Sustainability of the new economy: An empirical study of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow

Kazi Abdul, Mannan and A.O, Krueger

Institute of Business Studies, Moscow State University

1996

Online at https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/102520/
MPRA Paper No. 102520, posted 26 Aug 2020 11:07 UTC
Sustainability of the new economy: An empirical study of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow

Kazi Abdul Mannan
Senior Lecturer
Institute of Business Studies, Moscow

And

Professor Dr. A. O. Krueger
Moscow State University

Abstract

Very little is known about the specifics of the challenges and the strategies of the Bangladeshi migrants use to cope with, in Russia, for studies in this regard are largely non-existent. With the aim of filling this gap, this study explores the socio-economic survival strategies of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow. Using mixed research methods, it draws data from 385 survey questionnaire, and 10 Key Informant Individual Interviews and analyses the experiences of migrants in relation to access to livelihood and their use of social networks in Russia. The findings of this research indicated that economic reason is the main pull factor for the migration of Bangladeshi to Russia. This paper also examines the survival strategies of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow. A number of survival strategies are identified including trade and commerce, petty business, importing, trading processing raw jute from Bangladesh, trading electronics products, physicians and working in government institutions. Migrants have been noted to intensify establishment of petty businesses in major trading centres as their major survival strategies. The findings presented in this paper established that age, sex and education are important factors in influencing the diversification of survival strategies of migrants. The study concludes that, although all the survival strategies examined seems to have improved migrants livelihoods better than in their place of origin, however none of strategy is complete in its own forcing migrants to opt for more than one survival strategy.

Keywords: socio-economic, survival strategies, social networks, migrants, international migration.
INTRODUCTION

The Russian Federation appeared on the world map as an independent state at the end of 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Even as it grappled with huge political and economic upheaval, Russia suddenly found itself home to a massive number of ‘immigrants’ from former Soviet states. With little experience managing international migration flows to guide policy in this area initially, Russia has been at the center of transformative shifts in migration, all while its government has worked to solidify a comprehensive migration management system. The history of international migration in Russia did not begin with the breakup of the Soviet Union. Therefore, analysis of migration patterns in the Russian Federation, as in other former Soviet republics, should begin in earlier times, when they formed a single state. Many socio-demographic issues and ethno-political conflicts in former Soviet republics, as well as migration flows between them after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, are to a large extent the result of Soviet-era migration.

Today, Russia maintains strong cultural, political, and economic ties with residents of former Soviet states reflected in ongoing migration patterns which it works to strengthen with its citizenship policies.

Migration between Russia and other Soviet republics during this period occurred in two stages. The first lasted from the beginning of the 1950s to the mid-1970s, when Russia lost 2.7 million people to other Soviet republics (World Bank 1995). Migrants from Russia flowed to Ukraine and Belarus for postwar reconstruction and development, to the Baltic republics, to Kazakhstan for the development of fallow land, and to Central Asia to build newly industrialized economies. Meanwhile, migration from other Soviet republics gradually grew, starting a second stage one of in-migration to Russia. This phase, occurring between 1975 and 1991, increased the population of Russia by 2.5 million (World Bank 1995). Initially, these flows were directed to remote, resource-rich areas aided by the offer of state benefits. Later, they were spurred by state reallocation of investments to the development of oil and gas fields in West Siberia and mineral resources elsewhere in eastern Russia.

Many students from other socialist states and from developing countries including Bangladesh attended Russian universities, and, to a smaller degree, universities in other Soviet republics. In 1960, 13,500 foreign students were in the Soviet Union, a number that rose to 180,000 by 1990. In 1960, the People’s Friendship University of Russia was established to train students from newly independent countries in Africa and Latin America, and more than 60,000 people from 165 countries studied there during the Soviet period (World Bank 1995). In addition, temporary labor migration took place in limited fashion between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Starting in the late 1970s, tens of thousands of people (mostly from Bulgaria, North Korea, and Vietnam) migrated annually to major Soviet cities and the remote reaches of Russia.
The first post-Soviet migration legislation in Russia was devoted to issues of displacement. In 1992, Russia signed the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol, and in 1993, it codified elements of these in new laws on refugees and internally displaced persons. In 1993, a law was passed on freedom of movement and choice of residence, expanding opportunities for internal migration (UNHCR 1993). Meanwhile, the legal status of foreign citizens was still regulated by a 1981 Soviet law and a 1991 decree that were no longer compatible with the rapidly changing reality (Elena 1991). Comprehensive rules on residence and work for foreigners in Russia were lacking, and procedures for issuing residence permits were obsolete. To fill these gaps, Russia implemented a set of commonly used migration management tools, including entry visas, work permits, visas to attract foreign employees, registration of place of stay for citizens and foreigners, and permits for permanent and temporary residence.

In the early post-Soviet years, it was difficult to draw a clear line between temporary and permanent labor migration, and between the legal and illegal employment of immigrants from the former Soviet republics. This was due to the still-porous nature of borders, the large number of people with unresolved citizenship, and a lack of laws governing the legal status of foreigners (Popov 1996). A new understanding of labor migration came at the beginning of the 21st century, when an improving Russian economy led to increased demand for labor, especially in construction, transport, and services. Citizens of other former Soviet republics that were not faring as well economically (except for Kazakhstan) were drawn to Russia in search of higher salaries (Popov 1996).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research was to conceptualize sustainably of migration and explore the economic and social survival strategies of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow, Russia.

The specific objectives of the study are:

Firstly, to investigate the pull factors that underlie Bangladeshi’s reasons for migration to Russia

Finally, to examine the experiences and strategies that Bangladeshi migrants in the different sector in Moscow use to ensure their daily livelihood and their social networks and how these are used as a means of survival.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term ‘sustainable migration’ is not commonly used in academic literature on migration, and if it is, it is rarely defined. At the same time, the words ‘sustainable’ and ‘migration’ frequently appear in conjunction. The bulk of existing literature at the intersection of sustainability and migration relates to two main themes: ‘migration and development’ and ‘migration management’.

To unwrap the black box of sustainable migration from lower and middle-income countries to high-income countries, the point of departure cannot be the term itself, nor
specific topics in the literature (United Nations 1995). Aiming for a holistic approach to investigate what is known about sustainable migration, the frame of reference needs to be an inclusive understanding of migration and migration outcomes, including the experiences of the stakeholders that are affected, directly or indirectly, throughout the migration chain (Bertram 1986).

This literature review aims to provide key insights from areas that address ‘sustainable migration’ defined as ‘migration that ensures a well-balanced distribution of costs and benefits for the individuals, societies and states involved, now and in the future’. The review thus builds on the project’s approach to ‘sustainable migration’ as a process with political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, affecting the individual, societal and state level, occurring at and between the stages of the migration chain i.e. in countries of origin, transit and destination (United Nations 1995). The literature review identifies key debates and findings in existing academic studies and ‘grey literature’, including governmental and non-governmental reports. The key insights are found through a thematic clustering, in the areas reviewed. These include widely cited arguments and findings in articles in highly ranked journals.

The research-based assessment of the overall effects migration has on development in origin countries varies substantially. The effects of emigration are not only diverse, but often contradictory, and it is impossible to summarize the ‘overall’ effect migration has on development. This is related to the multi-faceted nature of migration, where migration’s impact on development will depend on the type, size, timing and direction of the migration flows, the migrants’ individual characteristics and human capital, as well as the socio-political context in the country of origin (Carling 1996).

One of the recognized ways in which migration can influence development is through money transfers sent from migrants abroad. Remittances are praised as a valuable economic impetus in many origin countries since they may improve living conditions for individuals and families, and support development at the societal level (Russell 1992). In less developed countries with a large diaspora, remittances can make up a substantial part of the GDP (Stahl 1982). This flow of money is much larger and more rapidly increasing than the amount of international aid (Stahl 1989). At the same time, however, remittances are recognized as a potential source of dependence. Both individuals and state economies may become dependent on money transfers from abroad, and thus be more vulnerable than if they were self-sustained (Bertram 1993).

The general assessment of how migration affects development in origin countries has fluctuated between positive and negative views over the last decades (Carling 1996). While an optimistic view prevailed in the 1960s, a more negative approach surfaced from the mid-1970s onwards. In the decade following the turn of the emerging (Wood 1982). Increasingly, too, the question of how migration affects development has become one of a pair in the concept of a ‘migration-
development nexus’ (Appleyard 1989). The impact of migration on development has been, and needs to be, assessed in relation to the impact of development on migration (Huguet 1989).

The literature strongly indicates that policy interventions can enhance the development benefits of migration. A case in point are efforts to increase the value of remittance transfers, affect their use, or connect them to promotion of financial inclusion (Chant & Radcliffe 1992). In the field of migration and development, most policy interventions take migration flows as a given and concentrate on enhancing their benefits, rather than seeking to affect the flows which would invariably be more contested (Massey et al 1993). A prominent exception to this general trend are the ‘labour export’ policies of some developing countries, especially in Asia (Abella 1992).

Diaspora and emigration policies are important facets affecting the sustainability of migration, and emigrants can indeed represent a ‘resource that can be mobilized in support of the political or economic interests of the sending state’ (Heisler 1985). However, such policies and engagement are not necessarily beneficial. For instance, despite a rhetoric of protection of migrant workers, most of the states that encourage emigration to the Gulf do little to protect these emigrants (Brochmann 1992). Thus, the question of sustainability is different at the individual level, and particularly for the migrants who experience exploitation and abuse (Connell 1992). Also, on the state level, the long-term outcome of emigration policies can be questionable, particularly in cases where origin states’ national development strategies include a reliance on the migration industry and other countries’ need for labour (Carling 1996).

In the literature on transnationalism, which has skyrocketed in the last two decades, the positive impact of migrants’ engagement on origin country communities has been a focal point of attention (Arnold 1992). The beneficial impact of transnational engagement has been included in studies on economic activities, political activities and socio-cultural transnational activities (Sen 1993). Involvement in transnational social fields is, however, not necessarily only beneficial, as an example, research on children of immigrants have found that while some find origin country visits enjoyable, others are unsettled by cross-border involvement (Gitmez 1988). In relevance to this is the question of whether transnational attachment obstructs immigrant integration.

Factors such as poverty, environment degradation, and armed conflict are often referred to as the root causes of migration. The ‘root causes’ doctrine became part of European policy in the 1980s and gained popularity through the 1990s (Brochmann 1990). The idea of alleviating root causes to reduce migration, however, is at odds with findings from scientific research. First, there is a long and complex chain of relationships from root causes to actual migration. While demographic trends, socio-economic development, environmental degradation and governance failures in origin countries are important to determine migration, so are
people’s hopes, desires and fears. Both structural factors and individual factors play decisive roles and the latter is often disregarded in policy discussions on managing migration through the alleviation of root causes (IFAD 1992).

Newer approaches to migration theory see migration as the outcome of, first, the formation of migration aspirations, and second, the ability to realize those aspirations (Kay 1993; Massey 1993). Moreover, many in-depth accounts of migration describe how it is often not destitution that makes people turn to migration, but rather a feeling of inescapable stagnation (Heisler 1985). Therefore, when discussing the sustainability of migration, it is also important to consider that the absence of migration can have negative consequences (Bertram 1993). In the majority of cases when people want to migrate from a poorer to a richer country, the desire remains unfulfilled that can be blocked by restrictive policies, high smuggling fees, or other structural obstacles (Wood 1982). The ‘would-be’ migrants are thus left with frustrated aspirations that can have important development implications (World Bank 1995). Additionally, other migration outcomes can occur, such as migration to other destinations, failed migration attempts, or troubling migration journeys towards Europe that ends with death, return or prolonged stays in transit hubs (Heisler 1985).

When migration is prevented in conventional ways, through restrictive immigration policies and border enforcement, it can result in involuntary immobility (Seccombe & Lawless 1989). If policy interventions are successfully directed at earlier stages in the migration chain, affecting political, societal and economic circumstances, and thus people’s life prospects, people would be more likely to stay because they wanted to, and not because they are blocked from leaving (Lim 1992). However, such outcomes have proven extremely difficult to achieve through targeted policy interventions.

‘Transit migration’ is one of several ‘new’ migration concepts that have come to be used over the last decades or so (Adler 1977). While the term is common in both policy and academic contexts, it is often left undefined and based on assumptions, e.g. when it is implicitly used to signify illicit migration at the fringes of Europe (Bach & Schraml 1982). States can also shape the meaning of the term through attempts to ‘rebrand’ de facto settlers as people who should leave, such as is the case with Sudanese migrants in Egypt (Balán 1988b).

The term ‘transit migration’ can be misleading for several reasons. In the case of North Africa, it can be misleading because substantial numbers of migrants can settle for years in towns or cities along their route (Böhning 1984). For some, this may be a step on the way to their ideal destination, while for others this may become the final destination. Moreover, countries commonly identified as ‘transit locations’ such as Mauritania and Algeria, and to some extent Morocco and Tunisia have also been points of destination for labour migrants, students and professionals (Adépoju 1988).
Individual migrants ‘in transit’ can have very different experiences of the costs and benefits of migration, and of the temporary nature of transit (King 1995). Refugees, for instance, may be more vulnerable as they may not get the protection they need in contexts of transit. Additionally, while refugees and asylum seekers can be ‘stuck in transit’ in transit hubs outside European borders, they can also experience the sense of uncertainty and temporality associated with transit situations within European borders (Jacobsen 1996). Prolonged stays in reception centres or elsewhere, during or after the asylum application process, has been described as living in limbo, for months, or years, the migrants remain in transit, and have unclear prospects for the future (Weiner 1996).

The phenomenon of ‘transit migration’ has also had political consequences. During the 1990s, the attention of EU migration control shifted from southern EU member states to countries further south and east (Kaimowitz 1990). Countries of origin and transit outside EU borders agreed to cooperate with EU on migration management. This policy has been labelled the ‘internationalization’ or ‘externalization’ of EU border control, and it represents a disputed political field (King 1995). The contested parts of this policy are e.g. that EU states ‘pressure’ third countries to enter agreements that largely profit the EU, that some of these governments are undemocratic or accused of human rights abuse, that the support received contributes to strengthen the parties responsible for such human rights abuses, and that these policies do not provide people with other potential migration routes (Kritz & Caces 1992).

The arrival of immigrants can bring different sorts of costs and benefits to individuals, societies and states in countries of destination and the nature of these effects cannot be generalized, as this will relate to the characteristics of the individual migrants that arrive, their reasons for migrating to that specific country and the overall composition of migration flows (Go 1995). The arrival of a high number of migrants with insufficient qualifications to immediately contribute to a host country’s national economy will have different impact than the arrival of a smaller, specialized group of migrants who are skilled to fill a specific gap in the national labour market (Potts 1990). The context in destination countries is crucially important, as the ways in which migration brings both costs and benefits depend on labour market needs, political climate, national economy and demographic trends (Seccombe & Lawless 1989).

The answer to the question of whether and how migration can be sustainable for countries of destination will also depend on what type of sustainability is discussed. Even if immigration yields economic sustainability in a country, it may foster social unrest or political distress. While migration may be experienced as more or less sustainable for the host state, this may be different to the experience of the specific parts of the population, and indeed to individual members, migrants and non-migrants, in the population. The concept of ‘absorption capacity’ lends relevance in this regard.
While it has been used to explore a ‘society’s capacity to absorb immigrants’ or ‘the extent to which a receiving community is willing and able to absorb immigrants’, it is difficult to define exactly what the term entails (Knights 1996). Different stakeholders can have diverse experiences of the society’s absorption capacity, and in research on migration the term is often left undefined. In the EU, there is no official definition of absorption capacity, and it is arguably problematic that it ‘is being used in official texts of the EU, whose language should have precise legal, economic or political meaning’ (Agarwal 1986).

In terms of national economic consequences of migration, it is often feared that labour immigration will decrease wages, increase unemployment rates among natives and challenge the national economy (Balán 1988a). Some may fear that immigrants’ use of public goods like public services will decrease the availability of such goods for the general population (Brochmann 1990). Yet in economic research, there is no evidence that immigration has caused large declines in GDP or public service provision in destination countries (Stahl 1989).

In general, there are two broad, though diverging, perspectives on the economic effects of labour immigration: The mercantilist assumption is that ‘any wage-depressing effects of immigration at the destination can raise that country’s welfare by increasing the competitiveness of its manufactured exports’, while the most common argument is that ‘immigration has deleterious effects on labor’ (Adams 1991b).

The difference of these assumptions is that the latter is argued by micro-economists focusing on immigration, while the former is argued by macro-economists focusing on economic growth and development overseas (Arnold 1992).

Depending on the composition of the migration flow, the arrival of newcomers may increase diversity and decrease ethnic and cultural heterogeneity in the population that can pose a challenge if heterogeneity is valued by the existing national population (Adams 1991b). If integration fails or the existing population is in opposition to immigration, the sustainability of migration can be challenged (Gitmez 1988; Mannan & Kozlov 1995). Hypothetically, this can happen if social trust decreases, if social cohesion is threatened, or if the state loses legitimacy (Sen 1993). The feared threat of migration as a driver of difference, which in turn erodes social cohesion, is built on evidence which is methodologically thin and for in measuring the impact of ethnic diversity on social cohesion, a review of existing evidence points out, first, that the varying geographic scales of studies provides findings which are inconclusive and second, that attitudinal and behavioural variables are, more often than not, conflated, or that just one or the other is included, leading to findings which do not provide robust answers to the research questions posed (Brochmann 1992; Carling 1996).
MATERIALS AND METHODS

This particular study was conducted in Moscow, Russia. The household survey was conducted among 385 migrants. The current study employed a mixed method approach where both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used in data collection and analysis. Both purposive and snowball sampling techniques have been used. The target population of migrants was captured through snowball sampling technique because the exact number of migrants was not known. The researcher made initial contacts with community leaders who identified a small group of people (known individual migrants) and used them to establish more contacts with other potential migrants. Use of snowball sampling technique may have affected the representativeness of the sample. Apart from snowball sampling technique, purposive sampling was also employed in the selection of key informants deemed to possess crucial information for the study.

This study employed 385 questionnaires to the migrants to collect quantitative data. Questionnaire survey was conducted in 1995/1996 in the study area where questions were directed to the migrants. Both closed and open ended questions were used. Closed ended questions had many options that allowed the respondents to choose only one for some questions and more than one option for multiple response questions. Few open ended questions were also included to allow respondents to express their levels of understanding on the topic studied. Closed questions ensured uniformity on answers and simplified data entry while open ended questions aimed at acquiring more information based on respondent’s experiences on migration and survival strategies. Qualitative information was collected through the use of in-depth interviews, field observations and focus group discussions in 1995/1996. In-depth interviews were conducted with nine selected key informants who deemed to possess crucial information for this particular study. Moreover, focus group discussions were used to validate the information gathered through other methods. A total of five groups with a composition of six members were included in the discussions. Field observations were used to capture specific information particularly, activities done as survival strategies for migrants in the area of destination. Documentary reviews from government reports and scholarly works were also used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data that relates to the study topic. The collected data were analysed through both descriptive and content analysis methods. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed through descriptive statistics. Frequencies were determined to observe the occurrence of the responses from interviewed migrants. Qualitative data from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and field observation have been analysed by content analysis.
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was important to study the age structure and education levels of the population because several social relations within the community depend on age and education. An examination of age structure of the heads of migrants (Table 1.1) indicates that, majority of migrants were aged 41 to 45 (51.60%) and the last category constituted 3.4% of the migrant were aged above 71 years. Age is an important variable in the study of mortality, fertility and migration of population in various places. Not only that but also various demographic studies have shown that migration is age and sex selective. Education influences the future shape and direction of migrants in the area of destination.

Table 1.1 Age distribution of the Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage (N=385)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-45</td>
<td>51.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-50</td>
<td>14.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-70</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71+</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 1.2 shows that 67% of migrants in Moscow had completed graduation level, 11% had post-graduation while 22% had higher secondary level of education.

Table 1.2: Educational level of the Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Percentage (N=385)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Secondary</td>
<td>7.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>67.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation</td>
<td>22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study intended to identify the survival strategies of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow. The study results show (Table 1.3) that, business was the dominant survival strategy where 45% of the surveyed population was involved in involved in trade and commerce. The next segment were involved in petty business (29%). It was also found that they were importing products from different countries and selling them in the Russian retail and wholesale markets (9%). A group of the traders were processing raw jute from Bangladesh in Russia and selling it in the local market as there is demand again (6%). The study also found that Bangladeshis were trading electronics products in a supermarket called Moscow (5%). Few physicians (3%) were performing their duties with reputation and some were also working in government institutions (2%).
Table 1.3 Survival strategies of the Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survival strategies</th>
<th>Percentage (N=385)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade and commerce</td>
<td>45.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty business</td>
<td>29.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importing</td>
<td>9.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raw jute trading</td>
<td>6.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading electronic goods</td>
<td>5.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government employee</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The term business and commerce in this study was used to mean all types of formal corporate business. Petty businesses identified include whole and retail shops, small kiosks, selling consumer items, brewing local liquor, buying and selling crops and livestock, making and selling burnt bricks and selling of forest product such as timber, firewood, and charcoal. The study further noted that, formal business at trading centres tended to be largely controlled by local spouse.

The age structure of migration flows varies according to type of employment. Young people usually involve in petty business. The 26-35 group makes up 35% of the migrant petty businessman, while the proportion of those over 50 is very small. The high percentage of young people is due to the fact that petty business require few skills other than physical strength, robust health and endurance. The 46-55 age group were involved in trade and commerce. These people have very high qualifications, language knowledge and professional skills, which enable them to seek positions in a variety of state and private enterprises in the country they enter. The 31-40 age group predominates among the shuttles, which is not surprising given that at this age people usually have families and therefore economic obligations. They already have life experience, a good educational background, professional skills and adequate health. Older people are deterred from getting involved in the shuttle trade by the intense physical and psychological stress involved.

The educational level of migrants is somewhat higher than among the general population in Bangladesh. In terms of education, labour migrants fall clearly into two groups. The first and most numerous group comprises young people who have higher secondary or incomplete secondary education, and who rarely have attended specialized schools. The second group is made up of middle-aged or older qualified workers and specialists. The percentage of those who have attended specialized higher secondary level schools (technical or professional school, academic lyceum), is almost four times higher among the migrants than among the general population. This means that qualified workers, technicians and midlevel information technology (IT) specialists are more active in the migration process. The collapse of industrial enterprises in Bangladesh threw trained personnel onto the international labour market, where demand for their skills is greater.
On the whole, migrant from Bangladesh have good language skills. 88.4% speak Russian in addition to English language. Knowledge of a second or third language is more common among older people than the younger generation. The younger the migrant, the lower the level of language skills. Young people made up the overwhelming majority of interviewed migrant who do not speak a third language.

The issue of adaptation to the host society is very important for migrants, who are in close contact with the local population not only in the workplace but in everyday life. Migrants try to establish relations with their fellow workers and neighbours. However, insufficient knowledge of Russian, cultural differences and sometimes religious differences can hamper integration.

25% of respondents said the local population treated them in a friendly manner. 40% said the locals were indifferent to them. 25% said it was difficult for them to build relations with local residents because the latter believe that migrants “are taking bread away from them”. 10% said the local population treated them badly and used derogatory expressions such as “black-heads” or “Asians”.

*We are insulted, thrown out of the country and called “blacks”. People get angry and ask us why we are coming there. One has to put up with it all. We don’t have any protection.* (Torab, age 46)

The various types of migrant networks actively interact with one another in the course of the migration process. Though the research for this report shows that the majority of migrants do business independently (30%), migrants rely heavily on the support of their networks. Friends, both Russian citizens (51%) and fellow countrymen (19%), provide assistance. From the family network, the migrant moves on to ethno-regional solidarity networks. Here authoritative older migrants, who have lived in Russia for a long time, are the key figures. They have high status and help organize the migration and employment of younger fellow countrymen, whose status is lower. Public employment services or individual employers often cooperate with ethno-regional migrant networks.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper has examined the survival strategies of Bangladeshi migrants in Moscow. A number of survival strategies were identified including trade and commerce, petty business, importing, trading processing raw jute from Bangladesh, trading electronics products, physicians and working in government institutions. Migrants have been noted to intensify establishment of petty businesses in major trading centres as their major survival strategies. The findings presented in this paper established that age, sex and education were important factors in influencing the diversification of survival strategies of migrants from Bangladesh to Moscow. The study concludes that, although all the survival strategies examined seems to have improved migrants livelihoods better than in their place of origin, however none of strategy is complete in its own forcing
migrants to opt for more than one survival strategy.

REFERENCES


