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## **Note**

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# **Internal Migration and Women: An Insight into Causes, Consequences and Policy Implications**

*by*  
RITA AFSAR\*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Migration is often considered an 'essential component of economic development, social change and political organization' (Jackson 1969:1). Bangladesh is one of the few countries where nonpermanent migrants are the major foreign exchange earners and a third of the country's trade deficit is financed by the remittances of the migrants working abroad (Hossain 1990). Similarly, the rapid growth of the export-oriented garments evolved directly in response to world market demand based on subcontracting and other forms of production that relied upon cheap labour of female migrants. Remittances are important determinants of the household income and the wellbeing of the families of the temporary migrants (Afsar 1995: 264). Moreover rural-urban migration is the hallmark of the rapid urbanization process in Bangladesh because along with reclassification of urban areas it has contributed between three-fifths and two-thirds to urban growth since last 30 years (1960-90).

Whether permanent or otherwise, migration is predominantly an outcome of economic motivation although it seldom operates in a totally individualistic way as suggested by the classical or neo-classical economic theories of migration (Lewis 1954; Fei and Ranis 1961; Todaro 1976). From a comprehensive analysis of the mobility and stability questions, the author (1995: 181) found that a 'great deal of the population mobility results from the family's survival and adaptive strategies to maximize family income by allocating their labour to a number of locations involved in diversified income earning activities'. Until recently, migration research has been male biased and has ignored gender specificity. The growing literature on female mobility suggests that not only are the numbers of female migrants on rise but women's independent migration is increasing considerably over the

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years (Hugo 1993). Hence it is important to examine the gender specific causes and consequences of migration and emerging policy related implications. The present paper addresses the following questions :

- \* Why men and women move, how they move and the motives and conditions that accelerate and constrain out-migration.
- \* How migrants, particularly women cope to face the demands of the urban socio-economic situation and whether their coping strategies differ remarkably from those of their male counterparts.
- \* What consequences flow from migration of men and women for the wellbeing of migrants and their families and emerging policy implications<sup>1</sup>.

## **I.2 Data and Methods**

The paper uses primary data collected by the author for her thesis with the help of a small scale survey of 710 randomly selected migrant and non-migrant households drawn from four randomly selected wards of Dhaka city and more detailed case studies of stayers, return as well as 'failed' migrants and families of temporary migrants in the areas of origin through a tracer survey. The sample for the survey was drawn using a multi-stage random sampling method. In the first stage the ward was selected as the primary sampling unit since it is the smallest administrative unit for all kinds of government activities. The Dhaka city has 14 *thanas*, each having 3 to 11 wards. The total number of wards in 1991 was 90. From the list of 90 wards Lalbagh, Purana Paltan, Mirpur and Jurain were selected randomly using the random number table. The 1989/90 electoral rolls served as the sampling frame.<sup>2</sup> The second stage of the sampling listed all persons of the selected wards in the electoral rolls, stratified those who reside in non-slum areas into nine occupational groups and drew a proportional random sample of 100. An additional sample of 20 households were drawn for each ward to be taken up as replacement, if a sample from the original list could not be located. The occupational

<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere the author has examined if there is any attitudinal change with regard to women's roles and status as result of the process of disassociation in moving from one social milieu to another (1995: 1-29).

<sup>2</sup> In order to give adequate representation of all categories of urban households to be covered by the survey this was the only feasible option since the 1991 population census was not ready and it was not possible to have complete enumeration of all households in the selected wards due to time and budget constraints. Hence though not ideal, the electoral rolls is the only available document which provides disaggregated data on the adult population (18+) with regard to age, sex and occupation.

categories used are doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, government service holders, businessmen/women, labourers, students and others. The household of the enlisted voter was used as the sampling unit. In the rare case, where more than one voters being drawn from the random number table belonged to one household, an additional sample was drawn to represent the particular occupation.

Non inclusion of slum and squatter settlements and gross under representation of voters, particularly the recent migrants are some of the biases found in the electoral rolls (Afsar 1995: 69-70)<sup>3</sup>. Hence supplementary censuses were conducted in all four study areas to include slums as well as squatter settlements and boarding houses which were discovered missing in the electoral rolls during visits made by the author. By stratifying them proportionately to population on the basis of the occupation of the household heads, an additional sample of 50 households of slum dwellers and squatters from each ward and a total of 110 temporary migrants from boarding houses in the study areas were drawn.

A subset of gender disaggregated data on temporary and permanent migrant households was used for this paper to examine factors which facilitate or constrain out-migration and consequences and if they differ on the gender line. The sample of temporary migrants consisted of about one-fifth of independent women migrants while there were only four per cent female permanent migrants who were *de jure* heads of the households<sup>4</sup>. Although small it can help to generate insights into the gender dimension of rural-urban migration. A ten year cut-off point is adopted to distinguish the long-term and recent migrants in this paper.

<sup>3</sup> The 1991 population census whose results were available later showed that the population of eligible voters in 1991 for the four wards were 106,000 compared to 71,400 listed in the electoral rolls, an under enumeration of about 33 per cent. It also suffered from the lack of disaggregated data by the nature of migration.

<sup>4</sup> In the absence of secondary data disaggregated by the nature of migration, the study used two variables viz. whether living with the 'family of procreation' and type of housing or dwelling units/boarding houses or barracks, to identify permanent and temporary migrants from areas of destination at the sampling stage. It also used place of birth along with duration of migration and levels of commitment of migrants to their areas of origin and destination to capture permanent and non-permanent movements. The study has successfully demonstrated greater commitment of temporary migrants to their areas of origin with the help of living arrangements in Dhaka city, close connections with the village home reflected through their longer stay during each visit and the size of their remittances (which constitute about three-fifths of their average income in the city) sent to their families in the villages. On an average temporary migrants are 17 years younger than permanent migrants, a majority of them are currently unmarried (54 per cent) and they have a joint family structure at home, all of which support their commitment to rural areas. Conversely, permanent migrants are more committed to place of destination reflected through family based settlement, predominantly nuclear type of family, occasional visits to their places of origin and very small size of remittances. They are generally married and the money they remit to their kin members in the villages constitutes less than five per cent of the average income they earn at the place of destination.

I.3 Determinants of Migration and Gender Related Implications

The development of an adequate theoretical account of the relationship between human action and social structure requires the answering of these fundamental questions: Why do people move, who moves, and how do they move? Whilst there are some attempts (Zelinsky 1971; Woods 1985) to integrate purposive human actions with the constraining and enabling influence of social structure, they do not bind these questions into one framework. Zelinsky's 'hypothesis of the mobility transition' (1971) provides a robust model but poorly articulated causal theory. It is alleged to be 'mono causal' due to its sole reliance on modernization and is illogical since it fails to identify a mechanism which would make the movement between stages inevitable (Woods 1985: 2). Woods himself formulated a framework for a general theory of migration (Woods 1985: 3) by expanding Germani's three levels of causation to include four layers as well as exogenous influences (Figure1). His model appears to answer why, and to some extent how, people move but does not include who moves. Through survey results and case-studies the present paper attempts to answer these questions while explaining rural-urban migration to Dhaka city.

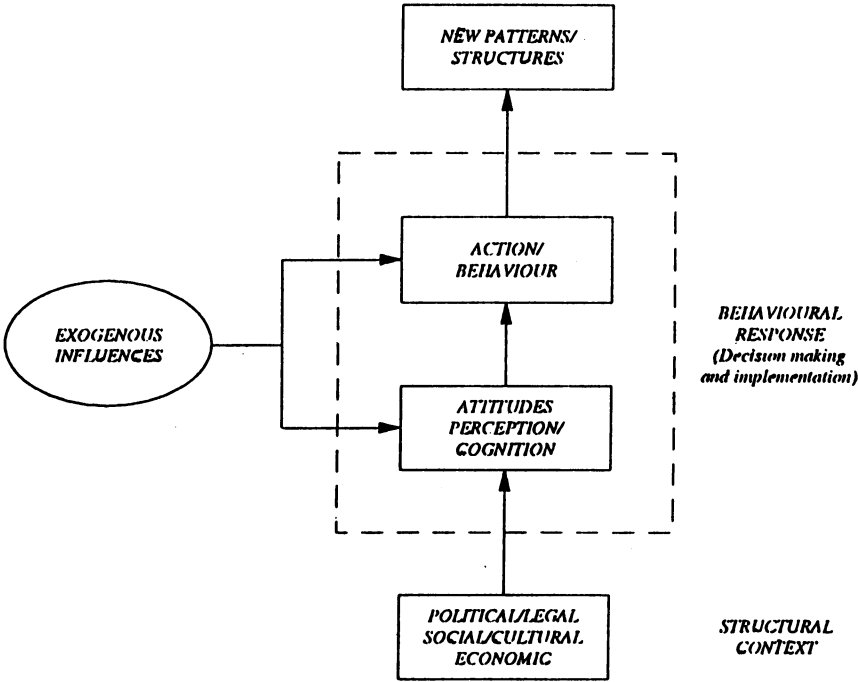


Figure 1: Framework for a General Theory of Migration (after Woods, 1985)

### **I.3.1 Determinants of Migration to Dhaka**

Reasons expressed for migration by respondents show marked variations by the nature of migration and along the gender line. Female temporary migrants almost exclusively came to Dhaka in search of job compared to their permanent migrants counterparts whose migration was associational (about 50 per cent). Migration is associated with the life cycle. Most of the women among permanent migrants (about 60 per cent) came to Dhaka more than 25 years ago. Mean age of the female permanent migrants was 41 years and they were 15 years older than their counterparts among temporary migrants. It should be noted that nearly three-fifths of these women are widows and they are older (46 years) than either married (36 years) or divorced (32 years) women among permanent migrants. The bulk of temporary migrants are represented by divorced (55 per cent) followed by currently unmarried (30 per cent) women. While both permanent and temporary male migrants came predominantly for job related reasons but there are some clear differences in their emphasis. Two-thirds of temporary migrants reported job search as the prime reason for their migration as opposed to one-fifth of permanent migrants. A similar response pattern was found in West Java (Hugo 1975: 458). A quarter to permanent migrants also migrated for a better job and another one-seventh were transferred on job. The corresponding figures for temporary migrants were 11 and 8 per cent respectively. On an average a temporary male migrant was eight years younger than recent permanent migrants at the time of migration. Being young and living in infrastructurally more developed villages than permanent migrants, they exhibit a greater tendency to aspire for direct job opportunities in Dhaka city (Afsar 1995: 157-68). Subsequently the proportion of unemployed among temporary migrants was significantly higher than permanent migrants before coming to Dhaka (Table I). All independent women migrants were unemployed before migration hence pre-migration occupation profile of the migrants is presented without gender disaggregated data. Table I also reveals that a large number of those men who came in the 1960s and 1970s were either students or dependents. Those who came as dependents did not have much choice but to look for a job to meet their mundane economic necessity. For those who were students

before migration, it was quite natural for them to migrate to undertake higher studies. In his village-based study of the determinants and consequences of rural out-migration in Bangladesh, Chaudhury (1978) stressed the importance of educational selectivity in the process of out-migration. The propensity to migrate increases with education beyond secondary level and migrants generally have higher levels of education than non-migrants. However the recent evidence (Yasmeen 1990; Nabi 1992) suggests that migration takes place in Bangladesh regardless of educational level because the association between the rate of migration and literacy has not been statistically significant and there was a predominance of unskilled and agricultural labourers among migrants.

TABLE I  
PERCENTAGE DISRIBUTION OF THE HOUSEHOLD HEADS BY THEIR  
PRE-MIGRATION OCCUPATION, NATURE OF MIGRATION, PLACE OF RESIDENCE  
AND LENGTH OF STAY IN DHAKA CITY

Length of Stay (in years)	Migrnts by Categories (Number)	Trade (%)	Self-employed (%)	Salar-ied Service (%)	Labo-urer*	Agricul-ture**	Un-emplo-yed (%)	Stu-dent (%)	House -wife (%)	Depen -dent (%)	Oth-ers (%)	Total
30+	Permanent (95)	6.3	3.2	10.5	3.1	6.3	14.7	33.7	2.1	18.9	1.0	100
	Temporary (2)	-	-	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-	
20-30	(Permanent (134)	4.5	1.5	11.2	1.5	8.9	12.7	44.8	0.7	11.9	2.2	100
	Temporary (5)	20.0	-	-	-	-	60.0	20.0	-	-	-	
10-20	(Permanent (173)	3.5	-	18.4	3.4	18.0	13.3	31.2	1.2	4.6	5.2	100
	Temporary (21)	9.5	4.8	23.8	-	9.5	19.0	23.8	9.5	-	-	
<10	(Permanent (82)	10.0	-	18.3	6.1	37.8	9.8	9.8	2.4	1.2	8.5	100
	Temporary (82)	3.7	2.4	9.8	13.4	7.3	19.5	31.7	12.2	-	-	
All	(Permanent (484)	5.2	1.0	14.9	3.2	16.5	12.8	31.8	1.4	8.9	4.3	100
	Temporary (110)	5.4	2.7	11.8	10.0	8.2	21.8	29.1	10.9	-	-	

**Note:** \*Non-agricultural labourer

\*\*Cultivator and Agricultural labourer.

**Source :** Afsar 1995.



### **I.3.2 Educational Selectivity of Migrants**

Generally a b-polar type of educational selectivity was found among migrants in developing countries such as India (Sovani 1966), the Ivory Coast (Joshi 1973), Ghana (Foster 1965; Caldwell 1969), Kenya (Todaro 1971) and the Philippines (Hart 1971). It is argued that the better off who can raise the money and wait for a longer period to get better returns from their education can afford to incur the risk of migration (Lipton 1980; Findley 1987). Conversely the poorer migrants who have no education take the risk of migration for income maximization and to make up for the land deprivation, high rents, low income and lack of diversified employment opportunities 'associated with the concentration and use of surpluses by the better off in their villages of origin' (Lipton 1980: 7). In her thesis the author finds that except for the 20-29 year age group, approximately a quarter of heads among permanent migrants had a degree level of education. No such regular pattern is found among non-migrants (1995: 162). There is significantly higher concentration of illiterates (22 per cent) and highly educated (28.5 per cent) among permanent migrants. This bi-polar pattern can be explained by the gender and duration of migration of the permanent migrants. Heads having no education are disproportionately higher among women (42 per cent) and recent migrants (34 per cent), whereas degree holders form the largest group among the long-term (about one-third) permanent male migrants. Gender based disparity in the educational attainment of the temporary migrants is even more conspicuous. All but three women migrants have no education as opposed to that of barely 13 per cent of the male head. Female permanent migrants had 5.5 years of schooling on an average compared to only one year for temporary migrants. Conversely both permanent and temporary male migrants had 8 years of schooling on an average. A positive correlation between age at migration and the level of education among the long-term permanent migrants can also be observed from Table II which is reversed in the case of the recent ones. Hence it can be said that the propensity to migrate is not only increasing among the women and the least educated but also among the older people in the recent years. However the risk of migration is not only influenced by the educational selectivity of migrants but also by the local setting of the community



of origin of the migrants and their families (Findley 1987: 36). Therefore, it is important to assess the role of community context in determining migration.

TABLE II  
DISRIBUTION OF THE MIGRANT HEADS BY GENDER, NATURE OF  
AND AGE AT MIGRATION AND LEVEL EDUCATION

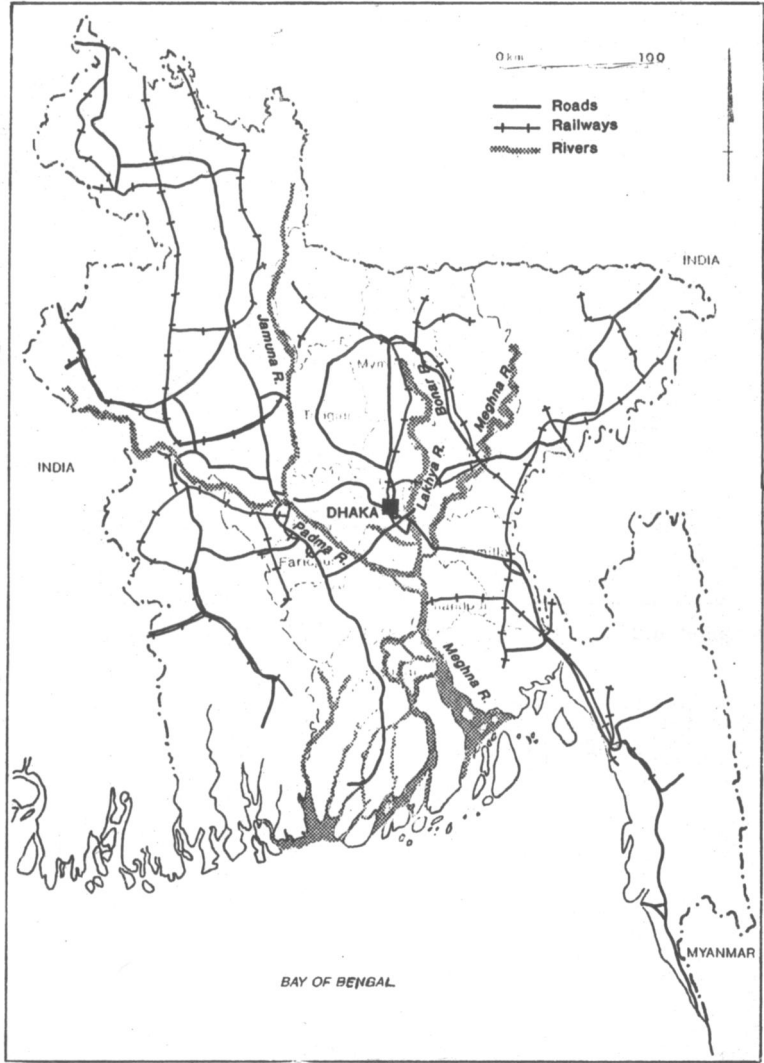
Education Level (%)	Permanent						Temporary			
	Male	Female	Total (No.)	Long-term	Recent		Male	Female	Total (No.)	
Illiterate	21.1	42.1	21.9	106	19.6	34.1	13.3	85.0	37.3	29
Primary	15.3	15.8	15.3	74	14.4	19.5	20.0	10.0	18.2	20
Secondary	11.0	5.3	10.7	52	9.7	15.8	11.1	5.0	10.0	11
Hr. Secondary	23.4	26.3	23.6	114	24.6	14.6	21.1	-	17.3	19
Degree	29.2	10.5	28.5	138	31.1	15.8	34.4	-	17.2	31
Average education by age at migration (years)	8.4	5.5	8.3	484	8.6	6.2	7.9	0.8	6.5	110
10-19	5.5	-	-	17	5.9	5.2	6.1	1.2	5.2	42
20-29	5.9	6.3	4.8	78	5.8	6.2	9.0	0.0	7.8	55
30-39	9.1	5.2	8.4	189	9.1	6.1	11.3	0.0	5.0	13
40-49	9.2	5.0	8.9	117	9.1	8.7	-	-	-	-
50-59	9.1	4.0	9.3	58	9.0	6.0	-	-	-	-
60+	9.3	10.0	8.6	25	10.0	2.0	-	-	-	-

Source : Dhaka migration survey, 1991-93.

### I.3.3 Importance of Community Context and Social Networks in the Rural-urban Migration

Districts that record consistent flows of male out-migrants to Dhaka city, are Dhaka, Faridpur, Barisal and Comilla (CUS 1990; Afsar 1995). Female migrants came overwhelmingly from Dhaka district, followed by those from Comilla and Noakhali. While a

significant proportion of temporary female migrants also migrated from Mymensingh, none of their counterparts among permanent migrants belonged to that district. Notwithstanding those divergence it can be said that migrants are disproportionately drawn from the central and south-eastern districts (Figure 2). Table III suggests that all the districts of out-migration have better performing agricultural sector than the national average, as indicated by total agricultural value added per acre of cultivable land.



**Figure 2 : Bangladesh Location of Dhaka City and its Transportation Network.**

TABLE III  
**AGRICULTURAL VALUE ADDED FROM PER ACRE OF LAND BY  
 REGION IN BANGLADESH AT CONSTANT PRICE (1984/85) 1990/91**

Region (Greater Districts)	Agricultural Crops/ Acre Cultivable Land (Taka)	Total Agricultural Sector/Acre Land (Taka)
Comilla	7856	7684
Chittagong	4508	5162
Noakhali	4910	4531
Sylhet	5344	4354
Dhaka	6053	5806
Faridpur	5777	5451
Jamalpur	6830	6272
Mymensingh	6231	5482
Tangail	6691	6484
Barisal	4797	5518
Jessore	6745	6489
Khulna	2378	3357
Kushtia	6586	6273
Patuakhali	3197	4300
Bogra	9074	7829
Dinajpur	5843	5158
Pabna	5761	5127
Rangpur	7230	5474
Rajshahi	5761	6462
Bangladesh	5222	5206

**Source:** Compiled and computed from BBS 1993: 252; BBS 1992: 118.

This is consistent with the bulk of research that found greater propensity for out-migration from those places where the agricultural sector has performed well (Mohan 1984; Mohan and Thottan 1988). These districts are close and very well connected to Dhaka city by both national roads (RHD roads network) and water ways (Figure 2). While proximity of migrants' areas of origin to Dhaka city can be offered as a possible explanation for higher concentration of female out-migration from Dhaka district, the inhibiting effects of distance seems to be offset by cheap transportation services as proposed by Hugo (1981a). However districts, like Chittagong or Serajganj, are also well-connected to Dhaka city by transportation networks yet they do not experience substantial outward migration to Dhaka. This directs one's attention to the community's migration history facilitated by the role of social networks. According to Hugo (1994: 8):

'The majority of movers, however, move along well trodden paths which, if they haven't traveled before themselves, have been traversed earlier by family members and friends. They tend to travel with friends or family and have a range of family based contracts at the destination.'

Table IV confirms Hugo's observation. It shows that almost all migrants, irrespective of whether they are permanent or temporary, living in slum or non-slum areas, had prior information about their initial place of settlement in Dhaka city through their social networks. While kinsmen constituted a major source of information for nearly half of permanent migrants, friends and neighbours supplied information to two-fifths of temporary migrants. This difference can be captured more clearly with the help of gender disaggregated data. Thus on the one hand, female permanent migrants were predominantly informed by their relatives and on the other, friends and neighbours constituted the major source of information for female temporary migrants (55 per cent).

This is because nearly three-quarters of female permanent migrants and about two-fifths of their male counterparts had family members and relatives at their initial place of settlement. It shows the importance of family led migration, which is more applicable for permanent migrants, particularly among women than temporary ones. In his study of West Java, Hugo (1975: 533-34) found that three-quarters of permanent migrants and only five per cent of temporary migrants were housed initially with family or friends. In sharp contrast, two-thirds of temporary migrants lived in boarding houses. An overwhelming majority of temporary migrants both male (80 per cent) and female (85 per cent) live alone in Dhaka and reported that their fellow movers served as major links in their migration and

settlement process. Hugo (1975: 509) also found the same tendency among temporary migrants in West Java. Therefore the above analysis on the source and the role of information confirms Ritchey's information hypothesis (Ritchey 1976) which states that friends and family at a distant location, encourage and direct the flow of migration by increasing migrants' awareness of conditions and opportunities at that place. A quarter of male migrants (both permanent and temporary) also had information from others such as employer, middlemen etc. This is not unexpected since a sizeable proportion of them were transferred on job to Dhaka irrespective of their nature of migration.

TABLE IV  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY THEIR SOURCES OF INFORMATION  
PRIOR TO MIGRATION ABOUT PLACE OF DESTINATION

Permanent Migrants	Family Members/ Relatives	Friends/ Neighbors	Stayed/ Visited before	Employer/ NGO	Others	Not Reported	All Migrants (Number)
Male	46.2	26.0	3.6	7.7	14.4	1.9	465
Female	57.9	15.8	5.3	10.5	5.3	5.3	19
All	46.7	25.6	3.7	7.8	14.0	2.1	484
Temporary migrant	15.4	34.5	7.8	13.6	14.5	1.8	110
Male	22.2	36.7	8.9	16.7	13.3	2.2	90
Female	15.0	65.0	-	-	20.0	-	20

**Source:** Dhaka migration survey 1991-93.

The role of kin and friends as chief suppliers of information prior to migrants arrival at the destination and also as facilitators in such moves was highlighted by Lansing and Mueller (1967), Choldin (1973), Tilly and Brown (1967) in North America. In the Third World context the crucial significance of social networks in the migration process has been demonstrated by Grunig (1971), Caldwell (1969), Hugo (1978), Gore (1971), Skeldon (1990) and Majumdar, Mahmud and Afsar's (1995) study confirmed this finding. However the present paper also suggests that the type of support at the destination may determine the type of movement, particularly among female migrants. Table V shows that two-thirds of the permanent migrants and slightly more than half of the temporary migrants received wide ranging assistance from their kin and non-kin networks immediately after coming to Dhaka city. This included seeking employment and housing, providing

short-term accommodation and financial help. Friends and neighbours of the one-fifth of temporary female migrants also searched jobs for them which is much higher than for other categories of migrants.

Figure 3 sums up the empirical analysis of determinants of migration decision making. Characteristics and motivations of potential migrants are posited as one of the important determinants in the figure. A gender and duration of migration based bi-polar educational selectivity pattern is found among migrants which suggests a higher propensity for migration among women and recent male migrants with the lowest and long-term male migrants with the highest level of education. Notwithstanding their polar characteristics, migrants have two things in common. Firstly, both groups can take risks. Those who have nothing are not afraid to take risks and conversely those who have greater than average incomes can afford to take risks. Secondly, the underlying motivation of both groups is income-maximization. The life cycle variables such as age, marital status can be considered as important determinants of women's mobility decision. Particularly marital status along with roles and responsibilities assumed in the family play important role in migration motivation. Hence family strategy or support and obligations are posited in the model. (Figure 3) as independent variables affecting migration decision-making.

TABLE V  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANT HEADS AT THE PLACE OF DESTINATION  
BY TYPES OF HELP THEY RECEIVED FROM THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS,  
GENDER AND NATURE OF MIGRATION

Migrants by Categories	Rent Free Accommodation	Rented Accommodation	Financial Help	Help to Locate Shelter	Help in Getting Job	Heads who received help	All Migrant Heads (Number)
Permanent	49.5	7.9	8.2	22.0	0.3	63.0	484
Male	49.5	7.8	8.2	21.8	0.3	63.0	465
Female	50.0	8.3	8.3	8.3	—	63.2	19
Temporary	44.8	10.3	1.7	34.5	8.6	52.7	110
Male	44.6	12.8	2.1	36.2	4.2	52.2	90
Female	45.5	—	—	27.3	27.3	55.0	20

**Source :** Dhaka migration survey, 1991-93.

Although economic motivation predominate in the reasons for migration, it is generally adopted and facilitated as a family level strategy for income maximization. Hence migration is the family level rational economic decision and not that of the individual migrant's as suggested by the classical or neo-classical economic theories of migration (Lewis 1954; Fei and Ranis 1961; Todaro 1976).

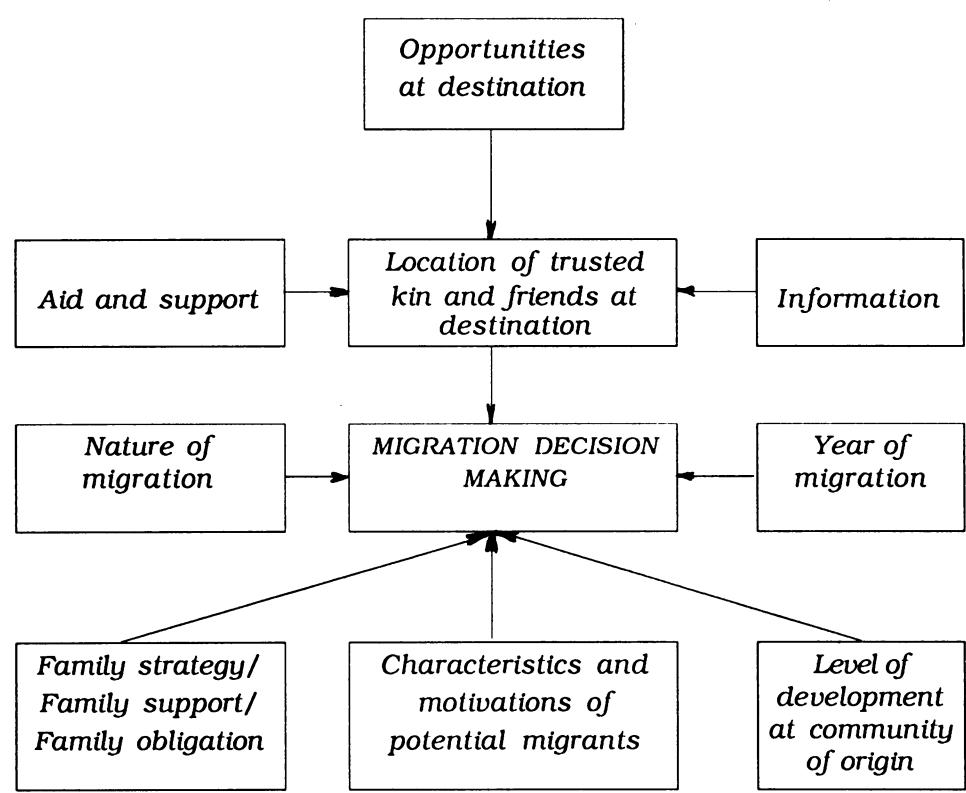
Moreover the location of the trusted kin members and friends at the destination emerges as pre-condition for migration. By supplying information on urban opportunities, e.g., employment, higher income and better education and skill formation and taking away the fear of uncertainty with material, non-material and emotional support (Table V) they encourage and direct the flow of out-migration. As Massey has pointed out 'networks increase the likelihood of movement because they lower the cost of relocation' (1988: 396). The above analysis has also demonstrated that the source and type of support can determine the nature of mobility particularly among women (Table IV). Once established networks operate independently of formal institutions and irrespective of policy interventions, either negative or positive. Hence it is urged that networks must be given full consideration for a greater understanding of how people move but also for effective policy intervention (Hugo 1994: 42).

Migration decision-making is operationalized with the help of the nature of the movement, permanent or temporary, year of migration, long-term or recent migrants and along the gender line. Considering the enormous complexities of the population mobility and the significant relationship between non-permanent mobility and their gender related implications for social and economic change (Hugo 1991: 4), the nature of migration along with gender dimension has been included in the causal model. With the help of the nature of migration and gender disaggregated data it was possible to detect the importance of family and community context in the migration decision-making process. Similarly, the concept of long-term and recent migrants helped detect dynamic patterns and trends in the rural-urban migration. Although the year of migration is significantly mediated by the age factor and subject to migration attrition,<sup>5</sup> it helps to point to the direction of change. The importance of sources of information and support as a determinant of population mobility and its nature can be seen from the gender disaggregated data (Figure 3). Hence the role of family and also fellow movers, friends and

<sup>5</sup> It is argued that non inclusion of repeat migrants who are often less successful (Speare, 1983) in the random sample of the original migrant cohort, would tend to minimize migrant-native differentials and exaggerate migrants' success (Yang 1994 : 1)



acquaintances of the same districts emerges as a prime factor in the migration decision-making process.



**Figure 3: Determinants of migration decision making in Bangladesh.**

**Source :** Afsar 1995.

**I.4 Consequences of Rural-Urban Migration**

It is generally acknowledged that assessment of the consequences of migration is far more complex methodologically than is usually recognized (Bilsborrow & UN Secretariat 1993: 13). This is because it demands an analysis of characteristics of migrants and nature of migration such as at what stage of the life men and women migrated, whether they moved alone or as a part of family group, etc. and context in which they migrated. The paper has drawn consequences of rural-urban migration exclusively from the author's thesis (1995) in the absence of any large scale systematic data in Bangladesh.

Chaudhury (1980) has formulated some hypotheses relating to factors contributing to migration, while Amin (1986) and Majumder, Mahmud and Asfar (1995) found contradictory evidence on the economic consequences of migration. Amin (1986) found positive correlation between resource endowment and the scope for upward occupational mobility. On the other hand, dynamism of the squatters is amply demonstrated in Majumdar, Mahmud and Afsar's study (1995). They found that life chances tend to increase with time in terms of education, skill acquisition and upward mobility. However they fail to identify different patterns of migration and their impacts upon a cross-sections of migrants at their place of destination and their families at areas of origin. Being based on one squatter settlement, their study lacks replicability, which is needed to face the challenges of urbanization and urban poverty. By employing qualitative, quantitative and comparative techniques among the randomly selected cross-sections of households of non-migrants and different categories of migrants, such as temporary and permanent, men and women, slum and non-slum households, a critical evaluation of consequences of migration presented by the author (1995: 218-267) in her thesis.

#### **I.4.1 Migration, Family Formation and Income Maximization**

It is interesting to find that none of the men and women among temporary migrants is unemployed in Dhaka city (Table VI). Temporary migrants generally belonged to the lower income bracket. On average, they were estimated to earn about US \$260 annually on a per capita basis. Although this was higher than the income of slum households (US \$155 per capita) but much lower than that of non-slum households (more than US \$ 500 per capita). It should be noted that temporary migrants migrate predominantly in search of work and unlike permanent migrants they generally do not have family support and shelter after migration. Female migrants do not have much choice in the job market. All the female temporary migrants, young and old are involved as domestic helpers in several boarding houses in Purana Paltan area. Their male counterparts however predominate in services sector (37 per cent), followed by those who work as labourers in transport (22 per cent) and manufacturing (18 per cent), traders (12 per cent), self-employed (4 per cent) and students (7 per cent). To maximize income the poor male migrants seek and engage in a wide diversity of occupations cutting across the dichotomy between the formal-informal sector. A quarter of the permanent male migrants are found in the formal

service sector, almost the same proportion pull rickshaw, another one-fifth are engaged in peddling, vending and hawking and about one-seventh work in factories and workshops. It should be noted that male temporary migrants had much higher level of education at the time of migration than their female counterparts. Many of them had prior work experience unlike female temporary migrants.

TABLE VI  
DISTRIBUTION OF MIGRANTS BY PRIMARY OCCUPATION, GENDER NATURE OF  
MIGRATION AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE (FIGURES IN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL)

Migrants by Categories	Business	Self- em- ployed	Service	Labo- urer	Trans- port	Rentier	Unem- ployed	Not Work- ing	House- wife
Permanent (N=484)	24.0	3.3	43.0	7.6	11.0	2.3	1.6	4.7	2.5
Male (N=465)	24.9	3.0	44.3	7.5	11.4	2.4	1.7	5.0	—
Female (N=19)	—	10.5	10.5	10.5	—	—	5.3	—	63.2
All non-slum (N=307)	26.1	4.2	54.4	0.3	2.0	2.6	0.6	6.2	3.6
All slum (N=177)	20.3	1.7	23.2	20.3	26.5	1.7	3.4	2.3	0.6
Temporary (N=110)	10.0	3.6	48.2	18.2	14.5	—	—	5.5	—
Male (N=90)	12.2	4.4	36.7	22.2	17.8	—	—	6.7	—
Female (N=20)	—	—	100*	—	—	—	—	—	—

**Not:** Unemployed were those who were looking for work.

Notworking category includes those who were not looking for work and not engaged in remunerative work. This category is overwhelmingly dominated by dependents and students in the case of permanent and temporary migrants respectively.

\* Domestic service only.

**Source:** Dhaka migration survey 1991-93.

Moreover from the household level data in the place of destination it was not possible to detect women's diversified occupations in the export-oriented garments, electronics assembling plants. Premised on

garments factories in Dhaka city, Chaudhury and Majumder (1991) were able to identify different types of migrants. Hence elsewhere the author (1995: 298-99) recommended that these women should be identified from their 'place of work' and their families should be traced in both rural and urban areas. Among the female permanent migrants, nearly two-thirds are housewives and a few work as labourers, self-employed and employees. However, housewives belong to the highest income brackets because they receive the house rent in Dhaka city and remittances from abroad. They received about Taka 80,000 on an average as remittances in the previous year compared to that of Taka 9,000 received by their male counterparts. Many of them are widows and unlike their counterparts among female temporary migrants, they are in the most advantageous positions. They generally have large extended family with minimum two adult earning members as opposed to the female temporary migrants who often are the sole income earners of their family. Hence it is not the marital status *per se* rather the life cycle and more importantly, the family formation variable in it along with education and prior work experience can explain this variation better.

It is also important to establish whether consequences are assessed with respect to migrant or their family at origin or destination. Thus while the above analysis shows that after migration all temporary migrants whether male or female start earning cash income, it is important to assess the consequences of migration for the families of temporary migrant at areas of origin. Gender disaggregated data show that 77 per cent male and 55 per cent female temporary migrants sent remittances which constitute 35 per cent and 27 per cent of their respective total expenditure in urban areas. Corresponding figure for permanent migrants was US\$ 100 and only 3.5 per cent of those families had remitted money. It represent only 4.5 and about 2 per cent of the total urban expenditure of male and female headed households respectively among permanent migrants. It should also be noted that by curtailing consumption of food and clothing temporary migrants can afford to save from their meager income for remittances. Thus female temporary migrants manage their food from their employer's house and their male counterparts spend only one-third of their total consumption expenditure on food and 4.5 per cent on clothing compared to 46 per cent and 8 per cent respectively for permanent migrants. Hence migration is adopted as a family strategy for income maximization by both male and female migrants.

A detailed analysis of the expenditure patterns of temporary migrants' families in their home areas by the author in her thesis

(1995: 261-64) revealed that remittances accounted for between 60-90 per cent of their overall household income. All of these families had managed to replace their thatched roofs with corrugated iron sheets to get protection from natural calamities. In some cases remittances were invested in buying cultivable land and inputs, such as an irrigation pump and fertilizer to cultivate the High Yielding Varieties (HYV) of rice. Some others also reported the use of remittances for the purpose of children's education and treatment of sick elderly family members. Hence the empirical evidence shows that remittances sent by the migrants not only help their families to meet their need for survival but contributes significantly toward improving the welfare of the relatives left behind by the temporary migrants in rural areas.

#### **I.4.2 Migrant's Access to Urban Basic Services**

Mega cities of most of the developing countries can be characterized by relative deprivation and persistent poverty. For example, half of urban population have access to public water supply and the sanitation coverage in urban areas is about 42 per cent. These figures reduce to one-third and one-fifth respectively for slum dwellers (UNDP-UNCHS 1993). Elsewhere the author reported that only one-tenth of the slum dwellers of Dhaka city have direct water supply at their premises as opposed to more than four-fifths of those of non-slum residents (Afsar 1995: 241). She has also cautioned the readers not to interpret it as the lack of access to safe water of the slum dwellers since 90 per cent of those households acquire access to safe water through informal channels, such as their neighbours' house or surrounding office/institution premises or from common sources like standpipe, tubewell, etc. This on the one hand, reflects that migrants, especially slum dwellers, create and manage ways of meeting their basic needs. On the other hand, it puts pressure on the existing workload of women, since they are the ones, who collect the water and perform all of the household chores with stored water. They spent a substantial amount of their time and energy and face problems of distance, overcrowding and long hours of waiting in order to fetch water. Most of the existing studies (CUS 1982; 1988; 1990) generally emphasize the deprivation faced by migrants, but remain silent on those issues relating to who bears the brunt of this and how slum dwellers manage to meet their demand for water.

Table VII reveals that the proportion of those who do not have access to electric connection and cooking gas facility are substantially higher among women heads of the permanent migrant households. Obviously many of these problems stem from the low income since

nearly two-fifths of the permanent migrants households are drawn from the slum and squatter settlements. Despite that, a large number of male heads from slums could manage to get those services illegally through informal channels (Afsar 1995: 240-41). However, the poorer female headed households are deprived of those access mainly because they could not overcome the inhibition to establish illegal connection to the mains by bribing the agents such as employees of the Electricity Department/Board, unlike their men counterparts. In the case of temporary migrants, a completely reverse situation is observed with regard to their access to basic services (Table VII). Almost all women among temporary migrant use sanitary toilet and they have access to piped gas, direct water supply from WASA and electricity. In sharp contrast one-quarter of their male counterparts use common kutchra latrine and 17 per cent do not have access to electricity. About one-tenth of the male temporary migrants reported to use water from nearby ponds in Jurain. Although all temporary migrants live in boarding houses there is area based stratification in their access to basic services. Since all the women boarders live in Purana Paltan, an upper-middle class area (Afsar 1995: 138, 141), they enjoy all these facilities albeit at a much higher cost. They spend about a quarter of their consumption expenditure on housing and those related services as opposed to 11 and 15 per cent spent respectively by their male counterparts and permanent migrants. Despite their low income they can afford such a high cost since they get free meals from their employers' house. Moreover as they live close to their work they save expenses by walking to employers' house.

Hence contrary to the existing myth that the urban poor do not have access to urban amenities such as gas, electricity and water, they are found to manage access to those services through informal channels and by spending more. This also contradicts Gilbert and Gugler's (1992: 117) observation that very few urban settlements in Latin America are without light and water, as opposed to the poor of the most Asian and African cities who may never receive those services. However, keeping in mind that the poor, particularly the poorer women, have to spend more money and energy to get access to these basic services which the non-poor get easily and relatively at a cheaper rate, future policies should address this issue.

TABLE VII  
**MIGRANTS' ACCESS TO BASIC SERVICES BY GENDER, NATURE OF MIGRATION AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE** (FIGURES IN PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL)

Basic Services	Permanent Migrant					Temporary Migrants		
Water	Male	Female	Total	Non-slum	Slum	Male	Female	Total
Direct supply at home	55.5	68.4	56.0	83.7	7.9	57.8	95.0	64.5
Common tap/pipe	14.4	—	13.8	3.9	32.2	1.8	5.0	1.8
Neighbour's/ office tap	11.7	15.8	11.2	0.3	30.0	6.7	—	5.5
Tubewell	14.6	15.8	14.7	12.1	19.2	31.1	—	25.5
Others	3.9	—	3.7	—	10.2	3.3	—	2.7
<b>Electricity</b>								
Legal line	72.3	68.4	72.1	97.7	27.1	83.3	95.0	85.5
Illegal line	9.6	—	9.1	0.6	24.3	—	—	—
None	18.1	31.6	18.6	1.0	48.6	16.7	5.0	14.5
<b>Cooking fuel</b>								
Gas	66.5	52.6	65.9	92.5	19.8	78.9	100.0	82.7
Kerosene and wood	24.9	47.4	25.8	4.9	62.1	20.0	—	16.4
Others	8.6	—	8.3	2.6	18.1	1.1	—	0.9

**Source:** Dhaka migration survey, 1991-93.

## 1.6 Conclusions and Policy Implications

Rural-urban migration has played a key role in the rapid urbanization process of Bangladesh and is likely to increase in scale, complexity and diversity. With increasing improvement in rural infrastructure and transportation more non-permanent movements will occur. Young adults, men and women, illiterate and highly educated who have support from social networks in the places of destination will migrate to maximize income opportunities generated by the city. Although economic motivation predominate among all categories of migrants, irrespective of gender and the nature of migration, it is adopted and facilitated as a family strategy for income maximization. Migration is generally beneficial for migrants, their families, for a technologically stagnant city like Dhaka and the economy as a whole. Diversified income-earning opportunities depend upon educational attainment, age, stages of life cycles, prior work



experience and contracts. Like men, migration by women contribute directly to wellbeing of their family.

Although employment pattern of migrants suggest that the rigid division between the formal and the informal sector does not hold in the case of male migrants, irrespective of the income level, independent women migrants are employed predominantly in the informal sector. Like men, women's contribution to development is directly linked with and dependent upon a number of socio-cultural and normative factors that determine women's roles and status in different societies. Those factors which tend to restrict women's economic and social activities in traditional societies like Bangladesh, are gradually changing in the context of persistent poverty and rapid urbanization, manifest through greater participation of women in economic and social life, including their increased participation in migration.

Money remitted by migrants, particularly the temporary ones, helps their families to meet their needs for subsistence and strengthen their resource base, both material and human. Hence, migration can be considered as a self-help strategy for poverty alleviation and betterment which should be duly recognized and adequately utilized for sustainable development of the country. Being the most complex and ambiguous of the demographic variables, there should multidimensional operationalization of migration with the help of temporal, spatial, gender and also commitment led criteria.

Contrary to the existing myth that the urban poor do not have access to basic services, the paper demonstrates that they manage access to those services through informal channels and by spending more. Particularly the poorer women have to spend more money and energy. Therefore it is recommended that the authorities should not hesitate to extend the delivery of the basic services to the urban poor in collaboration with NGOs and other organizations working with slum communities by adopting the 'user pays' approach. In order to be successful there should be involvement of the social networks of the urban poor communities particularly women in taking decisions with regard to the standards and locations of services and ensuring local maintenance and fund raising for cost recovery. Since education, particularly women's education up to secondary and above level is critical in determining migrant's employment opportunities, income, and also ensures better access and use of basic services, it should be given special consideration in urban poverty alleviation and gender based development policies (Afsar 1995).

There is no question on population mobility in the population census of Bangladesh, notwithstanding its profound demographic, social and economic impacts. Without questions on 'place of last residence' with duration, the 'place of birth' question asked in the supplementary survey by the BBS does not seem to be useful to detect non-permanent movements. Similarly the census question of the 'institutional type of households' (BBS 1992b: 7) should be extended to include boarding houses or 'mess' on a priority basis. This is because boarding houses are found to be the most common places of abode of temporary migrants in the present study. 'Place of work' of the urban residents are the other possible sources of detecting non-permanent movements and more particularly, independent migration by the women migrants. The labour force survey conducted by the BBS must have questions on 'place of birth', 'current place of residence' and the 'year of migration'. It should also include a question on the 'place of work' in the population census to detect the non-permanent migrants. As people in Bangladesh are involved in multiple income earning activities, it may be appropriate to ask a supplementary question on time use by major activities where they spend six to eight hours continuously.

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