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Does migration theory explain international migration from Bangladesh? a primer review

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DOES MIGRATION THEORY EXPLAIN INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH? A PRIMER REVIEW

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Abstract

This is a primer review of international migration theory and international migration from Bangladesh. We first present a review of the theory of international migration. Regarding international migration from Bangladesh, we note that by the middle of 2020, about 7.4 million people of Bangladesh origin were staying overseas, the sixth-largest worldwide and second-largest in South Asia. Yet there are concerns about illegal human trafficking and smuggling of undocumented workers. Recently there has been the COVID-19 pandemic, starting from the end of 2019 to date. Bangladesh international migration ground realities are often uncertain and challenging, with new situations emerging now and then in many different host countries. In summary, we argue that recent models of migration theory (circular, onward and return migration models) have successfully incorporated issues of international migration from large source countries, such as Bangladesh.

Keywords: international migration theory, NELM, short-term contract labour migration, circular migration, COVID-19 fallouts, Bangladesh

Introduction

Human *migration* (mobility) is of two types, *internal (domestic)* and *international (overseas). International migration* includes crossing an international boundary and a change of someone's usual location. If a change of location does not include

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crossing an international boundary-- that is categorized as a case of *domestic or internal migration* (see Bastia and Skeldon (2020), pp. 1-3, IOM (2019).

By mid-year of 2020, the number of *international migrants* stood at around 280.6 million people worldwide, which was about 3.6 per cent of the world population of 7.8 billion (IOM (2021)) (the United Nations defines *international migrants* are people who are living outside their country of birth for more than a year (op. cit.)). With the rapid expansion of globalization, **international migration** now holds a good option for a large number of people, particularly the younger ones, in developing countries (see IOM (2019), pp. 1-9, Bastia and Skeldon (2020), pp. 1-3, de Haas et al. (2020)).

Labour migrants are the one major category covering nearly two-thirds of this total number of *international migrant stock*, and the rest includes family migrants, *internally displaced people (IDPs), refugee migrants, and undocumented migrants* (see UN DESA PD (2020), IOM (2019)). In 1970, the number of *international migrants* stood at 84 million. This international migrant stock has increased to 280.6 million by the middle of 2020. India, Mexico and China are the three largest source countries and the USA, Germany and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are the three largest host countries.

One feature of *international migration* is that the most noticeable flow originates from developing countries and proceeds toward developed countries (the "*South-North Migration*"). Another flow originates within these developing countries and remains within these only (this is called the "*South-South Migration*") (the *South* is the developing countries, and the *North* is the developed, industrially advanced countries) (see World Bank (2016), de Haas (2020)).

One interesting research question is how far *migration theory* is successful in explaining *international migration*, particularly the developing countries as source locations.

The research objectives of this paper are as follows, *(a) review migration theory till date, (b) examine data about Bangladesh (as a case study of international migration), (c) assess the success of theory in explaining the international migration scenario of Bangladesh and (d) briefly examine fallouts from the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants from Bangladesh.*

The organization of this paper is as follows. *Section 1* introduces while *Section 2* provides a brief review of the international migration theory. *Section 3* is another brief review; this one is of recent developments in the international migration

theory. *Section 4* discusses Bangladesh as a case study of economic development in combination with international migration. *Section 5* discusses COVID-19 pandemic fallouts on Bangladeshi migrants. *Section 6* concludes.

Theory of International Migration

The *theory of international migration* started and flourished rapidly in the 1960s and proceeded further later on, even though discussions of international migration is there as earlier as in some paragraphs of the book, "*An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*" (1776) by Adam Smith and the "*laws of migration*" proposed by Ravenstein (1889) (see pp. 6, Bodvarrson, Simpson & Sparber (2015). Though **international migration theory** has originated from inputs of many different disciplines (such as economics, sociology, anthropology, geography, law, international relations, demography, and psychology) (Wickramasinghe and Wimalaratana (2016), pp. 14) and thereby incorporates many different views and perspectives, the central questions that this theory attempts to address are only a few. We see such questions evolving within migration theory over time, such as, *who migrates and why they migrate?* Only later on, the theory has proceeded towards answering questions such as, *what perpetuates migration? What causes return, circular and onward migration?*

We can classify these theories into three broad groups: the *micro-level*, the *meso-level*, and the *macro-level theories*. The *micro-level theories* view migration decisions from an individual's point of view: an individual's expectations, goals and objectives, plans, and constraints that he/she faces. Again, the *macro-level theories* view migration decisions from an aggregate point of view, e.g., the macroeconomy, national-level labour market demand, supply match, or mismatch. The *meso-levels theories* place migration decisions in between tiny micro-units and massive macro-units, such as family ties, social networks, peer groups, and community bonds (see Morawska (2007), Hagen-Zanker (2008), King (2012), Bodvarrson et al. (2015), Wickramasinghe and Wimalaratana (2016), Carling et al. (2020), Bastia and Skeldon (2020) and Constant (2020) for excellent recent reviews of the international migration theory).

micro-level theories of international migration

    (1) *push and pull factors theory*,

    (2) *neoclassical micro migration theory*,

    (3) *behavioural models* and

    (4) *theory of social systems*.

meso-level theories of international migration

(1) *social capital theory*,

(2) *institutional theory*,

(3) *network theory*,

(4) *cumulative causation theory*, and

(5) *the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) theory*.

macro-level theories of international migration

(1)   *neoclassical macro-migration theory*,

(2) *migration as systems* theory,

(3) *dual labour market theory*,

(4) *world systems theory* and

(5) *mobility transition theory*.

<u>Micro-level theories</u>

The push and pull factors theory

Everett S. Lee (1966) is one early scholar who coined migration's *push and pull factors theory*. According to this theory, "*push*" factors operate in the economically backward regions or countries of the world (insufficient demand of labour and low wages, forcing people to search for alternative locations for better livelihoods), whereas "*pull*" factors operate in the economically advanced regions or countries of the world (higher demand for labour and higher wages, encouraging people to come in and stay there).

The **micro neoclassical migration model** assumes an individual in a low-wage country as one who decides whether to migrate to a high-wage country or not, based on his/her expected lifetime benefits from migrating to that high-wage country versus his/her expected lifetime costs of migrating to that high-wage country. If he/she finds that the PV (present value) of lifetime benefits exceeds the PV (present value) of lifetime costs, he/she migrates, or if otherwise, he/she does not migrate. Over time, when sufficient numbers of workers leave for high wage rate countries, wage rates in sending countries increase, and on the other hand, when sufficient numbers of workers join in, wage rates in receiving countries fall. At some point in time, wage rates in both countries match, and international migration will cease. Ravenstein (1889) provided some "*laws of migration*," which were the first starting

points of current discussions of determinants of migration. Sjaastad (1962) first formalized this neoclassical micro theory of migration, and his model is considered seminal in this field. Simply put, an individual worker will decide to migrate to a new location as opposed to stay in the previous location if the net present value [of lifetime differences of wage earnings in between these two locations minus lifetime differences of cost of living in between these two locations and the cost of migration] is positive, otherwise, not migrate. Migration can be skill-augmenting by itself actually, but the point of emphasis is that by moving to a new location, the migrant selects the market which gives the highest return to his/her skills (or we can say *human capital*) (pp. 9-14, Bodvarsson, Simpson and Sparber (2015)). Becker (1964, pp. 7) also wrote about *migration as a human capital investment*, only within a few years as of Sjaastad.

One version of the model as mentioned above, the *human capital model*, basically models a potential migrant's *willingness to migrate* to be dependent on his/her human capital characteristics, e. g., age, gender, education, skills, occupation, experience, marital status, entrepreneurial ability, willingness to succeed, willingness to take risks in the form of starting a new life in an unknown land. In summary, *the human capital theory* assumes that migration decision is made when a potential migrant understands that he/she can improve his human capital accumulation and can have better returns on this human capital asset in the destination country than that is the case in the home country. An outcome of this human capital model is the *brain drain hypothesis*, which mentions that the sending countries lose out on their *best brains* (such as physicians, engineers, scientists, professors) in the process of international migration.

Meso-level theories

the *New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)* originated as a response to *micro neoclassical migration theory*, discussed above (Stark and Bloom (1985) is one pioneering paper on this theme of NELM). The NELM considers *migration decision*, not as an individual cost and benefits calculation (which is the case of the neoclassical model of migration), instead of as a decision taken by the family as a unit combined, in the form of *a family risk management strategy in the presence of market failures such as insurance, credit and labour markets*. A family, in this model, decides to send its different members to different labour markets, with uncorrelated risk characteristics, and some other members stay home. If one labour market where family resides or family has sent their member fails, other labour markets may remain strong, and therefore support from one member comes in

to support other members in the case of financial distress. The model recognizes remittance as an explicit or implicit agreement between the sending family and the remittance member sender since it was a family decision to send this person abroad to earn a living. Now is when he/she sends money to the other family members in contractual obligation and repayment of debts incurred by the family while sending this member abroad. *This way, international migration is a family decision in the form of a risk management strategy of the family, not an individual decision as in the case of micro neoclassical theory.* The family may consider wage differentials between the host country and sending country, but this is not the most crucial concern for the family, but rather a *maximization of household welfare subject to the risks and constraints*. Stark and Bloom (1985), among other papers, is considered a seminal contribution to the NELM literature. The NELM, on the flip side, fails to explain the case of entire *family migration*, such as when the entire family moves to a new country altogether, since in this case family itself decides to move, not that family sends different members to different labour markets.

Another theory at the meso-level that originated from sociology as a social science discipline is the **network theory** (see Massey et al. (1993), pp. 448-450 and Yap (1977)). *Migrant networks* are ties between the migrant population residing in the host countries and their social connections (family members, friends, acquaintances, community people, school friends, office colleagues) in the sending countries. There can be beneficial mutual agreements between these two groups of people; it is to the advantage for the migrant to be able to bring back closely related people from home (so that a closely connected *mini-society* which is like a replica of the original, can be established, in a foreign country).

A third theory we discuss at the meso-level is the **institutional theory** (see Massey et al. (1993), pp. 450-451). This theory points out that since this international migration is a new issue, there are gaps between potential migrants and visas available worldwide.

A fourth theory at the meso-level is the **theory of cumulative causation** (an idea first introduced by Gunnar Myrdal (1957) and discussed in Massey et al. (1993), pp. 451-454). This theory concentrates on how a migration flow starts and continues to expand over time. As the first migrant starts and provides social capital support (encouragement, information, referral and other forms of assistance) to family, friends, relatives and community people, potential migrants get encouraged to migrate and find jobs in the host countries, with reduced risks involved.

Macro-level theories

One macro-level theory is **dual labour market theory** (Michael J. Piore (1979) first introduced the term). This model does not accept the neoclassical notion that migration decisions arise from individual costs and benefits calculations of potential migrants in migrant-sending countries. The proponents consider that international migration exists because of labour demands in the industrialized or natural resource-rich nations, so the cause of international migration is the "*pull factors*" in advanced, rich countries (in terms of needs to do some jobs, which may not be much attractive for the citizens of the host countries themselves). The "*push factors*" in developing countries are not causes of international migration, e.g., poverty, high unemployment and low wages. So, there is a "***dual labour market***" operating globally, one is in the industrialized, resource-rich, technologically advanced countries, and the other is in the less-industrialized, resource-poor, technologically backward countries.

Another macro model we would discuss is the **migration systems theory** (Fawcett and Arnold (1987) is one early paper on this theme, see discussions in Massey et al. (1993), pp. 454). The idea is that migration changes the economic, social and cultural establishments of both the host and source countries. This model views migration as an extensive system operating at a broad level. This model focuses on both micro and macro linkages of the international migration process.

International Migration Theory, Recent Papers

Lewis (1954) is one pioneering paper for migration literature. Lewis focused on *internal migration*, whereas other papers extended his ideas into broader contexts. For example, **Harris and Todaro (1970)** is one crucial paper that adds uncertainty into this Lewis two-sector migration model framework. The assumption is that when the rural migrant worker comes to the city, he/she may not find a job readily available; he/she may have to wait for long periods as an unemployed or underemployed worker before having a job in the modern sector.

Yap (1977) is one paper in line with the "*network model*" (discussed in Section 2). This network model came in from the sociology discipline and has been immensely helpful in explaining *migrant networks* (or *social capital*) among already placed migrants and newly arrived migrants in a destination country (see Massey et al. (1993), pp. 448-450, Morawaska (2007)).

Polachek and Horvath (1977) is a paper that paved the way for the "*life cycle model*" of migration and the idea of *circular, onward, repeat and return migration* in migration theory. One problem with the Sjaastad model is that it considers migration decisions a one-time decision (once in a lifetime and irreversible).

Mincer (1978) is one early paper on *family decision making* in migration theory. Family decision making emphasizes the point that different members of the same family may have conflicting interests-- while the decision to migrate may be considered gainful for the husband as per his calculations, so *welfare-enhancing* for him (for example), the same decision may be considered a loss for the wife as per her calculations, so *welfare-reducing* for her.

Stark (1984) is one paper that explains that migration can happen from *relative income deprivation*. The idea is that migration decision is taken to respond to potential migrant's desire to increase his/her relative amounts of wealth compared to his/her "reference group's" wealth (such as neighbours, relatives, friends or colleagues).

Clark et al. (2007) brings the *immigration policy of the host country* into the model and discusses exciting issues. They model the immigration policy as some form of *migration costs*, and these costs can be higher for those migrants from a specific country or region with a specific skill set, who faces stricter immigration restrictions (see Clark et al. (2007)).

Chiswick (1999) is one paper that mentions a surprising feature of *international migration*. Compared to significant wage rate differences among different world regions, the actual international migration flow is relatively small, and one explanation can be the significant *migration costs* involved. Migration costs can be different for pairs of a sending country and a host country; for example, migration costs will be low within two neighbouring countries due to the small distance to travel.

Belot and Hatton (2008) and **Hatton and Williamson (2011)** are two interesting papers that bring *credit and poverty constraints* in migration models. *Credit constraints* are significant factors for *international migration from developing countries* (not sufficiently placed in theory till then). International migration is costly, and future returns are uncertain; potential migrants may find severe credit constraints in developing countries' already imperfect credit markets.

Dustmann and Glitz (2011) *is one paper where human capital accumulation is endogenous to examine the relationship between schooling and migration. The*

researchers treated human capital accumulation (for example, schooling) as *exogenous* in migration models till recently (though the original Sjaastad (1962) model considers *migration* simply as like *education* in terms of investment in human beings).

Beine et al. (2008) is one paper on a topic that is often called the "*brain drain*" (introduced in Section 2). In a dynamic migration model setting, young children invest in education in their youth and make migration plans later on in their lives, during adulthood. Human capital accumulation is difficult and costly, and this depends on individual ability and personal investments (studying), and at the same time, individuals may face constraints, if not fully binding, such as credit constraints in acquiring schooling. One striking result of this modelling exercise is that losses to society from the brain drain are small unless this brain drain is widespread. One simplifying assumption is that only skilled workers would migrate (not unskilled workers), whereas all workers (both skilled and unskilled) would try to obtain skills. Even though only those who achieved skills could migrate, everyone in the classroom tries to achieve these skills and succeed in migrating (similar to a lottery outcome, only a few obtain prizes whereas everyone purchases lottery). Skilled migration this way raises expectations from international migration and expected returns from this prospect of international migration within the society, leading to higher investments in human capital accumulation (studying) for the society compared to the case where this lottery prospect was not available. This situation, according to Beine et al. (2008), can be termed as the "***brain gain***", which can offset the losses from the "***brain drain***" of home country society (pp. 632).

Constant (2020) provides a comprehensive review of literature on *the circular, return and onward migration*, the take-home from this line of literature is that a potential migrant's migration decision is not a one-off decision. This migration decision changes throughout his/her lifetime, partly due to new information set, new circumstances or new considerations arising from stages of life where the migrant worker stays. Return, repeat and circular migrants are self-selected, a heterogeneous group of migrants; in some cases, they may be motivated by non-economic factors (also see Castles and Wise (2008) and de Haas (2010) for recent discussions on these issues).

International Migration from Bangladesh

Before independence in 1971, in the 1940s and onward, a significant number of Bangladeshi families, particularly from the Sylhet division, established

close communication with the Great Britain. Therefore, *family migration* has been a known phenomenon for Bangladeshi families for several decades. After independence, Bangladesh gradually established diplomatic and business ties with the Middle East countries, among other countries. If we examine the data, Bangladesh started first in the *labour migration* category in 1976 with a few thousand migrant workers (14 thousand) going to the Middle East for the first time, with short-term labour contracts. Over time, Bangladesh has become a significant source country of international migration and the number of international migrants has reached to one million approximately recently. Figure 1a depicts the trend of international labour migration of Bangladesh. On the other hand, Figure 1b represents the pattern of remittance received in Bangladesh. In the very beginning, Bangladesh has received around 49 million USD as a remittance in 1976-77, whereas approximately 18,000 million USD has been sent as remittance by the Bangladeshi expatriates recently. Although overseas remittances have started to pour in from 1976-77 onwards, this has gained high momentum in the twenty-first century years.

Figure 1: Trend of International Migration and Remittance
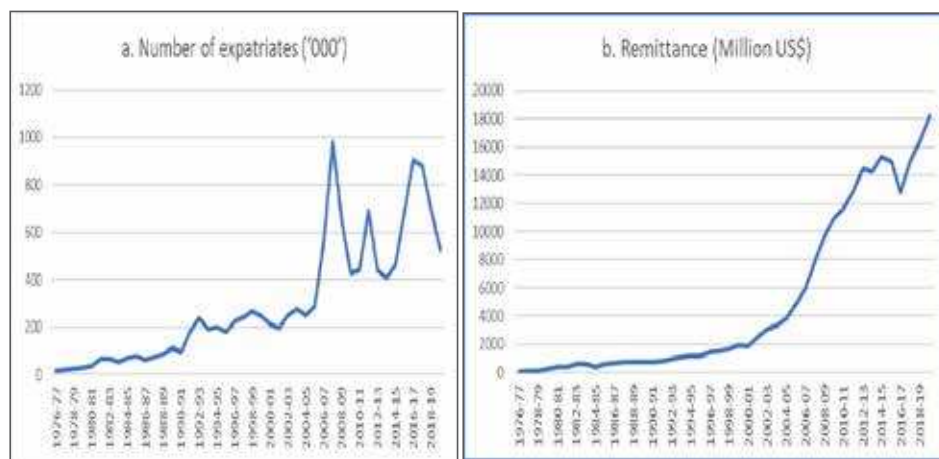
Source: Bangladesh Economic Review (2021), BMET (2021), Bangladesh Bank (2020, 2021)

Every year, few thousands of Bangladeshi workers move out towards many different countries of the world, with short-term labour contracts, and the central destination region of Bangladeshi migrant workers has always been the Middle Eastern countries (see BMET (2021), World Bank (2020)). In more recent decades,

Malaysia has also become a significant destination country for Bangladeshi migrant workers. Other popular destination countries are as far away as South Korea and South Africa, and one prevalent destination region has been the European Union countries. Besides migrant workers in short-term labour contracts, many Bangladeshi families have also settled in Canada, the UK, the USA, Australia, Malaysia, European Union countries, particularly Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Spain, France, the Netherlands, and so on. Bangladeshis have successfully reached significant portions of the globe and have also settled there, started jobs, businesses and education for their children (this is called the *diaspora community*, people with claims on two countries somehow). Some Bangladeshi non-residents have returned home to Bangladesh and have started jobs or businesses, often employing their education and technical knowledge obtained abroad. Bangladeshi non-residents (NRBs) have been able to contribute to the economic development of Bangladesh, including remittances that they send to their families staying in Bangladesh (remittances were equivalent to about 5.4 per cent of national GDP (IOM (2020a).

With regards to "*skills*" categories, only 2 per cent of Bangladeshi migrant workers are "*professionals*", and an overwhelming 48 per cent are "*low skilled*", many male migrant workers work in the construction sector (IOM (2020a)). Bangladeshi women also went abroad for *short-term contract labour jobs* from 1991 onward; their common destination is the Middle East countries, commonly working in the household help sector in these countries (op. cit.). IOM (2020b) provides survey findings from 1,000 migrant workers from Bangladesh (survey conducted in March 2019, before COVID-19). The major destination countries for Bangladeshi remittance senders are Saudi Arabia (27.7 per cent), United Arab Emirates (16.3 per cent), Malaysia (15.1 per cent) (pp. 10). The migrant workers' families are located unevenly across eight administrative divisions of the country-- Dhaka (38.8 per cent) and Chattogram (37 per cent) combined make about 76 per cent of remittance-receiving households (pp. 13).

We note that Bangladesh is a *lower-middle-income status country* now and is expected to graduate from United Nation's *LDC (Least Developed Countries)* ranking by 2026 (see World Bank (2021) and World Bank (2020)), located in eastern South Asia (alternatively called the Indian Subcontinent). India surrounds Bangladesh on the West, the North and the East. Bangladesh is bounded by the Bay of Bengal in the South and borders Myanmar in the South-East. Bangladesh is the basin of three major rivers of Asia-- *the Ganges* (*the Padma), the Brahmaputra* (*the*

Jamuna) and *the Meghna*, all flowing together into the Bay of Bengal in the South. Regular rainy season floods and cyclones are frequent events, and this is a country which is considered one most susceptible to *climate change* phenomenon and its fallouts (see Islam and Amstel (2018), Azad and Wadood (2017)). On a positive note, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in socio-economic indicators in recent decades (i.e., whereas in 1990, Bangladesh's Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.388, by 2018, this HDI was 0.614 (UNDP (2019), pp. 306)). Equally impressive have been the records of economic growth, for example, during the successive 5-year periods of 2000-2005, 2006-2010 and 2011-2016, the *average (yearly) growth rates of real GDP* have been 5.1, 6.1 and 6.5, respectively, and in terms of *per capita real GDP growth rates*, the corresponding numbers were 3.3, 4.8 and 5.2 (World Bank (2019), p. 140). Likewise, the national level poverty headcount rate has also fallen from higher levels earlier to the points of 20.5 per cent (upper poverty line), and 10.5 per cent (lower poverty line) by 2019, and the per capita GDP has now been USD 1,970 (Finance Division (2020), pp. xxxiii). Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world (area of only 147,570 square kilometres, with a population of an estimated 166.5 million, and population density of 1,125 persons/sq. km., and a population growth rate of 1.37 per cent) (*op. cit.*). Even though *the poverty rate* has declined remarkably over the last three decades or so *until the start of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic*, poverty has increased during this pandemic (see World Bank (2021)). Still, a large percentage of the population is subject to *extreme poverty* (below lower poverty line: 10.5 per cent) or *moderate poverty* (below upper poverty line: 20.5 per cent).

International short- and long-term contract labour migration from Bangladesh only started in 1976 (BMET (2021)), but family unification immigration, particularly to the United Kingdom, began at least three decades earlier (there have been consistently strong ties with the UK because this region was part of the former British Empire in India, till 1947) (see van Schendel (2009)). The country has, over time, become a major recipient country of international remittances inflow. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh oversees this sector through the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), the latter provides training, documentation and facilitation for potential migrant workers before migration (BMET (2021). We recommend BMET (2021) for Bangladesh immigration data and the World Bank (2019) for a detailed treatment of the issue of socio-economic development of Bangladesh. For the issue of international migration of South Asia, one can see The World Bank (2020)) (Appendix contains an administrative map of Bangladesh).

In the mid-year of 2020, 7.4 million international migrants of Bangladesh origin were residing worldwide. The corresponding number was about 5.5 million in 1990 (see IOM (2021), IOM (2020a)). Within these 7.4 million Bangladeshi international migrants in 2020, the percentage of females was about 33 per cent. Also, within these 7.4 million Bangladeshi international migration stocks in mid-year of 2020, 47 per cent were residing in the *Northern Africa and Western Asia* geographical region, 34 per cent were in the *Central and Southern Asia* region, again about 10.5 per cent was in *Europe and Northern America* geographical region. In contrast, about 7.6 per cent was in the *Australia and New Zealand (NZ) region*, and the rest were staying in other geographical regions (data calculated by authors from IOM (2021)). Data exhibits both "*South-North migration*" and "*South-South migration*" tendencies in the case of Bangladesh in recent decades. It is commonly observed that generally, the more educated among the potential migrants from Bangladesh tend to proceed towards "*South-North migration*", whereas the less educated opt for "*South-South migration*".

The Bangladeshi diaspora community has significantly contributed to the socio-economic advancements of Bangladesh in terms of remittance earnings support, household welfare improvement, technology transfer, foreign direct investment scopes, "*brain circulation*" (*aka* de Haas, Castles and Miller (2020), pp. 8). Overseas remittances sent by the wage earner migrant workers abroad and overseas resident Bangladeshis have helped the welfare of Bangladeshi families residing at home and, at the same time, have contributed to the long-term economic growth of the country (Wadood and Hossain (2015), Wadood and Hossain (2017), World Bank (2018).

Literature on Bangladesh International Migration

With regards to literature regarding Bangladesh international migration, we would mention a number of papers till now.

Siddiqui and Abrar (2003) examined and analysed data of remittances of Bangladeshi overseas migrants, the paper found that the country has experienced a steady increase of remittances sent by mostly unskilled or semi-unskilled labour migration.

Credit constraint is a significant barrier to household farm production (Azad, 2021) in Bangladesh. It eventually hampers household welfare. However, remittances sent by international migrants helped relax the constraint of credit and increased household welfare in the country (Romano and Traverso, 2020). Romano and Traverso (2020) also found that international migration has played a significant

role in the economic development of the country. International labour migration not only paves the way of development and poverty reduction in the source country through sending remittance, but it also ensures the growth and development of the destination country. As one of the major source countries of migrant workers, Bangladesh has been playing a significant role in world economic development (Siddiqui, 2016).

In a review paper in the field of international migration, Khan and Sultana (2021) examined the impact of remittance sent through the legal channel on the amount of remittance sent in Bangladesh. They found a significant increase in remittance sent by the Bangladeshi expatriates.

Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration Issue

There are concerns about the *international migration* issue from Bangladesh as well. Human trafficking of international migrant aspirants from Bangladesh has been common till now (a recent article is Shoji and Tsubota (2021)). *Human trafficking* is defined as "*the recruitment and transportation of potential migrants most often by force, coercion or deception, for exploitation"* (first page, op. cit.), and this is considered a humanitarian crisis worldwide. Bangladesh is no exception to this. The attraction of better income-earning prospects as international migrant workers has often lured many young Bangladeshis within the sphere of influence of illegal human trafficking rackets secretly operating in the country.

Section 5. Fallouts and Responses towards Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

A new situation has arisen in the international migration of Bangladesh, that is, the COVID-19 pandemic. Like every other community, the Bangladeshi diaspora community has also been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This COVID-19 pandemic emerged towards the end of 2019. The pandemic has continued until now, with all the adverse consequences throughout much of the world. The entire year of 2020 and half of 2021 have passed, and probably this will continue for some more periods. The Bangladeshi diaspora is no exception while facing the global pandemic and its severe consequences (see Sahai et al. (2020)). The Bangladesh economy and the Bangladesh society also have gone through difficult phases, and even till now (July 2021), they are going through challenging situations (see Kamruzzaman (2021)). Sahai et al. (2020) make a rapid assessment of the Bangladeshi overseas labour migration (OLR) sector, particularly in the Middle East, following the start of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide.

The overseas migration from Bangladesh has suffered from problems of complexities such as human trafficking, forced labour. Lack of legal documentation, frequent shifts of rules in foreign lands. The onset of the pandemic made the situation worse for Bangladeshi migrant workers working in the Middle East (mainly in the construction sector). Based on qualitative survey techniques, Sahai et al. (2021) report that negative demand shocks from the pandemic severely affected the migrant labour market in the GCC countries, in some sectors such as manufacturing, construction, transportation and trade, and this resulted in "*wage cuts and withholding, long working hours, compromised health and occupational safety, and lack of social protection*" (pp. 109).

Section 6.   Concluding Remarks

The rapid expansion of *international migration* is a new phenomenon for all countries globally, much in combination with globalization, the expansion of international trade, international business. While exports and imports of goods, services and capital flow usually do not generate much controversy, the very physical transfer of human beings across international borders, which is the case in *international migration*, causes much more concern. This sentiment is particularly prevalent in the host countries of international migration (for example, an often-stated comment such as "*cheap migrant labourers taking away jobs from own country workers*"). From the point of the source countries, one concern is the *brain drain* phenomenon.

Nonetheless, ***international migration*** has expanded throughout the entire world post World War II, in different types and forms, such as *short- and long-term contract labour migration*, *family unification migration*, *skilled labour migration*, *residency migration*, *political asylum migration*, *forced migration*, *undocumented worker migration*, *displacement migration due to war and conflicts,* and so on.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has already created worldwide repercussions in terms of lives as well as livelihood challenges. In the *international migration* arena, the Bangladeshi diaspora community is no exception to this global disaster. Nevertheless, how was it possible to set aside all the difficulties in one's immediate surroundings and respond positively to the difficulties of family members staying home? This sharp response could be a fascinating topic for future research in the *international migration theory literature*. In addition to these new issues emerging in such a vibrant field as *international migration*, long persistent issues for future research remain, such as examining and explaining *international migration* more effectively for academic interests and policy inputs.

International migration is a living experience for millions of people worldwide. We summarize that international migration theory can explain real-world international migration experiences of a developing country such as Bangladesh, both positives or negatives, up till now. In comparison, the theory takes some time to catch up with this rapid pace of reality. The *New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)* (for example, Stark and Bloom (1985)) literature and Harris and Todaro (1970) papers were ground-breaking works with regards to the **theory of migration** applicable for developing countries. The recent literature on the *circular, onward, short-term labour and return migration* exhibit considerable promise in that direction regarding examining and explaining international migration realities (Constant (2020) is an excellent review paper on this line of literature). The advantage of this abovementioned line of literature over previous kinds of literature is that this allows for continuous updating of the migration decision by potential or actual migrant, family decision-making framework, portfolio diversification of risks by a family of the potential migrant, poverty and credit constraints, skills shortage and costs of acquiring skills, migration to be viewed as some form of a *lottery*, adoption to different circumstances in migration life, incorporating risks and uncertainties as well as vulnerabilities of migrant life, particularly in the cases of *undocumented or irregular migrants*. These issues are conspicuously present in the real-life experiences of *short-term contract labour migrant workers* from a developing country such as Bangladesh.

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