

Migrated Street Vendors of Rangpur City: Process of Migration and Problems Encountered at the Place of Destination

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Abstract

In developing countries like Bangladesh rural-urban migration affects development in both urban and rural areas. This paper focuses on the analysis of major factors for migration to Rangpur city, the characteristics of migrants, challenges they face at the destination, and positive and negative aspects of their migration. In order to carry out this study quantitative method was adopted and 110 migrant street vendors were interviewed through questionnaires after selecting the respondents by using multistage sampling method in the study area. This study reveals that as one of the important informal sector, street vending activities in Rangpur are increasing with increasing rate of rural to urban migration. It has been found that with the increase in the number of street vendors in the urban areas in recent years, the situation is linked to the massive rural to urban migration. The study reveals that migrants came to Rangpur and they join in informal economy as street vendor. Street vending is becoming a good opportunity to rural poor for making a living in the urban areas and thus a potential sector which could contribute to the development of their place of origin, i.e., rural areas by the flow of money from urban-rural. However, urban authorities' response to street trading is too often unfavorable. The receiving area's pressure for social services is also an alarming issue to be taken into account.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration, street vendors, informal sector, employment, migrant's family, rural development.

Introduction

In Bangladesh 66 percent rural migration is directed towards urban centers, whereas 10 percent account for rural-rural migration and 24 percent for overseas migration (Afsar, 2003). Many people who migrate to urban areas in search of a more productive and lucrative job in the non-agricultural sector are likely to be disappointed, as the influx of people far exceeds the rate of job creation (Clemens, 2009). It is expected that more than 50 percent of the population in Bangladesh will live in urban areas by the year 2025 (UN World Urbanization Prospects 2011). Remittances from internal migrants, although smaller in magnitude; also comprise a vital component of rural livelihoods in many developing countries

(Garip, 2012). In recent years, most of the cities in Bangladesh are experiencing rapid urbanization. Rangpur is the newly established city corporation of the country. Street vending has been one of the many options for the migrants in Rangpur city. This occupational option has many facets including many positives and negatives on the lives of the migrants, their family and the society as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

It is indisputable that migration is a common feature of Bangladesh's recent history. Migration is considered as the movement of people from one geographical region to another, which may be on

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temporary or permanent basis. The rapid growth of rural-urban migration has been a common feature of the developing countries. Most of the rural-urban migrants are the rural poor who took shelter in slums, squatters, footpaths, rail station and many other scattered places. The number of people living in urban slums is expected to be double within 2025 (UN World Urbanization Prospects 2011). These migrants do not have the skills or the education to enable them to find good paid, secure employment in the formal sector, and they have to settle for work in the informal sector. Somehow they utilize their labor to earn livelihood and pay a role in economy. And in this case they usually take the street vending opportunity to earn their livelihood. Street vending is not only the means of income generation or employment generation, but also rendering a very useful service to the community of our country by playing important role. Not only the low income group but also the middle income group of urban dwellers depends on street vending to purchase their necessities. In this backdrop it may be asserted that street vending in Bangladesh is not only generating income and employment of some poorer section of people, rather providing useful service to the community. And that's why the migrant unskilled people are engaged themselves in this street vending profession. Street vendors can be found on the streets of the Rangpur city with everything from fresh sugar cane to dried fish. And most of the poor migrants live their livelihoods on street vending both male and female.

Methodology

The study area was Rangpur city since many people migrate to Rangpur to earn their livelihood. To study the street vending

Who are Street Vendors?

Rangpur city has a large number of street vendors as an informal trade. A street vendor is a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure, but has a temporary static structure or mobile stall (or head load). Street vendors may be stationary by occupying space on the pavements or other public/private areas, or may be mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or in cycles or baskets on their heads, or may sell their wares in moving bus etc. In this study only migrant street vendors have been selected as sample whose lives are being maintained by street vending such as vegetables or fruit selling, tea selling, grocery selling, food selling, cloth selling and other street vending activities in Rangpur city.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to assess the nature of impact generated by rural-urban migration of the migrant street vendors in Rangpur city. In the light of this general objective the following specific objectives were drawn to lead the study problem:

- a) to explore the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrant street vendors,
- b) to understand the process of migration, and
- c) to identify the nature of problems faced by the migrants this in turns functions as drawback.

activities in the core city of Rangpur, six main locations were selected purposively. Lalbag, Jahaj Company More, Shapla

Chattar, Khamar More, Railway station, and Dhap Medical More were selected to cover different types of vendors such as cloth vendors, vegetable vendors, food and other mixed vendors. In this particular study, the population size was not possible to know exactly and that's why 110 street vendors were selected from an infinite population size. At the very first stage six areas were selected purposively for sampling purpose. Then again using purposive sampling technique 110 street vendors were selected. Since a probability sampling would fail to ensure the diversity of street vendors, by using purposive sampling it was ensured that various categories of street vendors were selected. An interview schedule with both open ended and closed ended questions was used to collect primary data and observation was followed for analyzing and narrating some issues. Data collection process was accomplished between March 2017 to April 2017. In order to support the quantitative data open ended questions helped to accumulate data which were qualitative and in-depth in nature. The collected data in itself does not contain meaning and the act of data processing and analysis has the objective of bringing meaning to the data and displays it to the audience. The collected data were tabulated on the basis of different characteristics. Then quantitative data analysis was done through frequency distribution table. The relationship of different variables was taken to analysis by presenting data on bi-variant table and multi-variant table. This statistical presentation of analyzing data was supported significantly by qualitative information.

Theoretical Framework

For some decades, various disciplinary and multi-disciplinary approaches have been trying to analyze and provide fundamental

understanding for the phenomenon of migration. There are multitudes of theoretical as well as empirical studies, which are concerned with characteristics, determinants and impact of migration in internal levels.

Lee's Theory of Migration (The Push and Pull Factors Approach of Rural-Urban Migration)

In 1966, Lee developed a "general schema into which a variety of spatial movements can be placed" (Lee, 1966:49). He also tried to figure out a number of conclusions with regard to the factors in the act of migration. Lee also hypothesized that both area of origin and area of destination have positive forces which hold people within the area or pull others to it, negative forces which repel or push people from the area, and zero forces which has no effect. Although the push-pull concept is appealingly simple, it is a useful framework for categorizing a range of factors encouraging migration (Gmelch and Zenner 1996).

Network Theory of Rural-Urban Migration

An important concept around the importance of migration network, locally as well as internationally put simply, migrants move to place where friends, family members, neighbors or others from their village have moved before because it decreases their psychological and financial costs as well as increase social security. As a result, migrants in a particular destination tend to come from specific areas of origin; particularly when the migratory jobs are relatively attractive and have higher returns (de Haan, 1999).

Dual Economy Models of Rural-Urban Migration

The first theoretical explanation on rural-urban migration is the Lewis (1954) model

of development, which tries to explain the transition from a stagnating economy based on a traditional rural sector to a growing economy driven by the development of a modern urban sector (Lall *et. al*, 2006). In this model, Lewis assumes that rural economies initially present a specific context in which there is surplus labour in the agricultural sector. On this consideration, the agricultural sector is able to supply labour force to the modern industrial sector which can grow by accumulating capital and steaming labour from the traditional agricultural sector. The transfer of the labour between two economic sectors involves the reallocation of the labour force across space through migration from low population density rural to high density of urban areas. Lewis adds

that migration occurs until surplus labour is absorbed by the modern sector (Lall *et. al*, 2006).

Todaro and Harris-Todaro Expected Model of Rural-Urban Migration

The economic motive of migration is best articulated in the Todaro and Harries-Todaro model. Todaro and Smith (2003) postulate that, migration responds to urban-rural difference in expected income rather than actual earnings. Normally, people move from their place of origin for higher income and better job. The assumption in the Todaro and Harris-Todaro model is that migration is primarily an economic phenomenon. Migrants are assumed to consider the various opportunities available in the urban sector.

Literature Review

Farhana *et al.* (2012) in 'Factors of Migration in Urban Bangladesh: An Empirical Study of Poor Migrants in Rajshahi City' examined the factors of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. The study results highlighted the need to target migrant groups and urban poor within urban areas in the provision of availability of work and social care services. The study revealed that rural-urban migration and hence urbanization in Bangladesh is poverty driven, caused by extreme entitlement contraction among a sizeable segment of the rural population, who happen to be among the marginalized peasantry and the landless poor. The migration of the rural poor to the urban centers has caused a direct transmission of rural poverty and backwardness to the towns. In this study it was attempted to find the causes of migration like the pull factors and push factors, which attract and force the rural people and induce them to migration to urban locations.

Kuhn (2004) in 'The Determinants of Family and Individual Migration: A Case-Study of Rural Bangladesh' addressed the diversity of motivations for rural-urban migration by men in a rural area of Bangladesh in two ways. It looked separately at migration before and after marriage, a life event that both reduces the likelihood of migration and changes the nature of the migration decision. The analysis also studied migration patterns in the year immediately following a major flood. The likelihood of family and individual migration should increase following such a major ecological and economic catastrophe, yet the characteristics of those practicing family and individual migration following the flood should diverge considerably. Individual migration is more likely among those with small land holdings, while family migration is more likely among those with no land holdings. Following marriage, the likelihood of individual migration declines

rapidly, while the likelihood of family migration rises for several years following the mean age of marriage. So in this study it was found that there are differences between family migration and individual migration. And there are many reasons behind those and it was tried to find out some major determinants of the rural people to migrate in the city through this study.

Jahan (2012) in 'Impact of rural urban migration on physical and social environment: The case of Dhaka city' explored that the impact of migration is diverse both at the urban destination and at the rural origin. At both ends there were economic, demographic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts. This paper focused on the urban end. It examined the overall conditions of the underprivileged, poor migrants and the consequences of migration on the physical and social environment on their choice of destination. The overall physical environment in an urban area was determined by some specific facilities such as housing, sanitation, sewerage, drainage, drinking water supply, gas supply, electricity, garbage disposal and waste management. In Dhaka city these services

were extremely unsatisfactory and of poor quality, which was due to rapid increase of urban population (in-migration of the rural poor to Dhaka city) and limitation of resources.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Migrant Street Vendors

Socio-demographic status of migrant street vendors is a salient indicator for understanding their background strengths and weaknesses. In this particular study, 76.36% respondents (Table 1) were male and this was not surprising to many of us. But the existence of almost 23.64% female street vendors (Table 1) shows that this part of the sex was also significantly migrating from rural areas. It is also evident in this study that most of the migrants were usually carrying low level of education and only 15.45% (Table 1) respondents had educational qualifications above primary level. Married people with the need to feed their respective families tended to leave their place of origin and came to the cities as this study revealed that almost 67.27% respondents were married (Table 1).

Table 1 Age, sex, education, and marital status of the respondents

Age structure (in years)	Number of respondents (n)	Educational level				Marital status				Sex	
		Illiterate (%)	Can sign (%)	Under primary (%)	Above primary (%)	Married (%)	Un-married (%)	Divorced (%)	Others (%)	M (%)	F (%)
10-15	9	.91	.91	4.55	1.82	.91	7.27	0	0	5.45	2.73
16-20	14	1.82	.91	4.55	5.45	3.64	9.09	0	0	11.82	.91
21-30	28	.91	4.55	12.73	7.27	16.36	5.45	1.82	1.82	23.64	1.82
31-40	21	7.27	10.91	.91	0	18.18	0	.91	0	19.09	0
41-50	20	10	5.45	1.82	.91	16.36	.91	0	.91	8.18	10
51-60	10	8.18	.91	0	0	8.18	0	.91	0	3.64	5.45
60+	8	5.45	.91	.91	0	3.64	0	.91	2.73	4.55	2.73
Total	110	34.55	24.55	25.45	15.45	67.27	22.73	4.55	5.45	76.36	23.64
		100%				100%				100%	

Since the respondents were already migrated to the Rangpur city and involved

in street vending it was obvious that their current occupation was street vending. But

among various options of vending there were few which were considered as of high esteem (for example, moving with van is better than a tiny fixed vending option, fruit sellers are richer than others). As a result, many street vendors tended to shift from one vending option to another as the later

carried better status and higher opportunity of earning money. These choices and better vending options were reflected in those street vendor's life standards. Vending options included (Table 2) fruit/vegetable selling, cloth selling, tea selling, daily utensils, pottery etc.

Table 2 Distribution of migrants according to their occupation

Occupation (Types of street vendor)	Frequency (N=110)	Percent (%)
Fruit/vegetable seller	44	40
Cloth seller	13	11.82
Tea Stall	25	22.73
Daily utensils	9	8.2
Pottery	5	4.55
Food shop (hand made food)	7	6.36
Others (watch selling, Peanut selling etc.)	7	6.36
Total	110	100

Process of Migration

There are many reasons for rural people to migrate to urban centers like Rangpur city. Various factors worked as a determinant for migration of the study respondents. The survey result of this study also confirms it. As indicated in the Table 3 the majority of the migrants (79.09%) migrated to city to obtain job or seek employment. About 69% of migrants moved to city as a result of

famine, poverty and crop failure or any other natural disaster. This was due to the fact that Northern part of Bangladesh was highly food insecure and degraded areas. So, the only opportunity was to move to other areas for economic betterment. Most of the migrant vendors of this study came from Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Thakurgaon, Panchagar, and Gaibandha district.

Table 3 Reasons of migration

Reasons of migration (Multiple Responses are Possible)	Frequency (N=110)	Percentage (%)
For the search of a job	87	79.09
Famine, poverty, crop failure, land shortage, poor facilities, other natural disasters.	76	69.09
Cultural, political or familial issues	19	17.27
To join immediate relatives and friends or following them (Tradition)	53	48.18
To seek modern urban services and facilities	11	10
To open up personal business	59	53.64
Marriage	17	15.45
Others	5	4.55

There are many respondents (almost 48%) who migrated to Rangpur city as they saw

others of their own village or neighboring village to do so. These people interestingly

were involved in same vending occupation as their formers did and most of them were sellers of vegetables. Although 10% respondents migrated to Rangpur city for the services available in the city but this number mostly included people who were staying for the purpose of treatments or medical facilities for a longer period of time. Even there were many children who were living in Rangpur doing street vending and supporting their sick parents.

The in-depth interview, was undertaken for some detail information, explored that there were few respondents whom were ashamed of doing job that did not suit them or at least their society considered as it did not suit them. A 45 years migrant, place of origin in Shirajganj, was a person of high social status and after a disastrous event in his life his status was moved downwards. So, he came to Rangpur where nobody knew him and started to contribute financially back at home where his relatives knew that he was doing some sort of official job. In another case, a 16 year old child came to Rangpur only in the winter to sell *Vapa* Cake and his uncle helped him in this street business. Moreover, this very child had no interest for education and his family did not even require any financial help from him.

Problems Faced at the Place of Destination

Table 4 started with the presentation of the first set of problems related to initial adjustment outlined as financial problems. Accordingly, 64.55% were reported to have encountered serious financial problems just at the beginning of their stay at the place of destination. Lack of working opportunity was the other set of problem quite a common phenomenon for the majority of migrants. Table revealed that 44.55% of migrants reported to have faced unemployment problem for some times at the first stage of their arrival at the place of

destination. Inability to get social services (housing/accommodation, toilet, water, medication) and lack of consumable items was also expressed by migrants. 48.18% and 20.91% of them were faced with lack of social services and inability to obtain consumed items at the time of their arrival. Whether a migrant faced cultural difference (cultural shocks) or not at the time of first arrival was also examined in the study. It showed that 28.18% of the migrants reported to have encountered these problems at the time of first arrival at the current destination. Besides, many of the migrants expressed problems of uncertainty regarding how to behave, speak and dress like the people of urban area.

In most cities, street vending is regarded as an illegal activity. There are municipal and police laws that impose restrictions on the street trading. Urban authorities do not take vending as a profession. They impose restrictions on the use of urban space for street vending. This brings up the conflict between authorities and the vendors and they try to impose each other. Metropolitan police tries to detain vendors from the public space, while the vendors claimed that it was their right to work and earn for livelihoods. In addition, local shop owners and inhabitants saw vendors as an enemy. On the one hand, local shop owners took vendors as unfair competitors. While on the other hand, local inhabitants saw street vendors as an agent of urban environmental deterioration. So While asking questions, all the respondents were free to tell as much as the problems they were facing. Each and every problem they mentioned was noted down. Analyzing the problems faced by the respondents, it can be concluded that vendors were facing problems from authorities and individuals. Thus, problems relating to eviction and threats by local shop owners and inhabitants had been analyzed

as main constraint. Lack of social service and required funding to initiate vending business are also two major constrains they

used to constantly face during their course of stay at place of destination (Table 4).

Table 4 Problems Encountered by Migrants at the Place of Destination

Problems Encountered (Multiple Responses are Possible)	Frequency (N=110)	Percentage (%)
<i>Problems Encountered Upon Arrival</i>		
Financial	71	64.55
Lack of work	49	44.55
Inability to obtain food and consumer items	23	20.91
Lack of social services	53	48.18
Cultural differences	31	28.18
Housing problem	68	61.18
<i>Problems Encountered During the Course of Stay</i>		
Do not get job as expected	41	37.27
Funding to start vending	59	53.64
Local businessman's domination	66	60
Health problem	29	26.36
Lack of social services	25	22.73
Administrative problem	79	71.82
Extortion	83	75.45

The qualitative data collected through observation and in-depth interview supported the fact that migrated street vendors are actually facing the above mentioned problems. There were many incidents where local youth and powerful people used to take items from vendors without paying any money but the police stayed silent. In Rangpur city, there are few

places where business is more favourable and one can profit more for the advantageous position. But only local vendors used to occupy those places and migrated vendors have to stay away from those spots. As a result they had to earn their livelihood by selling items in areas where customers were scarce and moneys were hard to come by.

Recommendations

Migrant street vendor becomes street vendor as a result of many factors for example, For the search of a job, famine, poverty, crop failure, land shortage, poor facilities, other natural disasters, cultural, political or familial issues, to join immediate relatives and friends or following them (Tradition), to seek modern urban services and facilities, to open own

business, marriage etc. Also they have expectations of this occupation as a result. But in order make this particular occupational class a significant contributor to the local as well as national economy few steps needed to be taken. This particular study led to few suggestions which are as followed:

1. A city cannot hold more than its capacity population. Hence the number of street vendors needed to be controlled; otherwise it can be problematic for the urban areas. So, at first hand it is needed to be ensured that the flow of people towards city is maintained by creating more job opportunities in rural areas. An integrated and effective agricultural rural economy can be a potential solution to reduce the causes of rural-urban migration.
2. Street vendors always use to face problems from urban locals and authorities. An alternative provision for these informal sectors can be introduced by the authority to minimize the prevailing problems faced by the street vendors. Street vendors in our country are unlicensed. Government should issue licenses to those who want to hawk goods. This way their occupation can have a right to function smoothly.
3. Different social services such as better medical facilities, education, infrastructure, water and electricity needed to be ensured by the urban authority to the migrated street vendors.
4. Vocational training of the rural people on small scale industries (non-farm) activities that could generate an income for the rural household should be introduced in rural areas as it is supposed to alleviate the problem of landlessness and land shortage and their total dependency on only one source of livelihood i.e. Agriculture and migration to City.
5. Street vendors suffer from lack of security and lack of access to credit. Government should formulate some comprehensive plan like different training programs to improve the life style of street vendors and introduce credit facilities.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is mainly poverty driven. It may be mentioned here that enhanced job prospects, better educational and health care facilities and other social amenities that are necessary for better living conditions are added attractions of the migrants towards the city life. In this study, most number of respondents indicated that they had migrated to the city with a view to earn good livelihood and better city life facilities. They feel that there is a wide gap between the urban and rural areas in terms of both the quality of education, health, social services and good working opportunities which encouraged them to migrate and settle themselves in informal

sectors like street vending. Later they face different problems to cope with the city life and make the city vulnerable by overcrowding which is creating diverse problems both in origin and destination so it is urgent to solve the problems. In order to stop poor people from migration, therefore, the essential pre-conditions seem to be the expansion of employment opportunities, as mentioned above, and also the creation of better living conditions through improved availability of essential health care and occupational services. Unless the like of the amenities enjoyed by migrants in the cities can be made available in the rural areas, at least partly, if not to the fullest extent, the idea of alleviation of poverty through

inducing and sustaining the process of reverse migration will hardly be translated into reality. It is admitted on all hands, however, that alleviation of poverty in Bangladesh has been at the heart of the Government's development strategy,

particularly since independence of the country. So in the other side the proper management of these migrant street vendors can be a good way to ensure better livelihood of thousands of households and play a significant role in poverty alleviation.

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