, by showing gorgeous pictures and lavish life in foreign countries through movies and different programs, make people insatiable to go abroad. It is mainly media which propagates luxurious information about foreign countries. One of the renowned writers of Bangladesh,

Dr. Zafor Iqbal, mentions in *Deshantori* that “the image of the West portrayed in the media influences our young generation” (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). However, it is not always media’s responsibility to provide all necessary information. People, who want to migrate, should also have better knowledge about all aspects. Also, they need to be hard working and active to earn money. Otherwise, it will never help them to achieve their dream even if they move abroad or stay in their home country.

Case-Study of Bangladeshi Migrants:

Misinformation leads the migrants face several troubles starting from the beginning of the journey till their life in abroad. Taking an example from this specific documentary *Deshantori* it is visible that when the migrants were lying in the Sahara Desert sand in cold night with few warm clothes, they were not only suffering from severe cold, but also they were craving for food and water as they did not get food for three days. At this point the camera was angled in a way which depicted the sufferings of the travelers in dark environment with pain and grip in them (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). In similar to other migrants, Farhad was an affluent person in his village. He was a school teacher in a kindergarten school and he also has BCom degree. He lived in the village with pride and respect (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). However, while describing that incident sadness and miseries occupy his face rather than happiness and pleasure and this situation become more critical as the scene is captured in a dark environment with a very close shot of the victim (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). It is because, just following others with the greediness for more and more money, he forced his father to sell their land and depleted around 700,000 taka to go to Spain (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul

Chowdhury, 2007). However, at that point rather reaching or knowing about his destination he was laying in the desert without food and water, which makes them feel dying (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). Water in his eyes and face full of anxiety makes audience realize how measurable condition migrants actually feel; whereas, a complete different scene was pictured in their mind before starting their journey to Spain. It is not only Farhad, but every one of them asked for forgiveness to their parents. They spent several days and hours to reach Spain and their sufferings knew no bounds as they were travelling without sufficient food, water, and warm clothing (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujan Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). The slow movement of the camera from the moon to the dark face of Farhad depicts their bright past and unknown present situation. His facial expression is an example of the pain the migrants were facing on their way and also it depicts there uncertain future.

The Inevitable Truth:

Generally, most people desire for more; however, situation may differ if people know the truth and consequence. For instance, if the migrants had known that they would suffer so much and they will have a miserable life in compare to their present condition, they might not desire to go to Spain. Misleading by people and the middlemen's greed for money lead these less educated people suffer immensely. However, there are some people who are risk lovers and they prefer to challenge such situation over again and over again and they believe it will bring success at some point in his/her life. Media needs to play an important role in providing proper and correct information about foreign countries. There should have strict laws to investigate these middlemen and also government should be legitimate about migration process. However, people also need to change their view towards media and they should have

the ability to analyze the situation critically. Anisul Haque mentioned in *Deshantori* “It’s not the dreamland they imagine” (Mridul Chowdhury, Sujun Mahmud & Mridul Chowdhury, 2007). This country Bangladesh has gone over many challenges and many troubles and fought for their liberation; however, the dream people thought about the country is not fulfilled after 40 years. Besides, in order to prepare young generation to work for the betterment of the country, there need to be specific and suitable scope for their studies and jobs, which will not lead them to go abroad. The educated youth who know the truth regarding foreign life need to make others aware about that. One of the messages from the documentary, which is really important, is that youths are the one who can bring changes to a country and it will only be possible if they get together; take initiative and responsibility to eradicate the problems of the country.

Present Example of Migrants:

Presently in India, most doctors are migrated to abroad mostly in the UK in order to join National Health Services (Gupta & Omonivi, p, 175, 2007). A similar situation of present Bangladesh has been illustrated in the documentary *Deshantori*. New generation of Bangladesh, who is studying in medical school or any other science related subjects, they feel there have limited scopes to do research and necessary equipment is unavailable in the country. Additionally, students from other respective sectors also feel that they are studying for the sake of studying; soon after they finish undergraduate degree they face difficulties in finding jobs. Students are not satisfied with the education system in Bangladesh. They express their anxiety by asserting that in their education system they do not have scope to express themselves freely. Due to these circumstances, students of Bangladesh prefer to go

abroad for higher studies or for doing jobs. These migrant students believe that moving abroad will ensure a better future not only for them, but also for their future generation.

From the book, *The Cultures of Economic Migration*, by Suman Gupta and Tope Omoniyi, it is visible that people are so attracted to the view of tall buildings, pleasant environment of foreign countries and they find a hope of earning enormous amount of money in abroad. Thus, several people from Bangladesh as well as from India tend to go abroad in the greed of money by ignoring the hard working life in abroad. These people are eager to do any kind of job while living in abroad. Indian migrants are moving to foreign countries to work as taxi drivers (Gupta & Omonivi, p, 175, 2007). In similar way, a Bangladeshi man in the documentary *Deshantori* mentions that rather living unemployed he prefers to move to foreign countries and he is ready to do any kind of job which will bring him a lot of money. These people believe that as their relatives are unaware about their unusual jobs, it does not matter to them what they are doing. They believe if they go from abroad they will have more preference in terms of marriage. Hence, these migrants are working hard, doing unwanted jobs, but they are capable of helping their family financially and keep them happy.

Day by day, cost of living is increasing in Bangladesh. In addition to this, there are problem in getting daily needs in South Asian countries of Bangladesh or India. People in these countries suffer from inadequate water and electricity supply. There are many other difficulties which make people unhappy and they feel moving abroad is the better solution in such context. Young generation are more exposed to outer world and if they do not get better facilities in compare to their similar age people in other part of the world, they get disappointed. Because of high number of people are moving abroad, Bangladesh is losing new talents from the country. There are rare cases when people return back to home country

with the enthusiasm of doing something extraordinary for the betterment of the country. As a result, rich remain rich or become richer and poor remain poor or become poorer.

These present conditions of the migrant workers have created hope for a better future of Bangladesh. In this developing country, it is really hard for the government to provide job and education for every single people living in the country. In this circumstance, Bangladesh government found it easy to send unemployed to the western countries where manpower is a high need. In 2011-2012, Bangladesh has sent 6.9 lakh workers as labor migrants (Star Business Report, 2013). These people are happy enough as they get at least a job which is beneficial for them to help financially themselves as well as their family at home. For this reason, at present, people are highly enthusiastic to move abroad and this rate is increasing day by day, which was 56.82% in the last year (Star Business Report, 2013). Bangladeshi migrants play an important role in the national economy by sending a high range of remittances which has grown from 10.26% to \$12.85 billion in the last two years (Star Business Report, 2013). As more people are moving abroad it is the responsibility of the Bangladesh government to ensure safe journey and living condition for the people living abroad. In this case, as government is looking for new and more countries to recruit migrants (Star Business Report, 2013), they also should keep in mind about the security, safety, and sustainability of the migrants' life in abroad. According to the World Bank's estimation, in near future remittance rate of Bangladesh will increase by 15% (Star Business Report, 2013). Considering this high scale development through the help of labor migrants of Bangladesh, it is the responsibility of government as well as private sectors to come forward in order to ensure a better condition for these migrants. They should ensure that migrants are not misinformed through any kind of false representation of media regarding western countries.

Illegal Migration and its Consequences:

According to the report of International Center for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR, B) approximately 900, 000 Bangladeshis have left the country by 2007 as migrant workers (ICDDR, B, 2013). Foreign countries have more scope to work than here in Bangladesh. This situation influences a large number of people to move abroad and in order to fulfill their long cherished dream, people sometimes used to go through unauthorized way (ICDDR, B, 2013). This situation creates negative impact about the receiving and sending countries. It is because without legal process it is really hard to keep track of these migrants who move abroad in the hope of doing work. Besides, it hampers international relations among the countries in terms of export-import and many other factors related to business and other international issues.

Information about a large number of people going abroad, earning huge amount of money and sending it back to own country is mainly visible in newspaper or different websites of ICDDR, B. People of Bangladesh have tendency to move to a better place from this developing country; where they can get a well-paid job, increase their earning in order to improve their own as well as family living condition. Thus, people get attracted by this information and are encouraged to move abroad in the hope of higher earnings and better living. Thus, it can be stated that media representation plays an important role in influencing people to go abroad. However, the overall process to go abroad and work there requires proper visa, passport, and working permission in that country. This total procedure is too lengthy and in many cases people suffer from misinformation and great loss due to lack of guidance. As a result, many migrants depend on their familiar personalities who once went abroad or who deal with such process of going abroad. Taking benefit of the migrants' ignorance about the proper information, these people who are known as middle men, demand

higher amount of money from these migrants. This situation leads migrants with a great loss of money and in future they face enormous trouble in terms of going and living in abroad.

In addition to all these difficulties, these illegal migrants face huge problem in case of receiving salary as in most cases they work as low paid workers (ICDDR, B, 2013). To go abroad, these migrant workers spend a big amount of money for travelling as well as for conducting the process of going abroad. It is because in most cases they follow illegal way for moving into foreign countries, they need to spend most of their money for ensuring their visa and other necessary materials with the middle man. However, after giving a big amount of money to these middle men, while travelling and reaching abroad migrants in most cases find difficulties in every single sector. These people mostly move to foreign world in the hope of earning better amount of money and live a quality life. In that case, doing low paid jobs they cannot even manage their survival in those countries.

Due to the illegal citizenship of these migrant workers, they face problem while getting any kind of medical or safety facilities (ICDDR, B, 2013). In western countries there is high demand for labor; these labors are mostly from developing countries and most of them go abroad illegally. In this case, ensuring health care and security facilities for these huge amounts of people is a burden for the migrant receiving country. When labors go illegally, there is no specific information about them and that is why it is impossible for the receiving country to keep track about the numbers of people coming into the country as labor or any other purpose. In this circumstance, in order to keep track of the injured migrants in the workplace, Health Systems and Infectious Diseases Division of ICDDR, B, started this program with association of International Organization for Migration (IOM) (ICDDR, B, 2013). ICDDR, B, has started this program from a rural village named Mirsarai as a large number of people move abroad from this place mainly to Arab Middle East (ICDDR, B,

2013). These programs are beneficial for the migrants as it is somewhat helpful for them in terms of getting healthcare facilities, which is an urgent need for them as they do many risky jobs while staying abroad.

Expected Government Initiative for the Well-being of the Migrants:

Despite all the contribution migrants serve an important role in the national economy, even if they face terrible discrepancy during their life in abroad. By 2007, 7.93 billion dollars was added to Bangladesh national economy from the remittances of the migrants (ICDDR, B, 2013). Along with ICDDR, B, it is the responsibility of the government and other private as well as non-profit organizations to take effective initiative in order to assure a better life of the migrants. Research from ICDDR, B shows that around 60% migrants face ‘workplace injury,’ 54% do not get proper treatment due to injury. Besides, only 10% of the injury cost is provided by the employer to the employees, which is not enough as they are really low paid workers. There are approximately 35% workers who face severe injuries and 34% people were reported as sufferer of physical disability, but these workers did not get proper facilities during their trouble (ICDDR, B, 2013). In this case, initiative of ICDDR, B will help migrants to recover from this situation.

Living in developing country, such as Bangladesh, it is in people’s nature to regret about lack of money, measurable lifestyle and inadequate basic rights. Considering all these factors when people think of foreign countries they always dream of a better place than Bangladesh. However, they merely consider the above information of security and medical facilities which are merely available as a worker in abroad. The way it is being represented in the website of ICDDR, B, it may not be show this specifically in other websites or information center. If people have the facilities to get to know about every single thing

related to the working life in abroad, people may think differently regarding the matter of going abroad. In that case, it may happen that people will not follow illegal way to go to foreign countries as it is measurable and it causes great loss of money. Conversely, it is not always media representation that attracts people about foreign countries. Whereas, as people are more attracted towards quality lifestyle and as at present media such as television and mobile phone are nearly available to most of the citizens they are always connected to it. In such case, people responsible for the news or program broadcasting in the media should always be careful about showing relevant materials rather just doing it for the purpose of earning money and getting people's attraction.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it can be stated that the main reason behind people migrating abroad from Bangladesh is higher study, earning large amount of money, and to have a better life. It is visible that beside doctors and engineers, it is mostly students and workers with less education skill have tendency to move towards foreign countries. These people feel, in Bangladesh they do not have enough scope to establish themselves according to their knowledge and skill. Besides, there are fewer opportunities for higher studies and better job. Considering these situations, these people believe that there life might be better if they move to other parts of the world. People mostly get information about foreign countries from their neighbor, relatives who are presently staying abroad or have been to abroad previously, and also from offices who works for migration process. Additionally, media such as newspaper, television channels, internet (websites), and radio has important role in delivering necessary information to people about migration. These sources are accessible to most citizens of Bangladesh, which allow them to get information easily whenever they need.

However, due to misrepresentation of information or excessiveness of the actual situation create misperception among the migrant workers. Thus, facing these problematic incidents when migrants move to a new place, they find it hard to manage their livelihood in that unknown place. Conversely, media especially advertisement and internet help migrants to know more and detail information about the process, living style, cost of job, education opportunities and many other necessary things regarding foreign countries. In addition, internet services such as Skype, Facebook, g-talk, and yahoo also cell phones allow migrants to keep instant contact with near and dear ones. These services make migrants life easier as they can keep themselves updated about their family members and it is an easy and cost effective method to exchange information among each other. Nevertheless, in some cases migrants face harassment through these internet services as living in a new country they are unaware of all information.

Hence, it is visible that media works for providing information and helping migrants throughout the migrating process. Throughout my paper, I have analyzed the situation of migrants in terms of the role of media in their life. It was my intention to come up with some findings about the role of media in life of migrants. In this case, from the documentary *Deshantori*, I found different perception of people and their knowledge and experience about foreign world. This specific documentary represents the impact of media as well as it provides examples of migrants from Bangladesh. Through those examples, I realized that marginalized people move abroad as they are attracted by their neighbors' upgraded life after returning from abroad. However, they did not pay attention to the struggle faced by their neighbors in terms of finding job and living in abroad. As a result, these people faced a troublesome life when they went abroad. Also, they were misconducted about their job by the middle men, who have captured a biggest amount of money from the migrants. In case of the

students, it is visible that from the advertisement in the newspapers and the programs broadcasted in the television were very much influential in terms of making students desirous to leave home country.

Hence, through analyzing different text, articles, and the documentary *Deshantori*, I have understand that media itself has an important role in representing necessary and proper information to the people. They should not be biased and by offering attractive and irrelevant opportunities, they should not be using peoples' opaqueness. Media should be a source of valid and resourceful information area, upon which people can rely on. Besides, media should provide not only migrants, but also to every citizens of the country truthful, valid, and necessary information which will not misconduct people in terms of decision making process in their life. Television media needs to be careful enough in broadcasting programs with truthful information. They should not only be showing the lavish life in abroad with high-rise building, gorgeous shopping malls, and beautiful environment. Programs should be made in such a way which presents the actual lifestyle in abroad by representing it in both ways. Besides, it is the responsibility of the newspaper advertisements and the internet websites to have proper and detailed information about the universities and job opportunities, which is necessary to know for the students before going abroad. In order to make proper use of media it is the responsibility of the people who control different types of media and its information to make proper use in terms of the benefits of the migrants. Also, it is the responsibility of the citizens to have better knowledge to analyze the situation critically to have better understanding about migration process. Thus, by making better use of media, it can become the most reliable and resourceful source in shaping the life migrants of Bangladesh.

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