



IRREGULAR LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH CRISES AND WAYS FORWARD

মানুষের জন্য
manusher jonno

promoting human rights and good governance

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FOREWORD

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is a non-governmental organisation mandated to provide funding and capacity building support to organisations working on human rights and good governance in Bangladesh. MJF considers the issue of Safe Migration as an important area of its work in Rights and Governance given the importance of the sector to the economy of Bangladesh plus as a means of employment for millions of people (at present over 10 million work in countries such as Middle East and Malaysia sending back \$ 15 Billion in remittance). Partnering with a number of nationally reputed civil society organisations, MJF is working for the last couple of years to establish rights of labour migrants to ensure their safe migration to receiving countries and also safe return back home. It is also involved with policy advocacy to influence the government to take progressive legislations and law reform in this important sector. The advocacy of MJF and other organisations working on this issue has resulted in the Law on the Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013. It has also raised national attention and awareness on the situation of labor migrants especially those who migrate using unsafe and risky means.

Sadly, over last few years, irregular labour migration from Bangladesh has increased significantly. This is an issue of serious concern, both nationally and globally. A huge number of aspirant migrants from Bangladesh are leaving for different destination countries through maritime routes with hope for better future. However, the means they use is often risky, dangerous resulting in suffering and even death. Recently, a number of mass graves of Bangladeshi migrants have been identified in the deep jungles of Thailand and Malaysia. Given importance of the sector for the economy of Bangladesh and the risk posed by irregular migration, MJF has taken the initiative to investigate it further and understand the nature and features of irregularities around labour migration from Bangladesh.

The study on 'Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crises and Way Forward' is essentially an important first step. It is intended to bring about a deeper analysis and understanding of the ongoing processes of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh, its operational models, trends and patterns, causes, crises and consequences. This is expected to create an opportunity to adopt alternative policy options to deal with persistent crises in irregular labour migration. The study findings reveal that irregular labour migration is the outcome of governance failure and thus has a political economy perspective. The presence of new power blocs and their control have made the labour migration processes more complex and critical. Although, multiple factors are responsible, economic factors have been rated as the most dominant followed by social factors. Labour migrants with irregular status face higher risks of being abused and exploited, and are denied of fundamental rights. There is also a direct link between irregular labour migration and weak implementation of existing laws.

This study has been strengthened by the valuable support of many people including government officials, civil society organisations, academics, journalist and other stakeholders. On behalf of MJF, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who took part in conducting the study. I also would like to express my deep appreciation to the respondents for their patience, valuable time and information. I hope this publication will be useful to relevant stakeholders working on safe and secured labour migration in Bangladesh. It is expected to be equally important to the academics, students and relevant government agencies to study and analyse the present situation and find effective solutions.

Shaheen Anam
Executive Director
Manusher Jonno Foundation

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-

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

- ADC □ : Additional Deputy Commissioner
BDT □ : Bangladeshi Taka (the currency of Bangladesh)
BMET □ : Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BRAC □ : Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
BTV □ : Bangladesh Television
CEDAW □ : Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination
□ □ against Women
CNG □ : Compressed Natural Gas
CPD □ : Center for Policy Dialogue
CRC □ : Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO □ : Civil Society Organisation
ICERD □ : International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of
□ □ Racial Discrimination
DEMO □ : District Employment and Manpower Office
EWOE □ : Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
FGD □ : Focus Group Discussion
GDP □ : Gross Domestic Product
GMG □ : Global Migration Group
GNI □ : Gross National Income
ICPRMW □ International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of
□ □ All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
ICESCR □ : International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO □ : International Labour Organization
IOM □ : International Organization for Migration
KMO □ : Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MBA □ : Market-Based Approach
MJF □ : Manusher Jonno Foundation
NGO □ : Non-government Organisation
NSDP □ : National Skill Development Policy
OEM □ : Overseas Employment and Migration
RBA □ : Rights-Based Approach
RSS □ : Rapid Screening Survey
RMMRU □ : Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit
SD □ : Service Delivery
SSSD □ : Small-Scale Service Delivery
TTC □ : Technical Training Centre
UDHR □ : Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN □ : United Nations
UNHCR □ : United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The number of Bangladeshi workers seeking employment abroad is growing every year. Between 1976 and 2015, more than 10 million Bangladeshis have migrated to 159 countries in search of better opportunities - over 81 percent of them labour migrants, according to government estimates. Undeniably, these are the people who drive the economic growth of the country after the readymade garment sector. In Fiscal Year 2014-2015, they sent home \$15.31 billion in remittance, which was equivalent to nearly 14 percent of the total GDP (Bangladesh Bank Report 2015).

Despite their immense contribution, the labour migration process in Bangladesh is riddled with legal and structural constraints. Ultimately, these setbacks lead to migration through illegal channels, particularly through maritime routes. In the absence of legal protection, these poor migrants face extreme abuse and exploitation at the hands of brokers, traffickers and members of law enforcing agencies both at origins and destinations. Because of their irregular status, they get little or no legal protection. Sadly, their stories are hardly told. The MJF undertook this study, first, for a deeper understanding of their condition and then to offer policy suggestions to address the problems they face before, during and after migration.

This study examines the overall operation models, trends and patterns, root causes, crises and harsh consequences of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh. It also focuses on the existing legal frameworks, regulatory approaches and policy options to handle labour migration. Irregular labour migration from Bangladesh has increased markedly over the last few years. The lack of accountability of government officials and other structural constraints have paved the way for a new power bloc to

emerge and take control of the entire labour migration process in Bangladesh. What is worrying is that this power bloc, in the form of criminal groups, has changed the whole migration system. These groups are luring aspirant labour migrants into taking perilous sea voyages for 'better jobs' at a low cost, and without any official formalities. In the process, however, they face physical torture, prolonged detention in extremely harsh condition and even death.

The problem is so complex and widespread that government and development organisations working on labour migration struggle to tackle it and find a way out. And although irregular labour migration has recently become a cause for serious concern at home and abroad, there is hardly any literature documenting the overall situation and suggesting protection measures and policy solutions. The present study - Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crises and Ways Forward - comes against such a backdrop. It is essentially a step towards bringing regulation and efficiency in the labour migration process. The overriding goal of this study is to generate a concrete information and knowledge base on irregular labour migration from Bangladesh with particular emphasis on migration through maritime channels, and help policymakers and development partners to come up with effective solutions to the problem.

Methodological Considerations

The study has employed a mixed approach combining quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. To meet the study objectives, Rapid Screening Survey, Household Survey (focusing on migrants with irregular status) in six high-migration districts, Focus Group Discussion with failed migrants and community people and in-depth interviews with victims of labour migration as well as government officials, migration experts and civil society members were conducted. The study covered 48 villages in 12 unions under six upazilas spread over six administrative districts of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions. The study districts were selected based on the prevalence rate of migration. To get a comparative picture of analysis, three MJF intervention districts and three non-intervention districts were selected.

Soon after the selection, a Rapid Screening Survey (RSS) was conducted to list every household that has at least one member who migrated in the last three years. The RSS identified 4,321 labour migrants in the study areas, of whom 1,434 were irregular labour migrants. Finally, 360 households from among the identified 1,434 irregular labour migrants were surveyed based on sample determinants formula and using a detailed questionnaire. Beyond conventional approaches, the study has further employed advanced statistical analysis to determine prioritization of factors associated with irregular labor migration. Thus, a multistage purposive sampling technique was used. The study has examined the last three years' data and information about irregular labour migration and its causes and consequences.

Key Findings of the Study

The study was designed to investigate irregular labour migration from Bangladesh from two broad perspectives. Firstly, it sought to develop a comprehensive list of labour migrants and establish a comparative analysis on the prevalence rate of regular and irregular labour migration in both MJF intervention and non-intervention areas applying the RSS method. Next, the Household Survey Method (HSM) and other qualitative methods were applied, focusing on irregular labour migration to discover the socio-economic characteristics of irregular labour migrants, its trends and patterns, process of handling irregular labour migration (cost and cost management), determinant factors of irregular labour migration, crises and difficulties faced by the labour migrants with irregular status and its consequences on individuals, families and the society as a whole. The study looked into the labour-migration governance to learn how irregular labour migration operates, what are the structural and non-structural dimensions of power relations that make this migration problematic and cause sufferings, what are the regulatory frameworks for the protection of migrant workers against injustice and exploitation and what are the existing governance challenges and gaps between policies and practices. Some key findings of the study are presented below.

First of all, the study found that 4,321 people have migrated as workers from the study areas with different status (regular, irregular etc.). The

highest number of labour migrants (974) has migrated from Comilla, while the lowest (458) from Narsingdi district. Nearly 67 percent of the respondents migrated with regular status while 33 percent landed or tried to land in foreign countries with irregular status. The rate of irregular labour migration in MJF-intervention areas is almost half of that in non-intervention areas (24 percent against 44 percent respectively). It is because of effective implementations of project actions and strategies by the MJF and its partner organisations. The study has identified several dynamic factors promoting safe and hassle-free labour migration in the MJF intervention areas. They include awareness building on safe migration, providing information on safe and secure migration, facilitating registrations at the BMET, providing skill development training, helping migrants to open bank accounts, facilitating access to finance, pre-departure training, visa checking, reducing influence of middlemen and giving legal supports to the victims.

The study has gathered some horrifying stories from survivors about death of their companions on boats. The study found that 23 labour migrants from the study areas have died on their way in the last three years. During the same period, as many as 39 labour migrants went missing after embarking on their journey and their families have no information if they are dead or alive.

The labour migration process is dominated by informal channels in Bangladesh. More than half the respondents (52.07 percent) went abroad through dalals (middlemen/brokers) and the rest with supports from relatives, friends, private recruiting agencies and the government.

Secondly, the study shows that irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is male-dominated. More specifically, 98.33 percent male persons have migrated as labourers with irregular status against only 1.67 percent of female. Moreover, irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to different destinations is age-selective. Data shows that irregular labour migrants are usually young male persons. A whopping 71.38 percent of them belong to the age group of 18-31, while the lowest number (1.86 percent) of them is above 45 years of age. Further, the majority of those who travelled with irregular status are less educated. About 36 percent have primary education while only 13 percent studied beyond SSC level.

Nineteen percent of them have never been to school and can only sign their names. Another 19 percent studied between class six and ten (below SSC) while 13 percent went to madrasas and vocational schools. Employment status, occupation before migration, income and cost of irregular labour migration were also assessed during the study.

It was found that majority of the respondents (21.11 percent) were self-employed while a significant number (11.39 percent) of them were unemployed before migration. Qualitative data shows day-labourers in non-agriculture sector, especially those in weaving industries, are facing the risk of losing their jobs more than their counterparts in other professions. Due to technological transformation (handloom to powerloom) in the weaving industry in Sirajganj and Narsigndi, many people have lost their jobs. Irregular labour migration is not always beneficial, at least not equally, for the labour migrants themselves or their families. In some cases, social, economic and other costs related to irregular labour migration are higher than the expected benefits. Irregular labour migrants in the study areas have to pay a huge amount of money and then go through extreme hardships at every step of their journey before reaching their destinations. Moreover, a significant number of aspirant migrants cannot enter their destination country even though they spend hefty sums. The survey found the average monthly income of an irregular labour migrant is BDT 18,696, which is much below their expectation. More than half the respondents (54 percent) reported monthly income ranging from BDT 10,000 to BDT 20,000 while 28 percent had no income as they failed to migrate finally.

Thirdly, the cost of irregular labour migration was found to be lower than the cost of regular labour migration. However, the cost of both migrations varies greatly depending on the region, the country of destination, the route of migration and the nature of the job. The average total cost of irregular labour migration is BDT 271,100 per person. The financial cost of irregular labour migration through maritime channel is a little low, although its social cost is extremely high given the abuse, exploitations and deaths on boats. Whatever the amount, arranging the money is very difficult for the migrants, most of whom are from lower income families. The study found that the money to cover the cost comes mainly from selling properties such as land and ornaments, borrowing (at

high interest rates) from moneylenders, mortgage, family savings, sale of valuable household assets, and sometimes from the in-law's family (dowry). However, the tendency to arrange money through selling land and property is high among irregular labour migrants, with 32.5 percent respondents admitted to have collected the money by selling their land. The study found different payment methods and none of them is ideal. Recruiting agencies, criminal gangs and individual recruiters have developed different payment systems, including full payment before migration, payment in installments, full payment on the day of travel, partial payment, and payment after migration/on arrival. On-arrival payment is more popular in maritime migration. This means the migrants do not need to pay before departure; the payment is made after reaching the destinations.

Fourthly, the study found that the motivations for irregular migration are mostly economic ones, including income, cost of migration, unemployment and search for better jobs. Also responsible are some social and institutional factors such as influence of middlemen, obsession for going to foreign countries and poor performance of formal channels. The study has employed factor analysis methods to measure sample adequacy and significance of determinate factors of irregular labour migration in the study areas. Statistical analysis shows low income is the main factor accounting for 19.813 percent variations positively loaded with an Eigen value of 2.972. Moreover, they have very limited livelihood options to make a living. The second factor is employment problem which represents 10.521 percent variations with an Eigen value of 1.578. Survey data shows that employment opportunities at origins are limited and less-diversified. Factor analysis shows that people prefer irregular labour migration because it is cheaper. The factor of lower cost of irregular labour migration represents 9.109 percent variation with an Eigen value of 1.366. This means irregular migration is more desirable than regular migration. In the factor analysis, 'low-skill' variable was identified as the fourth important cause factor. Data shows the 'low-skill' variable has a variation of 7.971 percent in the total variable set with an Eigen value of 1.196. Inducement by brokers or middlemen has a significant influence as well. This variable accounts for a variation of 6.904 percent with an Eigen value of 1.036. Middlemen or labour

brokers in Bangladesh have been directly involved in the labour migration process. The study found that Bangladeshi people, particularly the youths, are obsessed with the idea of going abroad. This 'obsession' factor, which is among the top causes of irregular labour migration, represents 6.736 percent of variation with an Eigen Value of 1.027. Findings also show that this 'craze' is not only about attraction but also about social status and prestige.

The factor analysis also identified some other factors, with low level of significance, behind irregular labour migration, including relatives and friends are already in destinations, search for better work, lack of information regarding labour migration opportunities, information of available jobs abroad with high salary, recovery from shock and climate impacts.

Fifthly, the study has identified various critical humanitarian crises in the process of irregular labour migration, particularly through sea. Compared with the regular or formal labour migrants, those with irregular status face higher risks of being abused and exploited, and are denied of fundamental rights as a human beings or workers. Physical torture, ransom, bribe, inadequate access to basic service, discrimination regarding work hours and wages, harassment by law enforcing agencies, restricted mobility, poor working and living conditions, death and being accused as criminals at destinations are some of the common ordeals for the irregular labour migrants. During interviews, 77.78 percent of the respondents said they had to face different sorts of problems before, during and after migration, against only 16.94 percent who did not face any obstacle or crisis.

Sixthly, irregular labour migration affects migrant workers, their families and the society as a whole. Not all forms of labour migration contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and their socio-economic development. It is quite visible that irregular labour migration is becoming increasingly dangerous and causing serious human rights violation. About 70 percent of the respondents said their migration with irregular status has resulted in a lasting negative impact on their lives and livelihoods. It is otherwise for about 18 percent. Twelve percent migrants did not respond to this question. Findings show irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is responsible for extreme emotional trauma, social isolation, changing

social identity, joblessness, loss of savings, home and time, school dropouts, displacement, insecurity and even physical disability.

Finally, the study argues that irregular labour migration is the outcome of governance failures in both the sending and receiving countries, which help informal power structures to emerge and take control of the labour migration process. These power groups deliberately complicate the migration process. Their influence is further consolidated through a nexus with local and national politicians, local power groups, administrative bodies, international criminal groups and so forth. Their action and influence cannot be ignored because they have already achieved some sorts of acceptance, particularly in rural areas. Their influence and dominance are widespread and are, for the most part, the causes behind the sufferings of migrants, their families and the community. The Bangladesh government is well informed about the vulnerable conditions of its labour migrant population both at home and abroad, but unfortunately turns a blind eye to the problem. Further, there is a fundamental lack of clarity about how existing laws and policies as well as the service-providing mechanisms are active and responsive to protect labour migrants (whether regular or irregular) in times of crises. There are serious gaps between policy and practice in preventing irregular labour migration and protecting their rights. On the one hand, irregular labour migration is an outcome of governance failure and, on the other, it negatively affects the existence governance systems both at the sending and the receiving countries. So there is a pressing need to respond to the crisis in a holistic manner.

Recommendation

- In a single study, it is quite difficult to determine all the dynamics of irregular labour migration and its workings, as the issue is diverse and complex. People's understanding varies, and there is information gap as well. Therefore a comprehensive study on irregular labour migration is vital to explore its ground realities and also to build a database.
- Government and non-government organisations should jointly promote mass education and public awareness on pros and cons of

irregular labour migration, rights and entitlements of labour migrants both at origin and destination, from where and how they can get supports and the ways of ensuring safe migration. The process of public awareness initiatives should be strategic and effective to ensure sustainable change of mindset and practices.

- Local people do not have adequate and diverse opportunities in job markets. Left without alternative livelihood options, labour migrants are pushed by the lack of job opportunities at the origin and pulled by the hope of economic potentials in the destination country. Therefore, strategic initiatives to establish economic zones to generate employment opportunities and ensure better wages are recommended.
- Government's safe migration service is available at union parishad. But locals say officials are not cordial and do not provide information easily. So the government should take the issue seriously. The UP information centres can use the knowledge and expertise of the returnee migrants.
- The present study has identified a number of issues related to institutional capacity and responsibility that present challenges to manage development initiatives concerning labour migration. Therefore, priority should be given to strengthen capacity-building for key organisations and give them more responsibilities, deploy tools and systems to assess further requirements, deploy sufficient manpower and also enhance coordination mechanisms to make the institutions active, responsive and functional.
- The country has been facing challenges to explore new and viable labour markets for its huge potential labour migrants. It is also facing a stiff competition from the emerging labour-sending countries. The government should play a proactive role and coordinate with the civil society and private companies to retain the existing market and explore new ones with legal basis.
- The high cost of regular labour migration is one of the major factors behind irregular migration. Day by day labour migration cost has been increasing in Bangladesh, and the entire cost has to be borne by the migrants. So the government should take practical measures as soon as possible to reduce migration cost.

- Overseas jobseekers depend mostly on middlemen, only to face abuse and exploitation. To prevent this, the government should develop a mechanism to control middlemen by giving them legal identity and by monitoring their activities and offices at local and national levels.
- There is an increasing demand from among different stakeholders for setting up a monitoring cell at national level comprising government officials, civil society representatives, members of BAIRA and trade union leaders etc. This monitoring cell will be responsible for overseeing the migration process to ensure safe migration. A strong oversight mechanism can protect workers against these ill-practices.
- Cheating, extortion, death and various forms of violence are some natural outcomes of irregular labour migration. There are numerous instances where migrant workers received no supports from either the source country or the receiving country. They badly need social, legal and financial supports to survive and reintegrate in the society like other citizens. The government and development organisation should take both short-term and long-term support initiatives as needed by the victims.
- To combat irregular labour migration, it is vital to increase accountability and responsiveness of the administration, law enforcing agencies, boarder security forces, recruiting agencies and other formal institutions. Also important are ensuring vigilance, search and rescue operation in case of accidents and proper investigation into deceptions by brokers.
- Political will of the government is required to downsize irregular labour migration and protect migrants. Political consensus is needed to enforce laws, accommodate public concerns in national plan, make decisions and work with the international community.
- Critical engagement of private sector (including bank, human resource development institution, business sector, electronic and print media etc.) is vital to deal with the problem effectively. A strong private sector can provide vital supports through creating jobs, increasing wages and publicising irregular migration and trafficking-related issues (community radio, TV channels (particularly BTV) and FM radio can play important roles here).

CHAPTER 1

The Study Context, Analytical Framework &
Methodological Consideration of
Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh

Sailing to Malaysia: An Untold Story of a Failed Fortune-Seeker

A Case Study of Munnaf

Munnaf, a 29-year-old married man, lives in Jaliapalong, a village under Ukhia upazila of Cox's Bazar district. He has a son and lives in a joint family along with his parents and siblings. He is the sole income-earner in his family with a reasonably good number of dependents. Due to economic hardship, he had to put an end to his education after HSC and start working in a project in a local NGO. Before long, the project ended in early 2014 and his family was struggling again to earn a living. During these days of harsh conditions, he was introduced to Sanaullah (a middleman with different names in different places; in fact all are false identities), a man who claimed to have export-import business with Malaysia. Sanaullah offered Munnaf a highly-paid job of BDT 80,000 per month in Malaysia. Since no documents and advance payment were required and since a number of stories of successful migration through maritime channel did their rounds in the community, Munnaf was persuaded into grabbing this opportunity as the easiest and safest way to turn his life around.

It was the 1st Friday of March 2015. Immediately after Juma prayers, Munnaf got a call, asking him to make hurry to get on a boat leaving for Malaysia. He was the 'only person left behind,' he was told. Accordingly, Munnaf hired a CNG-run auto-rickshaw and went to the Rozur Bridge at Teknaf where he found a small boat waiting with 14 other fortune-seekers. Around 7:00pm, the boat started sailing and reached a place along the Teknaf River sometime around midnight. He was then handed over to another middleman and shifted into a large boat which accommodated roughly 40/45 people. This boat sailed for about a day and then reached somewhere in Myanmar where passengers were once again shifted into a big watercraft under the control of a new team of smugglers from Myanmar. This watercraft remained anchored for 10 days until it was full with around 400/450 passengers. Then, it sailed for seven days and

reached somewhere in Thailand. Having failed to ensure border clearance this time, the watercraft moved back to the Myanmar side again and dropped all its passengers on a small island. Abuse and inhuman treatments followed in the next few days. This was actually to force every migrant to arrange payment of BDT 230,000 only via bKash (a mobile cash transfer service) from their relatives at home. As soon as the confirmation of payment was received, Munnaf along with 116 others was taken aboard a new watercraft which then sailed for another seven days. At this stage, all crewmembers and the middlemen left, keeping the watercraft floating in the deep sea. Subsequently, the Myanmar Navy rescued them and handed them over to the Myanmar police. One month later, after due formalities, they were handed over to the Myanmar Border Guard. Another one month later, they were back in Cox's Bazar following mediation by the IOM.

According to Munnaf, it was the most horrifying experience in his life. Hunger and sleep deprivation were indiscriminate. He would be given only 100 gram of rice and 100 gram of drinking water a day. His weight came down to 31kgs from 65kgs before the voyage. He witnessed first-hand many deaths on the boat. A pregnant woman died during childbirth. The body of the woman and the baby, still alive, were thrown overboard. His sufferings were intolerable so much so that he attempted suicide several times. Even the Myanmar police allegedly tortured him. Moreover, his family needed to bribe different Bangladeshi authorities, including the police, nearly BDT 15,000 to arrange the proof for the Myanmar authorities that he was a Bangladeshi citizen. Today, Munnaf is virtually a disabled man. His doctor has prescribed him six months' complete rest with therapy. Family members are starving again. His son had to quit school because of economic hardship and has been sent to his maternal uncle's to be raised. Above all, he is now burdened with a large amount of loan which his family took to meet the traffickers' demand.

But Munnaf is not the only victim of this migration trap. The study found many sufferers like him and closely observed their physical, psychological, economic, social and legal hardships. We need to put an end to this type of labour migration. Labour migrants are human beings in need of assistance, protection and respect.

1.1 Background of the Study Context

This report details the design, methodology and findings of a study on irregular labour migration from Bangladesh, its challenges and ways forward. What is irregular labour migration? Who migrate with irregular status? What are the major qualifiers? How does irregular labour migration operate? What sorts of risks and crises are involved? What are the major consequences? These are some of the questions that constitute the core areas of focus throughout the study. Some strategic directions offered at the end of the report seek to help development stakeholders to deal with irregular labour migration more effectively. Irregular labour migration from Bangladesh has increased markedly over the last few years. The lack of accountability of government institutions in handling labour migration and other structural constraints have paved the way for a new power bloc to take hold of the entire labour migration process in Bangladesh. What is worrying is that this power bloc has caused a transformation of the labour migration system. They are enticing aspirant labour migrants into migrating through dangerous sea routes for 'better opportunities abroad'. In the process, migrant workers face extreme risks of abuse and exploitation before, during and after migration, and are denied legal rights and protection. They are often subject to physical torture, prolonged detention in harsh conditions and even death. The problem is so deep and complex that government and development organisations struggle to find new and effective solutions. While the geometric rise of irregular migration continues to cause alarm at home and abroad, there is hardly any research documenting the overall situation and suggesting policy measures for the protection of migrant workers. This study seeks to fill in that information gap and also tries to

What is worrying is that this power bloc has caused a transformation of the labour migration system. They are enticing aspirant labour migrants into migrating through dangerous sea routes for 'better opportunities abroad'.

deeply understand the cause and nature of the problems irregular labour migrants face. The purpose of this study is simple: To bring about efficiency and regulatory changes in the migration process.

The progress of Bangladesh in various fronts is evident. It has achieved remarkable feats in many social and economic indicators (e.g. women empowerment, child mortality, enrollments in primary school and many others). Bangladesh has recently upgraded to the status of a lower middle income country. The GNI (Gross National Income) per capita has risen to \$1,314 (World Bank 2015). Still, income disparities and other social inequalities continue to persist high, particularly among lower income groups (MJF 2012). A World Bank (2014) estimate suggests that Bangladesh has nearly 4.3 million unemployed active labour forces. If we add to this the underemployed workforce, it will be almost 24 percent of the total population (Khatun, F. 2013). There has not been any significant policy change in the recent past to create new job opportunities for the growing unemployed population. Anecdotal evidence suggests that labour migration contributes significantly to reduce unemployment and underemployment related problems as well as contribute to formation of country's economic growth. According to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET 2015), over 10 million Bangladeshi migrated to 159 countries (WDF 2015) between 1976 to mid 2015, of whom roughly 81 percent were labour migrants. Bangladesh Bank estimated that the country received \$15.31 billion in foreign remittance in the fiscal year 2014-2015, which was equivalent to nearly 14 percent of the total GDP (Bangladesh Bank Report 2015).

Even so, Bangladesh has a complicated labour migration process full of legal and structural constraints. In Bangladesh, formal migration is often expensive, intricate and time consuming. Labour migrants have been facing fraudulence and various hassles. As a solution, they rely on brokers/agents and various other informal channels. In the end, however, these helpless migrants are abused and exploited by the brokers and they lose everything they had - jobs, homestead land, family savings and so on - in the process. Further, they are not well informed about the safe and regular migration process as well as their rights and entitlements both at origin and destination. More often than not, these setbacks encourage migration through irregular channels. Irregular labour migration from

Bangladesh is nothing new; it is because of the recent humanitarian crisis of the boat people in the sea that this issue of irregular migration has received wider attention in policy debate. A deeper analysis, however, suggests that irregular labour migration is the outcome of governance failure of both the sending and receiving countries and thus have a political economy perspective (Borjas 1995, Benhabib 1996, Amagashie 2004). More specifically, either the government is unable to tackle irregular migration owing to institutional inefficiencies or is unwilling to do so for political-economic concerns (R. Berlinschi and M. Squicciarini 2008). This irregular labour migration from Bangladesh has become a most controversial and debated issue, and there is a huge outcry about this in and outside the country. Despite repeated attempts, the government has failed to answer some vital questions.

In the last few years, an alarming number of Bangladeshi fortune-seekers made desperate attempts to migrate, with irregular status, in various countries through maritime channels. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), some 87,000 Bangladeshi workers migrated to Malaysia illegally in 2014, through sea routes alone. OKUP (Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme), a national NGO, reported that on average 5,000 Bangladeshi workers took perilous journey every month during October 2013-April 2014 through maritime channels. Reportedly, the sea remains calm during these months. OKUP has claimed to have received some 400 complaints of clandestine journey to Malaysia (in its Narsigndi project locales) between September and December 2013 alone. Different sources have confirmed that a vast number of migrant workers died while on the way to destination countries through sea. All this has created panic and brought the issue to the forefront of development debates over the last few years. Further, it is clear that there is a link between criminal groups and irregular labour migration through sea routes because this is an easy way of making big money. It is estimated that the business is worth \$100 million a year through the Bay of Bengal alone (BRAC 2014).

Regardless of the process involved, it is by now established that irregular labour migrants are extremely exposed to different forms of abuse and exploitation. That is a clear violation of the existing standards of human rights (UDHR 1948, ICERD 1965), labour rights (ILO convention-97 &

143, UN convention 1990) and women rights (CEDAW 1979). These widespread problems and rights violations can be partly attributed to the lack of sound policies and regulations. Institutional regulation mechanisms related to labour migration are weak and ineffective in many cases. Public institutions are characterised by a lack of clear responsibilities and coordination and shortage of human resources and funds.

Given all this, conducting a strong evidence-based study was crucial for developing strategic directions to tackle irregular labour migration and protect

labour migrants from adverse consequences. To obtain further empirical evidence, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) envisions accumulating information about the 'perspectives of irregular labour migration, its causes and consequences' so that the human rights situation of migrant workers with irregular status comes to the forefront of development discussion, policy formulation, planning and implementation. Different government and nongovernment institutions (both national and international) are active as well to facilitate safe and secure labour migration. Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is one of the premier national NGOs in Bangladesh working relentlessly on labour migrants' rights. Its emphasis, among other things, includes establishing both supply and demand side accountability. This study is also an endeavour towards this very end.

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1.2 Objective of the Study

This study aims to generate a concrete knowledge base on irregular labour migration from Bangladesh with a special focus on migration through maritime channels, in efforts to ensure more effective solutions to the problem.

More specifically, the study aims to:

- Collect and collate persisting main features and relevant understanding/knowledge centring round irregular labour migration from Bangladesh, particularly those using maritime channels;
- Identify the forces and factors associated with irregular labour migration from Bangladesh;
- Assess potential impacts/consequences associated with irregular labour migration from Bangladesh; and
- Review comparative strengths of MJF programming in reducing irregular labour migration from Bangladesh and to suggest more effective strategies.

1.3 Key Research Questions

Specifying research questions is the methodological point which helps the study to define study problems and make decisions about the study as to what data will be collected and analysed and in what process. In this consideration, the study has addressed the key research questions about understanding irregular labour migration dynamics in Bangladesh. Irregular Bangladeshi labour migrants have some specific characteristics and experiences that have been taken into consideration in this research. Irregular labour migration encompasses some very complex and diverse issues that are not at all helpful for labour migrants. Therefore, it is essential to explore the means and process of irregular labour migration, including arrangement of the cost and the place they want to go for laborious work. To better understand the factors that promote irregular migration, the study seeks to put together concrete evidence and help policymakers to chalk out long-term and short-term strategies for positive changes. Other key research questions include how does irregular labour migration operate and why does it need to be regulated? What are the existing supports and services available to them and which types of services and benefits do they use and have access to? What are the structural and non-structural constraints facing the labour migrants? The present study also seeks to understand what is happening in the process of irregular labour migration and what kind of crises, difficulties

and challenges they face as they strive to build their future. They are more vulnerable than regular migrants and may even have to experience trauma. The research questions with some details are as follows:

Sl.	Research Questions	Issues of Exploration
01	Who migrated irregularly as labourer?	Socio-economic & demographic characteristics of irregular labour migrants
02	How did they migrate and arrange the cost?	Ways/means and process of irregular labour migration, cost of migration and arranging the cost
03	Where did they migrate to look for jobs?	Destination of labour migrants
04	Why did they migrate?	Factors influencing irregular labour migration (analysing cause factors)
05	What happened in the process of irregular labour migration?	Crisis and challenges they faced before, during and after migration
06	How irregular labour migration is taking shape and operating?	Political economy, power practice, regulation and implication
07	What could be the strategic solution to tackle inhuman treatments and other effects?	Key strategic proposals to influence policy decisions and further development needs to ensure safe and favourable labour migration.

1.4 Analytical Framework of the Study

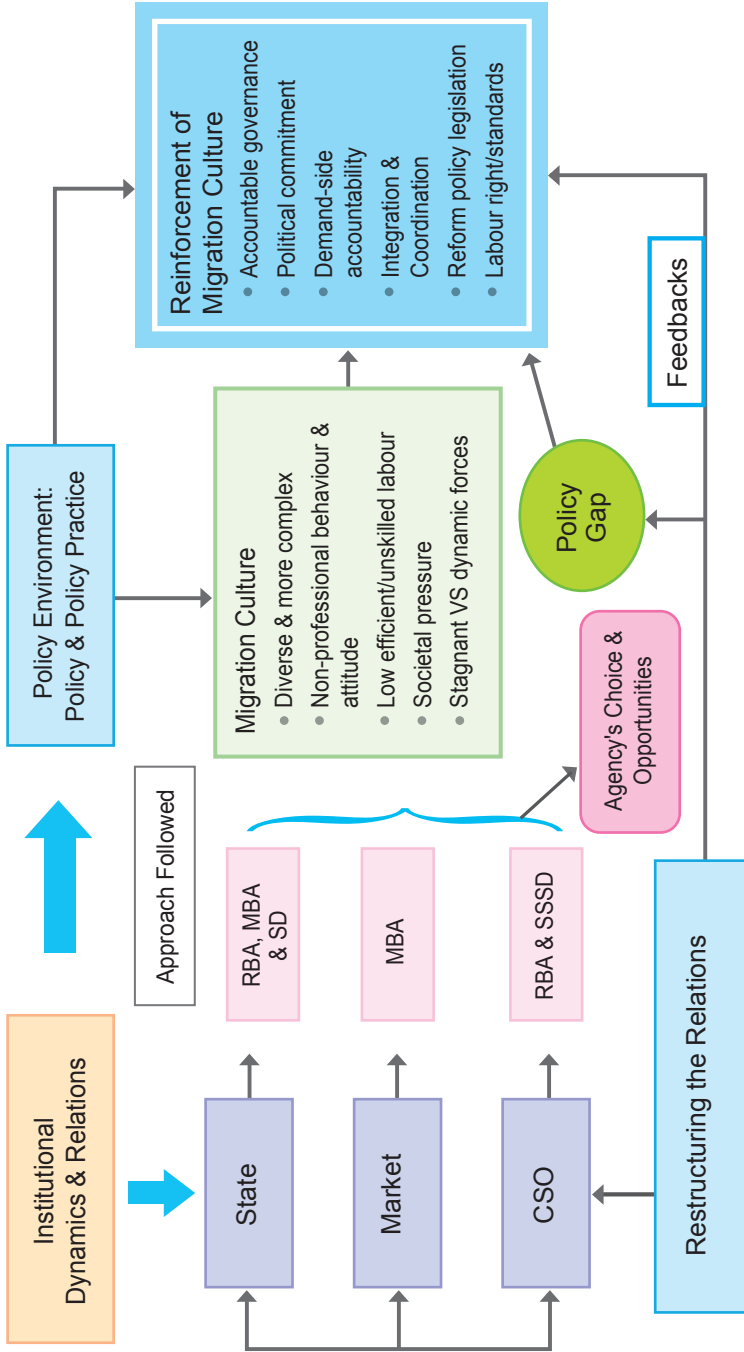
For the study to be accurate, it is vital to collect and interpret the data systematically. To interpret the field data, the following analytical framework has been developed in light of the study approach, theme and objectives. The entire study and its analysis rest on this analytical framework. The analytical framework has been developed based on the political economy of labour migration. The following diagram presents the analytical framework of understanding and analyses the whole range of issues related to irregular labour migration from Bangladesh.

According to the framework, existing irregular labour migration culture is the by-product of the political economy. The box titled 'irregular labour migration culture' indicates that political economy has a significant contribution to making labour migration process more complex and abusive. It forces both the structures and the agencies to behave unprofessionally or irrationally and triggers the rise of other stagnant forces. If we look at it critically, it will be clear that the structures are dominating over the human agency's choices and options about making migration-related decision. On the one hand, people in Bangladesh have 'migration addiction' and on the other the existing structures induce them to accept patchy ways of labour migration with irregular status. In the absence of adequate information, supports and services related to regular migration, people have few options but to migrate through irregular channels.

Irregular labour migration culture is the by-product of the political economy. 'Irregular labour migration culture' indicates that political economy has a significant contribution to making labour migration process more complex and abusive.

Moreover, institutional dynamics and relationship patterns show that there exists an imbalanced relationship within the structures. The state machinery is largely unresponsive in and unaccountable to regulating labour migration and providing supports and services for the protection and welfare of labour migrants. The state is either reluctant or unable to control labour market (e.g. recruiting agencies, middlemen, reducing migration cost, exploring new labour markets and so forth). It seems that the state is seriously promoting a market-based society. There is also a strong 'unholy alliance' between the state and market which centres around making money for personal gains. Further, in Bangladesh the market is fragmented and has therefore failed to establish uniformity in regulating labour migration. Markets always follow business valuation

Diagram 1: Analytical Framework of the Study



methods by ignoring the ethical and moral values where making profit is the only determinant of their business value. The unholy relationships and predominant influence of market over the state machinery have opened the door for petty interest. In a simplest term, labour-migration markets are enjoying more freedom from national political and legal bindings. Recently, informal labour-migration market has evolved as a dominant and influential structure by building functional relations with local and national political figures, law enforcing agencies and border securities, organised criminal groups, local mastaans (goons), recruiting dalals (middlemen) at the local level to handle aspirant migrants.

Policies related to labour migration are not adequate and supportive enough to prevent irregular labour migration and to defend migrants' rights. The narrow interest of policymakers hardly serves public interest. Further, there are huge gaps between policies and practices. Given all these elements of the framework, we should move to restructure the institutional relationships through policy advocacy, and if we want to improve the labour migration culture, then we should ensure better political commitment, accountable and transparent governance, logical behaviour of potential labour migrants, improved coordination among states, markets and civil societies and also reform policies and legislations.

1.5 Irregular Labour Migration & the Study Working Definition

Irregular labour migration has no one meaning. Plenty of ambiguities persist surrounding its definition. Like labour migration itself, irregular labour migration is multifaceted and involves diverse issues and standards. So there is plenty of room for misconception and misinterpretation. Different professionals and agencies use different terminologies to explain their own perspectives. Following is a list of a number of terminologies frequently used to refer to labour migrants in an irregular situation:

- Irregular labour migration
- Illegal labour migration

- Clandestine labour migration
- Status-less labour migration
- Undocumented labour migration
- Unauthorised labour migration
- Uncontrolled labour migration
- Sans-papers labour migration

Again, available literature contains several definitions. Typically, 'irregular labour migration' refers to a movement in which international labour migrants enter a country without legal permission or stay in a country not entitled to reside in, either because they have never had a legal residence permit or because they have overstayed their time-limited permit. Article 5 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families reads that migrant workers and members of their families are: (a) considered as documented or in a regular situation if they are authorised to enter, to stay and to engage in a salaried activity in the state of employment pursuant to the law of that state and to international agreements to which that state is a party; and (b) considered as non-documented or in an irregular situation if they do not comply with the conditions provided for in subparagraph (a) of the present article. According to the Global Migration Group (GMG) 2008, an 'irregular migrant' is a person who, owing to undocumented entry or the expiry of his or her visa, lacks legal status in a transit or host country. The term applies to migrants who break a country's admission rules and not authorised to remain in the host country.

Analysis shows irregular labour migrants are being increasingly stigmatised globally on the grounds that criminal groups are involved with their migration process. Country perspective reports can be cited in this regard. This is clearly a violation of fundamental human rights of labour migrants. Labourers from different low-income countries, including Bangladesh, migrate irregularly to join the labour market in countries where informal economy is strong and informal employment widespread. They move as irregular labourers because of high unemployment and low income at home. Moreover, the formal market is more controlled and restricted, and it adopts different policies to check

unwanted entries. Secondly, the term 'illegal labour migration' involves a negative connotation and completely denies the human side of migrants. Though the receiving countries of labour migrants habitually claim that only the sender countries benefit from labour migration, it is totally wrong because all migrant workers, irrespective of their status, contribute to the economic prosperity of the host country (UNFPA 2006). Further, labour migration is a human rights issue recognised in national and international policy agendas. Human being cannot be illegal; rather he has all the rights to make choices about where s/he wants to go and when to leave, and is subject to legal protection.

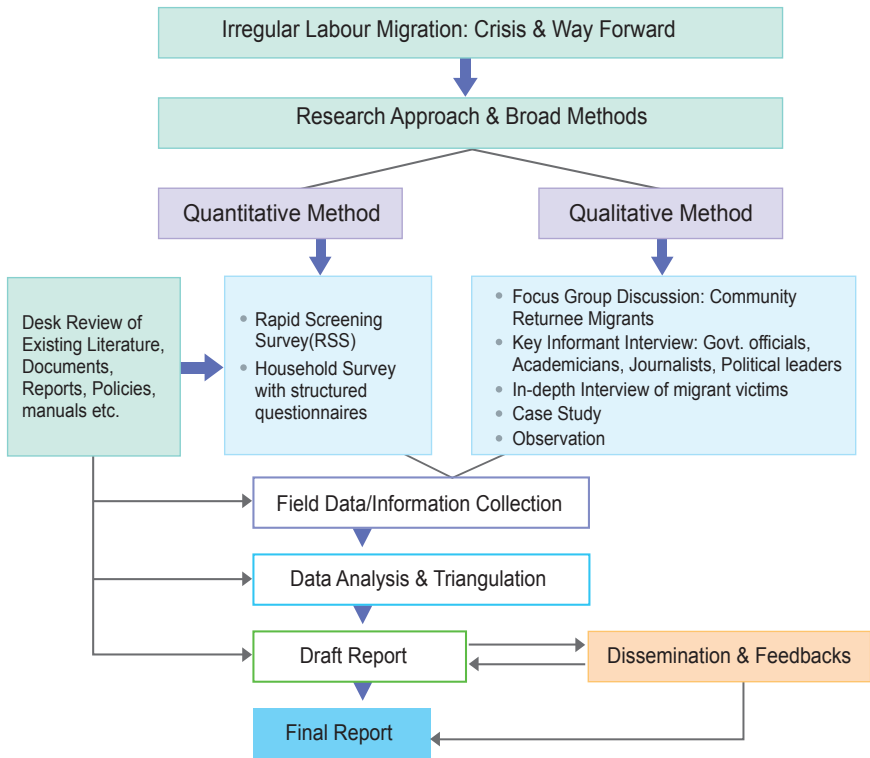
Given these inconsistencies and debates, the present study finds it appropriate to use the term 'irregular labour migration'. It also establishes the following working definitions to avoid any misinterpretation:

- i) Labour migrants who have unauthorised entry, unauthorised residence and unauthorised work, meaning unauthorised in every process;
- ii) Labour migrants who have authorised entry and authorised residence but unauthorised work. This refers to a situation where labour migrants enter the destination countries using visas other than work permit visas, such as in student, omrah, hajj, tourist and business visas.
- iii) Labour migrants who have authorised entry but unauthorised residence and work (through visa-overstay); and
- iv) Aspirant labour migrants who have tried to cross borders, spent money and time for this and are known to local people as would-be migrants, but has failed to reach the destination countries because of fraudulence, or those arrested by the border security force or law enforcing agencies.

1.6 Methodological Choice & Option of the Study

Realistic, viable and reliable were the three key areas of focus in selecting the methodology. Thus, in combination of both quantitative and qualitative ones, a mixed research approach was employed. Data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was

collected through quantitative surveys. Both Rapid Screening Survey and Household Survey were used for this. On the other hand, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), In-depth Interview, Case Study and Expert Interviews were mainly used for collecting qualitative data. Structured and semi-structured questionnaires and a number of checklists were used for this in particular. For secondary data collection and analysis, literature review method was applied. Following is a brief discussion of different methods used for this study:



Literature Review: Labour migration and irregular labour migration-related literature were collected and reviewed first. Documents related to policies and regulations were also assessed to find the adequacy and gaps in terms of policies and practices. The study design, questionnaires and checklists were developed based on the literature review and in consultation with MJF's partner organisations working with labour migration.

Rapid Screening Survey: A Rapid Screening Survey (RSS) was conducted to list migrant households and to identify the prevalence rate of regular and irregular labour migration in the study areas. For this, every household in the study area was surveyed using a limited but basic, structured questionnaire. The RSS further helped to get a comparison between MJF intervention and non-intervention areas.

Household Survey: Based on the migrant household list identified through the RSS, a representative sample size was drawn next using sample determination formula. To do this, emphasis was given more on sampling the households that have had at least one irregular labour migrant over the last five years. In all, 360 households were surveyed, covering 48 villages from six districts having high incidences of migration.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): To complement information gaps in the analysis of the household survey data, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with returnees and failed migrants and also the heads of households with member/s working abroad. A total of 12 FGDs were conducted in the six study districts, with two in each district.

In-depth Interview: The study also conducted in-depth interviews with a number of irregular labour migrants. For this, a checklist was developed and used. Necessary caution was maintained to avoid leading questions. These helped us to document some of the bitter experiences migrants face throughout the process.

Expert Interview: A good number of expert interviews were held, particularly with officials of BMET, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, DEMO, law enforcing agencies, ADC general, academicians, president of BAIRA, journalists and lawyers. These interviews were conducted mainly to obtain expert views on different aspects of irregular migration which, among other things, included how irregular labour migration operates, what are the institutional gaps, adequacy and implementation of existing policies and laws, and probable alternatives/solutions to perceived threats centring round welfare and rights of labour migrants.

Selection of Study Locales and Sampling Criteria

A total of 48 villages, 12 unions and six upazilas were covered from six administrative districts of Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions. The highest rate of prevalence of labour migration was the main criterion for selecting study districts. To get a comparative picture of analyses, three MJF intervention districts and three non-intervention districts were selected. Soon after the selection, an RSS was conducted to list every household with a migrated member (in the last five years). The RSS identified 4,321 labour migrants in the study areas, of whom 1,434 were irregular labour migrants. Finally, 360 households of the identified 1,434 irregular labour migrants were surveyed based on sample determinants formula and using a detailed questionnaire. Thus, a multistage purposive sampling technique was used. Availability of dependable respondents, location, communication cost and time were the main criteria for using purposive sampling. Based on the prevalence rate of irregular labour migration, an uneven number of samples were drawn from the MJF intervention and non-intervention areas. So, 90 households were surveyed from every non-intervention district against only 30 households from every MJF-intervention district. The Geographic Distribution of Sample Households is presented in the following table:

Selection Criteria of Study areas & Population

- Multi-dimensionalities of the irregular labour migration covered;
- Geographic diversity in consideration of highest rate of prevalence of labour migration covered;
- Comparative perspective of MJF intervention and non-intervention areas covered;
- Special emphasis given on irregular labour migrants.

Table -1: Geographic Distribution of Sample Households

District	Upazila	Union	Village	No. of Labour Migrants' HH covered by RSS	No. of Labour Migrants' HH covered by HH Survey
MJE Intervention Areas	Comilla	2	8	974	30
	Tangail	2	8	654	30
	Narayanga nj	2	8	633	30
Non-MJE Intervention Areas	Sirajganj	2	8	715	90
	Cox's Bazar	2	8	887	90
	Narsingdi	2	8	458	90
Total	06	12	48	4,321	360

In qualitative research, however, purpose and necessity were the main criteria for sampling.

1.7 Roadmap of the Study Report

The study report has been laid out in seven main chapters. First chapter provides a brief analysis of the study background, objectives, research questions and the analytical framework. Apart from these, a working definition of irregular labour migration, study methodology and a short profiling of sample respondents have been considered in this section. Second chapter provides an analysis on governance structure and process related to labour migration from Bangladesh. Chapter three describes labour migration trends and patterns, rate of prevalence of both regular and irregular labour migration in MJF and non-MJF intervention areas and an analysis of effective strategies in practice. Chapter four examines the determinant factors of irregular labour migration. Chapter five attempts to explore the overall risks, crises and difficulties associated with irregular labour migration. Chapter six details the impacts of irregular labour migration on the migrants, their families and the society as a whole. Finally, in chapter seven, a conclusion has been drawn based on the study analysis, which is then followed by a set of recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Governance of Labour Migration in Bangladesh: Process, Construction & Operation

This chapter explores the functional modalities of governance related to irregular labour migration in Bangladesh. To be specific, this section seeks to clarify how irregular labour migration operates, what are the structural and non-structural dimensions of power relations that make this migration problematic and cause sufferings, what are the roles of different government institutions in managing regular and irregular labour migration, in what context new power blocs have emerged and took control of the irregular migration process, what are the regulatory frameworks for the protection of migrant workers against injustice and exploitation and what are the existing governance challenges and gaps between policies and practices. The study argues that irregular labour migration is the outcome of governance failures in both the sending and receiving countries, which help informal power structures to emerge and take control of the labour migration process. The emergence and function of these power groups largely are responsible for creating a messy and anarchic situation in the whole labour migration process. Their influence is further consolidated through the creation and maintenance of a nexus with local and national politicians, local power groups, administrative bodies, international criminal groups and so forth (Purvez, 2005). Their action and influence cannot be ignored because they have already achieved some sorts of acceptance, particularly in rural areas. Their influence and dominance are widespread and are, for the most part, the causes behind the sufferings of migrants, their families and the community as a whole.

Irregular labour migration is the outcome of governance failures in both the sending and receiving countries, which help informal power structures to emerge and take control of the labour migration process.

2.1 Governance Situation of Labour Migration in Bangladesh: Actors and Elements Involved

The Bangladesh government, with the help of different departments, has been trying to strengthen and promote governance mechanisms for labour migration. Recently, the government has taken some effective initiatives (e.g. enacted Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013, established Probashi Kallyan Bank as a specialised financial institution for migrant workers, expanded TTCs at local level for skill development, also the BMET is now comparatively better functioning) to make labour migration safe, and to protect rights of migrant workers. Despite these efforts, the labour-migration governance in Bangladesh is riddled with problems. Currently, the country has been facing serious administrative and governance problems over the management of both regular and irregular labour migration to different destinations. In spite of their immense contribution to the national economic growth and the human development index, migrant workers suffer badly throughout the whole process of their migration, which the government seems to overlook. Migrants, whether regular or irregular, are subjected to frequent neglect, harassment and violation of human rights. Relevant government departments and institutions are not responsive enough to the needs of labour migrants and do little to protect them from injustice and rights violation. In many cases, corruption, reluctance of some officials to do their duties and other malpractices are widespread in the labour-migration process. Labour-migration governance in Bangladesh is multi-layered and multi-dimensional, and involves multiple actors (both formal and informal) at the national and local levels.

2.1.1 Formal Governance of Operating Labour Migration & Its Challenges

Various private recruiting agencies authorised by different government ministries and departments are involved in managing, controlling, supervising and recruiting labour migrants. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (EWOE) is the main authority that handles labour migration. As a legal entity, this ministry is responsible

for creating overseas jobs for the citizens, dealing with the problems migrants face and ensuring their protection. However, the study found that the ministry has resource shortages. Over the last couple of years, the ministry has failed not only to explore new markets for the growing number of labour migrants but also to negotiate effectively with the host countries that have imposed restrictions on Bangladeshi migrants. Also, the Bangladesh government has signed bilateral agreements and Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with different countries but failed to ensure their effective implementations for various reasons. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is another implementing agency, which is accountable for controlling and regulating agent recruitment, collection and analysis of labour market information, registration of migrants, execution of training programmes, organising pre-departure briefing sessions and resolving legal disputes. However, the study found that the BMET has failed to ensure effective coordination with other actors. It has also failed to allocate adequate budget to run the TTCs properly. Further, the approved training curriculums are backdated, trainers are unqualified and the training is very short.

The District Employment and Manpower Office (DEMO) in Bangladesh are managed by the BMET, which is the primary entry point for migrants. The DEMO is responsible for doing online registration of aspirant migrants, receiving online complaints, making them aware on safe and secure migration process, ensuring welfare for the families of deceased migrants, verifying work permits, recording and settling complaints, disseminating information on available job markets, keeping data on returnee migrants, providing pre-departure training, selection and training of potential female migrants and vocational guidance and welfare activities. The study found tremendous shortcomings in its functions. It is mainly because the DEMOs lack efficiency and manpower (some of the available workforces are irregular) and are not sincere, cooperative and responsive enough. In addition, they are highly controlled by the BMET.

The role of foreign missions is also vastly important for exploring potential labour markets, providing consular services for Bangladeshi workers and ensuring the welfare of the migrants overseas. However, the

study found many migrants who did not receive any supports in their needs from the foreign missions. Migrants allege that in most cases, officials of foreign missions do not perform their duties properly and are unresponsive to the needs of the workers abroad. A good number of the respondents also claimed that in most cases officials of foreign missions either did not take their problems seriously or acted very late. On the other hand, hundreds of private companies have been handling labour recruitments with government permission. Under the rules, they are obliged to follow the government instructions in recruiting manpower but in practice they do not care what the rule book says. They charge workers fees that far exceed the permissible limit, which is totally prohibited. Further, they are also involved in abusive and fraudulent practices. They entice potential migrants by offering 'attractive jobs with high wages,' though upon reaching their destinations, many migrants find the pay is very low or there is no work at all. The study found that both the fraudulence practices and the migration costs are increasing geometrically, making the process more complicated and problematic for the migrants. In the recruitment process, they employ local agents called dalal whose job is to 'catch' potential labour migrants and realise money from them.

However, formal institutions involved with labour migration have failed to ensure safe migration and protect migrants' rights. All sorts of supports and services are centralised. Government agencies have failed to reach the local people with available supports and services, explore new labour markets, provide adequate information of job opportunities and reduce migration cost. The study reveals that such an unhelpful situation surrounding the labour-migration governance is the reason why irregular labour migration gains currency, creating scopes for the emerging new power blocs to control the migration process.

2.1.2 Informal Governance in Operating Irregular Labour Migration: Emergence of New Power Blocs & their Influence and Dominance

Over the last decade, the global labour market has undergone a radical change marked by increasing informalisation of employment (Likic-

Brboric and Schierup 2012). This re-structuraisation of global labour market creates unstable working conditions and seriously undermines irregular labour migrants' rights. Currently, the global labour market is highly competitive. As a result, job contracts in the coming days are likely to be short-term, part-time or even on self-employment basis without full social benefits and job security. The present global labour market is characterised by accumulation of wealth and power by depriving or shrinking rights of labour (Hertel 2009). On the other hand, Bangladesh as a labour intensive country has been struggling to compete with the global labour market and create new markets for its growing number of aspirant migrants. Moreover, weak governance in handling labour migration (e.g. high cost, uncertainty, lack of supports and services etc), lack of political will and inefficient diplomacy make the labour migration process more complex and troublesome. Against this backdrop, irregular labour migration has spread under the control of the new power blocs (criminal groups) whose influence and dominance are making the labour migration process ever more difficult. In Bangladesh, it is common for aspirant migrants to fall prey to illegal recruiting agents or brokers who extort money from them.

Currently in Bangladesh, the lack of regular migratory channels with strict supervision and serious attention for the protection of migrant workers has promoted the shift of the labour migration management from formal channels to the hands of criminal groups. This shift has resulted in exploitation and abuse of migrants. That criminal gangs are operating this lucrative business is a serious concern for the Bangladesh government. The emergence of structured criminal gangs is the reason why migrants suffer so much. Also, their increasing influence appears to be a threat to rule of law and governance. Over the years, the criminal groups formed some kind of shadow governance in the labour migration process.

The influence of criminal groups in the labour migration process is widespread, and they operate under a strict hierarchical structure. The hierarchy of the criminal structure, composed of 'core' and 'additional' members, assigns a specific role and responsibilities. Such hierarchies are functionally vertical in nature but horizontal dependency is also highly visible. Within the 'core' and 'additional' clusters there are

different ranks. On the top of the hierarchy, there are investors, protectors and communicators who enjoy greater benefits from this unusual manpower business. On the other hand, the dalal (collector of labour migrants) at grassroots levels belongs to the lower position and his main responsibility is to 'catch' aspirant migrants. The study seeks to know how these criminal groups (particularly dalals and their immediate protectors) operate at the local level. Sending labour migrants through sea, air and land routes with irregular status is a very profitable business for the criminal groups, which helps them to sustain as a structured entity. They have strong connections and unholy relations with local political leaders, law enforcement agencies and government officials. All this helps them to fend off external pressures and threats. They also have a very good alliance with relevant service-providing institutions whose supports at various levels help them operate this unlawful labour migration. The study found that their ties with other criminal groups at national and international levels, together with the aforementioned connections, give them a free rein to consolidate their power. Further, division of labour among various organised criminal groups is also common. This means, not only the identified criminals are involved here; rather a wide range of interest groups are engaged in the process with specific responsibilities, including as transporters (auto-rickshaw drivers), food suppliers, boatmen, bKash (mobile banking) agents, political leaders at local level and so on.

The influence of criminal groups in the labour migration process is widespread, and they operate under a strict hierarchical structure. The hierarchy of the criminal structure, composed of 'core' and 'additional' members, assigns a specific role and responsibilities. Such hierarchies are functionally vertical in nature but horizontal dependency is also highly visible.

Irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to different countries is nothing new, but it is now taking place on a large scale with the help of

organised criminal groups. As a result, many poor and ultra-poor people are falling victim to this unlawful migration. Therefore, the government should take concrete actions to curb the influence of these power groups and better manage the migration process by gradually regulating the flow of migrant workers.

2.2 Legal Framework and Labour Migration Governance: Protection of Labour Migrant Workers in Bangladesh

Labour migration from Bangladesh is governed by national laws and policies, international conventions and bilateral agreements. And yet, irregular labour migrants from Bangladesh are facing numerous violations of their fundamental human rights both at home and in destination countries. They are frequently denied access to financial supports, decent jobs, healthcare benefits, accommodations and social security guaranteed by the laws and international accords. Their mobility is highly restricted; they are not allowed to exercise their rights to freedom of association. At home, complexities, hassles and sufferings in the process are a daily reality. Labour migrants, whether regular or irregular, have all the rights to enjoy their fundamental rights. Issues regarding protection against different forms of rights violation, abuse and discrimination of labour migrants have been widely discussed in policy debates, but effective initiatives are hardly seen globally. In this context, it is essential to strengthen governance process and legal frameworks that support safe labour migration and protect labour and human rights and the wellbeing of migrant workers. Moreover, it is imperative to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of existing policies and laws both by the sending and the receiving countries.

2.2.1 International Instruments:

Non-discrimination and equality without distinctions are the fundamental principles of the international human rights law. It protects the universal recognition of basic rights, fundamental freedoms, dignity and rights for all citizens. International human rights laws lay down obligations that every state is bound to fulfill and apply them to protect labour migrants

from rights violation. Labour migrants and their labour rights are protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) 1965, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICESCR), ILO Convention - 97 & 143, UN Convention 1990, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979 and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948): Adopted in 1948, the UDHR represents the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family which is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace. The UDHR goes on to affirm that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration (Article 2). Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3). No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Article 5). All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination (Article 7). Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (Article 13-1). Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country (Article 13-2). Bangladesh ratified the UDHR which provides for human rights standards.

UN Migrant Workers Convention (ICRMW) 1990: The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (UN Migrant Workers Convention, ICRMW) was adopted in December 1990. The UN Convention seeks to discourage irregular migration and at the same time it urges for protections of migrants' rights, including of those who find themselves in an irregular situation. According to the UN Convention, migrant workers and their families shall be free to leave any state, including their State of origin (Article 8). It also recognises that migrant workers and members of their families shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 12). They shall have the right to freedom of expression

(Article 13). Article 14 of this convention clearly specifies that no migrant worker or member of his or her family shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, or to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation. Migrant workers and members of their families shall be entitled to effective protection by the State against violence, physical injury, threats and intimidation (Article 16). Bangladesh has accepted this and has signed and ratified it in 1998 and 2011 respectively.

ILO Conventions (97 & 143): These are the first comprehensive international instruments for broad solutions to the problems facing migrant workers. The first assembly of the International Labour Conference in 1919 highlighted the issue of equality of treatment between nationals and migrant workers, and the coordination of migration policies between states on the one hand and between government, employers and workers' organisations on the other (ILO 2001). The most important of the ILO instruments relating to migrant workers are: the Migration to Employment Convention (Revised) 1949 (No. 97); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143); and the Migrant Workers Recommendations (No. 151). Convention No. 97 came into force in 1952 and Convention No. 143 in 1978. ILO instruments on migrant workers provide for guarantees and facilities to assist migrant workers and their families in all stages of the migration process. Although Bangladesh has signed the UN Convention, it has not yet ratified the ILO conventions.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979: This Convention is a powerful instrument to hold both sending and receiving states accountable for violations of women migrant workers' human rights. The CEDAW includes a number of provisions applicable to migrant women, including but not limited to the elimination of sex role stereotyping (Article 5), suppression of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitutes (Article 6), and an end of discrimination in the field of employment and citizenship (Articles 3, 9 and 11). Bangladesh has agreed to the CEDAW in 1984 but made reservations to articles 2, 13(a), and 16(1) (c) and (f), stating that these provisions conflict with the Sharia law. However, this has resulted in an increased number of Bangladeshi women migrating for work.

2.2.2 National Instruments:

In order to manage and provide better protection to migrant workers and uphold their rights, the Bangladesh government has taken different measures, including formulation of ordinances, policies, laws, orders and rules. These include: The Emigration Ordinance 1982, Overseas Employment Policy 2006, National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) 2011, Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act of 2012, The Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 and Rules Related to International Labour Migration.

The Emigration Ordinance 1982: Migration from Bangladesh was regulated under an ordinance called the 'Emigration Ordinance of 1982'. The ordinance encouraged development of institutions for promoting overseas employment. It appeared as comprehensive in terms of nature, scope and dimension. Under the terms of the Ordinance, only those with valid travel documents were allowed to emigrate. The Ordinance also empowered the government, in the public interest, to prohibit the emigration of persons of a particular occupation, profession, vocation or qualification. Under the Ordinance, the government was authorised to grant licences to individuals and companies who wish to be engaged in recruitment for overseas employment (Sec. 10), and to cancel or suspend licences and withhold repayment of the security deposit if it is satisfied that the licensee's conduct has been improper or is in violation of the law or prescribed Code of Conduct. The government has enacted a new act (Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013) by repealing the Emigration Ordinance, 1982 (Ordinance No. XXIX of 1982) to make provisions in conformity with the international conventions, human rights perspectives and treaties ratified.

Overseas Employment Policy 2006: The Bangladesh government was also adopted Overseas Employment Policy in 2006 to organise overseas employment sector and to ensure welfare of Bangladeshi workers abroad. The objective of this policy was to ensure the prospect of regular migration of long-term and short-term, abolition of any scope of irregular migration, to protect the rights, dignity and security of all migrant workers in and outside the country. This policy was also effective in

considering to recognise assistance in social and economic re-integration of returnee migrant workers. Due to some weaknesses and wider demands of up gradation, the cabinet omitted this policy and further approved the new Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy on January, 2016.

National Skill Development Policy (NSDP) 2011: This is a supplementary policy related to labour migration. In this policy there is a provision of recognising the needs for migrant workers' comprehensive orientation and training and provision of establishing migration support services for safe migration and livelihood.

Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act of 2012: The government of Bangladesh enacted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act in 2012. The act categorically addressed all forms of trafficking including prostitution, various forms of sexual exploitation, pornography, forced labour or services, debt-bondage, slavery or practices similar to slavery, exploitation through false marriage, forcible engagement in the entertainment industry, begging and removal of organs for the purpose of trade. This act is an effective instrument to restrain the perpetrators. As per the provision of this act, an individual committing trafficking offence will be punished with maximum imprisonment for life and for organised crime the maximum punishment will be the death penalty. The Act also specifies the establishment of tribunal for the purpose of speedy trial and other necessary arrangements tools to establish judicial accomplishment. Furthermore, the act also addresses protective measures for the victims of human trafficking. The proposed measures include the identification, rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation, social integration and return of victims of trafficking.

The Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013: The government of Bangladesh enacted Overseas Employment and Migration Act in 2013. This act has been designed to protect the rights of its workers outside of the country. Under this act, all migrant workers from Bangladesh are recognised as workers and are guaranteed basic labour rights, they have the right to legal remedy, they can access labour courts, mobile courts, and other courts and the Bureau of Manpower

Employment and Training (BMET) and labour attachés in destination countries are recognised as key rights custodians. This act also enhances the safety of women's migration and also makes recruiting agencies more accountable. According to the ILO, this is the first-ever law on labour migration of Bangladesh that derives basic principles of the international labour standards and the UN conventions and recommendations.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016: The cabinet approved the "Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy" in 2016 with a view in ensuring and encouraging safe migration and protection of migrants and their families. The policy has been formulated, keeping in mind international laws and convention on migration. The policy builds on the foundations laid out in the migration policy approved in 2006. The new policy is more detailed and comprehensive than the previous one. This policy includes six essential directives to ensure and encourage safe migration, protection of migrants and their family members, ensure facilities and welfare of migrant workers, encourage migration of female workers, associating migration with national development and proper planning for labour migration. This policy also incorporates a provision for setting up a 'national migration forum' to oversee its implementation. It also proposed formation of a national steering committee comprising ministers and secretaries of the ministries concerned to deal with issues relating to overseas employments.

Rules Related to International Labour Migration: In addition to the 'Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act, 2013, the legal regime of managing international labour migration also consists of the three interrelated sets of rules including: i) The Emigration Rules 2002, ii) The Wage Earners' Welfare Fund Rules 2002, and iii) The Recruiting Agents' License and Conduct Rules 2002. These rules were adopted to control migration process and promotion of overseas employment, define the role of the activities of Recruiting agents and arrange welfare activities to the migrant workers and their families. These Rules were framed in pursuance of the now repealed Emigration Ordinance 1982, section 19. The effects of these Rules have been saved by the OEM Act 2013, section 49 (2). The government is in the process of drafting new sets of Rules on migration management, recruitment regulation, migrant

workers' welfare fund and registration of the jobseekers and workers under the OEM Act 2013. The government has already organized consultation with different stakeholders in revising these new rules.

2.3 Limitations & Gaps of Governance of Labour Migration (Institutional & Legal)

In Bangladesh, the governance related to labour migration has been facing a wide range of limitations and challenges. In many cases, legal provisions for ensuring safe and secure labour migration and protection of migrants appear contradictory and inconsistent, which should be urgently addressed. Some inconsistencies between the existing laws and practices are:

- The ministry in charge of managing this labour migration is severely under-resourced. Over the last couple of years, the ministry has failed not only to open new markets for the growing number of potential labour migrants but also to negotiate effectively with the countries that have imposed restrictions on Bangladesh as a sending country.
- In many ways, the BMET fails to perform its duties effectively. Interagency coordination of the BMET is relatively weak and power-centric. The BMET has failed to allocate adequate budget to run the TTCs properly. The complaint-lodging mechanism is extremely complicated and fraught with bureaucratic tangle (Hoque R. 2014). Also, there are no effective measures in place for remedies. The BMET usually takes a long time to resolve disputes without any logical grounds. Moreover, the lack of transparency in the arbitration process is a major drawback of its complaint-filing mechanisms (Siddiqui and Billah 2012: 4). The study also found that training curriculums of the TTCs are not updated, trainers are not qualified enough and the training duration is short. Potential labour migrants badly need skill development training by the TTCs. So the training duration should be long and the course should include more detailed and diverse aspects of migration. The study found that the DEMOs operate on a limited scale. On the one hand, they have manpower shortages and on the other hand they are not cooperative and

responsive enough in providing information about safe migration and not sincere in providing services to labour migrants. A lack of efficiency is also responsible for their poor performance.

- There are also serious loopholes in the legal provisions related to labour migration. The Emigration Rules 2002 provides for key responsibilities of the Registrar of Emigrants and Labour Attachés of the foreign Missions of Bangladesh, but there is no mechanism to hold them accountable. The Recruiting Agents' License and Conduct Rules 2002 also specifies the offences related to migration and provides for punishments for them, but fails to ensure an effective remedy for the labour migrants. With regard to the cost of migration, there are wide gaps between rules and practice. The government has fixed the maximum ceiling of the cost, but recruiting agencies are charging more, which many aspirant migrants cannot afford. The relevant authorities have failed to ensure their supervision and control over the recruiting agencies and their hiring process. The government has taken a significant initiative by creating Wage Earners' Welfare Fund, but the practices in place do not fully ensure the welfare of the migrant workers.
- There are major loopholes also in the Overseas Employment and Migration Act-2013. Section 18 (1) of the MOE act 2013 specifies that if a license of a recruiting agency is cancelled under the section 12, the government may confiscate the whole or part of the surety money paid by the concerning recruiting agent. Besides, section 18 (2) sub-section (1) states that compensation to any affected migrant worker or the cost of return/repatriation of a worker who was sent overseas by the concerned recruitment agent may be paid from the surety money confiscated. Definitely, these provisions are valuable to bring legal framework of managing secured migration in line but problem has occurred in using the terms "may" and "may be". The law does not confirm that the recruiting agency shall be/must be bared compensation for the migrant victims.
- The OEM act 2013 provides the provision guaranteeing victim migrant workers at destination shall have the right to return home with necessary assistance. The section 29 (1) and (2) of the MOE act

2013 stipulates that a migrant worker, especially a worker detained or stranded, or otherwise is in situation of distress overseas, shall have the right to return to Bangladesh and to receive necessary assistance from the Bangladesh Mission in the concerned foreign country. If any sum of money is spent for repatriating a migrant worker, the money so spent may be recovered from that person. Whatever, the law does not define adequately the term "that person". Here it is not understandable that who will be the "person", either respective recruiting agency or the government. It should be clear right away for implementing this law effectively.

- Under section 38 of the Overseas Employment and Migration Act-2013, offences under this act shall be triable by the judicial magistrate of first class or, as the case may be, the Metropolitan Magistrate. However, as per the Code of Criminal Procedures 1898, the first class magistrate has the authority to give imprisonment up to five years with penalty of Tk 10,000. This makes it difficult for the victims to get desired justice under this law.
- Under section 34 of the Overseas Employment and Migration Act-2013, individual migrant, the local police, TNO, elected local representatives, BMET, and BAIRA are empowered to file cases against offenders. But it is unfortunate that till date no case has been filed under this law. Politicians, local-level government representatives, administration, and law enforcement and security forces have conveniently shut their eyes and let such a heinous crime against humanity happen.
- Further, section 40 of this act clearly specifies that the law should be considered in the schedule of mobile court act-2009. This act has given powers to the executive magistrates to conduct mobile courts that can order jail sentences of up to two years and also a fine. In contrast, the Overseas Employment and Migration Act-2013 evidently specifies that for any offence related to labour migration an offender shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may be up to 10 years with penalties. This provision is completely contradictory with the 2009 mobile court law.

- There are also some limitations in the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act of 2012. Though the Act calls for framing rules to implement the purposes of the Act which including the establishment of operating procedures but till date the rules are yet to be passed. This not only frustrates the effective implementation of the Act but also shows the gap between the enactment and the implementation of the law. Furthermore, by analysing the Act, it can be reasonably deduced that it only talks about the post occurrence measures that will be applied only when the offences of trafficking are taken place. The act does not focus on the preventative measures that are essential to make people aware and capable so that they might not become the victims of trafficking.

CHAPTER 3

Findings of the Survey
[both Rapid Screening Survey (RSS) &
Household Survey (HS)]

The study has taken each labour migrant's household as a unit of analysis, assuming that all socio-economic activities are centred around this unit. The entire data analysis has been done from two perspectives. Firstly, the study attempted to develop a comprehensive list of labour migrants (both regular and irregular) and establish a comparative analysis on the prevalence rate of regular and irregular labour migration in both MJF intervention and non-intervention areas applying Rapid Screening Survey (RSS) method. Next, the Household Survey Method (HSM) was applied, focusing particularly on irregular labour migration to discover the socio-economic characteristics of irregular labour migration, its trends and patterns, process of handling irregular labour migration (cost and cost management), determinant factors of irregular labour migration, crises and difficulties faced by the labour migrants with irregular status and its consequences on individuals, families and the society as a whole. In this regard, qualitative information was used for an accurate analysis.

3.1 Statistics of Labour Migration: Findings from Rapid Screening Survey (RSS)

The recent alarming rise of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh through maritime channels throws a valid question to the MJF: What is actually happening in the labour migration process in spite of its development programmes on safe migration? Concerned about this, the present study attempts to find the extent of both regular and irregular migration in MJF intervention and non-intervention areas, the difference, if any, in terms of the prevalence rate of irregular labour migration in MJF intervention and non-intervention areas and the factors that promote regular migration, particularly in the MJF intervention areas.

3.1.1 Labour Migration Trends Regular vs. Irregular

Data shows that 4,321 people have migrated in different countries as workers from the study areas (48 villages under six districts) with different status. The highest number of labour migrants (974) has

migrated from Comilla, while the lowest (458) from Narsingdi district. A significant number of labour migrants also went abroad from Cox's Bazar (887), Sirajganj (715), Tangail (654) and Narayanganj (633).

Figure 1: Prevalence Rate of Labour Migration

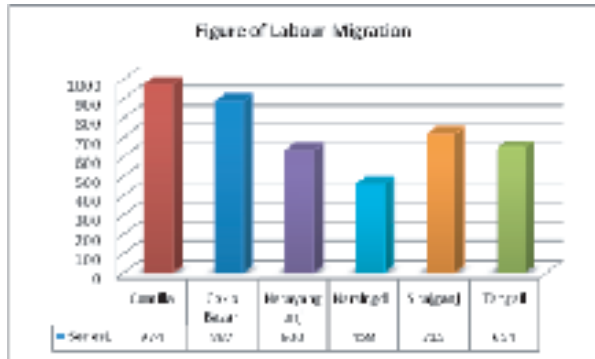
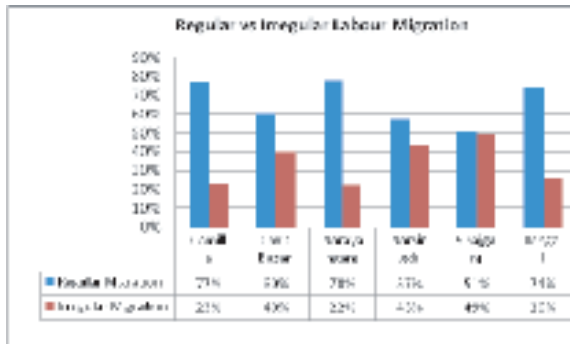


Figure 2 : Regular Verses Irregular Labour migration



The distribution of regular versus irregular labour migration shows that in the study areas approximately 66.81 percent of the respondents migrated as regular labour migrants while 33.19 percent landed in

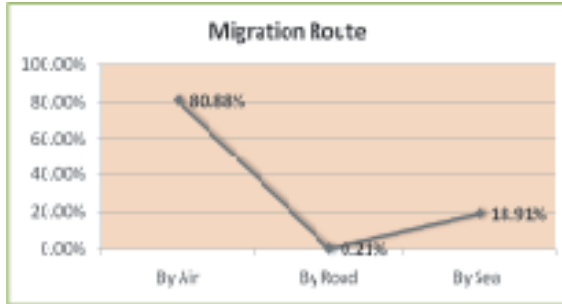
foreign countries with irregular status. Further, the study found 23.67 percent irregular labour migration occurred in MJF intervention areas and 43.89 percent in non-intervention areas. The highest irregular labour migration was found in Sirajganj (49 percent) and the lowest in Narayanganj (22 percent). The study also revealed that the prevalence of regular labour migration is high in MJF intervention areas (76.33 percent) against 56.11 percent in non-intervention areas.

3.1.2 Migration Route

Labour migrants from study areas took different routes to reach their expected destinations. As evident from the Rapid Screening Survey, labour migrants used three different routes - air, road, sea - for their

departure. Data shows about 80.88 percent of the respondents travelled by air against a meager 0.21 percent by road. Surprisingly, a very significant number of the labour migrants (18.91 percent) took dangerous sea routes.

Figure 3 : Migration Route



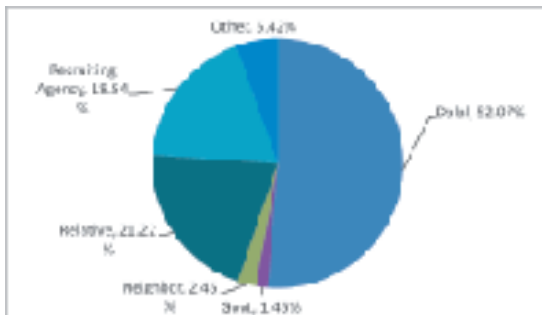
Qualitative findings show that as regular channels for labour migration from Bangladesh have shrunk due to malpractices both by private and government agencies, desperate

jobseekers take dangerous sea routes mainly to go to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and other Middle-East countries. Hoping to have highly-paid jobs, they seek help from third parties and accept the sea voyage.

3.1.3 Means Facilitating Labour Migration

Normally, labour migrants use several formal and informal channels to go abroad. The study found that labour migration process is dominated by informal channels that include relatives, friends, dalal (middleman), neighbours and personal networks. Findings show more than half the respondents (52.07 percent) went abroad through dalals whereas the second highest number (21.22 percent) migrated with supports from relatives and friends. Private recruiting agencies and government sources

Figure 4 : Means facilitated Labour Migration



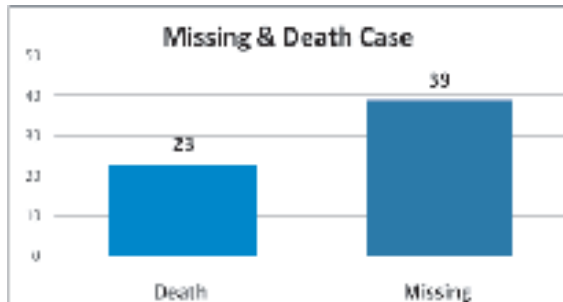
were chosen as mediums by only 18.84 percent and 1.45 percent respectively. Labour migration through informal channels is more prevalent in areas where MJF has no interventions.

3.1.4 Incidents of Death and Disappearance on the Way

Incidents of death and disappearance on migration routes are really unexpected and unfortunate, though such incidents have risen significantly over the last few years. The study has encountered horrifying stories from

survivors about death of their companions on boats. On different occasions, the media and different national and international organisations have reported cases of such deaths and incidents of irregular labour migrants going missing to draw attention of the authorities to prevent such tragedies. The present study found that 23 labour migrants from the study areas have died on their way in the last three years. During the same period, as many as 39 labour migrants went missing after embarking on their journey and their families have no information if they are dead or alive. The cases of disappearance cause heavy stress for the families as they wait for the safe return of their loved ones.

Figure 5: Missing & Death Case



3.1.5 Promoters of Safe Migration in MJF Intervention Areas

In Bangladesh a good number of development organisations have been working to promote safe and hassle-free labour migration. Among them Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is a leading development organisation working for promoting international migrant workers' rights. The MJF has designed a comprehensive programme on protection of vulnerable workers, including labour migrants from Bangladesh, to protect labour migrants' rights and entitlements and reduce their vulnerabilities through ensuring a safe and secure migration process. This programme has been designed based on the concept that labour rights are not something that are given; rather a proactive role by the migrants is crucial for the protection and promotion of their rights. The

core intension of this rights-based initiative is to bring labour migrants together by offering a vision of justice so that they get fair treatments from service providers. This programme has also strengthened both the demand and supply side accountability, which entails responsibilities, duties and obligations of both the rights holder and duty bearers. However, over the years the MJF has ensured significant contributions to improving the wellbeing of migrant workers through developing their knowledge and skill, increasing their participation, representation and voice, realisation of their rights and entitlements and promoting demand-driven institutional responsiveness. This improvement in migrant works' lives and livelihoods is also well reflected in the findings of the present study.

The core intension of MJF's rights-based initiative is to bring labour migrants together by offering a vision of justice so that they get fair treatments from service providers. This programme has also strengthened both the demand and supply side accountability, which entails responsibilities, duties and obligations of both the rights holder and duty bearers.

Table 3.1 : Promoters of Safe Migration in MJF intervention Areas

Promoters of Safe Labour Migration in MJF intervention Areas		
Promoters	Supports Received from MJF-Supported Project	
	Frequency	Percent (%)
Awareness building on safe migration	550	53%
Provide information on safe & secure migration	334	35%
Facilitate registration at BMET	250	24%
Skill development training	151	14.5%
Facilitate to open bank account	218	21%
Facilitate access to finance	36	3.5%
Visa checking	130	12.5%
Pre-departure training	140	13.5%

Findings show the prevalence rate of irregular labour migration is comparatively low in the MJF-intervention areas because of effective implementations of project actions and strategies. The study has identified several dynamic factors as promoters ensuring safe and hassle-free labour migration in the MJF intervention areas. Such factors include awareness building on safe migration, providing information on safe and secure migration, facilitating registrations at the BMET, providing skill development training, facilitating to open bank accounts, facilitating access to finance, pre-departure training, visa checking, reducing influence of middlemen and giving legal supports to the victims. In the MJF intervention areas, the study found 2,261 labour migrants through the Rapid Screening Survey (RSS). Among them, about 46 percent respondents (1,040 respondents) said they received different types of supports and services about safe and secure labour migration from NGOs (particularly from MJF partners, including RMMRU, WARBE & OKUP), the government and other informal sources. In contrast, 43 percent of them said they did not receive any support or they never required any support for migration. Eleven percent of the respondents did not respond to this question. Table 3.1 shows that of the 1,040 respondents who received supports, 53 percent labour migrants received supports related to awareness-building, 35 percent received information related to supports from project offices, 24 percent received direct supports for registration at the BMET, 21 percent received supports to open bank accounts for smooth transfer of remittance, 3.5 percent were facilitated to have access to financial institutions, 14.5 percent received skill development supports, 12.5 percent received supports related to visa checking and verification of other information and 13.5 percent received pre-departure training.

3.2 Findings of Household Survey - Irregular Labour Migration

3.2.1 Socio-Demographic & Economic Characteristics of Irregular Labour Migrants

3.2.1.1. Sex of the Respondents:

Table 3.2 presents the sex distribution of the surveyed irregular labour migrants. Data shows irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is male-dominated. More specifically, 98.33 percent male persons have migrated as labourers with irregular status against only 1.67 percent of female. There are several reasons for such a huge difference. First, women in Bangladesh are more rational than their male counterparts when it comes to taking up risky jobs abroad. Secondly, they do not have the freedom to make the decision independently to move out of the country. Generally, her family and the society at large do not permit her to move alone to search for jobs in a risky manner.

Table 3.2 : Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Irregular Labour Migrants in Bangladesh

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of ILM							
Main Characteristics	Study Areas						Total
	Comilla	Cox's Bazar	Narayanganj	Narsingdi	Sirajganj	Tangail	
Gender Distribution							
Female	0.28%	0.83%	0%	0%	0%	0.56%	1.67%
Male	8.05%	24.17%	8.33%	25%	25%	7.78%	98.33%
Age of the Respondents							
<18	0.28%	0.28%	0%	1.39%	0.83%	0%	2.78%
18-31	3.88%	15.83%	5%	20.56%	21.11%	5%	71.38%
32-45	3.89%	7.5%	3.06%	3.06%	3.06%	3.33%	23.9%
>46	0.28%	1.39%	0.28%	0%	0%	0%	1.94%
Level of Education							
Can sign only	0%	2%	1%	3%	10%	3%	19%
Primary level	2%	9%	5%	14%	4%	2%	36%
Six to SSC	3%	8%	1%	1%	5%	1%	19%
Above SSC	3%	5%	1%	0%	3%	1%	13%
Others	Madrasa & Vocational education						13%

3.2.1.2 Age of the Respondents:

The age distribution of irregular labour migrants is shown in table 3.2, which shows that irregular labour migrants are usually young male persons. A whopping 71.38 percent of them belong to the age group of 18-31, while the lowest number (1.86 percent) of the respondents is above 45 years of age. The second highest number (23.9 percent) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 32-45, with only 2.78 percent under the age of 18.

3.2.1.3 Educational Background of the Respondents:

Education plays an important role here. The study shows that less educated people travel with irregular status in greater numbers compared with their better educated counterparts. Of the respondents, 36 percent have primary education while only 13 percent studied beyond SSC level. Nineteen percent of them have never been to school and can only sign their names. Another 19 percent studied between class six and ten (below SSC) while 13 percent went to madrasas and vocational schools. This finding is proof of the general perception that most labour migrants are poorly educated or illiterate.

3.2.1.4 Occupation Before & After Migration:

Before Migration: Table 3.3 shows the occupational distribution of irregular labour migrants before their migration. The study found that they were involved in a number of occupations. Top among them is self-employment (21.11 percent), including small business, rearing poultry and livestock and small-scale fish farming. The second highest number of respondents (19.72 percent) worked as day-labourers in non-agriculture sector followed by day-labourers (11.67 percent) in agro fields. Qualitative data shows that day-labourers in non-agriculture sector, especially those in weaving industries, are facing the risk of losing their jobs more than their counterparts in other professions. The study found that due to technological transformation (handloom to power-loom) in the weaving industry in Sirajganj and Narsigndi, many people lost their jobs. The survey shows that the rate of unemployment was also higher among the irregular labour migrants. About 11.39 percent of the respondents said they had no work and some 7.78 percent were students prior to migration.

Moreover, 3.33 percent, 2.22 percent and 2.25 percent irregular labour migrants were involved in rickshaw/van/push cart driving, construction work and fishing respectively before migration. About 1.94 percent respondents were transport workers (drivers and helpers of bus and truck) and about an equal number of them were domestic helps (mostly female irregular labour migrants). Data shows only a small number of irregular labour migrants were involved in formal jobs - just 3.07 percent

respondents were service holders in private company and 2.22 percent were industrial workers. Employment status also varies greatly between regions and age groups.

Table 3.3 : Occupation of Irregular Labour Migrants before Their Migration

Profession Before Migration	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Farming	37	10.28	10.28
Day-labourer in Agriculture	42	11.67	21.95
Day-labourer in non-agriculture	71	19.72	41.67
Student	28	7.78	49.45
Unemployed	41	11.39	60.84
Rickshaw, van puller, push cart driver	12	3.33	64.17
Transport worker (driver and helper of bus, truck and others)	7	1.94	66.11
Self-employment (tea shop, vending, hawking, poultry livestock, selling milk etc.)	76	21.11	87.22
Work in factories	8	2.22	89.44
Domestic help	7	1.94	91.38
Construction worker	8	2.22	93.06
Fisherman	9	2.5	96.2
Job in private sector	11	3.07	99.27
Others	3	0.83	100
Total	360	100	100

After Migration: While most of the labour migrants were engaged in different professions upon reaching their destinations, some of them failed to reach their destinations either because they were cheated by the trafficking gangs or were sent back home by the law enforcing agencies of the destination countries. Table 3.4 shows that the highest number of the irregular labour migrants (27.78 percent) was forced to leave the destinations or they returned home after escaping from the criminal groups. However, for those who got work, construction job (15.83 percent) and cleaning (9.44 percent) were the most common professions. Agricultural work, especially in Malaysia and Thailand, is also common. Findings show 8.89 percent of the respondents were employed in

agricultural activities and 8.33 percent in hotel and restaurant jobs, which is more favourable compared with the other jobs.

Table 3.4 Occupation of Irregular Labour Migrants after their migration

Profession After Migration	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Failed labour migrants	100	27.78	27.78
Construction worker	57	15.83	43.61
Cleaner	34	9.44	53.06
Motor workshop worker	11	3.06	56.11
Agriculture worker	32	8.89	65
Self-employed (small business)	3	0.83	65.83
Worker in factory	21	5.83	71.67
Hotel and restaurant	30	8.33	80
Salesmen and product delivery	19	5.28	85.28
Transport worker	4	1.11	86.39
Private job in company	12	3.33	89.72
Shop/showroom	26	7.22	96.94
Domestic worker	9	2.50	99.44
Other	2	0.56	100
Total	360	100	100

Another 7.22 percent and 5.28 percent of irregular labour migrants were engaged respectively in shop/showroom and sales-related jobs where they were responsible for managing customers and delivering their products. Further, 5.83 percent of the respondents had factory jobs and 3.33 percent worked with various companies. On the other hand, about 2.5 percent of the respondents were involved in domestic jobs. Just about 0.83 percent of them were able to be self-employed, including in roadside small businesses.

3.2.1.5 Monthly Income of Irregular Labour Migrants

It is generally assumed that international labour migration can significantly improve the household's economic status as well as the living standards of its members. The present study sought to look into

this age-old myth and found that irregular labour migration is not always beneficial, at least not equally, either for the labour migrants themselves or for their families. In some cases, social, economic and other costs related to irregular labour migration are higher than the expected benefits. Irregular labour migrants in the study areas had to pay a huge amount of money and then go through extreme hardships at every step of their journey before reaching their destinations. Unlike their regular counterparts, irregular migrants are often offered low wages and hard manual work, and they have no alternative but to accept them in the absence of legal protection. Also, as already discussed, a significant number of aspirant migrants cannot enter their destination country even though they spend hefty sums (see the section: Cost of Migration). The survey found the average monthly income of an irregular labour migrant is BDT 18,696, which is much below their expectation. More than half the respondents (54 percent) reported monthly income ranging from BDT 10,000 to BDT 20,000. Twenty-eight percent had no income as they failed to migrate finally. On the other hand, 9 percent respondents said they earned between BDT 20,000 and 30,000 and 2 percent between BDT 30,000 and BDT 40,000. It is noteworthy that about 7 percent of the respondents earned less than BDT 10,000 a month.

3.2.2 Cost and Management of Cost

3.2.2.1 Cost of Irregular Labour Migration

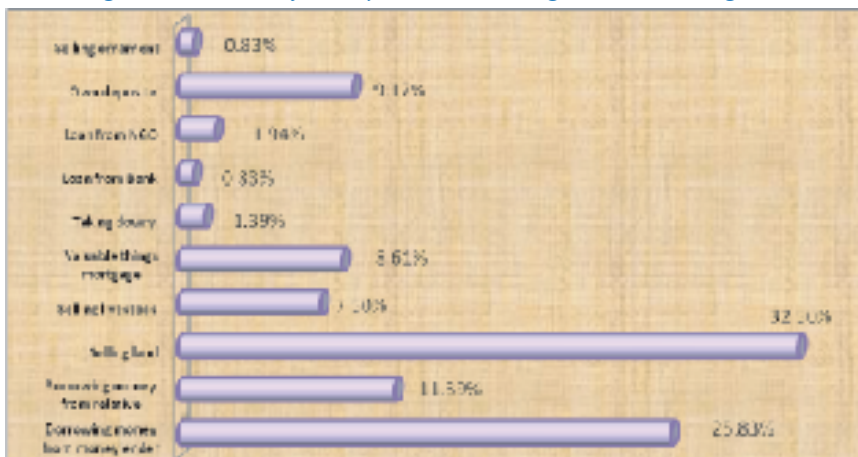
It is well documented that international labour migration from Bangladesh involves a high cost compared the neighbouring counties like Nepal and India. The cost is going up further, and there are many reasons for that. In Bangladesh the demand for international labour migration is high among the growing unemployed and underemployed population. So the potential labour migrants are ready to pay high cost by any means as they believe that the financial gain from a successful migration will be far greater than the migration cost. For instance, the cost of sending migrant workers to Saudi Arab has increased excessively. The study found that in Comilla district, recruiting agencies are charging BDT 12,00,000 (equivalent to \$15,500) for labour migration to Saudi Arab with regular status. However, the cost of irregular labour migration

was found to be much lower although the cost of both types of migrations varies greatly depending on the region, the country of destination, the route of migration and the nature of the job on offer. The study found the average total cost of irregular labour migration is BDT 271,100 per person. The financial cost of irregular labour migration through maritime channel is a little low (BDT 226,128 on average), although its social cost is extremely high given the abuse, exploitations and deaths on boats. The maximum cost of irregular migration to South Africa and Saudi Arab was estimated at BDT 600,000 and BDT 470,400 respectively. Apart from these, Dubai, Kuwait and Oman were identified among the most expensive destinations. The irregular migration cost for these countries is BDT 436,000, BDT 375,000 and BDT 300,000 respectively. On the other hand, irregular migrants have to pay much less if they move to India, Nepal and Iraq.

3.2.2.2 Sources of Money to Finance Irregular Labour Migration

Economic analysis suggests that well-managed labour migration can help people from lower income groups and their families to improve their economic and social status, acquire assets and learn labour skills. Many migrants, particularly those from lower income families and those who migrate through irregular channels, find themselves in a difficult

Figure 6 : Sources of Money to Finance Irregular Labour Migration



situation to arrange the cost. The study found that the money to cover the cost comes mainly from selling properties such as land and ornaments, borrowing (at high interest) from moneylenders, mortgage, family savings, sale of valuable household assets, and sometimes from the in-law's family (dowry). However, the tendency to arrange money through selling land and property is high among irregular labour migrants, with 32.5 percent respondents admitted to have collected the money by selling their land. The second highest number of respondents (25.83 percent) borrowed it from local moneylenders at high interest. This group of labour migrants said they had no other option but to borrow from moneylenders. Another 11.39 percent financed their migration by borrowing from relatives and friends. About 9.17 percent of the respondents said they used their own savings and another 8.61 percent mortgaged their valuable items, including ornaments. About 1.94 percent and 0.83 percent of the respondents took loans from NGOs and banks respectively to meet the migration cost. On the other hand, 1.39 percent said they took dowry for the purpose.

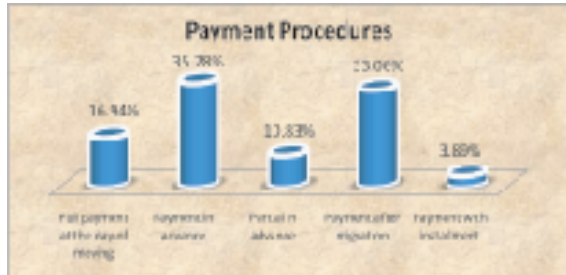
3.2.3 Payment Procedures & Discrepancy between Initial Demand & Final Payment

Payment Procedures: There are many different payment methods and none of them is ideal. For instance, the payment method for irregular labour migration through maritime channel is different from that for other irregular labour migration. Recruiting agencies, criminal gangs and individual recruiters have developed different payment systems, including full payment before migration, payment with installments, full payment on the day of travel, partial payment, and payment after migration/on arrival. On-arrival payment is more popular in maritime migration. This means the migrants do not need to pay before departure; the payment is made after reaching the destinations.

Findings show the highest number of respondents (35.28 percent) had to pay the recruiters the agreed sum in advance. It is clear from the FGDs that this mode of payment creates hassle and mistrust. Participants cited many examples of cheating after advance payments. Of the respondents, 33.06 percent said they embarked on the sea journey on condition of on-arrival payment but in some cases they had to pay before reaching their

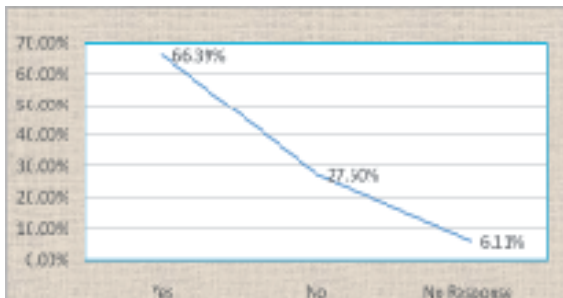
destinations. In Bangladesh, labour migration through sea is operated mainly by criminal groups and they are well aware that most of the jobseekers cannot pay in advance. Therefore, they initially offer for them to start the journey first and pay through family members either while on the way or after reaching the border of the destination country. Once the payment is made at home, the migrant is allowed to cross the border. But there is no guarantee that this payment will make sure their entry. If any migrant fails to pay the money, he will be tortured or killed or handed over to the law enforcing agencies of the destination countries.

Figure 7 : Payment Procedures



The study found that about 16.94 percent of the irregular labour migrants made full payments on the day of departure, as demanded by their recruiters. A significant number of migrants also make partial advance payment. Data shows 10.83 percent of the respondents paid parts of the agreed sum before migration and the rest in 10 to 15 installments after reaching their destinations. However, this happens only when the recruiter is a relative, friend or neighbour. Further, 3.89 percent of the respondents paid the entire amount in installments and only after reaching their destinations. Before migration, they did not pay any money except for the personal cost for their preparation.

Figure 8 : Discrepancy Between Initial & Final Demand of Payment



Discrepancy between Initial Demand & Final Payment: Empirical evidence shows that there is a huge discrepancy between the initial demand and the final payment for irregular labour migration.

Irregular labour migrants do not have any formal documents of agreement about the payment method. To expedite the migration process and in the absence of deeds and documents, labour migrants are forced to pay more than the recruiters' initial demand. Findings show, about 66.39 percent of the respondents paid more than the amount initially agreed upon while 27.5 percent paid the amount initially demanded. About 6 percent respondents did not respond when asked about this. The study estimates that the difference between the initial demand and the final payment is BDT 51,933 on average.

CHAPTER 4

Determinant Factors of Irregular Labour Migration in Bangladesh

One of the core objectives of this study is to identify and analyse the determinant factors behind irregular labour migration, meaning what influence a person or a group to decide to migrate as labourer? This chapter deals with this issue. A systematic analysis of the reasons behind irregular labour migration will help us to develop long-term and short-term strategies to tackle its impacts as well as to uphold the rights of and ensure justice for irregular labour migrants. Irregular labour migration does not occur in isolation, that is to say separate from social, economic, political, cultural and structural contexts. Moreover, no one single factor is responsible for forcing a person or a group to move to another country to search for jobs. According to the Global Commission of International Migration (2005), the issue of irregular migration is inextricably linked to human security. Many people who migrate in an irregular manner do so because their own countries are affected by political instability and economic decline. However, all the factors are not equally important or significant.

Over the decades, a number of theoretical models have emerged to explain and analyse the cause factors of labour movements, including neo-classical economic model (Todaro 1969), institutional theories (Massey et al. 1993), human rights-based perspectives (Barbara Bogusz 2004), structural model of labour migration (Skeldon 1997) and human capital model (Sjaastad 1962). Different models have analysed the causes of migration from their own theoretical perspectives. Of the various theoretical models, neo-classical economic and institutional theories provide perhaps the best explanation of irregular labour migration, though they are not free from limitations. According to the neo-classical model, wage differential is the most important determinant of irregular labour migration (Kurekova 2011). Institutional theory indicates that irregular labour migration causes imbalanced relationships between the number of people seeking jobs in the host country and the limited work permits given by that country (Massey et al. 1993). However, the present study attempts to analysis the motivation for irregular labour migration from multi-dimensional perspectives by focusing on economic, social, legal, political and institutional accountability. The present study recognises the significance of poverty, unemployment, labour and labour

market, and the influence of politics on economy and institutional inefficiencies in the process of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to countries of higher economic levels. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence manifests that the most common motivation for irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is the pursuit of greater economic opportunities. The study also shows that the lack of institutional response is another important cause for irregular labour migration where 'push-factor' rather than 'pull-factor' is prominently at work.

To analyse the determinant factors of irregular labour migration in Bangladesh and to measure the level of significance of each factor independently, the study has employed both quantitative and qualitative methods and tools. As a statistical tool, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was built and its output has been presented in table 4.3. On the other hand, respondents' views on the main causes with explanation for irregular labour migration were captured through qualitative methods, including FGDs and interviews. The qualitative discussion has produced a very comprehensive and inside knowledge of the factors causing irregular migration.

The study recognises the significance of poverty, unemployment, labour and labour market, and the influence of politics on economy and institutional inefficiencies in the process of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to countries of higher economic levels.

4.1 What Factor Analysis Says: Significance of Cause Factors to Determine Irregular Labour Migration

This factor analysis contains three measures: i) the reliability of factor variables is tested through reliability analysis by applying Cronbach's Alpha, ii) sampling adequacy and determining the factorability correlations by using KMO and Bartlett's test, and iii) significance of

cause factors (factor explanation) has been tested through total variance by analysing Eigen value.

4.1.1 Reliability of the Variables:

The variables identified by the study as cause factors of irregular labour migration are many. Therefore, the number of variables is exhaustive; so the study decided to include only those having internal consistency for further analysis. The reliability of the variables has been tested through reliability analysis by applying Cronbach's Alpha. The results of Cronbach's Alpha are as follows:

Table 4.1 : Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
0.643	0.653	15

The calculated value of the Cronbach's Alpha in this case is 0.653, which clearly shows that the identified variables of cause factors are very reliable having internal stability. The study indentified 15 cause variables as influencing factors for irregular labour migration and the calculation indicates that all the variables are more or less competent for factor analysis.

4.1.2 Sampling Adequacy and Determining the Factorability

Factor analysis helps to reduce the many variables into a handful number of latent factor having interrelations. In this consideration, KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measures and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity have been used to measure the sampling adequacy and determine the factorability of the correlation.

Table 4.2 : KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.700
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	759.270
	df	105
	Sig.	0.000

According to the rules, when the KMO value is greater than 0.5 it can be considered significant with varying degrees (low, moderate and high), which indicates that the component or factor analysis will be useful for these variables. This usually occurs when most of the zero-order correlations are positive. The KMO value becomes less than 0.5 when most of the zero-order correlations are negative. The 0.5 KMO value requires remedial action, either by deleting the offending variables or by including other variables related to the offenders. The findings of the KMO and Bartlett's test show that there is a higher KMO measure (.700) and a significant Bartlett's test result (0.000), and therefore the factor analysis can be rightly employed here.

4.1.3 Factors Driving Irregular Labour Migration: The Variance Analysis

Based on the Cronbach's Alpha and KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) measures and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, the factor analysis has been attempted through variance explanation by analysing Eigen value. The results are presented in table 4.3:

Table 4.3 shows that not every factor contributes equally to irregular labour migration. As the factor analysis shows, mostly economic factors, including income, cost of migration, unemployment and search for better jobs are the dominating variables causing irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to well-off countries. The study also found some significant social factors behind irregular labour migration, including influence of middlemen, obsession for going to foreign countries and so on. Further, some variables were identified as having little significance but can still cause motivation for migration with irregular status.

Factor-1: Low Income: Data shows that low income is the main factor accounting for 19.813 percent variations positively loaded with an Eigen value of 2.972. Here, low income at home appears to be a major driving force behind irregular labour migration for better income opportunities. Qualitative findings also indicate that most Bangladeshi workers are engaged in informal sector with low-income jobs. Existing working sectors are unable to absorb the growing surplus labour, especially in rural Bangladesh. People's incomes are not enough to cover the cost of

their basic needs. Moreover, they have very limited livelihood options to make a living.

Table 4.3 Total Variance Explained

Component/Factor Variables	Eigen values		
	Eigen Value	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1. Low income	2.972	19.813	19.813
2. Unemployment	1.578	10.521	30.334
3. Lower cost than regular migration	1.366	9.109	39.443
4. Low skill	1.196	7.971	47.414
5. Induced by brokers/middlemen	1.036	6.904	54.318
6. Obsession for going to foreign countries	1.027	6.736	60.954
7. Absence of formal sources	0.952	6.346	67.300
8. Relatives/friends already in destination	0.863	5.754	73.054
9. Search for better work	0.765	5.099	78.153
10. Formal process is more complex	0.711	4.737	82.891
11. Lack of information	0.634	4.229	87.120
12. Family demand	0.592	3.947	91.067
13. Got message about available job	0.506	3.372	94.439
14. Recover shock	0.427	2.846	97.285
15. Due to climate effects	0.407	2.715	100.000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Factor-2: Unemployment: The second factor is employment problem which represents 10.521 percent variations with an Eigen value of 1.578. Survey data shows that employment opportunities at origins are limited and less-diversified. Moreover, a significant percentage of respondents from Sirajganj, Narsingdi and Cox's Bazar said loss of jobs and job

uncertainty in local areas compelled them to leave their homeland for better employment opportunities in other countries. Technological advances in weaving factories, in Sirajganj and Narsingdi in particular, threw many people out of their jobs. Most of the weaving factories are shifting from handloom to power-loom in order to add values to their products and also to make higher profits. This transformation has of course ensured higher production with smaller workforce, but has rendered many people jobless. Most of the interviewed factory owners have claimed that in the absence of financial and other supports from the government and private sectors they are unable to expand their businesses as well as to create more jobs for the active population.

Factor-3: Lower Cost Compared to Regular Migration: The cost of labour migration is a big concern for the potential labour migrants as they come mostly from lower income group. The cost is rapidly rising in Bangladesh. So people look for migration opportunity with a lower cost, whether regular or irregular. Factor analysis shows that people prefer irregular labour migration because it is cheaper. The factor of lower cost of irregular labour migration represents 9.109 percent variation with an Eigen value of 1.366. This means irregular migration is more desirable than regular migration.

Factor-4: Low Skill: Recently, different countries have imposed various restrictions on low-skilled labour migration. Moreover, regular migration for low-skilled workers from

Technological advances in weaving factories, in Sirajganj and Narsingdi in particular, threw many people out of their jobs. Most of the weaving factories are shifting from handloom to power-loom in order to add values to their products and also to make higher profits. This transformation has of course ensured higher production with smaller workforce, but has rendered many people jobless.

Bangladesh is limited due to structural constraints. As a result, low-skilled labour migration from Bangladesh through irregular channel is increasing. The study found that irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is popular in countries where informal employment is widespread, including Malaysia, Thailand and some Middle-East countries. In the household survey, a good number of respondents said low-skill is one of the reasons for their migration as irregular workers. In the factor analysis, 'low-skill' variable was identified as the fourth important cause factor. Data shows the 'low-skill' variable accounts for a variation of 7.971 percent in the total variable set with an Eigen value of 1.196.

Factor-5: Induced by Brokers or Middlemen: Inducement by brokers or middlemen has a significant influence in causing irregular labour migration. This variable accounts for a variation of 6.904 percent with an Eigen value of 1.036. Middlemen or labour brokers in Bangladesh have been directly involved in the labour migration process. Their role in sending irregular labour migrants abroad is unparallel but questionable. The study found both positive and negative activities of middlemen or dalals to help migrants to cross borders by creating fake documents, collecting information and finding jobs at the destination countries. However, in case of irregular labour migration, particularly through sea, middlemen are responsible for abusing and exploiting the migrants to an extreme extent. Surely, these middlemen have immense contribution to the migration of millions of labour migrants, but instead of helping the migrants they rather extort money from the jobseekers in most cases. Extremely manipulative, they operate under various organised criminal groups with economic and political interests.

Factor-6: Obsession for Going Abroad: The study found that Bangladeshi people, particularly the youths, are obsessed with the idea of going abroad. This 'obsession' factor, which is among the top causes of irregular labour migration, represents 6.736 percent of variation with an Eigen value of 1.027. Findings also show that this 'craze' is not only a matter of attraction but is also directly linked with social status and prestige. Typically, a person who has migrated in another country enjoys higher status, respects and prestige at home. A youth living in a foreign country has greater prospects of marrying in a well-off family compared with his peers living at home.

Factor-7: Absence of Formal Sources at Local Level: The next important factor to determine is the absence of formal procedures and management of labour migration at local level. Data analysis shows that this factor is not as highly significant as other factors, but has a major influence on jobseekers to migrate through irregular channels. This factor accounts for a variation of 6.346 percent with an Eigen value of 0.952. The Eigen value of this variable is very close to 1, meaning it has to be considered as an important cause factor for irregular labour migration. Qualitative findings also highly support this factor variable. The study found that most of the institutions that handle migration are in big cities. Further, these institutions cannot always provide jobseekers with accurate information about migration opportunities. As a result, aspirant migrants have to rely on brokers even though it creates more hassles and requires more money and time.

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The study has also identified eight other factors, with low level of significance, behind irregular labour migration. Their Eigen value is less than 1 and percent of variation comparatively little. They are: relatives and friends are already in destination countries, search for better work, formal process is more complex, lack of information regarding labour migration opportunities, information of available jobs abroad with high salary, recovery from shock and climate impacts. Statistically, these variables are not significant but are still important in the wider contexts. For example, irregular migration through sea from Bangladesh has been on the rise as a result of propaganda. One respondent, Falu Miah of Daulatpur upazila of Sirajganj, said he sent his two sons through sea as he heard jobs in Malaysia and Thailand were not only available, but also highly-paid. Moreover, he heard, it was easy to enter those countries.

4.2 Other Contributing Causal Factors for Irregular Labour Migration

Alongside the factor analysis, qualitative findings point to some other important factors that cause irregular labour migration. They include: i) on-arrival payment system, ii) government circulations of sending a large number of workers to Malaysia through G2G agreement, iii) success stories of migration through sea, iv) government failures to create new and decent labour market etc. Of this list, the most important factor is the offer of 'on-arrival payment' by labour agents. This offer for building a future without any initial investment entices young fortune-seekers to take the gamble. One youth from Belkuci upazila of Sirajganj said he had no idea that it was a trap and that he grabbed the offer at once without a second thought. In his area, he said, there are many stories of successful migration in Malaysia and Thailand, which led him to believe the agent and take the offer.

Another important reason behind irregular labour migration is the government initiative of labour recruitment through G2G. The initiative was circulated widely but the enrolment process was very slow. According to the circulation, 1.5 million people were to be sent, at a minimum cost, to work in agriculture, construction and other service sectors. But the government has been able to send some 7,000 people so far under the scheme. Organised criminal gangs took this opportunity. They told people that jobs were still available in Malaysia but the government process was lengthy and jobs through this process may even be uncertain. They asked jobseekers to migrate through their agents. This message was well received and many chose to migrate through brokers. Kabir, a youth from Daulatpur upazila of Sirajganj, had his name registered with the DEMO and was initially selected for a job in Malaysia under the G2G scheme. Months went by, but there was no call. He was worried about his future. There was also the prestige issue because he already informed his relatives and neighbours about his 'job in Malaysia'. Finally, he decided to contact a dalal despite the risks involved. One day he went to a dalal with his cousin to know the process of migration by boat. The dalal assured them the journey by boat is easy and economical. The broker also cited examples of those who took the sea route to go to Malaysia and was now earning a good sum of money.

Convinced, he embarked on the journey but failed to enter Malaysia. Back home, he is now trying to migrate through formal channel.

Being a country with a huge labour surplus, Bangladesh has a strong potential to contribute to the world labour market. Civil society and the media are also pushing the government to explore new and decent labour markets and make the government agencies concerned more responsive. But the government has so far failed to negotiate with different labour recruiting countries for keeping their job market open for Bangladeshis. As a result, desperate jobseekers are migrating through irregular channels.

CHAPTER 5

Risks Associated with Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crises & Difficulties Faced by Irregular Labour Migrants

"The number of migrants in an irregular situation is rising, fuelled by the growth of informal forms of employment, shortages of workers for dirty, demeaning and dangerous jobs ('3D jobs') and lack of opportunities for regular labour migration. The absence of formal management for migration and national policies in some countries contributes to the increasing number of irregular migrants... some of them face abusive and exploitative situation including sexual and physical harassment, debt bondage, retention of identity documents and threats of denunciation to the authorities, without effective access to legal protection." (ILO, resolution concerning a fair deal for migrant workers in the global economy, Geneva 2004.)

This section aims to enhance the understanding of irregular labour migrants' experience of different crises and difficulties in different steps of their migration process. It is evident that across the globe, irregular labour migrants are facing numerous challenges both at origins and destinations, which are hardly documented, neglected and may not get the legal and humanitarian response they need (IOM 2012). When irregular labour migrants experience different crises and difficulties, they often have very few means to ensure their safety and protection (ILO 2011). Moreover, in some cases, particularly at destinations, they may be incapable or unwilling to seek help. These unsolved crises and difficulties for irregular labour migrants consequently generate further crises, which need to be factored in rights-based and humanitarian response frameworks (Koser 2012). The Bangladesh government is well informed about the vulnerable and dangerous situation of its labour migrant population both at home and abroad, but unfortunately turns a blind eye to the problem. Further, there is a lack of clarity about how existing laws and policies as well as the service-providing mechanisms are active and responsive to protect labour migrants (whether regular or irregular) in times of crises. This study seeks to offer possible social, legal and humanitarian responses to protect rights of irregular labour migrants by examining their crisis situations. The discussion below details the helplessness, abuse, exploitation, discrimination and overall rights violation of irregular labour migrants before, during and after migration.

5.1 Crises and Difficulties Faced by Irregular Labour Migrants of Bangladesh

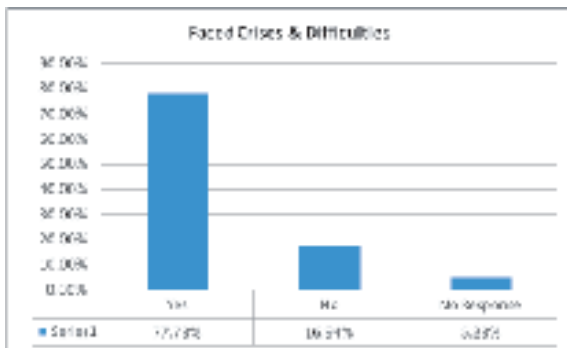
Irregular labour migration from Bangladesh has entered a period of crisis. Currently, formal or regular labour migration options are limited which force the aspirant labour migrants from Bangladesh to accept migration through irregular channels. According to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugee), over the last three years the rate of irregular labour migration has increased nearly three times (2015). The present study has also identified various critical, dangerous and humanitarian crises in the process of irregular labour migration, particularly through sea. Compared with the regular or formal labour migrants, the labour migrants with irregular status have to face higher

risks of being abused and exploited, and are denied of fundamental rights as human beings or workers. Physical torture, ransom, bribe, inadequate access to basic service, discrimination regarding work hours and wages, harassment by law enforcing agencies, restricted mobility, poor working and living conditions, death and being accused as criminals at destinations are some of the common ordeals for the irregular labour migrants. The crises and difficulties facing the irregular labour migrants are many as well as complex. So for a better understanding and an effective mitigation, they have been divided into three categories -- before, during and after.

During interviews, 77.78 percent of the respondents said they had to face different sorts of problems at different phases of migration, against only 16.94 percent who did not face any obstacle or crisis. Around 5 percent interviewees did not respond when asked about this. The interview findings were supported by the qualitative data, which also

Compared with the regular or formal labour migrants, the labour migrants with irregular status have to face higher risks of being abused and exploited, and are denied of fundamental rights as human beings or workers. Physical torture, ransom, bribe, inadequate access to basic service, discrimination regarding work hours and wages, harassment by law enforcing agencies, restricted mobility, poor working and living conditions, death and being accused as criminals at destinations are some of the common ordeals for the irregular labour migrants.

Figure 9 : Faced Crises & Difficulties



shows that the type and scale of the crises faced by irregular labour migrants depend on several factors such as the nature of migration, the nature of job, their ability to adapt and their closeness with the recruiters.

5.1.1 Crises and Difficulties Faced Before Migration

Crisis before migration has been recognised as a major ordeal both for the irregular migrants and their families. Their sufferings begin long before they start the journey. Though irregular labour migrants taking any of the three routes - road, air and sea - go through this ordeal, those taking maritime routes suffer the most. Uncertainty about the trip, anxiety, long wait, pressure to arrange the money, fear of being cheated by the middlemen are some of the nightmares they go through before migration. The highest 63.92 percent of the respondents said they were extremely worried whether they would finally be able to migrate. Examples of anxiety over long wait also abound. Nearly a fourth of the respondents said arranging the migration cost was hard for them. They had to collect the money from different sources - moneylenders, relatives, friends, NGOs, banks and so on. Also, 17.5 percent of the respondents said the local agents' frequent demand for additional money further complicated their situation. Many migrants were required to pay this additional money, arrangement of which was a big headache for them because it was not in their initial budget. While all respondents were in the view that the brokers are 'good extortionists,' over 10 percent of the migrants said they were victims of fraud by dalals. These middlemen fled with the money they took from jobseekers to process their migration. Saiful, from Narayanganj district, described how he was cheated by a dalal:

Figure 10 : Faced Crises & Difficulties before Migration

Type of Crises	Percentage
Tension for uncertainty & long wait □	63.92%
Managing money □	23.92%
Frequently demand of money □	17.50%
Dalal fled with money □	10.36%

Saiful and two other aspirant migrants gave a local broker BDT 250,000 each for jobs in a construction firm in Dubai. They gave him the amount upon a verbal agreement that they would fly to Dubai very shortly. A month later, the middleman informed Saiful that the passport and all other documents had been submitted to an authorised recruiting agency, and asked him to get ready for the trip. Three months later, he came to realise that he fell victim to fraud as there was no visible progress although the broker was giving him hope. Then one day, the dalal was gone from the village and his phone was switched off. Later, he came to know that the broker was living in Dhaka, and sent his son to Italy with the money Saiful gave him for his own migration.

5.1.2 Crises and Difficulties During Migration

Irregular labour migrants from Bangladesh are taking greater risks to go particularly to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. The routes they prefer are highly dangerous, restricted and unpredictable. Due to an increasing flow of irregular labour migration, many labour-receiving countries have imposed new restrictions and heightened their border securities. The study also found that irregular labour migrants from Bangladesh experience numerous barriers and crises while en route to destination countries. Physical torture, exploitation and abuse by brokers, arrest by border security and other law enforcing agencies, food and sleep deprivation, loss of physical strength, long walk through jungles, drowning in the sea, death and various forms of violence are some of the common ordeals they face. Concerned, different quarters have repeatedly called on the authorities to intervene to protect the migrants' rights and reduce their sufferings.

During interviews, nearly half of the respondents (47.5 percent) said they were 'very nervous' while crossing borders. They were extremely worried that they might be arrested. Some said they were very

Figure 11 : Faced Crises & Difficulties during Migration

Crisis □	Percentage
Arrested while crossing border □	10.36%
Tension while crossing border & for illegal movement □	7.50%
Food & sleep deprivation □	36.43%
Physical torture □	16.79%
Loss of physical strength □	15%
Long walk through jungles □	10%
Fell into the sea, but finally rescued □	2.14%

tense while crossing the Thai borders, thinking no one would help or protect them. Irregular labour migrants through maritime channels also suffered from extreme food and sleep deprivation, which was the 'most terrible part of their journey by watercrafts'. Survey results show over 36 percent of the respondents suffered from food and sleep deprivation on boat. Talking about this brought tears to one participant's eyes as he said the memory still haunted him. He along with several hundred migrants was on the verge of dying due to food and water shortages and sleep deprivation. His story is as follows:

Sohagh, a 17-year-old boy from a poor family, lives in Pachani Para village of Narsingdi district. In the second week of April 2015, he and his 10 friends, enticed by a broker, decided to go to Malaysia to look for work in the face of financial crisis at home. It was nearly one and a half month's journey by boat. During the time, they had been through an extreme food and sleep deprivation. For the first 20 days, he was given only 150gm of rich with raw dry fish and 100gm of drinking water a day. Later on, he along with others was forced to take a food supplementary medicine with a sleeping pill, which made them unconscious for at least two days. When they reached Thailand, they were kept in a jungle. Criminal groups forced them to have their families send them money through bKash. After getting the money, the criminal groups fled. Sohagh had to stay one week in the jungle before being arrested by the Thai police. During his stay in the jungle, he ate banana leaves to survive. He said at least 85 migrants died due to starvation and torture.

The study also found evidence that irregular labour migrants are physically tortured by the boatmen and brokers alike. Some 16.79 percent of the respondents were subjected to physical torture for protesting mistreatments and demanding food, water and other essential items. Rahul, a youth from Sirajganj district, shared his horrific experience of brutal beating:

After sailing for 29 days on the Indian Ocean their stored food and water ran out. For two and a half days the migrants were not given any food, though the boatmen and the brokers were having food. Rahul and some other youths protested this and demanded food. At this, a broker attacked Rahul with a sharp knife, badly injuring him in the leg. During interview, he showed his wound which looked deep and still fresh.

Arrests by the border security and law enforcing agencies and then prolonged detentions are also common. About 10.36 percent of the respondents said they were arrested while crossing the border. Nevertheless, some were happy to be arrested for at least they got adequate food and water during detention.

Another dreadful part of the journey begins after landing in jungles in Thailand, which is often used as a route to traffic labour migrants into Indonesia and Malaysia. Ten percent of the respondents spoke of their terrific experience of walking for hours on end through the deep jungle.

One respondent said migrants were divided into groups of 20-30 and forced to walk, though most of them were virtually unable to walk but had no option but to follow orders. After walking for 10-15 miles, they got on a microbus to enter Malaysia. In Thai jungles, migrants are confined to realise ransom from their families back home. They are brutally beaten until the local brokers or agents of the gang receive the money. Once the payment is made, the migrants are taken to a group ready to cross the border. However, the payment does not guarantee the final entry into the destination, in this case Malaysia. Kajal from Amdia village of Narsingdi district shared his sufferings of crossing a Thai jungle:

We got down from the boat at midnight and were instructed to walk through a jungle close to Thai border. In the jungle, we saw some people waiting with firearms and other locally-made weapons. They took us in the deep jungle and started torturing us for payment. Five days later, when the money was paid, they told us to walk to catch a microbus that will take us to Malaysia. Another dreadful part began; we had to walk at least 10 kilometers through the jungle to catch the microbus. I lost my strength to walk and whenever I stopped to take some rest, they beat me and forced to walk continuously. Moreover, the jungle was thick, thorny and difficult to get through. After walking throughout the night in total darkness, we reached an open area. Only then I noticed that my legs were seriously injured.

But that's not all. The study found six people (2.14 percent) were thrown overboard by brokers, but were eventually rescued by fellow migrants. They would not have been alive if it were not for the mercy of their fellow fortune-seekers, who were total strangers to them.

5.1.3 Crises and Difficulties Faced while Abroad

Sufferings of irregular labour migrants do not end once they reach their destinations, however. In the absence of legal protection at the destination, migrant workers with irregular status easily fall prey to extortion, abuse and exploitation by employers, local brokers, corrupt bureaucrats and so on. It is evident that basic human rights of migrants

At destination countries, irregular labour migrants are exposed to various forms of exploitation and ill-treatment, including restricted or limited mobility and freedom, uncertainty of work, demand for bribe by law enforcing agencies, physical assault, irregular wage, work beyond duty hours, no payment for overtime, detention and poor working and living condition.

Figure 12 Faced Crises & Difficulties While Abroad

The survey results show that the highest number of the respondents (38.96 percent) reported facing wage-related problems, particularly irregular wage. As a result, they felt vulnerable and faced hardship. Another 8.84 percent said they were denied payment for

Crisis	Percentage
Pay bribe to law enforcing agencies	6.83%
Irregular wage	38.96%
In custody/jail	14.06%
Too much work	28.51%
Mobility restricted	15.26%
Physical assault	23.70%
Uncertainty of work	10.84%
Didn't get salary according to the contact	16.47%
Didn't get overtime	8.84%
Problems related to food, residence & health	21.28%

overtime. Worse still, 16.47 percent of the respondents were not paid the salaries agreed upon before migration. According to them, in many countries, there is a considerable wage disparity between native and migrant workers even though they do the same work for the same duration. Migrant workers with irregular status are forced to accept lower wages. Moreover, 28.51 percent of the returnee migrants said that in many cases they had to do more work and also give other free services for the employers and the company. Further, 10.84 percent of the respondents had difficulties in finding any job, not even temporary ones.

Restriction on mobility was found to be a serious problem for irregular migrants. About 15.26 percent faced 'severe restrictions' on their movement. They were not allowed to move outside freely. In addition, their employers told them that in case of a problem they (the employers) could not help the migrants because of legal barriers. Because of these restrictions, migrants cannot look for better jobs, have access to information, communicate with acquaintances of fellow countrymen living in different places, send money home and cannot bargain for higher wages.

Problems related to food, healthcare and housing ranked the third highest. Over 21.28 percent of the respondents faced these problems. They had very little access to healthcare supports. About 7 percent of the returnees interviewed said harassment by law enforcing agencies, particularly by police, was common. Sometimes, they had to bribe the police for their unauthorised stay. At other times, their employers gave the police a certain amount of money regularly as per the contracts. Dipul, a returnee migrant from Comilla district, said:

I was abandoned by the broker in Malaysia and had no job. Fifteen days later, I luckily met a Bangladeshi student who helped me to find a job in an Indian restaurant. At the very beginning, I told my employer about my financial and other problems and requested him to protect me from law enforcing agencies by any means. My employer assured me and he managed the police by promising to pay 200 ringgit per month from my salary. I had to pay the sum every month for the two years' of my stay at the restaurant.

In addition, 14.06 percent of the respondents, who were sent home by the authorities, were detained and had to serve times in jail. In police custody, many of them were tortured. In short, all these facts and figures show how a large number of irregular migrants face various problems and dangers at the destination countries where they go to make a fortune, but upon reaching there they find themselves in a deep trouble instead.

CHAPTER 6

Adverse Consequences of Irregular Labour Migration at Individual, Family & Society Levels

"This is a human tragedy for all of us, and each of us should take responsibility for this tragedy. It's unfortunate and shameful that after 42 years of independence, graves of our people are being found in jungles outside of our country... There are so many people associated with this heinous crime, many of them are influential people but if they are not brought to justice then this crime will continue unabated. It's also shocking that despite a large number of law enforcement agencies and other authorities are unaware of such illegal migration. Thus, there is a need for accountability from the authorities concerned as well. A single solution is not enough to prevent this crime." (Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, MJF, in a National Consultation in Dhaka on Irregular Migration to Malaysia, June 30, 2015.)

The previous chapter has outlined the overall crises and difficulties irregular labour migrants face in different phases of their migration. The discussion and analysis in the previous chapter helped us identify some specific crises and difficulties and the consequences of such irregular labour migration. Without looking at its various negative impacts, it is difficult to offer any solution as to how to better manage labour migration. Therefore, it is imperative for this study to examine how and to what extent individual migrant workers with irregular status and their families are exposed to certain harmful effects of irregular labour migration. This chapter, therefore, attempts to explore some major negative impacts of irregular labour migration on migrant workers, their families and the society as a whole. Based on the previous discussions, the study argues that irregular labour migration causes both short- and long-term impacts on various aspects of migrants and their families' lives. An elaborate discussion is as follows:

6.1 Irregular Labour Migration and Adversities (Harsh Consequences)

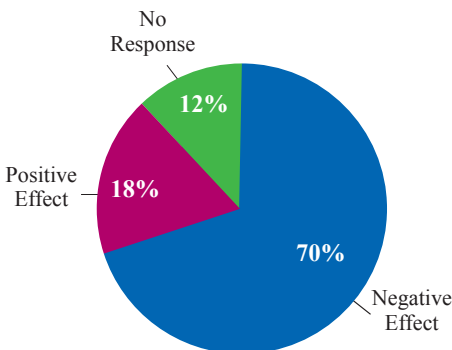
Labour migration has both positive and negative effects. In Bangladesh, labour migration to different developed or well-off countries is widely recognised as a salient feature of contemporary developing economies (Siddiqui 2015). In recent past, a good number of studies have examined the positive relations between labour migration, economic growth and poverty reduction. Undoubtedly, labour migration contributes significantly to improving labour migrants' lives, livelihoods (e.g. higher income, quality living standard, skills and education for children etc.) and also the local and national economic growth. However, few studies have investigated the adverse impacts of irregular labour migration from Bangladesh. Therefore, there is a pressing need to assess the extent of knowledge and understanding on the adverse impacts of irregular labour migration to formulate strategic directions and policy recommendations. The present study found that not all forms of labour migration are equally linked to the wellbeing of individuals and socio-economic development. Rather it is quite visible that irregular labour migration has become increasingly dangerous not only to the irregular migrant workers

themselves, it is also costly for their households and the society as a whole. For instance, different studies have already recognised that hundreds of Bangladeshi jobseekers die every year on the way and also while crossing borders of different countries.

The study reveals that irregular migrant workers from Bangladesh are extremely vulnerable. Regardless of how they earn the irregular status, irregular labour migrants are exposed to serious human rights violation. They are more likely to face discrimination, abuse and exploitation as well as subject to various forms of injustice related to social and legal protection. These injustices and inhuman treatments affect both irregular labour migrants and their families physically, mentally, socially, economically and so on. Asked during interviews, about 70 percent of the respondents said their migration with irregular status has resulted in a lasting, severe negative impact on their lives and livelihoods. It is otherwise for about 18 percent. Twelve percent migrants did not respond to this question.

Irregular migrant workers from Bangladesh are extremely vulnerable. Regardless of how they earn the irregular status, irregular labour migrants are exposed to serious human rights violation. They are more likely to face discrimination, abuse and exploitation as well as subject to various forms of injustice related to social and legal protection.

Figure 13 □ *Faced Adverse Effects*



Findings show irregular labour migration from Bangladesh is responsible for extreme emotional trauma, social isolation, changing social identity, joblessness, loss of savings, home and time, school dropouts, displacement, insecurity and even physical disability. However, not every migrant

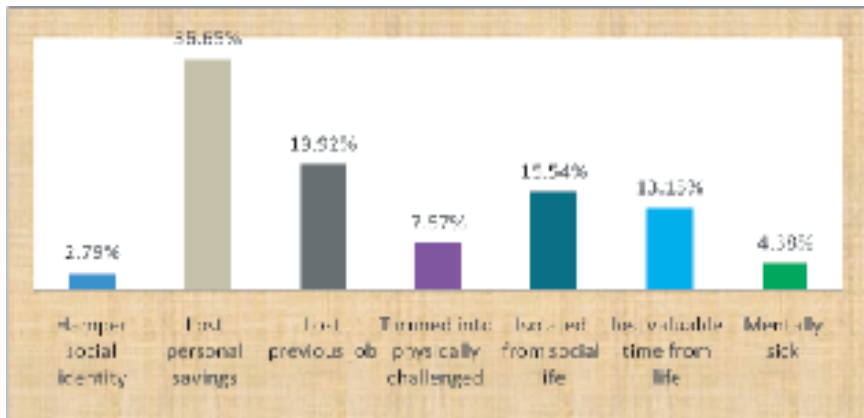
and his family is equally affected nor is one migrant's problem is identical to that of another. Labour migrants who took sea routes were affected more badly than their counterparts who took air routes, for example. Based on the findings, the study distinguished the negative impacts of irregular labour migration into three broad categories: i) on individual labour migrants, ii) on migrants' households, and iii) on the society as a whole. Following is a brief discussion on each of them.

6.2 Adverse Effects on Individual Irregular Labour Migrants

Labour migration with irregular status has a wide range of adverse consequences for the labour migrants themselves. This is most obviously the case for the victims of trafficking and those who are often exploited in their workplace. The study found that irregular labour migration is not only responsible for the loss of money, household land and other properties and social identity of the migrants, it also brings on psychological trauma, creates fear in them and causes physical injuries. Because of physical injuries, some become permanently cripple. Then there is the loss of job and time. All this affects the future life of the irregular migrants.

Data shows the highest 36.65 percent of the respondents lost their savings to process their migration. As a result, the whole family suffers

Figure 14: Adverse Effects on Individual Labour Migrants



as they fail to meet their daily needs. The second highest number of respondents (19.92 percent) lost their previous jobs at home. Most of them are now searching for suitable jobs or are doing household work. Some are involved in daily-basis income activities. Irregular labour migration has created a double burden for them: they have loans to repay and daily family needs to meet. For the loss of previous jobs, their families, now with no permanent income, struggle to cope with little or no earnings. Consider the case of Mominul from Daudkandi of Comilla:

A mason, Mominul used to earn too little to support the family. In early 2013, he migrated to Saudi Arabia on an Umrah visa with the help of a local broker. He had to spend BDT 310,000, which he arranged by selling livestock and taking a loan from a local moneylender. However, as it turned out after reaching the Kingdom that he was a victim of fraudulence. There was no job. After remaining jobless for a month, he managed a temporary work in a decoration company. But unfortunately, he was arrested by Saudi police three months later and was sent back home. Now he is facing financial hardships so much so that he finds it difficult to provide for his family and repay the loan. He works hard and for long hours - from early morning till 10:00 at night. During the day, he works as a day-labourer and from evening onward pulls a van. He said his migration through the dalal made his life financially and socially miserable and things would never be the same again.

Further, qualitative findings show that irregular labour migrants, particularly the unsuccessful ones, are marginalised by the society and their families. A good number of failed migrants consider themselves as burden for their families. The case of Harun from Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj district makes it clear:

Without informing his family, Harun had gone to Malaysia via sea with the help of a broker. Once there, he was arrested by the Malaysian police. Subsequently, he had to come back home with a return ticket sent by his family. In all, it cost him and his family BDT 300,000 for his migration and return home. All the money was borrowed from informal sources at high interests. Now his family is struggling to repay the loan by cutting the family budget. Also, his family has to face many odd situations, insults and even threats over the loan payment. As for Harun, because of the physical torture in police custody, he is not fit to do laborious work. He now instead helps his brother to run a small shop near their house. He has started to consider himself as a burden for the family because his whole family is bearing the consequences of his 'wrong decision'.

The study also found that irregular labour migrants, particularly the failed labour migrants, experience a higher level of social isolation. About 16 percent of the respondents said they sensed a growing isolation from social life. One respondent said he was hiding himself from his lenders. These migrants isolate themselves to avoid the lenders who frequently knock on their doors demanding their money back. Neighbours, relatives and even kinsfolk shun the failed migrants lest they seek some financial or other assistance. This isolation leaves a lasting impact on their mental health and also on their relations with the society.

Loss of time is another aspect that affects the irregular labour migrants badly. Over 13 percent of the respondents said their migration was meaningless; it was only a waste of time and money. They now concede that it was 'really an unwise decision' to migrate because the time they lost in the process could be used to earn a living at home.

Khalil, a 16-year-old boy from Narsigndi, is eldest among four siblings. His father died in a road accident three years back. At the time he was a student of class seven. The death of his father forced him to leave the school and join a motor garage at Pachdona with the help of his uncle. At the garage, he had to do heavy work for two meals a day and BDT 500 a month in transport cost. After nine months of such laborious work, he left the garage and, without telling his mother, went to Chittagong where he met Lokman, a local. Lokman offered him a job in Malaysia, and he agreed. The fact was that Khalil fell victim to a criminal gang that lured him into taking the perilous journey. That boat trip turned his life upside down. Having been arrested and having served in jail, he returned home after one year, empty-handed. With no work at home, he is going through a tough time. He now regrets that if he continued working at the motor garage, by now he could have been an expert mechanic.

Irregular labour migration has a lasting impact also on health. Physical torture at the hands of police, border security, trafficking agents and employers are common. Such torture has both short- and long-term impacts. Many escape with minor injuries, but some continue to suffer for long and even for their life. Due to severe physical torture, 7.57 percent of the respondents became nearly physically challenged. This has made them more vulnerable and dependent, and their ability to work is now far less than before. Rafiqul from Daulatpur in Sirajganj is an ideal

hardship. The study found that about 4.38 percent of the respondents were forced to take their children out of school. Due to financial constraints, some respondents sent their children to their close relatives' so they can live and continue their education there. This untenable situation affects female children more than the male children. In a situation like this, many households prefer their male children over female children to continue their education. Further, some households engage their children in various hazardous works to increase family income. Entering the labour force at an early age causes permanent damage to their education and health.

Jalil is a failed fortune-seeker from Daulatpur, Sirajganj. He has lost everything in his pursuit of a better life through migration in Thailand. But he could not enter the country and returned home with the heavy burden of debt hanging over his head. He was actually detained by a trafficking gang. He bought his release from them for BDT 270,000, which his family arranged by mortgaging their homestead land. After his return, he had to pay back the loan in 20 instalments. To do so, he had to cut family expenses and so he stopped sending his kids to school. But he needed additional income, too. So he sent his eldest daughter to work as a domestic help in a well-off neighbour's house and engaged his son to work with him on the farm. He said: "I had nothing to do but to engage them in work. But if good days returned, I would send them to school again."

- **Impact on Food Consumption:**

There is a significant link between irregular labour migration and food security in migrant workers' households, particularly the ones of the failed migrants. The study found 9.16 percent of the respondents' households experienced food shortages as family income fell on the one hand and other expenses, such as loan payment, rose on the other. These families cannot have three square meals a day, and in most cases adult members skip meals to feed the kids. They said they had no alternative but to cut food consumption. During a crisis period like this, some buy the lowest quantity and the lowest quality of food with the lowest price possible. During the time, they cannot afford to have some good food. The study found that some victims of irregular labour migration take support from their in-laws to buy food.

On the boat, he was badly tortured by the trafficking gang for being late to pay them. They broke one of his hands and injured his head seriously. After his return home, he saw a doctor. After three months of treatment, there was little improvement. He is now unable to do heavy work. Rafiqul said his family members were beginning to look at him as a burden for the family. He is totally dependent on his mother for his care.

Further, household survey shows about 4.38 percent of the respondents are mentally distressed and so cannot readjust themselves with their families and the society. Another 2.79 percent reported that irregular labour migration has had a great impact on their social identity. People are not friendly to them anymore and everyone considers them as a failure, making them socially ostracised.

6.3 Adverse Effects at Household Level:

The many adverse effects of irregular labour migration at migrants' households are a serious issue for analysis to be able to formulate ways for strategic solutions. This study sought to examine how irregular labour migration affects the wellbeing of migrants' households and found it had far-reaching impacts at household level. The families of those who failed to migrate or died on the way or had a poor income are hit particularly hard. They not only caused anxiety among the family members, they also brought extreme sufferings on the household members. It is therefore essential to understand how these adverse consequences on households can be minimised, particularly for the poorer section that has little or no resource to respond to such crisis. The study found that the adverse impacts of irregular labour migration on migrants' households are many and they affect family income, social relation, household assets, food consumption, children's education and other development, living condition and family relations. It even causes displacement.

- **Impact on Children's Education and other Development:**

Findings show that irregular labour migration has a tremendous negative impact on education and physical and mental development of migrants' children. Kids, particularly those from failed labour migrants' households, cannot go to school as a result of financial

Latif, a failed labour migrant, lives in a village under Ukhia upazila, Cox's Bazar. During the study, his family was struggling to manage adequate food. He cannot work due to serious illness. They do not have any land or other properties to sale except for the homestead land. His wife Jobeda works as a domestic help, but is unable to afford food for all the family members. So his father-in-law sometimes sends some money and food for them. But his father-in-law warned that it could not be a permanent solution and asked them to collect food, such as spinach, from natural sources. The family sometimes has one meal a day. Moreover, Latif needs additional money for his treatment. He said: "One wrong decision has put the entire family in trouble."

- **Impacts on Housing:**

Loss of home is a major negative impact of irregular labour migration. To arrange the high cost of migration, many sell their homestead land and other properties. Their dream for building a better tomorrow makes them homeless. Findings show about 3.99 percent of the interviewed households had to leave their homes and take shelter in other people's house temporarily. They are unable to build a new house and as a result remain under heavy stress due to poor living conditions in other people's homes. Some of them have left the village and taken shelter in faraway places. As a result of this isolation and living away from relatives and their known community, depression creeps in. The study also found four cases of displacement, because of their failure to repay the loan.

Further, irregular labour migration creates mistrusts and doubts among family members. Remittance sent by the labour migrants cannot make all the family members and kinsfolk equally happy. Also, the departure of a dependable member means redistribution of roles and responsibilities within the family. In that case, the remaining adult members have to take extra responsibilities, which may be a burden for them. Outside the family, irregular labour migration disrupt relations with relatives and the community. In the study areas, majority of the irregular labour migrants borrowed money either from their relatives or from moneylenders at high interests. In case of failure to migrate, many cannot repay the loan, leading to serious tension and conflict. In some cases, stress turns

into panic due to the frequent demand from relatives and moneylenders for return of their money. In this situation, the migrants seek more time or hide themselves from the lenders altogether.

- **Impacts on Income and Assets:**

The study found that in some cases family incomes fall and household properties erode as a result of irregular labour migration. The popular belief is that irregular migration costs less than regular migration, but that is not always the case. Irregular labour migration has a lot of hidden and indirect costs. During interviews, the direct average cost of irregular migration was estimated at BDT 250,000. But in-depth analysis shows the total cost, including the indirect expenses, is much higher. Take Aminul. On the first day of his journey, he paid BDT 10,000 while on the way to Chittagong. When he reached Malaysia, he paid the contract amount, BDT 230,000. Upon his arrest by the police there, he was forced to return home. The ticket cost him BDT 30,000. On his return home, ironically, he and his father were arrested by police in a false trafficking case filed by the brokers, and he had to give police BDT 20,000 in bribe. As if that was not enough, the dalal hired a killer to kill him and his father. So he managed the killer by giving him BDT 50,000. That's BDT 340,000 in total. Add to this the money the migrants spend to manage various difficulties before, during and after migration.

The money comes from the sale of family properties. Nearly 41 percent of the respondents said they sold land, livestock, ornaments and other valuables of household. To arrange the money quickly as demanded by the local agents or criminal groups, they were forced to sell their assets and properties at a cheap price. Another 15.53 percent respondents said they lost their household income and even the breadwinners, who died on their way.

6.4 Adverse Effects on Society at Large:

The society faces many challenges because of irregular labour migration. The growing irregular labour migration from Bangladesh to labour-

intensive countries is now among the issues of serious concern for the government. The natural question is: Why do people migrate with irregular status? The answers include: i) growth of informal-sector jobs in destination countries, ii) existing huge surplus labour ready to do 3D-jobs (Dirty, Dangerous & Demeaning) at destinations, iii) a lack of skilled workers or limited opportunities to migrate with formal status or absence of good governance in managing labour migration at home. The entire labour migration process and the reasons behind migration portray a negative picture about Bangladesh. Further, the recent humanitarian crisis of Bangladeshi labour migrants in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand speaks poorly about the way Bangladesh handles its labour migrants. If we look closely at the adversities of irregular labour migration on the society, we will see that such adversities are greater than what they first appear to be. Media reports provide ample facts and evidence about mass graves of migrant workers, including from Bangladesh, in Thai and Malaysian jungles. They show how jobseekers are held captive in jungles and in boats.

Further, it is evident that Bangladesh is earning a bad name because of irregular labour migration. In efforts to build their future, thousands of Bangladeshi labour migrants have been migrating in different countries through irregular channels by spending a huge amount of money. The manpower-receiving countries are also getting a large share of the money earned through this process. Death of labour migrants is a loss of human resources for the sending countries. This has a ripple effect, too, because, ideally, the state has to provide social protection for the migrants' dependents. The families of the migrants who do risky jobs, earn little and live in poor conditions suffer no less. Social problems because of migration arise from the lack of communications and care among family members -- husband, wife, children and parents and so on.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion & Recommendations

The present section attempts to draw a conclusion and some strategic recommendations for irregular labour migration from four broad distinctive categories. Undoubtedly, labour migration, if properly managed, can contribute to the economic and social development for both the sending and the receiving countries. It is therefore necessary that an appropriate policy environment is created to maximise the benefits and minimise the risks of labour migration.

7.1 Conclusion

This report has analyzed the findings of a study on irregular labor migration in Bangladesh. Irregular labor migration, particularly those using maritime channels has been the core area of focus throughout this entire analysis. Manusher Jonno Foundation which is a national human rights organization is one of the main initiators of this study. The study is one of the most contentious, both globally and nationally and since the number of ambiguities persisted regarding its meaning, scope and coverage. The study has considered only those as irregular migrants who have either gained unauthorized entry, unauthorized residence or unauthorized work. Destination countries of the aspirant migrants who have either failed to migrate or have been penalized by the law enforcement agencies.

The study has considered a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches and information was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Since there was no list of labor migrants available to conduct the quantitative research, a rapid screening survey was administered to list all labor migrant households this included irregular individuals also. Finally based on the accepted statistical formula a representative sample size was drawn and surveyed. Beyond conventional approaches, the study has further employed advanced statistical analysis to determine prioritization of factors associated with irregular labor migration. Risks and adversities from irregular labor migration were also studied.

What is apparent from the analyses is that irregular labor migration, particularly those of using maritime channels has been on a geometric

rise in non-MJF intervention areas in recent years. Almost half (43.89%) of all labor migrants were identified having as having irregular status in comparison to only 23.67% in MJF intervention areas. Low income, unemployment, lower cost compared to regular migration, induced by brokers or middlemen, obsession for going abroad, absence of formal sources are identified as priority factors for adopting irregular routes for migration. Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and other Middle-East countries are identified as main destination countries. Informal channels are analyzed in a more specific way and it is clear that relatives, friends, dalal (middleman), neighbors and personal networks perform as mediators. Among risk factors associated with irregular labor migration, uncertainty, tension, managing migration finance, arrest, lack of food, sleep deprivation, physical torture, drowning, restricted mobility, unsecured employment and low wages have been looked at.

Analyses further suggest that though some of labor migrants succeed in building a better future for themselves and their families, a large number of them become worse-off, losing everything they had and are living in more miserable conditions on returning home, both in the source and destination countries. They are an easy target for abuse and exploitation due to little or no legal/social protection. Because irregular labor migration is rising, government and development partners struggle to tackle the problems faced by migrants on a regular basis.

Moreover, there is a serious policy gap in protecting them from serious injustice and inhumane treatment and upholding their labor and human rights. It is indeed a great shame that despite being citizens of their countries, irregular labor migrants are deprived of their rights to economic, social and legal protection. Further, the study found that irregular

Though some of labor migrants succeed in building a better future for themselves and their families, a large number of them become worse-off, losing everything they had and are living in more miserable conditions on returning home, both in the source and destination countries.

labor migration causes governance failures on the one hand and affects the governance procedures on the other.

Based on the analyses of findings, the study has argued that it is because of a culture or the practice of political economy that irregular labor migration has been on an ever increasing trend. Because of low income and unemployment there is always an increasing demand for labor migration. The migration market has been on a decreasing trend for the last couple of years. Thus, there has been an opportunity to ensure a large flow of resources and income and exploiting labor migrants within a very short period of time. Because of the political economy the informal labor-migration market has evolved as a dominant and influential structure, by building functional relations with political and administrative structures both nationally and globally.

However, the study suggests that labor migration, if properly managed, can contribute to the economic and social development for both countries. It is therefore necessary that an appropriate policy environment is created to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of labor migration. For this both long-term and short-term strategies need to be implemented. Based on suggestions obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of both primary and secondary data this study recommends the following:

7.2 Recommendation

Some of the strategic recommendations to prevent irregular migrations from Bangladesh are:

A. BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF IRREGULAR LABOUR MIGRATION DYNAMICS

- **Need to conduct a comprehensive study:** In a single study, it is quite difficult to determine all the dynamics of irregular labour migration and its workings, as the issue is diverse and complex. People's understanding varies, and there is information gap as well. Designing and developing policy support programmes without a critical understanding of the subject will bear little or no fruits. A comprehensive study on irregular labour migration is therefore vital

to explore its ground realities and also to build a database. The MJF can also build functional relationships with national and international development organisations and research groups to share available information and offer technical supports on the issue.

B. PREVENTION - THE EFFECTIVE OPTION

- **Promote Strategic and Effective Mass Education and Public Awareness Programme:** Government and non-government organisations should jointly promote mass education and public awareness, on pros and cons of irregular labour migration, rights and entitlements of labour migrants both at origin and destination, from where and how they can get supports and the ways of ensuring safe migration. The process of public awareness initiatives should be strategic and effective to ensure sustainable change of mindset and practices.
- **Serious Attention Needed for Creating Job Opportunities & Growth of Rural Economy:** Findings show that jobs with better incomes abroad are a core motivating factor for irregular labour migration although such migration often leads to poverty. Local people do not have adequate opportunities in job markets. Left without alternative livelihood options, labour migrants are pushed by the lack of job opportunities at the origin and pulled by the hope of economic potentials in the destination country. Therefore, strategic initiatives to establish economic zones to generate employment opportunities and ensure better wages are recommended.
- **Access to Information:** Enhancing mechanisms for sharing information (information is relatively controlled and urban-biased) at local and national levels. It is understood that there is a gap between government agencies and potential migrants at the local level. Government's safe migration service is available at union parishad, but locals say officials are not cordial and do not provide information easily. So the government should take the issue seriously. The UP information centres can use the knowledge and expertise of the returnee migrants.

- **Enhance Institutional Capacity and Expand Responsibilities:** Recently, the government of Bangladesh has taken some initiatives to handle labour migration efficiently. A variety of departments and institutions are involved in the process, including the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (EWOE), the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), District Employment and Manpower Office (DEMO), Technical Training Centres (TTCs), Probashi Kallyan Bank, labour attachés at different countries, Wage Earners' Welfare Board etc. The present study has identified a number of issues related to institutional capacity and responsibility that hinder implementation of development initiatives concerning labour migration. The study reveals that a shortage of manpower at the DEMO, absence of quality trainers at the TTCs, reluctance of labour attachés to solve migrants' problems and a centralised control system at the ministry and the BMET have made these institutions less-functional. Therefore, priority should be given to strengthen capacity for key organisations and give them more responsibilities, deploy tools and systems to assess further requirements, deploy sufficient manpower and also enhance coordination mechanisms to make the institutions active, responsive and functional.
- **Collective Efforts Needed for Searching Viable Labour Markets:** Evidence clearly shows that labour migrants from Bangladesh are mainly in the semiskilled and unskilled labour market of the destination countries. These types of labour markets offer them manual and odd jobs with low wages with no job security. Moreover, the country has been facing challenges to explore new and viable labour markets for the huge potential labour migrants. It is also facing a stiff competition from the emerging labour-sending countries. Against this backdrop, the government should have a proactive role and coordinate with the civil society and private companies to retain the existing market and explore new ones with legal basis. The government should have a proper policy to identify new labour markets as well as to keep sending labour migrants in the existing markets.

- **Practical Measures Should Be Taken to Reduce Labour Migration Costs:** The high cost of regular labour migration is one of the major factors behind irregular migration. Day by day labour migration cost has been increasing in Bangladesh, and the entire cost has to be borne by the migrants. Due to the high charges by some recruiting agencies, many workers resort to irregular channels for migration, eventually making themselves subject to abuse and violence. For example, recruiting agencies and their local agents now demand BDT 1200,000 (about \$15,400) for regular labour migration in Saudi Arab with work permit (source: FGDs with labour migrants and community people in Daudkandi, Comilla). This sum is as huge as it is unrealistic. So the government should take practical measures as soon as possible to reduce migration cost.
- **Effective Initiatives for Skill Development of Potential Labour Migrants:** Skilled labour has a higher demand in the global labour market. However, Bangladesh has been sending mostly unskilled and semiskilled workers to different countries where they make up the group of the most unprotected, exploited workforce. Non-payment and late payment of wages, physical violence and arbitrary deportation are common for a large number of Bangladeshi workers. The government should produce skilled workers for the country's economic growth. To do so, the government should allocate more money and resources for promoting skills. The government should initiate more relevant and quality training, introduce long-term technical and vocational education, expand training institutions with qualified trainers and other skill-upgrading programmes.
- **Develop Mechanisms to Control Middlemen's Influence:** The role of middlemen is very significant in the entire process of irregular labour migration. Overseas jobseekers depend mostly on middlemen, only to face abuse and exploitation. To prevent this, the government should develop a mechanism to control middlemen by giving them legal identity and by monitoring their activities and offices at local and national levels.

C. PROTECTION MECHANISMS TO ENHANCE SECURITY AND CONTROL

- **Set Up Monitoring Cell at Local and National Levels:** There is an increasing demand from among different stakeholders for setting up a monitoring cell at national level comprising government officials, civil society representatives, members of BAIRA and trade union leaders etc. This monitoring cell will be responsible for overseeing the migration process to ensure safe migration.

All recruiting agencies are not contributing to the creation and expansion of overseas job market for the labour migrants. The study found numerous cases of exploitation. Different quarters have called on the government to put in place an effective regulation and control mechanism for recruiting agencies involved in malpractices. Deceptions, giving misleading information, charging excessive fees, not issuing payment receipts, collusion between intermediaries at origin and destination, offering inferior jobs at destination, seizing passports or other travel documents, hazardous employment and violation of migrant workers' fundamental rights are some common malpractices. These factors are the reason why irregular labour migration through maritime channel is rising. A strong oversight mechanism can protect workers against these ill-practices.

- **Enhancing Social, Economic, Health and Legal Supports for the Victims:** Cheating, extortion, death and various forms of violence are some natural outcomes of irregular labour migration. There are numerous instances where migrant workers received no supports from either the source country or the receiving country. They badly need social, legal and financial supports to survive and reintegrate in the society like other citizens. The government cannot avoid responsibilities in providing supports to ease the problems and difficulties labour migrants face in whatever forms. The government should take both short-term and long-term support initiatives as needed by the victims. In this regard, the government can introduce a separate social protection scheme for the victims of labour migration. Also, financial assistance should be available for their economic empowerment through income generation. They should also have access to legal and health supports from the government.

D. PROMOTING GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Enhance Accountability, Transparency and Responsiveness of Relevant Institutions:** To combat irregular migration, it is vital to increase accountability and responsiveness of the administration, law enforcing agencies, boarder security forces, recruiting agencies and other formal institutions. Ensuring vigilance, operating search and rescue operation in case of accidents and conducting proper investigation into deception by brokers are also important. For the failed migrants, there should be adequate victim support centres and also skill development training for future employment.
- **Political Commitment:** Political will of the government is crucial to downsize irregular migration and protect migrants. Political consensus is needed to enforce laws, accommodate public concerns in the national plan and to work with the international community.
- **Building PPP (Public Private Partnership) and Enhancing Cooperation for Solution:** Critical engagement of private sector (including bank, human resource development institution, business sector, electronic and print media etc.) is vital to deal with the problem effectively. A strong private sector can provide vital supports through creating jobs, increasing wages, and publicising irregular migration and trafficking-related issues (community radio, TV channels and FM radio can play important roles here).

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Appendix -1

Tools for Data Collection

300. Process of labour migration									
301	Whether the migrant had job offer or managed job being in the country migrated	Job offer : 1, Manage job after migration : 2, Returned for no job : 3,							
302	Who played mediatory role?	Government = 1, Recruiting Agency = 2, Relative = 3, <i>Dalal</i> = 4, Neighbour = 5, Other = 6 (Specify please							
303	Migration Channel/route	By road = 1, By air = 2, By sea/maritime = 3							
304	Migration cost	Govt. fee	Agency	visa fee	passport	ticket fair	interm edinary	other helpers	Package
305	Amount BDT								
306	Name of destination country	(Please see country code at section 3.1)							

400 Supports and Services Received									
401	Name of the Supports & Services Received	Who Supported (Tick Please)					Relative & Neighbour	Other Specify	
		Govt.	NGO	Union Parishad	Media	Media			
402	Passport								
403	VISA								
405	Registration at BMET								
406	Bank Account								
407	Finance								
408	Skill Training								
409	Information								
410	Pre-departure training								

B. Questionnaire for Household Survey

Sample ID		
Location	MJF intervention area : 1, MJF non-intervention area : 2	

Interview Date							
Name of Interviewer							
100	Identification						
101	Name of the Migrant						
102	Name of the Household Head						
	Father/Husband of HH Head						
103	Village/Para:						
104	Union:						
105	Thana:						
106	District:						
107	Household Category	Code: Nuclear = 1, Joint (with parents and unmarried siblings) = 2, Extended (More than one families) = 3					
108	Religion	Code: Muslim = 1, Hindu = 2, Christian = 3, Buddhist = 4, Others = 5					
109	Ethnicity	Code: Bangle = 1, Chakma = 2, Marma = 3, Santal = 4, Garo = 5, Others = 6					

200. Socio-economic Information of Irregular Migrants								
Name of the Migrants	Age	Sex	Marital Status (Code)	Education Status (Code)	Occupation Before Migration (Code)	Occupation after Migration (Code)	Monthly Income of Migrant (In BDT...)	Monthly Income of HH (In BDT...)
Sex: Male=1, Female=2, Trans sex =3 Marital Status: Unmarried=1, Married=2, Widow=3, Divorced=4, Separated/ Abandoned=4 Education: No education=00, Can sign only=2, Primary level=3, Up to class nine=4, SSC passed=5, HSC passed=6, Graduate=7, Masters and higher=8, Vocational=22, Polytechnic=33, Madrasa education=88 Occupation: Farming=1, Agr. Labour=2, Non Agr. Labour=3, Fishing=4, Rickshaw/Van Puller, Push Cart Driver=5, Other Transport Worker (driver/helper of bus, truck, tempo, etc.)=6, Self Employed in Low Profile Profession (Carpenter, Weaver, Owner of Small Rickshaw Garage etc.) =7, Worker in the Industry=8, Small/Petty Business (Tea Shop, Vending, Hawking, etc.)=9, Poultry/Live Stock Raring/Selling of Milk/Egg. etc. =10, Job in the Private Sector=11, Job in the Public Sector=12, Housewife=13, Student=14, Begging=15, Unemployed=16, Domestic Helper (Guard, Cook, Aya-domestic help etc.)=17, Child Labor (Tea-boy, Shop assistant, Garage worker, Workshop worker)=18, Other=19 (specify).....								

300. Irregular Labour Migration: Trends, Process & Procedures	
301	Where did you/he/she migrate? (destination country)
Country code: India=1, Malaysia=2, Thailand=3, Indonesia=4, Singapore=5, Saudi Arab=6, Kuwait=7, Oman=8, Libya=9, South Africa=10, UAE=11, Europe=12, Korea=13, Others=14 (Please specify.....)	
302	Why did you/he/she choose this country? (country preference)
Code: Unskilled Job Available=1, More Income=2, Have Relative/known Person in Destination=3, Close Distance from Origin=4, Low Cost to Migrate=5, Easy to Go=6, Don't have any Choice=7, Secured for Illegal Stay=8, Others=8 (specify please....)	
303	Did you/he/she migrate before? Yes=1, No=2, Don't know=3
304	Did you/he/she try to migrate before? Yes=1, No=2, Don't know=3

305	Who played the mediatory role?	Govt=1, Recruiting Agencies=2, Relative=3, Neighbor=4, Dalal=5, Others=6 (please specify...)	
306	What was the total cost involved?	In BDT.....	
307	How did you/he/she manage cost? (means of collecting money for bearing cost of migration)		
	Code: Selling Land=1, Selling Livestock=2, Mortgage=3, Own Deposit=4, Dowry=5, Borrowing Money from Relatives=6, Borrowing Money from Local People with High Interest=7, Loan from NGO=8, Loan from Bank=9, Selling Ornaments=10, Others=11 (please specify...)		
308	What was the method of payment?		
	In Advance=1, Partial in Advance=2, Full Payment at the Day of Moving=3, Pay After Migration=4, Pay in Installment After Migration=5, Others=6 (please specify...)		
309	Was there any discrepancy between initial demand and final payment?	Yes=1, No=2, Don't know=3	
311	If yes, what was the range?	In BDT....	
312	Migration Status		
	Succeeded=1, Failed=2, Returnee=3, Missing=4, Death on the Way =5, Death After Migration=6, In Jail =7, In Detention by the Criminal/Gang =8, Detention by the Government=9, Others=10 (please specify...)		
313	If failed, what were the reasons?	Cheated by Dalal=1, Returned by Immigration Authority=2, Detained in Jail and Forced Return=3, Trafficked by Gang=4, Others- 5 (Please specify.....)	
314	If failed, did you/he she tried to migrate again?	Yes=1, No=2, Have possibility=3, Don't know=4	
315	If returned, what were the reasons?		
	False Visa=1, False Job Contract=2, Contract End=3, Expelled Due to Breaking Law=4, Low Wage=5, Psychological Trauma=6, Irregular Payment=7, Physical Torture=8, Sexual Abuse=9, Gender Violence=10 Others =11 (Please specify.....)		
316	Who was the main decision maker for migration?		
	Self=1, Self but Influenced by Friends=2, Family Member=3, Relative=4, Influences by Dalal =5, /Influence by Traffickers/Human Smuggler=6, Returnee Migrants=7, Collective Decision=8, Others=8 (specify please.....)		
317	Starting from first day of migration decision up to reaching to the final destination, how many days actually needed?		

400	Factors/Reasons for irregular labour migration		
401	What was the main reason for migration?		
Code: Expectation for High Income=1, Absence of Formal Sources=2, Low Skilled=3, Lack of Information About Regular Migration=4, Induced by Broker/Middlemen=5, Lower Cost than Regular Migration =6, Formal Process is More Complex=7, Jobless/Unemployment=8, Family Pressure=9, Lost Job=10, Recover Loan=11, Displacement due to Climate Effects=12, To Escape Persecution=13, Prestigious=14, Carrier Development=15, Relative/Friends Already Migrated=16, Search for Better Work=17, Craze to Go Foreign Country=18, On Arrival Payment=19, Availability of Jobs in Destination Country=21, Others (specify please)=22			
402	What was the source of information about labour market in the destination country?	Official Source=1, Friends=2, Relatives=3, Media=4, Migrants=5, Dalal=6, Others=7 (Please specify ...)	
403	What was the level of information regarding final destination?	Good=1, Very Good=2, Bad=3, Very Bad=4	
500	Crisis and difficulties faced by the irregular labour migrant		
501	Did you/he/she face any crisis/difficulties during migration?	Yes=1, no=2, don't know=3,	
502	If yes, what were the difficulties/crises involved before migration?		
Managing Finance=1, Long wait=2, Frequent money demand=3, Dalal abscond with money=4, Waste of time and money=5, Don't know=6, Others=7 (please specify)			
503	If yes, what were the difficulties/crises during migration?		
Tension=1, Long journey=2, Food & Sleep Deprivation=3, Physical abuse=4, Kidnap by the smuggling gang=5, Tension to cross boarder=6, Sexual violence=7, Robbery=8, Drowning into the sea=9, Arrest during border crossing=10, others=11 (specify please....)			

504	If yes, what were the difficulties/crises after migration?	
	Physical assault=1, Custody/jail=2, Too much labouring=3, Irregular wage=4, Less wage/salary than actual=5, Arrested by police=6, Problem of sending money=7, Discrimination=8, Not paid overtime=9, Sexual violence=10, Mental abuse=11, No Health Facilities=12, Food related problems=13, Pay bribe to law enforcing agencies=14, Restricted mobility=15, Low quality residence=16, Legal punishment=17, Forced prostitution=18, Uncertainty of work=19, Others=20(please specify	
505	How did you/he/she manage crisis/difficulties?	
	Contact Bangladesh Embassy=1, Seek help from known/Bengali people=2, Look for assistance from local contractor=3, Helpless=4, Receive supports from international organization=5, Received legal assistance in destination country=6, others=7 (specify please....)	

600	Effects of irregular labour migrants on Individual, HH and society at large	
601	How did you/he/she consider unlawful migration?	Good=1, Bad=2, Don't know=3
602	If bad, what were the effects at personal level?	
	Lost previous job=1, lost personal savings=2, Loss of valuable time =3, Turn into physically challenged=4, Lost family=5, Mentally sick=6, Isolated from social life=7, Hamper social identity=8, Others=9 (Please specify.....)	
603	If bad, what were the effects at household level?	
	Loss of property=1, Loss of income earner=2, Food insecurity=3, Children dropout of school=4, Lower status in society=5, Hamper social relation=6, Unable to pay loan money=7, Loss of shelter/housing=8, Displacement= 9, Others=9 (Please specify.....)	

700	Supports needed by the irregular labour migrants (only for returnee & others as specified below)	
701	What kind of supports do you think can help now? (only for returnee)	Supports needed: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
702	What is your future work preference? (only for returnee)	Work preference: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
703	What kind of supports needed for missing labour migrant?	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
704	What kind of supports needed for those who are in custody/detention at destination?	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
704	What kind of supports needed when to migrate through formal process?	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

C. Checklist (guide) for Key Informant Interviews

Respondent Name:	
Respondent Status/Occupation:	
Date of interview:	

1. Irregular migration to neighbouring countries
 - Trends and causes
 - Critical factors involved.
2. Operational aspects in irregular migration in Bangladesh
 - Operational processes involved
 - Underlying political economy
3. Institutional level gaps/loopholes in irregular migration
 - Regarding law enforcement agencies
 - Regarding judicial processes
 - Regarding BMET and other departments involved
 - Essentials to promote legal and safe migration
4. Regarding policies and laws
 - Adequacies/shortage
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Suggestion/advice
5. Regular versus irregular labour migration in the context of Bangladesh
 - Similarities and differences
 - Regular migration related formalities versus execution in practice
 - Loopholes in formal/legal migration processes
6. Tackling irregular migration
 - Perceived means/ways
 - Roles of relevant department, institutions and other stakeholders
7. Enhancing legality in labour migration
 - Recommendations/advice/suggestion

D. Checklist for In-depth Interview

- Demographic information (e.g. name, age, marital status, religion, sex)
- Education status
- Duration of staying in aboard
- Present occupation
- Previous occupation
- Status of contact with employer
- Nature of work (Monthly or daily basis)
- Working hours
- Salary status
- Job duration
- Means/processes involved in managing job
- Quality of living
- Income expenditure comparison
- Reason for migration
- Route of migration
- Assistance/help received in the process of migration
- Costing and ways of cost management
- Reasons for choosing specific destination
- Payment procedures
- Regarding migration decision (involvement, influence, restriction)
- Types of crisis faced before migration
- Types of crisis faced during migration
- Types of crisis facing at present (at workplace, living place, security concern etc.)
- Ways of managing crisis (coping mechanisms)
- Impacts of migration (both positive & negative)
- Supports expect
- Recommendations (based on his/her experience)

Additional information on this study '**Irregular Labour Migration from Bangladesh: Crises and ways forward**' may be obtained from

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