

Beyond 'Push-Pull' Dichotomy: Dynamics of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT This manuscript is an ethnographic account of the dynamics of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh, beyond the 'push-pull' dichotomy of conventional studies. Rural-urban migration has always been considered in both academic and public domains within the understanding that lack of opportunities in rural areas and mounting new scopes in urban centres determine the migration pattern. The present manuscript challenges the conventional ideas and argues that the capacity to aspire is instrumental behind rural-urban migration in many cases. The manuscript is based on ethnographic data collected through half-year long intensive fieldwork among migrant workers in Dhaka. The manuscript reveals that various factors are in operation behind rural-urban migration beyond 'push-pull' orthodoxy, and sometimes they work in the frontline.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is broadly defined as a temporary or permanent change of residence from one civil division to another (Sohel et al. 2017). Eshetu and Beshir (2017) view that when the change of residence crosses the national boundary, it is termed as international migration and when it is within the national boundary, it is termed as internal migration. Internal migration may be rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-urban or urban-rural. The present manuscript deals with the dynamic factors of migration from rural areas to Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh.

740 million people in the world are rural-urban migrants which is four times larger than international migrants (Tawsif et al. 2022). In 1960, 20 percent countries of the world with an average annual income ranging from 1000-2000 USD were urbanized. The number increased by more than 50 percent in 2016. It is projected that the number of urban population in developing countries will be double by 2030 compared to 2005. The extent of built-up urban areas may even triple during this time (Hoffmann et al. 2019; Angel et al. 2005). Currently, urbanization is increasing rapidly in developing countries resulting in an unplanned growth and expansion of towns and cities. It is the main reason for the expansion and transformation of towns and cities in developing countries (Firoj and Bakar 2017). Alexander et al. (2015: 2) show that between 1975 to 2009, more than 3 percent of the total population of Bangladesh migrated from rural to urban areas per year. This means millions

of people are migrating to Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, Sylhet etc. every year.

Rural-urban migration has always been important in the study of migration in developing countries. It deals not only with the movement of people from rural to urban areas but also with its consequences at its place of origin and destination. Firoj and Bakar (2017) show that poor people of rural areas consider migration as a livelihood strategy because of different opportunities available in urban areas. Many people also migrate in search of better education, employment or business opportunities. According to them the ability of migration means coming out of the poverty line. However, the patterns of migration vary based on age, sex, caste, marital status, education, occupation etc. The trends of migration also vary significantly among these groups depending on their socio-economic condition.

Migration has increasingly been considered as a means of support as people choose to diversify livelihoods using opportunities for alternative income sources in the destination (Black et al. 2011; Foresight 2011: 21). In many cases, household members plan to diversify their income by engaging different members in different fields. They consider that if different members work in different fields, the risks of the total security of the households are reduced because of the sickness or death of any working member. This is like the insurance of the households in developing countries and agricultural world where the household members calculate the net expected returns from migration (Massey et al. 1993: 436). Social and cultural situation indicate

how potential migrants perceive their alternative options as suitable for them. Again, different alternatives lead to different types of outcomes. As a result, the idea of alternative options influences the decision and subsequent actions (Evertsen and Van der Geest 2019; Martin et al. 2014). However, this is possible if the migration is planned and voluntary (Walsham 2010: 7). If the migration is forced for any reason, it undermines livelihood security and worsens the situation of migrants in urban areas and their relatives at home (Van der Geest and Warner 2015).

Existing Literature Review

The motivation for rural-urban migration has always been analysed in conventional study under the rural-push and urban pull dichotomy (Jedwab et al. 2014; Sridhar et al. 2010). The push-pull theory by Lee (1966) shows that migration is driven by several push factors such as poverty, unemployment, landlessness, low social status, poor marriage prospects in the place of origin and pull factors such as better income, better education, welfare system, good environmental and living condition in the place of destination. Jankulvoski and Chkareuli (2019) argue that economic factors like rural unemployment, low wage, landlessness and other material assets and non-economic factors like lack of health and educational facilities, poor infra-structure and living condition and agricultural transformation of rural areas push people to move to urban areas. On the other hand, economic pull factors like higher employment opportunities, higher wage and non-economic factors like better infrastructure, better living condition, better educational and medical facilities pull the rural poor people to urban areas.

Liao and Yip (2018) argue that rural-urban migration refers to the transfer of labour force from less productive agricultural sector to more productive urban areas. They argue that cities attract rural people who search for better jobs with higher wage, better career prospects, better educational and medical facilities. In contrast, the scarcity of agricultural land in rural areas plays a significant role to push people to move to cities. Similarly, Al-Maruf et al. (2022) show that age, agricultural knowledge, household indebtedness, seasonal poverty (*monga* in northern part of Bangladesh), shortage of agricultural inputs, river bank

erosion, unemployment etc. in rural Bangladesh on the one hand heavily push rural people to migrate to cities. On the other hand, income opportunities in urban areas attract rural people to migrate from their village to cities. Likewise, Ullah (2004) argues that landlessness, joblessness and extreme poverty in rural Bangladesh push rural people and easy access to informal sectors in urban areas pull rural people to urban areas.

The popular understanding and existing studies in Bangladesh show that urban life is considered as the scopes and hopes for a better life that accelerate migration from rural areas (Afsar 2000). It is a general perception that rural people migrate to urban areas for searching opportunities that ultimately increase their economic capacity, living condition and social status. Connection with urban areas, especially the connection with Dhaka, uplifts the position of a rural household. Siddiqui (2003) shows that rural-urban migration plays a vital role in reducing rural poverty. Afsar (2003) suggests that following the improvements in communication and transport, electricity, and market, migration has become a significant source of livelihood.

There has been a structural transformation in Bangladesh during the late 1980s, when the agricultural economy began to shift towards manufacturing (Ishtiaque and Ullah 2013; Afsar 2003). Dhaka has observed the rapid growth of its urban population and seasonal migrants. Most of the existing studies focus on the pull factors generated by the garment (RMG) industry in Dhaka. It also focuses on women's entry to the formal job sector from previous informal work as domestic help. Again, it focuses on economic and social transformation associated with their income-generating activities (Hossain 2008; Ellis 2003). Nevertheless, much less attention has been paid to the informal sector during this time, although it covers 87.5 percent working population of the nation. 27.6 percent male and 19.0 percent female are engaged in formal sector in urban areas against 10.6 percent male and 4.4 percent female in rural areas. On the contrary, 66.35 percent male and 68.92 percent female in urban areas and 79.24 percent male and 90.85 percent female in rural areas are engaged in informal sector (BBS 2011). Considering this, the present manuscript has paid attention to both formal and informal sectors of migration.

The review of the existing literatures suggests that poverty, unemployment, and destitution push

rural people to leave their place of origin. On the other hand, the scopes and opportunities of urban areas pull them from village to cities. Consequently, rural-urban migration is based on the push and pull dichotomy. However, the present manuscript challenged the conventional 'push-pull' dichotomy. It revealed that various factors are in operation behind migration other than mere push and pull factors, and sometimes those factors are more important to migrants. Therefore, the current manuscript does not generalize the situation of the migrants. The manuscript argues that the capacity to aspire (Appadurai 2004) is instrumental to understand the dynamic factors of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh.

Objective of the Manuscript

The above studies focus on economic factors and consider that the lack of opportunities in rural areas and the availability of new scopes in urban areas determine the pattern of rural-urban migration. Against such context, this manuscript focuses on individual cases and aims to explore the various causes of rural-urban migration beyond push-pull dichotomy of conventional studies. The manuscript also attempts to investigate the future plans and ultimate goals of migrants to get a complete picture of the pattern of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh.

Analytical Framework

The present manuscript analyses the findings by the idea of the capacity to aspire coined by Appadurai (2004). According to this idea, the capacity to aspire is regarded as a cultural capacity, particularly among the poor. He considers that the idea of future is important as much as the idea of the past to understand the capacity and argues that if we understand the future oriented logic of development as a natural ally, we could find out how individuals find the resources required to contest and alter the condition of their own poverty. While discussing about culture, he says,

“In a word, the cultural actor is a person of and from the past, and the economic actor a person of the future. Thus, from the start, culture, is opposed to development, as tradition is opposed to newness and habit calculation” (Appadurai 2004: 60).

The quote indicates that culture has always been viewed as a matter of past where the keywords are

habit, custom, heritage, tradition etc. On the contrary, development is always seen in terms of future where the keywords are plan, hopes, goals, targets etc. Therefore, he focuses on a new dimension of culture- its orientation to future that has never been discussed elaborately before him particularly in anthropology.

Appadurai (2004: 69) again shows that the capacity to aspire means a navigational capacity. This means that the privileged people in the society can explore their future more frequently, more realistically and share their knowledge with others more effectively than the poorer and weaker people of the society. The future opportunities for the poor are limited because their capacity is less developed. This idea indicates that aspirations of individuals are linked to wants, preferences, hopes, calculations etc. that are never the matter of simply individuals. They are always found in interaction and interconnections in our social life. Considering this analytical idea, the present manuscript intends to explore how rural-urban migration is linked to the cultural capacity and future plans of individuals for achieving their life goals.

The Pattern of Urbanization in Dhaka

Urbanization is the process by which large number of people migrate from rural areas and live in urban settings. In this process, the percentage of urban people increases while the percentage of rural people gradually decreases (BBS 2015). Bangladesh is the 7th most populous country in the world with an estimated population of 166.50 million, with an average population of more than 1265 per km² across the country. Among this population, 23 percent live in urban areas (BBS 2020).

Dhaka is experiencing the highest flow of migration among the cities and towns in the country. Since the 1980s onwards, urban population has grown rapidly in Bangladesh. So, it has undergone social, economic, and area-based demographic changes. Bangladesh has observed a gradual increase in urban population and seasonal migrants since the structural transformation in the late 1980s when its economy began to shift from agricultural to manufacturing (Ishtiaque and Ullah 2013; Afsar 2003). The agricultural sector is no longer able to accommodate the surplus labour entering into rural economy every year. This situation encourages rural people to seek earning opportunity outside.

On the other hand, earning scopes in urban areas encourage rural people to migrate in urban areas. Establishment of garment and other manufacturing factories, business, employment etc. are concentrated in the largest cities. Dhaka alone is the centre for more than 80 percent of Bangladesh's garment industries. It is the mostly preferred city for migration among the cities and towns in Bangladesh. According to World Population Review (2022), Dhaka is the largest city in the country and the most densely populated city in the globe with a density of 23,234 people per km² within a total area of 360 km². As of 2016, the greater Dhaka area has a population of 18 million, while the city area has an estimated population of 8.5 million.

Dhaka is increasingly expanding beyond its capacity which affect earning opportunities, living condition as well as urban situation (Mc Namara et al. 2016: 2). Therefore, many migrants find themselves in a situation where they leave one set of problems in the place of origin for a new set of vulnerabilities in the place of destinations (Evertsen and Van der Geest 2019; Mc Namara et al. 2016). According to Detail Area Plan (DAP 2004), Dhaka has only 8 percent land for transportation in the city for which the road network of the city is characterized by unmanageable traffic congestion, low quality of public transport services, insecurity for pedestrians and growing air and sound pollution (United Nations 2009). The communication system of Dhaka city is very complex due to haphazard road construction. There are numerous roads that are not suitable for the movement of vehicle. However, more than half of all trips in Dhaka city are pedestrian and non-motorized (Rahman 2009). STP (Strategic Transport Plan) survey in 2004 revealed that 44 percent trips are held on bus or minibus and 34 percent on rickshaw whilst walking and motorized trips account for 14 and 8 percent trips respectively (Labib et al. 2013).

A number of flyovers and elevated expressways and metro-railways are under construction vanishing the pedestrian friendly design from the road network plan of Dhaka city. This will increase the use of private automobiles and decrease the footpaths. As a result, people will be dependent more and more on transport instead of walking short distances Labib et al. (2013: 9) Nonetheless, Dhaka is the mostly preferred city for migration among the cities and towns in Bangladesh as it is the centre for most government and non-government organizations, financial and banking services, garment and other

industries, hospital facilities, educational and cultural institutions, international trade and commerce etc. (Sohel et al. 2017).

In such context, urbanization got momentum in Bangladesh over the last four decades, first through the establishment of readymade garments and then through housing and real estate construction, and infra-structural development. In addition, a significant number of middle-class people have emerged in urban areas and created job opportunities in a different formal sectors. They also created job opportunities for the working-class people who work in informal sector including domestic helps, day labourers, drivers, contractors, helpers, cleaners, rickshaw pullers, construction workers, vendors, and small entrepreneurs. As a result, there is a huge demand for working-class people in urban areas particularly in Dhaka (Kumar and Fernandez 2016; Ishtiaque and Ullah 2013). On the other hand, the mechanization of agricultural activities, frequent natural disaster, and rapid population growth creates unemployment problem in rural Bangladesh (Kumar and Fernandez 2016).

METHODOLOGY

This paper is the outcome of a half-year long ethnographic fieldwork conducted intermittently from August 2020 to January 2021 with rural-urban migrants who came from different regions of Bangladesh and work in various formal and informal sectors in Dhaka. A checklist was used to conduct in-depth interviews with 40 migrants of whom 16 came from the north, six from the southeast, six from the south, four from the west, four from the northeast, and four from the central area of Bangladesh. Of the informants, 30 were male, and the remaining 10 were female. In order to maintain ethical issues, the purpose of the manuscript was explained in detail and consent was sought before discussions to talk with a trustworthy rapport. The whole discussion was informal and open-ended in nature. Conversations were not recorded because it was found that people were uncomfortable talking with a natural flow in front of the recorder. Therefore, a field diary was used to take notes of important information while talking to the informants. Observation notes were also written. The notes were regularly expanded after returning home from the field. After the completion of the fieldwork, the scattered information was read several times and coded according to the purpose of the manuscript.

After that, codes were expanded and categorized to write the draft report according to the central themes of the manuscript. Pseudonyms of all the informants were used in the publication to respect the privacy of the informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Occupation and Living Condition

Data show that prior to migration, the informants were engaged in various occupations in rural areas such as agriculture labourers, grocers, hawkers, track helpers, spice sellers, vegetable vendors, poultry farm workers and canteen workers. Female informants performed household chores; some used to make quilts in village. Coming to Dhaka, they are engaged in various formal and informal sectors and work as rickshaw pullers, vegetable vendors, fish sellers, hawkers, bus and auto-rickshaw drivers or helpers, security guards, and small entrepreneurs. Female migrants work as domestic helps and garment workers. However, many migrants do not get suitable jobs or working opportunities in urban areas for which they lack basic necessities such as housing, health care, sanitation, education, and social security. Most of the migrants live in a slum or very poorly managed households in groups and cannot enjoy a comfortable life. Most of them live in Dhaka, leaving their household members in the villages due to high living cost in Dhaka (Kumar and Fernandez 2016; Ishtiaque and Ullah 2013).

On the other hand, the growing population puts additional pressure on the primary supply of urban facilities such as electricity, gas, water, sanitation, and sewerage. This puts extra pressure on public transport, law and order situation in urban areas. Urban planners in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka, do not think about the accommodation of the working-class and poor people. Nonetheless, the migrants create a labour force that contributes to the country's upward mobility (Kumar and Fernandez 2016).

Reasons of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh

Migrants are the rural poor who struggle with different economic and non-economic factors related to migration (Jankulvoski and Chkareuli 2019). Al-Maruf et al. (2022) explained that a person's decision to migrate largely depends on his age, agricultural

knowledge, poverty and overall background in his village. The current manuscript has found a variety of reasons for the rural poor people to migrate to Dhaka. Although the economic factor is considered a significant factor in fulfilling the dreams of the migrants for a better future for themselves and future generations, my experience reveals different factors depending on different social, economic, and personal circumstances. The individual reasons for the migration of the informants are discussed below:

Poverty and Household Responsibilities

The manuscript reveals that in many cases rural people migrate to urban areas in search of their own economic well-being and take the household responsibilities. They cannot create a satisfactory source of income in the village due to their household poverty and lack of options in rural areas. So, they migrate to Dhaka leaving household members in the village and maintain regular contact.

For example, Salam (25) has been living in Dhaka for five years. Prior to migration, he was an agricultural labourer in his village in Gopalganj district. His household is an extended household where his parents, four married brothers and his wife live together. Their household has no cultivable land except homestead. Once, his household members tried to send his eldest brother abroad. Unfortunately, the travel agent issued a fake visa for which his brother could not go. As a result, they lost BDT 300,000 (\$2900), most of which were borrowed as high interest loans. He said, "In such a situation, we were in a serious financial crisis. So, taking permission from my parents, I came to Dhaka with the help of a village uncle." Now, he is currently running a stall on sidewalk of Sadarghar in old Dhaka where he sells tea, biscuit, banana, bread, candy, cigarette, betel leaves, and nuts, etc. After meeting his living expenses, he sends BDT 4/5000 (\$48) per month to his family in the village.

The above case indicates that household poverty and landlessness create a situation that instigates individuals to migrate to urban areas and take household responsibilities (Firoj and Bakar 2017). Uddin (2013) shows that when arable land is scarce, rural people historically go through hardship for which they get involved in various non-farming activities. In this respect, Al-Amin (2010: 11) shows that villagers who have more resources are not directly involved

in cultivation. They employ labours to increase agricultural production. On the other hand, the poor people move to cities to earn their living because they do not have multiple options.

Business Opportunities

Sometimes, rural people move to Dhaka to earn more money because they feel that their income in the village is not enough to support their households and their children's future, while others see urban life as a 'symbol of status', and 'source of power' in the village (Hossain 2001). For example, Milon (32) came to Dhaka from Natore, a northern district of Bangladesh. He came to Dhaka to increase his income and social status in the village. His household is an extended one where his wife, children, and parents live in one household in the village. His brothers live in separate households in the same homestead. His household has one acre of cultivable land. He used to grow various spices such as ginger, garlic, onion, etc. in the village and used to trade spices before coming to Dhaka. He said, "Once, one of my maternal cousins, who lives in Dhaka, told me that if I could do the same business in Dhaka, I could make more profit. Hearing this, I came to Dhaka with his help." Milon does the same business in Dhaka and earns more than the village. He sends BDT 10/12000 (\$ 115/116) per month to his village. He bought 10 *katha* (16.50 decimal) land beside the main road of his village and planned to construct a break-built house. Now his financial condition is better than his brothers who did not migrate. He informed that as his financial condition is good enough, other villagers evaluate him and respect his opinion on various issues.

Milon's case reveals that sometimes, migration occurs to get better business opportunities. Miah et al. (2014: 16) show that in some cases, migrants go to urban areas to earn more money and hold a respectable position in the village.

Riverbank Erosion

Herrmann and Sverin (2009) point out that the increasing incidence of natural disasters indicates poor development of the agricultural sector and repeated threats to food security that ultimately accelerate rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. Kuhn and Randall (2000) note that land ownership is a very important indicator of rural-urban migration.

Landless people are more likely to migrate than the landowners.

In one case, Akkas (48) came to Dhaka from Sirajgonj, a north-western district of Bangladesh, two years ago. His household is nuclear which consists of his wife, three sons and a daughter. He had two bigha (66 decimal) of cultivable land. He also had a grocery store in the village. But river engulfed his lands and source of income. He said, "My village is located on the bank of Jamuna river which engulfed my farmlands three years ago. So, I left my family members in the village and moved to Dhaka with the help of a relative." Now, Akkas works as a vegetable seller in old Dhaka and sends BDT 4/5000 (\$ 38/48) per month. Thus, his family members are surviving somehow. In this respect, Ishtiaque and Ullah (2013) view that riverbank erosion is a major cause of homelessness and landlessness in many rural areas of Bangladesh. This disaster is so devastating that even a wealthy family can be destitute overnight. These conditions force people to migrate to urban areas.

Seasonal Migration

Temporary migration during lean season is a common feature of livelihood strategies in Bangladesh (BBS 2015). Bangladesh has seen a structural change since the 1980s when its economy began to shift from agriculture to manufacturing (Ishtiaque and Ullah 2013). Mechanization of cultivation process also removes many rural people from agricultural activities (Liao and Yip 2018). As a result, there are employment opportunities for the rural people during the planting and harvesting seasons. They remain unemployed for the rest of the year which accelerates seasonal migration. So, some people are interested to take the advantage of the annual agricultural cycle in the village and see the life in urban areas during lean seasons. For example, Naim (35) came to Dhaka from the Tangail district. His household is a nuclear one where he lives with his wife and children. He said,

"I have been living in Dhaka for 15 years, leaving my household members in the village and working as a rickshaw puller. I came to Dhaka with the help of an elder brother of my village. However, I do not live in Dhaka all the year round. I go to village during harvesting seasons and work as agricultural labourer".

Naim's case indicates that the lack of employment throughout the year is one of the reasons of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh (Al-Maruf et al. 2022).

Love and Marriage

Marriage against family will sometimes, forces rural-urban migration. For example, Kalam (58) informed that his father was a village leader, and his household was financially solvent. He had a love affair with their female domestic help. Once she became pregnant. He wanted to marry the girl; but his parents and siblings did not allow. So, he eloped with the girl and married her against the family will. His father considered it an insult to him. Angered, his father disowned him and deprived him of all hereditary property. His siblings also kept no contact with him. In such situation, seeing no way out, he first moved to Rangpur district town and lived there for several years. He came to Dhaka 15 years ago. He said, "I tried to go home after my father's death; but my brothers did not allow. Now, I live in Dhaka with my wife and children and work as a rickshaw puller." He further informed that he bought a few rickshaws and rented them out to others. Alongside this, his household members and he run a catering business and supply meals to different offices. In this context, Sohel et al. (2017) show that a large number of migrants move to urban areas due to marriage, joining families/relatives, divorce, loses of husband or other familial reasons.

Gendered Pattern of Migration

Traditionally, women have been considered passive in rural-urban migration studies because they used to migrate with their families (Evertsen and Van der Geest 2019). However, since the early 1990s, with the emergence, rapid growth and success of garment industries, they began to migrate in search of jobs and economic fortunes. Currently, we have the second largest garment industry in the world. This industry is supported and run by internal migrants, mostly female migrants. Before the establishment of garment industries, poor women in urban areas worked as domestic helps. When the garment factory increased, young women got work opportunities in garments. However, the demand for domestic helps has also increased as urban family structure is increasingly becoming nuclear in the absence of institutional support from the government (Al-Amin 2010: 12).

Rahima (40), came to Dhaka from Tangail district five years ago with her husband. Her household is a nuclear one. They have 18 decimal of land in the village

except homestead. When they were in the village, her husband worked as a tailor while she worked as a housewife. But it was very difficult to maintain the household and bear the educational cost of their two sons with her husband's limited earning. They became worried when their elder son failed in SSC (Secondary School Certificate) exam twice. She said, "My son failed because we could not appoint a tutor for him. So, thinking about the future of our sons, we moved to Dhaka with the help of a sister-in-law of my husband's village." The sister-in-law works in a garment factory. Rahima and her husband got jobs in the same factory with the help of that sister-in-law. Now, each of them earn BDT 8/10000 (\$78/96) per month. She added that their elder son is now graduating with honours from a private university, while the younger son is studying in class XI.

In another case, Asma (35) came to Dhaka from Sherpur, a northern district of Bangladesh, with her husband to manage dowries to marry their daughters and repay interest and loans. They plan to return home after managing the required money. Asma informed that her household is an extended one where her mother-in-law, two daughters and one son live in the village. They have no cultivable land except homestead. She said, "My husband and I moved to Dhaka a year ago with my sister-in-law (husband's sister) and her husband." She further informed that when they were in the village, her husband was a rickshaw puller, and she used to make quilts for sale. They were surviving somehow on a limited earning. But problems arose after the marriage of their elder daughter two years ago. The son-in-law demanded BDT 50000 (\$483) to start a business. Also, they had a loan of BDT 20000 (\$193) in interest. It was difficult for them to manage the dowry or repay the loan money from their earnings in the village. For this reason, they left their children with her mother-in-law and migrated to Dhaka. Now she cooks for two student messes. She lives in a separate mess with other women while her husband works as a home security guard and lives there.

The above cases indicate that unlike previous generations, women are now migrating in search of jobs and are working in both formal and informal sectors to earn a living for themselves and their families. This feminization of labour has changed the nature and extent of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh, especially in Dhaka (Dannecker 2002). Therefore, the male-female ratio in rural-urban migration tends to shrink. However, there are more employment opportunity for men than women for which rural-urban migration is still

male dominated in Bangladesh. In addition, the wives of many migrant men stay in village because the living cost is very high in urban areas, especially in Dhaka (Evertsen and Van der Geest 2019).

Fantasy and Dream

Sometimes, young people dream of living in urban areas. For example, Mohsin (25) came to Dhaka from Rangpur district, a northern district of Bangladesh. He came 10 years ago when he was 15 years old and studying in class eight. He informed that his household is a nuclear one where his parents and siblings live together. He did not like studying since childhood. His father is a rickshaw puller in the village. Being the first child of the household and seeing his father's hardship, he felt the need to support the family financially. He said, "Seeing my father's hardship, I secretly contacted an elder brother of my village who works in a construction site in Dhaka. He helped me come to Dhaka and get accommodation and work at a construction site." He further informed that he dreamed of coming to Dhaka since childhood. Initially, his parents did not accept his decision and tried to motivate him to continue his studies. But he thought it would not be possible to go far due to the financial constraints of his parents. Later, when he started sending money, they accepted the migration.

Mohsin's case indicates that young people in rural areas are culturally motivated to support their families financially which influences their migration. They also have a fantasy and dream to live and work in Dhaka. However, older people feel that the city is overcrowded, polluted and congested. They move to cities for financial reasons. But they enjoy village life especially in old age (Ishtiaque and Mahmud 2011).

Other Reasons of Rural-Urban Migration

Migration may also occur due to non-economic factors such as personal conflict in the family or community. When the situation arises, individuals are pushed to migrate (BBS 2015). Some villagers migrate due to conflict with neighbours or other villagers. In addition to social issues, political issues also play an important role in rural-urban migration in Bangladesh as some individuals migrate to escape law enforcing agencies.

In one case, Babul (55) said, "My father came to Dhaka from Shariatpur district, a southern district of Bangladesh. He had a dispute with his cousins for which he migrated with the family before I was born." His father is no more. He lives with his mother, wife and two daughters. Now he works as a rickshaw puller. He visited his father's village for the last time 30 years ago. His family does not have much contact with the people of the village.

In another case, Jasim, 26, came to Dhaka from Bagura, a northern district of Bangladesh. His household is a nuclear one where his parents, two brothers, and a sister live together. They have two *bigha* (66 decimal) of cultivable land except the homestead. His father is a sharecropper and a day labourer. His two brothers also work as agricultural labourers in the village. He migrated to Dhaka three years ago. Before coming to Dhaka, he worked in a poultry farm. Sometimes, he also worked as an agricultural labourer. Three years ago, two men were killed in political conflicts in his village. He was a supporter of the opposition political party. He said, "I was not involved in the incident at all. But surprisingly, the police included my name as an accused." He added that he stayed in the local area, escaping police for a few days. Later, he came to Dhaka with the help of a village neighbour and became a rickshaw puller. One day, suddenly, the police arrested him and took him to the police station. The police asked him many questions about the incident and recorded his detailed permanent and present addresses. The police warned him not to change his place of residence and released him.

In this respect, Sohel et al. (2017) show that sometimes, people leave their village due to the defeat of their political party and consequent torture and false police cases of the supporters of ruling party. Migrant may also leave their village for religious violence, *fatwa* (religious edict) and persecution by influential people of the village. Some people may also migrate to urban areas to avoid or manage installments of NGO loan.

Future Plan of the Migrants

The empirical findings of the manuscript reveal that most of the migrants do not want to live permanently in Dhaka; they move to Dhaka to earn livelihood for their future security back in the village. Their ultimate goal is to save some amount from migration and return home to work in agriculture, start a small

business, drive auto-rickshaws or do something else. Some migrants like to go abroad and eventually return to the village.

Migrants maintain constant contact with their villages while working in urban areas. They are concerned about the safety of household members, especially their daughters. For example, Kashem (25), a vegetable seller, said that he does not want to live in Dhaka permanently. His household does not have cultivable land in the village. So, he wants to stay in Dhaka for 5-7 years and earn BDT 2/300,000 (\$192/288) to mortgage-in some lands to ensure food security of his household. His ultimate plan is to return home and engage in agricultural work. In another case, Sumon (36), who runs a tea stall on the sidewalk, said he wants to go back home in 2-3 years at old Dhaka if he can buy a CNG (four-stroke three-wheeler) to drive in the rural areas.

Rahima (40), said all her household members have migrated to Dhaka. However, they are not willing to live permanently in Dhaka. If her eldest son gets a good job, she and her husband will return home because she thinks village life is suitable for older people. Kalam (35), a rickshaw puller, said he has been living in Dhaka for 15 years. He bought one and a half bigha (50 decimal) land in the village by his own earnings. If he can buy another one and a half bigha, he will return home permanently. Spice seller Milon (32), informed that his eldest daughter reads in class four. The daughter is growing up. There is no male person in his village home for which he is worried about the safety of his daughter. So, he is thinking of returning when the daughter will study in class eight. Ripon (25) said he came to Dhaka to manage the capital to go abroad. He informed that if he can go abroad, he will ultimately go back to the village and start a business after returning from abroad. Rashid (2013) argues that international migration is not only a means of livelihood but also a means of higher social status in the village.

Knowing the future plans and ultimate goals of the migrants is very important to understand the dynamics of rural-urban migration. The ethnographic data demonstrate that in many cases, migrants are neither pushed by adverse situation of origin nor pulled by the advantages and scopes of urban life. The push or pull issue may be applicable in some cases, but it is gradually becoming an insignificant driver in understanding the rural-urban migration pattern in contemporary times. Besides, the individual case studies reveal that migrants are entirely

free to decide whether to migrate or not (Kumar and Fernandez 2016). Since many of them migrate for a temporal period to accumulate capital to do some business in rural areas or go abroad, they are neither pushed nor pulled. If they were pushed or pulled, they would have little option to return to the place of origin. In some cases, it has been found that some individuals do not have the option to return not because of poverty but because of other social or political reasons.

The development of transport between rural and urban areas, the growth of networks with urban centres, and the growing awareness about the capacities of life motivate rural people to aspire for a better future. Appadurai (2004) explained that people gain the capacity to aspire through personal awareness and social networks that provide them with multiple options. Due to increased capacity, rural people want to migrate to urban areas. He argues that people's aspirations are shaped and reshaped by their navigational capacity and the experiences they gather through interactions with outer social settings. They are shaping and reshaping their 'aspiration', not just for earning money, but something else. Therefore, people tend to migrate to urban areas to fulfil their aspirations, which cannot be understood by applying the push-pull framework.

CONCLUSION

The manuscript explored the dynamics of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh beyond the existing theoretical understanding that the lack of opportunities in rural areas and various opportunities in urban areas determine migration pattern. Empirical findings of the manuscript show that people migrate from rural to urban area not only in search of jobs and economic fortune but also for many other factors which existing studies could not properly tap and map in the literatures on rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. Therefore, individual experiences of the migrants are significant for a deeper understanding of the dimension of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh.

The manuscript reveals that rural people migrate to urban areas for various reasons based on their reality. However, in most cases, both men and women come to Dhaka for a temporary period to fulfil their needs. Their ultimate goal is to return village home when their purpose is over. Existing studies

of rural-urban migration focus on the causes and consequences of migration based on a 'push-pull' dichotomy. In reality, human life is diverse which cannot be analysed by traditional dichotomous idea. The dichotomy may be applicable in some cases, but it is gradually becoming insignificant in understanding the rural-urban migration pattern in contemporary times. Again, existing studies did not properly explore the ultimate goals of the migrants and therefore failed to understand the full course of rural-urban migration. Conversely, the present manuscript explored the future plans of the migrants and showed that most of the migrants are temporary migrants who are unable to permanently live in Dhaka.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above discussions, the manuscript suggests the following recommendations:

1. We should focus on the individual experiences of migrants instead of generalized 'push-pull' dichotomy for understanding dynamic factors of rural urban migration.
2. We should focus on the future plans and ultimate goals of the migrants to get the complete picture of contemporary rural-urban migration.

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CONFLICTING OF INTERESTS

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