

**Migration Scenario:
Nature, Patterns and Trends**

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1.00 Introduction:

In the context of existing export potential of manpower and insufficient facility to generate new jobs for growing economy; migration has become one of the primary concerns of the government of Bangladesh. The scenario of 'Labour Migration' is changing all over the world. Over a few decades Labour Migration takes place as an essential part of the global economy. Economic reform in different countries has created substantial changes in labour migration process. Policy makers are showing greater interest in labour migration issues and this is one of the core issues of policy dialogue and international co-operation. Presently estimated global migrant population is 191 m. of which 86 m are labour migrants and 49% in the total figure constitutes female migrants.

According to the United Nations report of 2006, about 3% of the world population is migrant. A sizable portion of the people is living outside their countries of birth. The migrant workers provide a constant source of income an amount larger and more predictable than the official development assistance, foreign direct investment and other private inflows.

Bangladesh is a highly populated country with a population of about 140.0 million and a population density of about 955 persons per square kilometer. Estimated labour force is 56.0 million (age 10⁺), which grows at 1.9% per year with a high rate of unemployment. In 2006, the size of the unemployed labour force below the age of 25 had crossed 15 million. Besides, a huge unskilled and semi-skilled labour force that is under-employed provides a deep pool of exportable manpower resources.

Considering the importance of manpower export sector and emphasizing the contributions of expatriate Bangladeshis, government created the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment on Dec 20, 2001. The vision of the Ministry is to ensure the rights and interest of Bangladeshi workforce both at home and abroad and to facilitate overseas employment for rapid economic growth.

2.00 Historical overview of migration scenario of Bangladesh:

Remarkable migration from Bengal may be noticed by the visit of Buddhist religious scholar and saint Atish Dipankar to Tibet in 1042. A good number of Muslim spiritual

religious personalities like Hazrat Shahjalal (R), Shah Paran and other 'Aulias' came from Yemen to Sylhet and Chittagong areas and settled there in 1344. Some tribal groups migrated from various parts of India to the tea plantation fields concentrated in Sylhet. In the late 19th century, migration also took place from Bengal to Myanmar (former Burma) and Assam of India to avail the employment opportunity. Some people moved to London from Sylhet within 1946-1950 when their British employer left Bangladesh after independence of India and Pakistan.

During the 18th and early 19th century, sailors originating from the southeastern part of Bangladesh in the districts of Chittagong, Noakhali and Sylhet were employed in the British merchant navy. Some of them settled in UK and USA. Some people from Chittagong migrated to Makkah city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia overstaying there after performing hajj or Umrah. Most of the migrants became long-term residents and some adopted citizenship of the countries of destination. During the 1950s Bangladeshi migrants went to UK under a statutory mechanism of 'Employment Vouchers' issued to individuals selected by the British Government.

Emigration from Bangladesh was also initiated in 1922 when workers from British-Indian Bangladesh moved to the African states under British colonial rule. During early sixties the Middle Eastern countries enriched their economy on the basis of oil exploration and started to recruit various kinds of manpower. After independence of Bangladesh in 1971, formal migration started for employment in 1976.

3.00 Geographical pattern of the flow of migrants, immigration, stocks and flow of returned migrants:

a) Flow of migrants

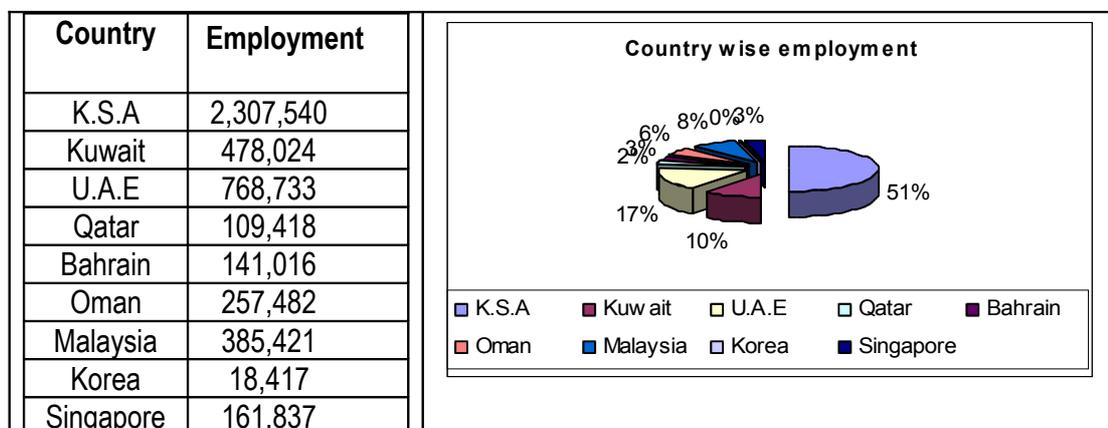
Migration from Bangladesh started in 1976 with a modest number of 6078. Presently Bangladeshis are engaged in overseas employment in more than 100 countries. About 5.0 m overseas workers had been employed in various parts of the world up to June 2007.

Bangladeshi migrants are spread over five continents: Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and North America. Geographical pattern of the flow of migrants varies with time and it is basically dominated by nature of demand. Saudi Arabia took the top position in receiving the manpower up to 2005, followed by UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, etc. In 2006, UAE scored the highest position in employing Bangladeshi migrant workers. About 92% of the overseas employment takes place in 9 countries only. These are KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Malaysia, Korea and Singapore. The detail is depicted in the Table -1.

Table - 1

COUNTRY-WISE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT

From 1976 – June 2007 (Top 9 countries)



b) District wise flow of migration:

An analysis on the migration taken place from different districts of Bangladesh shows that only 5 among 64 districts are very prominent in the overseas employment market. These districts constitute about 40% of the total migration, in which Comilla tops the list (11.48%). Table – 2 and Table – 3 show in details:

Table- 2

District wise Migration

District	2004 (Jun-Dec)	Female	2005	Female	2006	Female	Total	%
Baerhat	484	45	749	68	115	7	1240	0.33
Bandarban	20		29	2	5		49	0.01
Barquna	453	62	453	453	453	23	929	0.25
Barisal	1943	453	3263	428	460	68	5274	1.40
Bhola	819	50	1258	62	190	9	2086	0.55
Boogra	1794	54	2411	106	465	26	4231	1.12
Brahmanbaria	7594	266	13725	417	2588	81	21400	5.67
Chandpur	6609	190	10286	316	1708	51	16946	4.49
Chittagong	12648	84	21561	103	3508	21	34230	9.06
Chuadanga	389	26	717	34	84	4	1110	0.29
Comilla	15900	392	27334	654	4802	118	43352	11.48
Cox's Bazar	1200	11	1447	23	206	6	2653	0.70
Dhaka	9148	1712	14942	2356	2367	384	24474	6.48
Dinaipur	269	15	377	28	70	4	650	0.17
Faridpur	2341	314	3970	551	676	113	6424	1.70
Feni	4218	32	7061	50	1122	10	11289	2.99
Gaibandha	464	21	742	30	166	3	1209	0.32
Gazipur	4378	782	7739	1105	1273	129	12246	3.24
Gopalgani	715	42	1024	61	182	11	1750	0.46
Habiganj	1732	54	2867	97	413	21	4620	1.22
Jaipurhat	287	21	376	31	81	5	668	0.18
Jamalpur	949	45	1745	70	334	12	2706	0.72
Jessore	1164	76	1952	247	292	58	3174	0.84
Jhalakati	555	42	958	105	131	16	1529	0.40
Jhenaidah	962	41	1579	92	228	16	2557	0.68
Khaorachari	72	1	115	9	16		187	0.05
Khulna	378	42	660	80	95	11	1049	0.28
Kishoregani	2871	207	5443	408	1061	45	8359	2.21
Kuriagram	168	6	286	20	56	3	457	0.12
Kushtia	1050	37	1715	65	321	19	2784	0.74
Lakshmipur	3334	42	5084	78	884	11	8429	2.23
Lalmonirhat	45	3	88	5	15		133	0.04
Madaripur	1655	153	2645	247	492	44	4344	1.15
Magura	455	22	734	53	124	9	1198	0.32
Manikgani	3844	962	6308	1338	1056	255	10407	2.76
Meherpur	593	17	905	48	158	7	1505	0.40
Moulvibazar	3238	46	5105	64	723	11	8354	2.21
Munshiganj	4795	366	8006	534	1348	87	12888	3.41

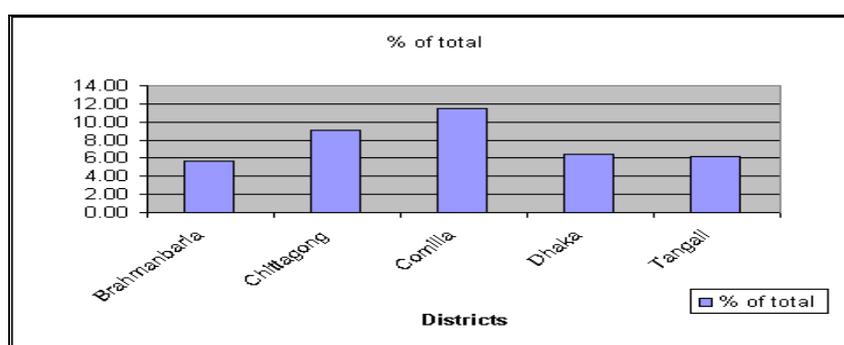
Mymensingh	2847	201	5577	329	1051	52	8476	2.24
Naogaon	934	38	1291	61	219	9	2234	0.59
Narail	555	21	837	27	96	2	1394	0.37
Naravanganj	3822	772	6417	1063	1149	174	10413	2.76
Narsinondi	4189	460	7859	717	1356	84	12132	3.21
Natore	679	35	928	62	126	11	1618	0.43
Nawabganj	1295	23	2860	40	502	3	4158	1.10
Netrakona	293	37	558	46	112	13	864	0.23
Nilphamari	70	10	196	36	41	4	270	0.07
Noakhali	5498	68	8353	107	1467	18	13869	3.67
Pabna	1136	42	1136	1136	1136	14	2286	0.61
Panchagarh	25		68	20	10	1	94	0.02
Patuakhali	381	63	735	117	97	21	1137	0.30
Pirojpur	895	52	1344	123	211	21	2260	0.60
Raibari	630	53	1003	109	177	15	1648	0.44
Raishahi	419	20	782	45	139	7	1208	0.32
Rangamati	20	2	44	6	11		64	0.02
Rangpur	325	11	596	27	96	4	925	0.24
Satkhira	538	30	827	49	106	11	1376	0.36
Shariatpur	1525	161	2768	300	446	42	4335	1.15
Sherpur	197	13	398	52	47	10	605	0.16
Sirajganj	634	32	1085	45	154	13	1732	0.46
Sunamganj	1192	11	2061	33	269	10	3263	0.86
Sylhet	3982	55	7069	61	928	12	11063	2.93
Tangail	7660	197	15437	368	3113	48	23145	6.13
Thakurgaon	121	4	157	22	32	1	279	0.07
Total:	139395	9145	236045	15439	41359	2298	377738	100

Table – 3

District wise Migration

District	2004	Female	2005	Female	2006	Female	Total	%
Brahmanbaria	7594	266	13725	417	2588	81	21400	5.67
Chittagong	12648	84	21561	103	3508	21	34230	9.06
Comilla	15900	392	27334	654	4802	118	43352	11.48
Dhaka	9148	1712	14942	2356	2367	384	24474	6.48
Tangail	7660	197	15437	368	3113	48	23145	6.13
	52950	2651	92999	3898	16378	652	146601	38.81

District	% of total
Brahmanbaria	5.67
Chittagong	9.06
Comilla	11.48
Dhaka	6.48
Tangail	6.13



c) Flow of returned migrants:

All the overseas employment is contract service with duration of 2 to 3 years. Migrant workers return to the country after completion of the agreement. These workers usually come back with skill and experience. It has an impact on the economy for absorption of the returned migrants in the domestic employment market. BMET has planned to provide micro-credit assistance to the returned migrants to create self-employment and entrepreneurship development for re-integration of them to the society. There exists insufficient facilities and unsuitable environment to absorb the returned migrant workers particularly for the female migrants to utilize their expertise

and promote self-employment & entrepreneurship to re-integrate in the society. Investment opportunities created by the Govt. for expatriate workers is not adequate and not easily accessible to ordinary workers so that they can take advantage of these avenues of investment.

d) The media of recruitment:

There are five channels of recruitment from Bangladesh for overseas employment. These are as follows:

- (i) Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), the Government Agency.
- (ii) Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), Government owned private limited company.
- (iii) Licensed private Recruiting Agents (Presently 762).
- (iv) Individuals through friends and relatives stationed abroad.
- (v) Bangladeshi firms operating abroad.

Recruitment of manpower from Bangladesh to various countries takes place through these channels. The government channel is free of any charge. Usually BMET arranges recruitment on specialized request and G to G (Government to Government) contract agreement. Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) is acting as a semi-government agent. It charges nominal fee from the candidate and normally deals with the recruitment of skilled and professional people. A good number of private commercial recruiting agencies are operating to arrange recruitment of workers for different countries. These recruiting agents are authorized and licensed by the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. Private recruiting agents collect demand from employer and recruit workers. To provide such services these recruiting agents charge commissions from the workers. Cost of travel, medical services, etc., are supposed to be borne by the employer but practically workers pay for these. The fourth channel of migration is Individual initiative, which constitutes 68%. Actually individual efforts through friends and relatives are the most predominant among all the channels. BOESL recruits less than 1%. Recruiting agents deal with 32% of recruitment. A comparative statement of overseas employment through different channels of recruitment during the period from 1976 to January '2007 is shown in Table - 4.

Table - 4

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT BY MEDIA OF RECRUITMENT

From 1976 to Jan 2007

Media	Number	%
BMET	42,014	0.91%
BOESL	12,086	0.26%
Recruiting Agent	1,778,270	38.63%
Individual	2,770,442	60.20%
Total	4,602,812	100%

Media wise Overseas Employment

Media	Percentage
BMET	0.91%
BOESL	0.26%
Recruiting Agent	38.63%
Individual	60.20%

e) Terms and Tenure of Employment

The contract period of service to the overseas employment is usually 2 to 3 years. On satisfaction of both the sides of the employer and employee the contract may be renewed for subsequent terms. Normally the employer provides food and accommodation. Air passage, medical and other facilities are paid by the employee although it is agreed to be paid by the employers in the agreement.

f) Nature of Employment

On supply side the market for overseas employment depends on the availability of the kind of labor in demand, their skills and its relative competence with respect to other labor exporting countries. Plan for improvement of skills to match the demand of the importing countries and persuasion to expedite the import of more manpower from the sending country are also important. Since the migration is largely demand-driven in nature, the relative share of different skill groups largely depends on the structural changes and transformations taking place in the country of import.

The overall demand of workers in the receiving countries will vary on the economic condition and the infrastructural status. Towards the structural changes being experienced by the Middle Eastern countries, the 'construction boom' is on the eclipse. Most of the Middle Eastern countries have completed their infrastructure building i.e., roads, highways, airports, building constructions, power generations, etc., and is embarking upon repair, maintenance and service activities. The present trend of investment is towards industrial development, agricultural exploration and improvement of various service facilities. Hence they require more skilled and semi-skilled types of workers than those of less-skilled types.

Another important aspect which would affect the future of migration is the lowering trend of wages, particularly in the Middle Eastern countries and the cost of migration which is increasing day by day. Most of the labor receiving countries reduced the salary significantly for all levels of jobs. The trend of labor migration in these countries is decreasing particularly in Saudi Arabia where almost half of the total

labour is migrated every year. Of course, new avenues are opening in Malaysia and Korea.

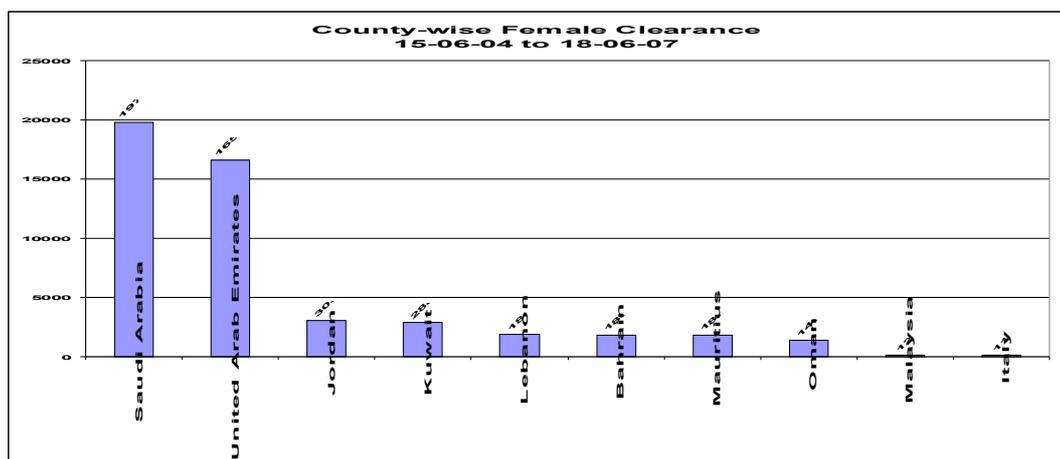
g) Gender specific migration, its trend and nature:

Feminisation of migration is an enduring theme of human mobility. Successful migration can be ensured only when it is engendered in nature. In Bangladesh, female migrants constituted only 1% up to 2004. But after 2004 the trend changed and reached about 5% up to June 2007. Country wise overseas employment of female workers from 15.06.2004 to 18.06.2007 is shown for top 10 countries in the graph. It shows KSA scores the top followed by UAE. Female migrants are employed mainly in the trades of housemaids, nurses and garment workers, etc. Table – 5 shows in detail.

Table - 5

i) Country-wise female migration from Bangladesh

Country	KSA	UAE	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Bahrain	Mauritius	Oman	Malaysia	Italy
Numbers	19778	16592	3039	2886	1884	1834	1824	1402	129	118



ii) Gender specific problems in migration sector:

Female migrants are mainly facing the following problems:

1. Lack of a common understanding on a gender sensitive, right based approach to employment. This gap exists among both the aspiring migrant workers as well as all other stakeholders.
2. Access to information for potential migrant workers is inadequate.

3. Concentration of employment opportunities in a few low paid and unskilled conventional jobs limits their opportunity for overseas employment.

h) Remittance:

The major benefit arising from the emigration of workers has been the worker's remittances. They have not only made a significant contribution towards the GNP (4%), but also to face the balance of payment's deficit. The remittance of migrant workers stands at US\$ 5,486 m (equivalent to Tk. 38,328 crore) in 2006 and US\$ 3,123 m (equivalent to Tk. 21,776 crore) up to May 2007.

i) Immigrants

Over several decades many Bangladeshis migrated permanently to the developed countries for better living. Their most preferred destinations are Western Europe, North America, Australia, etc. There has been a noticeable and progressive increase in the issuance of H1 and H2 visas by the US over the last decade the work permits issued by UK, France, Japan, Korea and Australia, in new technologies. But Bangladeshi workers could not avail these opportunities. The number of Diaspora community of Bangladeshi citizen cannot be ascertained but it is estimated about one million all over the world.

4.00 Trend over time

It was estimated that more than one million people migrate abroad from South Asia annually. Bangladesh stands among the top 5 countries of emigration. Starting from 1976 migration of Bangladeshi workers is increasing steadily experiencing a small up down in figures.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the extent of migration is said to have taken its significant shape. The oil producing countries faced difficulties in overcoming their ever-increasing acute manpower shortage. Consequently, foreign manpower in the Arabian Peninsula increased in the subsequent years. The economic trends changed in the Middle Eastern countries and oil price began to fall in the mid eighties, and simultaneously the demand for foreign workers fell. Over 6,00,000 Asian migrant workers returned to their countries during the Iraq-Kuwait war in 1990. Other oil producing countries were also affected by the falling oil prices. Bangladesh started sending manpower to Far Eastern countries during 1990. Before analyzing the trend and level of labor migration from Bangladesh, it is necessary to highlight the major trends in outflow which includes the number, direction and skill composition.

Table - 6 shows the country-wise and year wise flow of migrants from Bangladesh. The figure in the table is the gross flow over the time. No figure is available on the returned migrants which may be estimated as 10%-15%. The growth rate between 1976 and 1977, the initial period was as high as 158%. This comes down to 45% between 1977

and 1978 and to a very low figure of 7% between 1978 and 1979. It went up to 25% between 1979 and 1980. During 1977-1980 migration was doubled. The number suddenly rose to 55,787 in 1981 compared to 30,573 in the previous year and this was more than half of the total number of those migrated during 1977 - 80 as a whole. From 1984 to 1987 the flow experienced a sinusoidal curve i.e. a little rise in 1985 than in 1984, again a little fall in 1986 and it increased in 1987, which met a fall in 1988. In 1989 the migration increased again crossing the number 1,00,000. During 1989 -1993 a steady rise was experienced which was significant in 1993 by reaching to 2,44,508. In the following years it came down and rose to 211,714 in 1996.

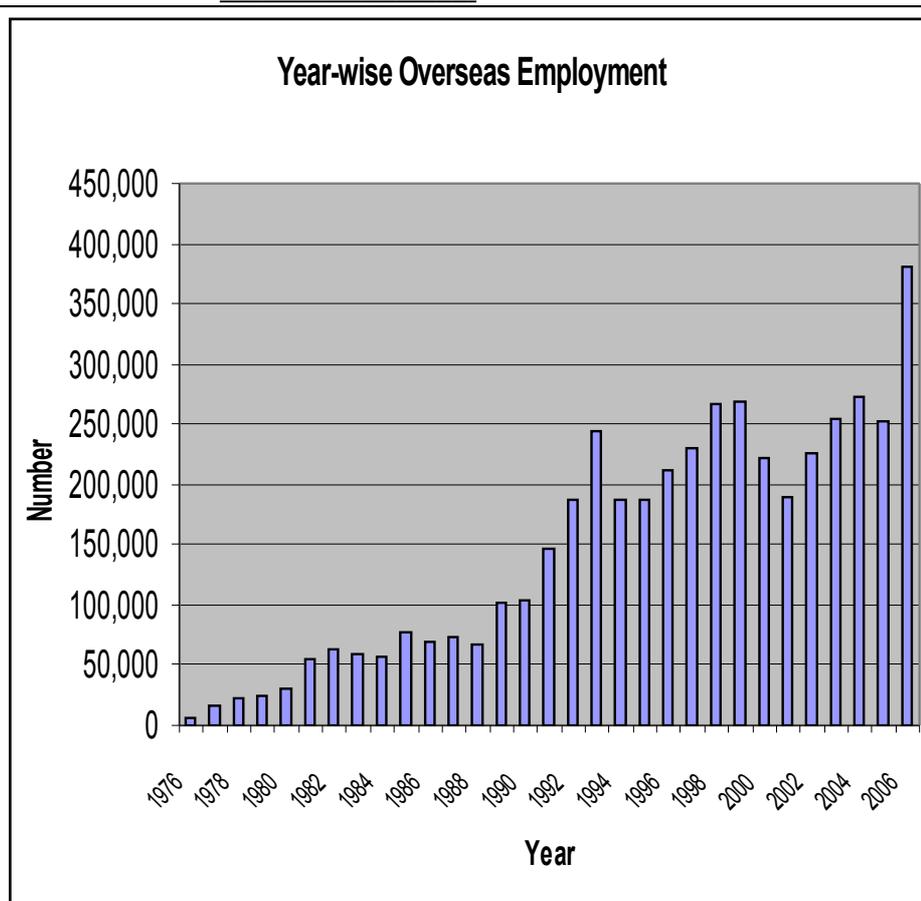
After 1996 the figure faced positive trend up to 1999, which again decreased in the two subsequent following two years and increased in next three years. The figure of overseas employment reached 3,81,516 in 2006, highest among all previous years which is 51% higher than the previous year 2005 (2,52,702). In 2007, from January to June i.e. in first 6 months this figure crosses 3,35,000 and with this trend it is expected that it may be more than 7,00,000 in 2007, which will be about 100% increase over the last year.

In the context of the country-wise number of migration during 1976 to 2005, KSA tops the list. During this period a total of 21,12,714 Bangladeshis went to this country on employment which is about 51% of the total migration. In the year 2006, UAE scores the top position. Next positions are occupied by Kuwait, Malaysia, Singapore, Bahrain and Qatar, which employed 10.06%, 8.11%, 3.41%, 2.97% and 2.30% respectively. The third important destination of Bangladeshi migration is Kuwait. It accounted for 4,78,023 migrants amounting to 10.06% of the total. It is relevant to mention that 63,303 numbers of Bangladeshis returned from Kuwait and Iraq during Gulf War in 1990. Iraq has stopped importing manpower from 1991 just after the Gulf War. Other countries inviting Bangladeshi workers are Libya, Jordan, Korea, Brunei, Mauritius, UK, Italy, Lebanon, Laos, Ireland, etc. The employment figures in those countries are 54216, 22204, 18417, 16763, 7511, 7090, 6406, 5972, 463, 461, respectively up to June 2007. Year-wise overseas employment is depicted in the Table – 7 in the bar chart.

Table - 7

YEAR-WISE OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT
From 1976 to 2006

Year	Employment
1976	6,087
1977	15,725
1978	22,809
1979	24,495
1980	30,073
1981	55,787
1982	62,762
1983	59,220
1984	56,714
1985	77,694
1986	68,658
1987	74,017
1988	68,121
1989	101,724
1990	103,814
1991	147,131
1992	188,124
1993	244,508
1994	186,326
1995	187,543
1996	211,714
1997	231,077
1998	267,667
1999	268,182
2000	222,686
2001	188,965
2002	225,256
2003	254,190
2004	272,958
2005	252,702
2006	381,516



Total	4666957
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Saudi Arabia is one of the major employing countries of manpower from Bangladesh and it constitutes about 47.5% of the total migration. Bangladesh entered into the arena of manpower export to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia rather late, preceded by some neighboring countries as India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Starting with a figure of 217 in 1976, migration in the KSA increased steadily up to 1993. It experienced decrease in the next subsequent years, then again increased from 1997 to 1999. The export-figure of Bangladesh reached 1,85,739 in 1999. In the subsequent years the figure is slightly less for various reasons. It again faced sharp fall in 2005, where only 80,425 workers migrated from Bangladesh to KSA. But in 2006 it picked up again. Labor market in Saudi Arabia is shrinking for expatriate workers in coming days mainly because of (i) increased importance on 'Saudiaisation' by Government and (ii) economic condition of KSA.

Malaysia started employing Bangladeshi workers significantly in 1990. From 1990 to 1997 a quite good number of workers migrated to Malaysia, which declined in 1998. Bangladesh signed MOU with Malaysia in 2005 and the recruitment got momentum in 2006 again. 1,04,050 numbers of workers migrated up to June in 2007 in Malaysia.

Bangladesh has to expand its market beyond its current presence and it is going to face stiff competition from a few countries in each region, some being common competitors and some being unique to the region. A few countries such as India and the Philippines are going to be the common competitors of Bangladesh in most regions

Among the leading South Asian competitors of Bangladesh, Nepal is fast emerging as a challenger in the unskilled manpower segment both in the Asian as well as Middle East markets. In the semiskilled category, Bangladesh will be facing competition from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and to some extent from India. In the skilled and highly skilled categories, challenge for Bangladesh will be to compete with India in all markets.

5.00 Pattern compared on per capita basis with other countries world wide and regionally:

Table – 8 and Table – 9 show the year-wise migration from various Asian countries.

Table – 8

Year wise migration from various Asian countries:

Country	Year					
	001	002	003	004	2005	2006
Indonesia	5148	0393	3865	0690	474310	680000
Pakistan	7929	7422	4039	3824	151320	183191
Sri Lanka	4007	3773	9846	4709	230963	
Thailand						160846

Vietnam		200	840	320	75000	78000
India	8664	7664	6456	4960	548853	
Philippines					1204862	1221417
Bangladesh	8965	5256	4190	2958	252702	381516
Nepal	6025	4739	5055	6660		

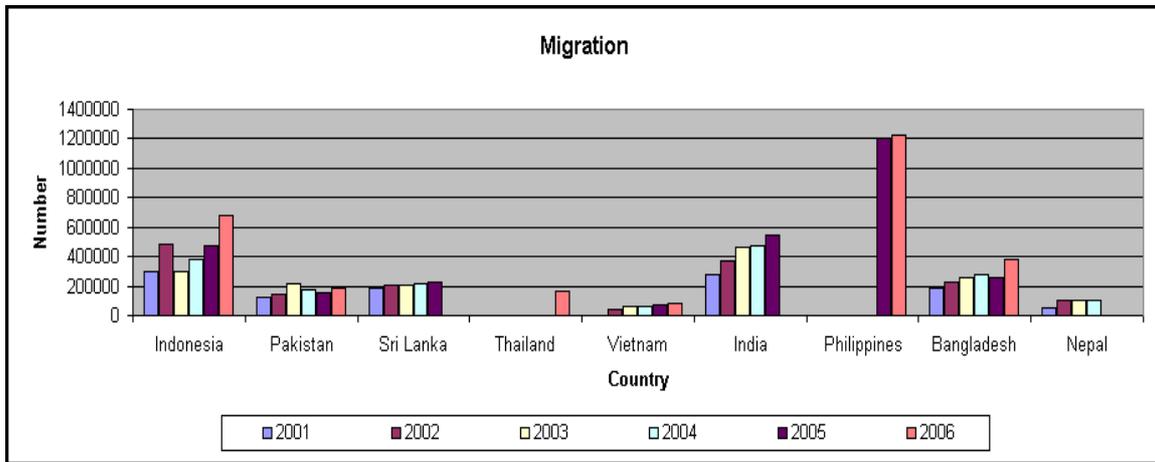
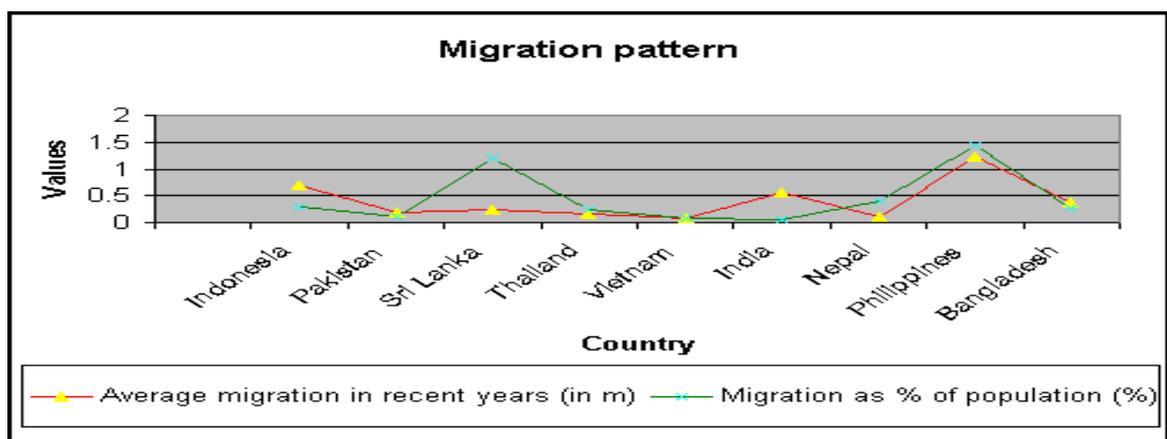


Table – 9

Migration as percentage of population:

Country	Population in million	Per capita GNI in US \$	Average migration in recent years (in m)	Migration as percentage of population (%)
Indonesia	225.3	1280.00	680000	.30
Pakistan	161.1	690.00	183191	.11
Sri Lanka	19.4	1160.00	230963	1.19
Thailand	64.9	2750.00	160846	.25
Vietnam	83.6	620.00	78000	.09
India	1100.0	720.00	548835	.05
Nepal	26.3	270.00	106660	.40
Philippines	85.2	1300.00	1221417	1.43
Bangladesh	140.0	520.00	381000	.27



Pattern of migration from South Asian countries shows that Philippine tops the list, which exported 12,21,417 in the year 2006. Next positions are occupied by Indonesia (6,80,000) and India (5,48,835) respectively. Migration as the percentage of the

population is high in Sri Lanka and Philippines, which are 1.19% and 1.43% respectively, Figures for all other countries are below 1%.

The trend of migration flow in the recent years shows steady increase over the years. Only Pakistan shows some sinusoidal up down in nature.

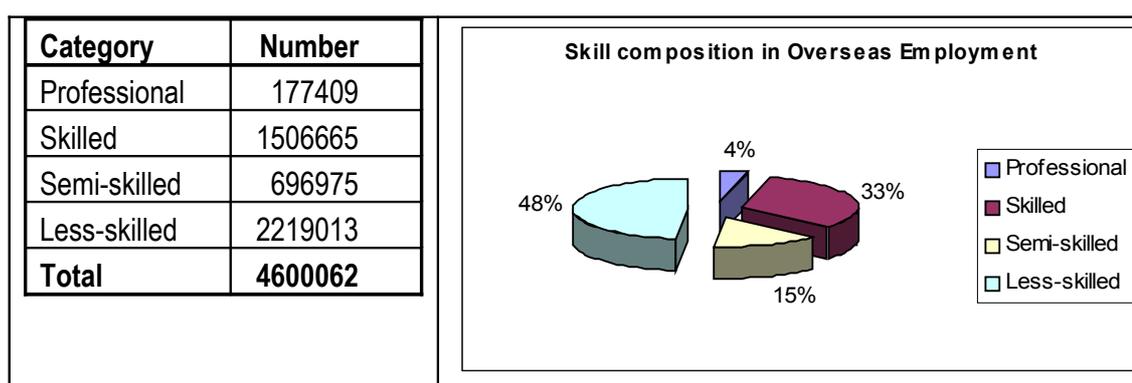
6.00 Skill composition of migrants:

Bangladeshis working abroad currently range from domestic aides to atomic scientists. A large section of them are un-skilled and semi-skilled workers. Changes in the relative composition of skills over time and their sectoral distribution in the importing countries are very important factors. The skill composition of Bangladeshi overseas workers is elaborated in Table- 10. Four skill groups have been identified for demarcation of the profession of workers. These are Professionals, Skilled, Semi-skilled and Less skilled. Doctors, Engineers, Architects, University and College teachers, Accountants, Computer programmers, Pharmacists, Nurses, Foremen, Diploma Engineers, Paramedics, Sales personnel, etc., are treated as professionals. Skilled workers group includes Mechanics, Welders, Masons, Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, Cooks, Drivers, Plumbers, Tailors, Blacksmiths, Tile fixers, Operators, etc. Semi-skilled category includes Farmers, Gardeners and different types of helpers in various trades. Finally Cleaners, Servants, Labourers, General workers, etc., are grouped into the Less-skilled category.

Table - 10

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT BY SKILL GROUP

(1976 - May 2007)



There has been noticeable mismatch in supply and demand of manpower resources across the countries and regions in different categories of occupations and skills. Considerable temporary migration of workers has been taking place despite very limited GATS commitments.

There are a large number of occupational areas where huge global demand exists. However, Bangladesh cannot address global demand in all occupational categories due to supply constraints. Bangladesh needs to accord maximum priority to those occupations for export where it has surplus labour. IT professionals, Engineers and technologists are not surplus in Bangladesh but their controlled export to advanced countries can be of use to help transfer of high-tech knowledge into the country as they, on return, would certainly be equipped with advanced knowledge and experience in their respective fields. In fact, a more strategic approach towards these occupations is needed as export of manpower with these occupations would not only benefit Bangladesh in terms of remittances but also help develop a brand Bangladesh as a powerhouse of knowledge workers.

About 48% of the total Bangladeshi workforce in various countries particularly in the Middle Eastern countries and Malaysia are unskilled or less-skilled workers. They have very little or no educational background and have not received any kind of training. Semi-skilled workers are accounted for 15.15% and rest of the migration belongs to the professionals and skilled workers, which come to an approximate value of 4% & 33 % respectively. From the statistics it is clear that a slow change has been experienced in the composition of skill groups over the years, of course this is not very significant.

Age group of Bangladeshi migrants ranges from 18 to 45. This has been limited to 25-40 for female workers.

In the short and medium term, Bangladesh should target occupations such as agriculture professionals, agriculture workers, clerical and secretarial occupations, book-keeping professionals, technical skill holders, plant and machine operators, construction workers, chefs and caterers, security professionals, craft makers, accountants, technicians, drivers, carpenters, masons, mechanics, electricians and drivers. Bangladesh should build specialized high quality institutes to develop health care professionals, managers and administrators; business and financial professionals, so that the country is in a position to export them in the long run.

The number of export figure of skilled and professional personnel is increasing, but it is still 48 percent of total manpower export. The unskilled workers are vulnerable and are not paid what they really deserve. The government has established some new science and technological universities, polytechnic and vocational institutes for increasing the number of skilled and professional personnel. But the number is still smaller than what is required to meet the actual demand. Moreover, the quality of education provided by these institutes is not up to the mark as compared to the institutes of other leading manpower exporting countries.

The number of skilled people and the skills and quality of the workforce has to be improved. To penetrate the lucrative markets of the developed countries it must improve the quality and skills of its workforce. Poor language and soft skills of aspiring migrants also become major deterrents to manpower export to many of the European countries such as France, Germany, Sweden, Spain, Italy, and more developed Asian countries like Japan and South Korea.

7.00 Policies that promote or restrict emigration

i) Recruitment procedure:

BMET provides license to the private recruiting agents to conduct recruitment for overseas market on the basis of demand. Recruiting agents are to obtain prior permission from the Govt. before embarking on recruitment. Such permission is given on the basis of a valid offer of employment indicating category of posts, terms of employment, monthly or annual wages, food, accommodation, leave, air passage, etc. The Recruiting agent is allowed to receive a maximum amount of Tk. 84,000.00 (US \$1200.00) only from the worker including air ticket, non compliance of which make liable for punitive action, cancellation of license and forfeiture of security deposit, etc. This service charge has been fixed for Middle Eastern countries and Malaysia. Government fixes this charge time to time for different countries. VISA / Entry permit received by individual through personal efforts may apply directly for emigration clearance. The documents will normally have to be attested by the Bangladesh missions abroad if there is one in the employing country. For countries where there is no Bangladesh Embassy or in cases where attestation cannot be obtained, satisfactory evidence of the authenticity of documents will have to be furnished. Recruiting Agents need to deposit Tk. 1.6 m (about US \$ 23,000.00) to BMET for processing license which is kept as security deposit. This money may be distributed to the claimants for any fraudulence activity detected. The minimum wage is also fixed by the govt. for sending workers to various countries.

ii) Awareness development

BMET arranges regular briefing sessions at head quarters before departure of the workers to the country of destination to make them aware about agreement of service conditions, working environment, culture, wages and other benefits, remittance system, local language of the host country, etc. To develop awareness on the use of legal channel of migration, campaign through electronic and print media is also going on.

iii) Rules of business of the Ministry:

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is responsible to facilitate coordination and control over the function and activities of the subordinate offices for overall management of the migration process. Specific functions of the Ministry are as follows:

- a. To ensure welfare of the overseas Bangladeshi workers;
- b. To facilitate overseas employment;
- c. To develop resource capabilities to fit into the requirement of the receiving countries and to increase employability of the workforce in the changing environment as well as development of skill base of labour force.
- d. To streamline the labour recruitment process in Bangladesh.

iv) Organisations under the Ministry:

a) Labour wings in Bangladesh Missions:

Twelve labour wings in ten countries are working under the Ministry. Officials are engaged for enhancing overseas employment along with ensuring welfare of the migrants.

b) Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET):

BMET is a department under the control of the Ministry, which was established in 1976 to execute all plan and policy of the Ministry for enhancing the labour migration as well as protecting welfare of the migrants and training of the workers. BMET is controlling and monitoring the activity of the recruiting agent. The main functions of BMET are involved in registration of job seekers for local and foreign employment; promoting employment in home and abroad; ensuring right of migrant workers and extending welfare services to the migrants. BMET collect, compile and disseminate different information on labour market. BMET is also engaged in human resources development programs providing skill development training in various employable trades through its infrastructural facility of training centres countrywide.

c) Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL):

BOESL is a limited company under the control of the Ministry. It was established in 1984. This is a government owned organization, which is responsible for enhancing and processing foreign employment. The main function of this organisation is to carry out the business of recruiting agents for employment of Bangladeshis abroad with a nominal service charge. It is also undertaking effective employment promotion campaign in the labour receiving countries.

v) Rules and regulations for overseas employment:

Migration from Bangladesh is regulated under an ordinance called the 'Emigration Ordinance of 1982'. The ordinance encourages development of institutions for promoting overseas employment at government, private and individual levels and can prohibit emigration of a person or a group of persons to a country or any number of countries if the government thinks otherwise. It appears to be comprehensive in terms of nature, scope and dimension.

a) The provisions under the emigration ordinance for protection of the migrant workers includes:

- i) Penalty for contravention of agreement (Clause : 24)
- ii) Recovery of expenditure from recruiting agents for repatriation of migrant worker (Clause : 25)
- iii) Provision for establishment of Special Courts for trial of offences (Clause : 26)
- iv) Punishment for fraudulently inducing to emigrate (Clause 21), receiving money, etc. for providing foreign employment (Clause: 23), unlawful emigration (Clause :20)
- v) Power to withdraw recruiting license (Clause : 15)
- vi) Power to make rules (Clause: 19)
- vii) Cancellation, Suspension, Forfeiture of security of recruiting agents, etc. (Clause : 14)
- viii) Regulation of emigration process (Clause : 7).

b) Establishment of special courts

On 11 April 1983, the government by a notification of the Ministry of Labour and Manpower set up four Special Courts in each of the divisions of the country (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi). Subsequently on 25 March 1985 through an order, authorised the Director General of BMET, Managers of Employment Exchanges and Assistant Director of District Employment and Manpower Offices to make complaints to the Special Courts.

c) Protection of female migrants

A committee has been formed from the Ministry to conduct interview for all female workers before providing the emigration clearance to check the genuineness of visa papers. Government imposes ban on female migration time to time. Presently there is no such ban but the age limit has been fixed as 25-45 years for emigration of female workers.

d) Rules and regulations

A set of laws, rules and procedures have been formulated for promotion and regulation of emigration and controlling the practices affecting migration. There are 3 sets of rules in this regard promulgated in 2002. Main features of these rules are as follows:

- i) Emigration Rules 2002.
- ii) Recruiting agents conduct and license Rules 2002.
- iii) Wage Earners` Welfare Fund (WEWF) Rules 2002.

It regulates the activity of Recruiting agents and controls emigration process, It arranges welfare activities for the migrant workers and their family and It encourages promotion of overseas employment.

These three rules include the following areas of activity:

- i. Procedure of registration of emigrants.
- ii. Appointment and duties of the Labour Attaches.
- iii. Registration of emigrants working abroad.
- iv. Appointment of sub-agents by recruiting agents.
- v. Training, orientation and counseling centers for awareness development of migrant workers.
- vi. Application and Renewal procedure for recruiting license
- vii. Recruiting agent's code of conduct.
- viii. Penalty for contravention of rules
- ix. Establishment of Wage Earners` Welfare Fund (WEWF), its operation and governing board.

vi) Overseas Employment Policy

Bangladesh adopted Overseas Employment Policy in 2006 to organise overseas employment sector and to ensure welfare of Bangladeshi workers abroad. Salient features of the Oversees employment policy are as follows:

- Ensure the prospect of regular migration of long term and short term for both men and women from all parts of Bangladesh at a rational cost.
- Ensure abolition of any scope of irregular migration.
- Commitment of government to protect the rights, dignity and security of all migrant workers in and outside the country.
- Commitment to explore scope of migration for professional and skilled workers.
- Measures to ensure the social protection of the left behind families and properties of both short-term and long-term migrants.

- Consideration of misconduct in the recruitment process as an act against national interest and provision to make the concerned persons, governmental and private organisations accountable.
- Encouraging remittance flows through official channels and support to the workers and their families to ensure effective and efficient use of remittance.
- Assist in social and economic re-integration of returnee migrant workers.
- Allocation of necessary resources and strengthen the existing institutional infrastructure and personnel for the implementation of the above policies.

There is lack of coordination among the Ministries responsible for formulation and implementation of policies and programmes with respect to overseas employment. In this regard, planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programmes need to be streamlined and organized more efficiently.

vii) Protection of rights of the migrant workers

Protection of migrants' rights and development of awareness may be ensured through the following measures:

- Signing of bilateral accord or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with labour receiving countries.
- Legal support to the workers fallen in trouble.
- Dissemination of information regarding migrant workers' rights in host country, providing comprehensive pre-departure briefing, expansion of briefing programmes in different regions of the country, publication of booklets with necessary information and their distribution.
- Ensuring working hour, payment for wage, over time, leave, health service, freedom of movement in the work contract.

To ensure the rights of migrant workers a lot of international legal mechanisms have been adopted of which following three are important:

- UN Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 1990
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979.

8.00 Promotion, problems, welfare and training activities relating to overseas employment:

a) Computer database network

A computer database network had been established in 21 district level offices, District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMO) and BMET head quarters in June 2004 with its connection at the Ministry, Airport and BAIRA (Bangladesh

Association of International Recruiting Agencies) office. Compulsory registration for all types of job seekers with the nearest DEMO had been started in 2004. This has created accountability and transparency in the recruitment system and aims to gradual elimination of the middlemen. Through the establishment of the database the following benefits are expected to be ensured:

1. All activities relating to registration, recruiting permission and emigration clearance are being modernized
2. It has become easier, faster and transparent
3. Extortion of money reduced and harassment of job seekers stopped.
4. Registration of unemployed and referral to the vacancy positions for overseas market.
5. High officials including Minister and Secretary can monitor entire process from their own computer terminals.
6. Job-exchange facility has been established.
7. The recruiting agents or employer may use their own computer to recruit from the databank of Jobseekers pool.

b) Impact of migration from Bangladesh:

Migration from Bangladesh facilitate the following socio-economic benefits for the country:

- It reduces the prevailing unemployment problem of the country and leads to poverty alleviation.
- The remittances enhance the economic condition of the migrant workers which in turn ensure the overall economic development of the country. This sector earns the highest amount of real foreign currency for the economy.
- Overseas employment helps in reducing the frustration among the youths, terrorism, drug addiction, social unrest, etc.
- It develops the capability of investment for self-employment and entrepreneurship.
- For movement of migrant workers, business related to hotel, traveling, transportation, etc. are getting momentum in the country.
- Earning through overseas employment enhances the financial capability and purchasing power of the migrant workers which gears up the economic activities and uplift the standard of living.
- It enhances transfer of technology through technical knowledge and expertise acquired by the migrant workers working abroad. It creates motivation and develop awareness of the migrant workers towards cleanliness, hygienic environment, importance of literacy, discipline, etc.

- Major age group of migrant workers is 25-35 years and their overseas stay lead them to adopt family planning, which helps population control program of the country.

c) Welfare measures for the expatriate Bangladeshis

Government arranges the following welfare measures for the migrant workers and their family:

- 1) On priority basis, residential plots have been distributed at the new residential area of 'Purbachal', at Dhaka, among all applicants from the expatriate Bangladeshis.
- 2) 500 apartments at 'Bhatara', Dhaka are being constructed to be allotted to expatriate Bangladeshis.
- 3) A one-stop-service center is being set up at Eskaton, Dhaka with facilities to extend all types of services required for a migrant worker relating to migration process. Expatriate Bangladeshis would be able to stay there for short period of time with safety during their travel abroad. Arrangements have been made at the one stop service center to provide the following facilities:
 1. Residential accommodation
 2. Airlines office for ticketing facilities.
 3. Office of the travel agents.
 4. Money exchange centers.
 5. Transport facilities for employers & expatriate workers.
 6. Selection and testing facilities for employees.
 7. Medical test facilities with standby ambulance
 8. Pre departure Briefing Centre
 9. Fax, phone, Internet facility.
- 4) Two language laboratories have been established in the Bureau to provide language training suitable for overseas employment.
- 5) Ministry takes necessary initiatives to ensure legal support to all Bangladeshi expatriates who are in Jail/Deportation camp. Sometimes International Organization for Migration (IOM) is requested to extend assistance to repatriate Bangladeshis where no Bangladeshi mission or labour wing is present.
- 6) Warning and awareness campaign among job seekers to use proper channel of recruitment are regularly published in the electronic and print media.
- 7) Aid to schools in which children of the migrant workers are studying has been provided. Stipend program has been introduced for the children of expatriate workers in some educational institutes

- 8) Bangladesh Airlines is providing services to bring back the dead body of Bangladeshi expatriates at free of cost from different countries to Bangladesh for sending the human remains to their relatives.
- 9) Families of deceased are receiving Tk. 20,000.00 (US\$ 300.00) to bear the transportation cost of dead body and funeral/burial expenses.
- 10) Extending necessary financial assistance up to Tk. 1,00,000.00 (US\$ 1500.00) to the distressed family members of deceased migrants when death compensation from the foreign employer is not received.
- 11) Assistance at airports : Government has undertaken the following measures to ensure movement of the Bangladeshi expatriates without any hindrance:
 - i) Welfare desks / booths at three international airports at Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet for facilitating safe arrival and departure of expatriate Bangladeshis. These desks are providing services to the migrant workers on checking emigration clearance or any other problems faced there. BMET officials are working round the clock at the airport booths.
 - ii) Expatriate Bangladeshis are now receiving transportation facilities introduced for secured and risk free movement from Zia International Airport, Dhaka to nearer inter-district bus stations for different destinations after arrival in Bangladesh.

d) Problems faced by the Bangladeshi migrants:

Bangladeshi workers are facing some problems in their countries of employment, which may be summarized as follows:

- 1) Sometimes demands are placed by the employers for labourers more than their requirement or without any requirement at all just to get the money by selling visa.
- 2) Procedural problem in some legal institutions in the importing countries causes delay in disposal of cases of labour problems for getting their proper dues.
- 3) Lack of adequate consciousness about labour rights in the importing countries sometime causes ill treatment from the employers.
- 4) Non payment, underpayment, delayed payment, poor living conditions, refusal to provide air tickets at the time of exit, non-adherence to the terms and conditions of employment by the sponsors.
- 5) Sometimes as soon as the worker reaches the host country, the agreement is substituted by a new agreement having low wages, substandard accommodation, no free food and other lower fringe benefits, etc.
- 6) In case of accidents it takes years to get the death compensation by the next of kin due to complexity of legal procedures of the host countries.

- 7) Sometimes workers are repatriated after becoming handicapped temporarily or permanently due to some accident without proper treatment or compensation.

e) Irregularities committed by Recruiting agents and action against them.

Recruiting agents are sometimes alleged with the following irregularities during their dealings in the migration process:

1. Taking excess money more than the amount prescribed by the government. Sometimes recruiting agents do not provide any money receipt for receiving money from the migrant workers.
2. Sometimes some agents do not handover the requisite papers like employment agreement, visa papers, etc., to the workers, or they deliver it at the last moment before departure.
3. Some agents do not arrange migration after receiving money from the aspirant candidates.
4. Sometimes recruiting agents do not come up to assist the workers who are facing various problems related to their contracts in the destination country.

BMET accepts all kinds of allegation against recruiting agents relating to migration process and arranges settlement of those cases. In 2006, there were about 132 such allegations of which 92 were settled. Some of them had been referred to special courts. A sum of Tk. 63,00,000.00 (US\$ 93,000.00) had been recovered from the recruiting agents and distributed to the distressed workers in 2006, a few licenses had been cancelled and some are suspended.

f) Promotion of overseas employment:

Middle East has been the major manpower exporting area of Bangladesh. But, there are prospects for manpower export from Bangladesh to almost all the regions of the world i.e. Asia, Europe, Africa and America. Unskilled workers form the majority of the people working abroad from Bangladesh. Bangladesh Government has developed organizational infrastructure including a Ministry, a Directorate, a Public Limited Company as well as some field offices to deal with overseas employment of its citizen. The government is also engaged in various welfare activities for expatriate workers. The govt. may try to exploit the full potentials of the country in terms of exporting its manpower resources. There are significantly large number of people in the country who may be sent abroad after training and capacity development.

Some potential areas of manpower export have remained unexplored. There is a lack of initiative on the part of the government and the Recruiting agent as well to

discover more avenues of employment in other regions of the world. Even in the Middle East, opportunities for employment have not been fully utilised. The govt. may take proper initiative and attach adequate attention to maximise the remittances received from the migrant workers by sending more skilled workers. Unlike other manpower exporting countries such as the Philippines, there is a lack of initiative in negotiating with receiving countries with a view to realizing higher wages for Bangladeshi workers.

More pro-active measures may be undertaken by the govt. to regulate the activities of the private recruiting agencies to curb mismanagement and corruption for the interest of the workers as well as to the country. There are excellent employment opportunities for women workers abroad. In the absence of proper initiatives this potential is yet to be explored.

In the international market of manpower, Bangladeshi workers are preferred for their loyalty to employers. Workforces from Bangladesh are normally satisfied with the agreed salaries. They are not normally addicted to any sort of narcotic drugs or drinks which are also an added advantage for recruitment. Bangladesh has a substantial reserve of skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled and professional manpower. The availability of youthful, inexpensive, trained and easily trainable labor force permit the services at comparatively low cost.

More demand for manpower from Bangladesh is coming from some South East Asian countries in addition to the Middle Eastern countries primarily from Malaysia, Korea, Japan and also from other countries of Africa like Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa as well as countries of Europe e.g. Germany, Spain, Italy and UK.

The effect of emigration on the future growth of the economy is not easy to perceive. Since Bangladesh has a small base of educated manpower, it is quite probable that the absence of such people in large numbers would constrain the normal functioning of the economy in different fields. In areas such as highly specialized doctors, engineers, reputed scholars in different fields, where available expertise are few, the migration of these people, would create a vacuum. On the other hand serious unemployment of the unskilled workers are aggravating the economic situation of the country. To have an ideal situation it is necessary to adjust the demand and supply of manpower from Bangladesh so that the necessary arrangement may be taken to avoid shortage of skills in specific areas and also to minimize the excessive pressure of unemployment.

g) Exploring new avenues of employment

The government should consider prospects for manpower export to many more countries in the world. It should shift its emphasis from regional to global markets to take full advantage of the new avenues of employment. Along with the Middle East, more countries of Asia, Europe, America, Australia and Africa should be targeted as sources of jobs for the Bangladeshi nationals. There is a huge demand for skilled workers in such trades as welding, electrical works, carpentry, house painting, air-conditioning and refrigeration. Steps should be taken to recruit such types of technically qualified people for overseas employment. Some advanced countries like UK and Australia require professionals like doctors, nurses, engineers and accountants. The government should take advantage of these countries' Highly Skilled Migration Programme (HSMP). Recently, Canada has liberalized its immigration policy. The government may extend necessary cooperation to the people of the country so that they can avail this opportunity. There are good opportunities for the employment of women as housekeepers in different countries particularly in the Middle East. Measures should be taken to organize the women interested in overseas jobs and provide them necessary training and orientation. There exists a huge demand of Computer and IT professionals even in advanced countries of the world including Europe, America, Japan and Australia. The Govt. may utilise this opportunity by producing more IT professionals and facilitate their employment abroad.

The Bureau of Labour Statistics of the US issued projections for 21 million more workers for the decade 2004 to 2014 indicating a remarkably strong demand for workers with a few formal skills. Among the occupations with the fastest projected growth are registered nurses and university teachers. The other occupations are retail salespersons, customer service representatives, food-service workers, cashiers, janitors, waiters, nursing aides and hospital orderlies. Candidates require little education only.

h) Human Resource Development and Training

Demand for skilled manpower in different trades is increasing in the world employment market. The benefits can be derived only if a skilled labour force is available to face competitiveness in the world market. Bangladesh can enhance the skills of the labour force providing them with appropriate education and training to achieve further success in global employment market.

General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) specifies Temporary Movement of Natural Persons (TMNP) in MODE-4 as per bilateral agreement between two countries (Sending and Receiving). The Government may undertake efforts to take advantage of WTO Mode – 4, i.e. International movement of labour by collaborating

with other developing countries to work on negotiating with the international community to implement the provisions.

Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment formed a committee comprising members from the Ministry of EWOE, Ministry of Commerce, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and members from research organizations. Committee is preparing ways and means for negotiation for movement of skilled and semi-skilled persons mainly to the developed countries.

Overseas employment market encourages enhancement of human capital and develop them to cope with international demand and competent enough to be globally employable. Bureau of Manpower, Employment & Training (BMET) is engaged in human resource development by providing vocational skill training through its institutional capacities. There are 38 Technical Training Centers (TTCs) located in different districts and one Institute of Marine Technology (BIMT) at Narayanganj under BMET. The present output is about 18,000 annually which will be more than 30,000 when all these centers will come in to operation.

i) Language training

Language is an important tool towards increasing the employability of the workers in the global market. With this view BMET arranges training on different languages. English language training courses have been arranged in collaboration with IOM for nurses, hotel workers and garment workers to make them competent for overseas employment. Manual for Arabic language course has been prepared. Japanese language training program had been conducted for JITCO training program for recruitment of Bangladeshi trainees. Korean language training program are being arranged in three Technical Training Centres of Dhaka to prepare the candidates for employment in Korea under Employment Permit System (EPS).

j) Need for improvement in the training system

The educational, vocational and technical training institutes provide formal training. The following institutions are imparting technical education and training:

1. Polytechnic Institute
2. Technical School and College (TSC)
3. Technical Training Centers (TTC)
4. Institute of Marine Technology
5. Glass & Ceramic Institute
6. College of Leather Technology
7. College of Textile Technology

8. Youth Development Institutes
9. Textile Vocational Institutes

There are also commercial institutes, Institute of Graphic Arts, Survey Institute and so forth. All these institutes are being operated under different Ministries like Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Social Welfare, etc. Some other government organizations such as Bangladesh Industrial and Technical Assistance Centre (BITAC), Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), etc. also offer many institutional and non-formal training courses for selected vocations, trades, skills and target groups.

Technical Training Centres run by BMET should be strengthened with more qualified staff and the necessary equipment so that they can impart more effective training in various trades demanded by manpower importing countries. These centres should be considered as the focal point for supplying skilled workers.

Women migrant workers need to be trained in their prospective jobs. They should also be given orientation on the culture of their receiving countries. Existing language training and orientation centres should be made more effective by providing modern equipment and more qualified teachers.

The mid-level technical and vocational training systems in the country produce a sizable number of skilled workers and technicians, which is provided after the tenth year of schooling. The Polytechnic sub-system offers 4 years diploma courses in engineering and technology. There are 21 polytechnic institutes in the country with an annual intake capacity of about 5500 students. Besides polytechnics, there are a number of agricultural and allied industrial, textile and leather technology institutes and other specialized polytechnic institutes offering diploma level courses in their respective fields.

Massive program may be taken to make training institutions set up by the Govt. to be utilized and effective in catering to the needs of overseas manpower market both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

A massive up gradation and scaling up of training infrastructure and curricula needs to be attended as prospective global employers would look for globally recognized certification. With globalization and increasing trade liberalization, the demand for more skill intensive and technology-literate workforce to produce high quality goods competitive in the global market will become increasingly greater for more developed economies. Bangladesh must be able to seize the opportunity so that Bangladeshi professionals and highly skilled workers can participate more actively in the global market. Bangladesh needs to have a number of internationally

recognized sector specific training institutions in the fields of information technology, healthcare, catering, driving and vocational jobs such as that of the electricians, plumbers, carpenters, mechanics, and in the service sectors, e.g., nursing, catering, physical therapists, etc. Bangladeshi institutions must seek accreditation from the internationally recognized accreditation agencies. Government has to encourage and facilitate this accreditation process. Skilled Bangladeshi workers will then find it much easier to get employment in other countries, if their degrees are accredited by the internationally recognized institutions. This will rectify the problem of Bangladeshi workers migrating abroad not being able to find high quality jobs because of their low skill levels and sometimes lack of recognition of their skills.

To enhance the reputation of Bangladesh as a quality supplier of human resources at a global level, national level skill assessment testing and certification should be made mandatory for the unskilled and semi skilled prospective migrant workers in the long run. It is important that the migrant workers also undergo a country-specific language training and teaching.

9.00 Role of Bangladeshi Missions Overseas

There are 12 labour wings in 10 countries under the Bangladesh missions abroad. Bangladesh Embassy/High Commission or Consulate discharges the duties towards the welfare of Bangladeshi migrants, where Labour Wings have not been created. These are situated in KSA (Riyadh and Jeddah), UAE (Abu Dhabi and Dubai), Malaysia, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, Singapore and Libya. Missions normally extend the following services to the migrant workers:

- i) Efforts to mitigate problems of non-payment of salary and other benefit through labour courts and other related offices by providing legal aide assistance to the workers.
- ii) Promotion of manpower export: This task entails market survey and contacts with large corporations and potential employers, both in the government and private sector.
- iii) To look after the welfare of migrant workers, visiting their work places, responding to their queries and complaints. In case of violation of contracts, labour wing try to solve the problems getting in touch with the concerned employers, lobbying the host government particularly those dealing with the foreign workers for monitoring violations of contract by employers and recruiting agents, facilitating legal support, providing shelters to those who are in need, and so forth.

- iv) Extending necessary financial assistance to the stranded workers for repatriation and for emergency treatment for distressed workers.
- v) Burial of dead body or repatriation of human remains of Bangladeshi workers abroad where their employers do not come up.
- vi) Collection of death compensation money and arrear dues through filing cases by legal aides.
- vii) Providing consular services to the expatriate workers in various prominent cities by visiting of consular team.
- viii) Attestation of papers relating to demand for recruitment checking genuineness of visa papers.

Labour attaches posted in different Bangladesh Embassies/High Commissions abroad need to perform to their maximum potential. They should be more cooperative, helpful and dedicated to the interest of the workers. They certainly need to be more proactive in exploring employment markets for Bangladeshi workers. Bangladesh Govt. should adapt a policy of economic diplomacy seeking overseas employment opportunities for Bangladeshi nationals.

10.00 Conclusion:

With the increasing importance of migration, government wants to maximize the contribution of manpower export for economic growth and poverty reduction of the country. It is now well accepted that the safest, shortest and lasting route to economic emancipation for Bangladesh lies in manpower export sector.

The total migration process needs to be addressed with an integrated approach towards creating a congenial environment for safe migration for all. These include the human resource development and also strengthening the migration process and welfare services.

Acknowledgement:

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