



Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic



Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Preface

The COVID 19 pandemic has compellingly exposed the uncertainties of temporary labour migration programmes. It has made policymakers and other stakeholders realise that the need for reintegration can kick in at any time in the migration cycle - from freedom of choice exercised by a migrant worker, to termination, loss of job, and the occurrence of a pandemic.

Planning reintegration programmes for returnee migrants becomes a major challenge as returnees are not a homogenous group. While some might attain a reasonable degree of success in their migration effort and gain skills and savings, others may return empty handed. A third group may comprise of traumatised migrants who may be in detention, or may experience physical, sexual or mental harm before they are repatriated. Therefore, any reintegration planning should address the specific needs of the concerned category of migrants.

Usually in pursuing the policy priority of harnessing remittances labour sending countries has thus far laid major emphasis on recruitment and deployment processes. In the spirit of building a better future and using crisis as an opportunity, the RMMRU-MFA-PROKAS conference on *Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers affected by Covid 19 Pandemic* had explored the significance of reintegration programmes as critical to the migration cycle of temporary labour migration programmes. The conference highlighted that reintegration issue required as much focus and resource as the recruitment and deployment phase.

This monograph documents the rich deliberations of the conference that was held virtually on 5-6 April 2021. Resource persons and participants from a diverse range of professional and country backgrounds representing governments, parliamentarians, state functionaries, civil society organizations and international agencies attended the conference and contributed to framing of a number of recommendations.

RMMRU thanks all those who contributed their time and effort in making the conference a success. It acknowledges the guidance and support of its regional partner, the Migrant Forum in Asia, in conceptualizing the event and mobilizing a number of key resource persons. RMMRU also thanks the PROKAS project of the British Council, Dhaka, for its support in publishing this monograph. RMMRU hopes that this monograph will help initiate an informed discussion on planning reintegration not only of Covid-19 returnee migrant workers but also of reintegration of returnee migrants in general.

Dr. C R Abrar
Executive Director RMMRU

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS

DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Introduction

The outbreak of Covid-19 has adversely affected people of all walks of life including the migrant workers. The migrants suffered a multitude of problems in the countries of destination and upon their return to their own countries. Due to travel restrictions, more than 3 million migrants became stranded across the globe in the countries of destination (IOM, 2020)¹ and a large number who were awaiting deployment got stranded in their own countries. Another group of migrants who came on vacation during pre-Covid 19 period also got stranded.

Return migration registered a sharp rise as migrants found it difficult to maintain livelihoods in their countries of employment. The closure of businesses and workplaces across almost all sectors significantly reduced their work opportunities. In addition the xenophobic prejudice against migrants also played a role in inducing their return. A large number of migrants were involuntarily returned by the countries of destination. The sudden and unplanned return caused huge financial loss to the migrants and their left-behind families suffered the uncertainty of the pandemic situation.

From 1 April 2020 - 31 December 2020, 408,408 Bangladeshi migrant workers returned home. Among the returnees, 49,924 (12.2 percent) were women migrant workers and 87.8 percent (358,484) were male.² Among these returnees, 46,150 (11.3 percent) returned with out-passes issued by Bangladeshi missions in the countries concerned. The majority of Bangladeshi migrants returned from the Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain) which comprised 79.71 percent (325,558) of total. The number of male returnees was 283,520 and their female counterpart was 42,038. The largest group of

119,172 (29 percent) workers returned from Saudi Arabia. This was followed by 112,966 (28 percent) from the United Arab Emirates and 49,252 (12 percent) returned from Qatar. Of the rest 24,457 workers returned from Oman (6 percent), Malaysia (4 percent), the Maldives (3.9 percent), and Kuwait (3.7 percent) each.³ A good segment of these migrant workers were victims of deportation and also of wage theft.

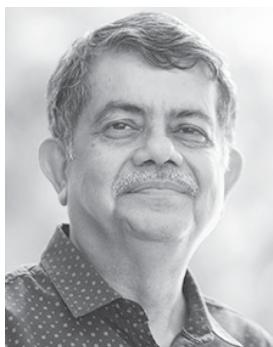
The untimely return of migrants has thrown a serious challenge to the policy makers and civil society actors in the countries of origin, including Bangladesh. It called for a holistic strategy for reintegration of the migrants. Though reintegration is an integral component in the migration cycle, it has not necessarily received due priority in most countries of origin.

The Overseas Employment Policy 2016 of Bangladesh government acknowledges the importance of reintegration. Section 1.8.3 of the policy highlights the importance to register and document the skills and experience of the vulnerable and distressed migrants to initiate the labour migration-related programmes and schemes for the social reintegration of migrants. The importance of the economic and social reintegration of migrants is underscored in sections 2.5.11 and 2.5.12 of the policy (Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016).⁴

The unprecedented flow of return migration due to the pandemic has exacerbated the need to engage in serious discussion for supporting migrants effectively integrate in the society or facilitate of re-migration of those who wish to do so. It is a daunting task to chart out plans for successful sustainable economic and social reintegration of migrants, who might have been away for long periods of time. The situation compounds further as in a number of instances the migrants might have

returned home under difficult circumstances and might not necessarily have minimum resources to make ends meet upon arrival. It is under such circumstances RMMRU organised an international conference on ‘Reintegration of Returnee Migrants affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic’ on 5-6 April, 2021 in collaboration with Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and PROKAS. This monograph is based on the proceedings of the conference.

Economic Reintegration



C R Abrar
**Refugee and
Migratory
Movements Research
Unit**

The issue of reintegration hardly secured any attention in policy framing during the pre-Covid 19 period. With many migrants returning under dire circumstances the harsh reality of the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered the need for a meaningful discussion on reintegration of migrant workers. Studies have found that almost 70 percent of returning migrants face unemployment and struggle to find decent jobs. In facing such challenges governments of source countries are making efforts to ease the problems of returnee migrants. This is a Herculean task, more so because of the pandemic situation. Now it is time to gather facts, discuss, debate and frame policy measures to effectively support the returnee migrants in their reintegration efforts into their communities.

We must acknowledge that a vast majority of migrants have sacrificed the best part of their lives overseas, and many would like to continue to engage

in economic activities at home to contribute to the well-being of their families. Along with enhancing the quality of life of migrant families, migrants also contribute to economic growth of their communities and the nation as a whole.

The returnee migrants are a mixed bunch. While some had successful stints abroad, other group has come empty-handed. A third group has returned in situations of massive debt. A good number of migrants have endured harm physically or mentally. Some were in jail for offences they had committed or might not have committed. There are also female migrant workers, many of whom may not have been treated with dignity and have traumas to contend with.

There are sub-categories of migrants within these categories. A section of migrants who have come back with savings may wish to set up enterprises and they may not need major financial assistance yet need access to financial literacy, knowledge of business management and book-keeping and access to market for their products. The other group of financially successful returnee migrants may not wish to take up the challenges of setting up enterprises in an environment they know little about but be keen on investing in financial instruments that yield safe and good return. Another group may have acquired skills and wish to be engaged in employment opportunities at home. Perhaps the largest group is constituted by those migrants who have neither secured high skills or have savings. They may require support to engage in economic activities or get jobs at home. Yet another group would need psychological support. Some among them may have been economically successful, but they might have been victims of trauma.

Therefore, there is a whole range of issues that need to be addressed. Returnee female migrants or female

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members of migrant households may have a completely different set of needs that have to be taken on board. Another important issue that deserves special attention is the issue of wage theft that had reached a new height during the pandemic as migrants had to return home without having their dues, end service benefits, and other entitlements settled. The hurried and unplanned repatriation, often facilitated by governments, have resulted in these migrants missing out on their due wages. We must factor in that if migrants were not subjected to wage theft then they would endure less hardship in reintegrating.



William Gois
Migrant Forum Asia

The pandemic has provided us with the opportunity to reflect on how we could fully realise the potential of migration for

development of the migrant households as well as that of the country from which they hail. Reintegration should be the ultimate focus of development than deployment that currently receives the principal attention of the sending countries. RMMRU deserves congratulations for this visionary initiative on reintegration.



Mr. Shahidul Haque
North South University, Bangladesh, and Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh

Return, readmission, and reintegration have always been very sensitive, contested, much-debated issues for the countries of origin, and it remains so. The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) includes these three important issues in its objective; specifically the objective 21 discusses these. In addition, GCM has made the countries of origin obliged to create a conducive and friendly environment for returnees so that they can have a proper reintegration. The integration of the migrant workers is also addressed in the SDG goals 1, 10, 16, and 17. Nevertheless, migrants face xenophobic treatments in both countries of origin and destination during the pandemic.



Imran Ahmad, MP
Minister, Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minisry

Many people may not be aware of the capabilities of returnee migrants and hence their experience and expertise often remain untapped. We have to create a mechanism to assess their qualifications and where necessary provide them with training, re-skilling or up-grading skills, extend recognition of acquired skills through issuance of prior learning certification. However, we have noted that the

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migrants do not have much interest on this issue. There is also the lack of interest of returnees in reintegration loan being disbursed by Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB). Until April 2021 out of an allocation of Taka 700 crore PKB was only able to disburse Taka 146 crore. In addition the Government has started maintaining the database of returnee migrants but unfortunately in this case as well the migrants appear to be indifferent. During the period January to March 2021, officially approximately 144,000 people have migrated overseas on employment and another 150,000 or 200,000 people have migrated through other channels. There is no record on the movement through the latter track. Therefore, when these migrants get stranded in the destination countries they pose major challenge as they are not included in any planning process.



Farooq Ahmed
**Metropolitan
Chamber of
Commerce and
Industry, Dhaka**

From the recent experience of the returnees we note that they were not briefed, prepared, and/or informed about what to do after their coming back to the country. Besides, a study has noted as the migrants had remitted their income or savings to other members of their households (siblings, parents, or other relatives) those remittances were not utilized properly. In some cases, the migrants were not even aware how and where the remittances were utilised. Often migrant workers spend a long time in destination countries and gain expertise in particular skills. We tend to believe that upon return the skilled migrant workers would be able to find employment to earn their

livelihood compared to the lowly skilled migrants but often that does not happen. For instance, a skilled driver who worked in Saudi Arabia may find it extremely difficult to adapt to local road conditions in Bangladesh. Likewise, female migrant workers who work in the readymade garments (RMG) sector become skilled in the destination countries but they hardly can integrate into the local RMG sector as machines or equipments used here may be of different type or/ and of lower categories compared to those they had used in the countries of destination. Moreover, there are social considerations as well. Many may not be comfortable working under supervisors who are much younger in age to them. Added to these set of problems are that the returnee migrant workers hardly know about the local job market, local context and they find themselves isolated. All these hinder their employability at home.



Nazia Haider
**Embassy of
Switzerland,
Bangladesh**

Migrant workers deserve a dignified reintegration and that should be done through a combined process of pre and post preparations. In a successful and dignified reintegration, preparedness is a pivotal component, which does not start at a time when migrants are thinking of coming back. On the contrary it should start even before they get deployed. Preparedness refers to the willingness of the migrant worker to come back to the country, to mobilize the resources s/he may have at his/her disposal, and stay back in the country after engaging in gainful employment. There are three components of reintegration: return,

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readmission, and reintegration. For reintegration, it is important to know how the migrants have returned. Those who have returned voluntarily and after completing their migration cycle and those who have returned unplanned and involuntarily need to be distinguished. The gender perspective of reintegration is also an important consideration. In many instances, female migrants have to face a plethora of stigma after their return and sometimes they are unable to reintegrate with their families. Economic reintegration is crucial for a sustainable and dignified reintegration but in many instances migrants set up a small shop or business which may not necessarily be market-oriented and at the end, those businesses cannot make the expected profit. To address such mismatches, economic reintegration programmes should be developed with a special focus on a more market-oriented approach. Financial institutions also need to be responsive to the needs of returning migrant workers and design products for them.



**Rahnuma Salam
Khan
International Labour
Organization, Dhaka**

When planning economic reintegration, of migrants it is important to consider their social and psychological needs.

There is a need for investment on mental health of the male and female migrants. Often female workers return with little savings compared to the male workers as they remit most of their earnings while working abroad. This makes the female migrant workers' reintegration a difficult task. In this regard, advocacy can play a major role in making female migrants aware so that they start saving money for

their economic reintegration while they are still on employment overseas. The NGOs can be a good source to share this information among the aspirant and current migrants.

Recommendations

- A comprehensive reintegration strategy needs to be framed by involving concerned ministries CSOs and international organisations with assigned responsibilities for different stakeholders.
- A gender and skill segregated database of returnee migrant workers needs to be established.
- Returnee migrants maybe provided with a soft loan at the rate of 0% or 1%-2% interest with long repayment period (10 years or more) with additional grace period.
- Counselling services on loans and services for reintegration for both male and female migrants need to be established. There should be a routine counselling session as part of the programme, and the programme schedule should be notified well before due date so that those interested can attend at their own convenience.
- Financial institutions also need to be responsive to the needs of male and female returning migrant workers and design products suiting their needs.
- Employers' associations can play a role through local chambers. They can extend support to both returnee male and female migrants with advice and facilitation.

Gender Responsive Social Reintegration



Shirin Sultana Lira
PROKAS, British Council Bangladesh

The community does not always welcome returnee migrants. They are often seen as competitors in the local job market.

Reintegration becomes even more difficult for those returnees who were unable to clear the debts they incur for migration. In the absence of flow of remittances the family members often consider them as burden. All these lead them to lose their status within the family and also in the broader community. Accessing jobs is a challenge even for the highly skilled migrants. Returnee female migrants face additional challenges as they have to endure negative stereotyping. Many female migrants face insensitive and disrespectful behaviour.



Syeda Rozana Rashid
RMMRU and University of Dhaka

A female migrant has to face many questions compared to their male counterparts. Returnee women not only face disrespect and stigmatisation often those escalate into domestic violence. Social Protection should be an integral part of any effective return migration programme. Re-migration needs to be included in any reintegration scheme. The government may

develop both short-term and long-term strategies to address the emerging issues. Creating and updating the database, facilitating the Covid-19 related welfare services, including DEMO in reintegration programmes, and psychosocial training need to be introduced immediately. The government needs to develop an inclusive policy and a protection strategy by coordinating with respective ministries.



Advocate Salma Ali
Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA)

The unplanned and unanticipated return takes toll on psyche of the migrant workers and thus they endure trauma and shock. Therefore any reintegration effort needs to take into account the issue of mental support. Reintegration programme must ensure engagement of the local community. Those who were able to reintegrate effectively can serve as models for new returnees. Any reintegration programme should be gender sensitive. Failure to reintegrate may give rise to challenges of social unrest and violence against women.

Recommendations

- Gender sensitivity issues need to be included in the education curriculums to address the gap of understanding of this issue.
- Social protection should be a key element in any reintegration effort.
- Coordination between ministries and collaboration of government agencies and

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- the civil society is of great importance.
- There is a need for making the community sensitive about the problems and plights faced by returnee migrant workers who have contributed to the economic and social development of the local community.
- Those who have reintegrated before can help motivate new returnees and thus their expertise and insights may be tapped.
- Any national reintegration strategy should cover gender responsive social reintegration through intensive dialogue with all stakeholders.

National Experience



Mohammad Shaheen
**Ministry of
Expatriates Welfare
and Overseas
Employment
(MEWOE)**

As an immediate response, the GoB started support programmes at the destination countries through its embassies. A monitoring committee was set up to monitor these activities regularly and hold inter-ministerial meetings. During the countrywide lockdown of Bangladesh, BDT 5,000 was provided to the migrants at the airport as transportation cost, but this facility stopped after the withdrawal of lockdown. Other services at the airport, such as counseling, provided kits, continued in collaboration with civil society organizations. Fifty percent of deposit money of recruiting agencies was refunded. A unique RPL programme has been set up to harness prior learning of the migrants to help them in their remigration and reemployment efforts at home and

abroad. However, it is a matter of concern that migrants are showing little interest in enrolling in this programme even after being provided with financial support.

Taka 7,000,000,000 has been raised to disburse among the migrants as a loan. Up to Taka 300,000 is given to the migrants without any collateral. With this money, a migrant can start a small business such as poultry farms. Besides these initiatives, Wage Earners' Welfare Board has taken a programme on reintegration under the reintegration project of the World Bank. World Bank contributed BDT 425 crores, and the project will be implemented into 30 districts. In this project, district-level counseling will be introduced, which will assist the people to approach for a loan. In terms of vulnerability, the premature returning male and female migrants are the most vulnerable.



**Shariful Islam
Hasan**
BRAC Migration

The emergency support can be categorised in two ways: the first one within the first 24 hours to 72 hours after people actually return. The second one is when the migrant does not have a place to stay, if s/he is a victim of torture and may need counseling, medical support and accommodation. There are many things in this emergency support that we have not been able to provide very effectively. However, such emergency support is not part of the reintegration, but it cannot be separated either. We need to develop a mechanism at the airport through the expatriates' welfare desk or through immigration to register those who are returning: their name, address, and

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alternative number are needed to record properly. This will help them identify later; otherwise, if the migrants return to their villages or districts, it will be challenging to track them. It has also been observed that only less than 5% of migrants require emergency help services.

Sustainable reintegration entails three elements: psychosocial reintegration, economic reintegration, and social reintegration. These elements are crucial for a migrant to reintegrate into society with dignity. If a migrant is economically solvent and succeeds in economic reintegration, but the family and/or society does not accept him/her, reintegration cannot be possible. Psychological counseling is a pivotal part of reintegration because there is a difference between a returning migrant who had come back with Taka 10-15,00,000 savings and a returning migrant with no savings. Both require counseling, and in this situation, a referral mechanism is fundamental, but that is absent at the grassroots level. Referrals mechanisms are to be established that will enable service providers to refer migrants to concerned services such as Krishi Bank, department of social welfare, women's directorate and the like. There has to be improved communication among public and CSO service providers to know who is rendering which services.



Shakirul Islam
Ovibashi Karmi
Unnayan Programme

Many migrants return with skills but no savings and others return with no skills but enough savings to invest. However, both groups are not aware where to invest their skills and the savings they have. We need to develop a comprehensive mechanism

and support center to work collaboratively with the government and other service provider organizations and create a referral mechanism. If needed, the government should allocate funds to the civil society organizations to support reintegration efforts. There has to be a mapping of in which area each of the organizations are working in, what support services they are providing. Migrants can benefit a lot if there is a comprehensive map of the services of various organizations.



Nazia Haider
Embassy of
Switzerland,
Bangladesh

Along with policy, sub-policy, or national action plan another significant matter for consideration is institutions. Institutional building is crucial for sustainable reintegration. Economic reintegration seems to be the most important thing, but social reintegration is also crucial for sustained reintegration.



Farzana Shahnaz
International
Organization for
Migration (IOM)

Migrants should have the complete freedom to make his/her decision, whether it is re-migration or reintegration. For this, they need social stability, psychosocial counseling, and economic self-sustainability. For social reintegration support, there has to be a community approach, not just an individual based approach.

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Both male and female migrants face social stigma, so policy planning should address this issue. Proper coordination among the government services is required, and access to returning migrant database is crucial for a sustained reintegration programme.

Recommendations

- A comprehensive mapping exercise needs to be conducted on the services that are currently offered to returnee migrants by various government agencies and non-governmental organisations.
 - As only about 5% of the returnee migrants need emergency help that includes food, shelter, medical and mental trauma support and financial support for transport, effort should be directed to extend such support to them.
 - Returnee migrants should be duly informed of any available reintegration service as and when they arrive at the airport. Otherwise it will be difficult for them to get the information once they arrive in their destinations.
 - Returnee migrants should be registered soon after their arrival and the process should include their smart card number, current address, cell numbers and alternative cell numbers so that they can be contacted for future reintegration plans.
 - The government should extend psychosocial counselling, investment counselling, and referral services at the grassroots to facilitate reintegration of returnee migrants.
 - Probashi Kallyan Bank (PKB), Krishi Bank, Social Welfare Directorate, Youth Development Directorate and Department
- of Women Affairs etc organisations should have coordinated programmes at the grassroots for reintegration of returnee migrants.
- DEMOs are to be trained, resourced and engaged with reintegration issue which has not been the case so far.
 - There has to be better coordination among government agencies as well as CSOs in rendering services to the migrant workers based on a clear understanding about who is doing what.
 - A comprehensive support centre may be set up to coordinate reintegration activities. It would include various government organisations and service providing civil society organisations.
 - Returnee migrant workers should be facilitated to make their own decisions with regard to reintegration or remigration.
 - Returnee migrants should be linked up immediately after their arrival with existing services. Such services are to be extended at the community level rather than individual level.
 - Efforts have to be made to provide training on cost benefit analysis, savings, investment and related issues and advisory support on how a returnee migrant worker can become an entrepreneur using his/her skills and/or savings.

Experiences of Reintegration in the Region (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Philippines)



**Jeremaiah
Opiniano**
**Institute for
Migration and
Development Issues
(IMDI)-Philippines**

The Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in the Philippines are of two types: land-based and sea-based. With the rising numbers of migrant workers, who suddenly returned, including seafarers, it has become a major test of the Philippines migration management bureaucracy, as the tasks involve from arranging quarantine and isolating infected migrants to escorting them to their communities of origin, including rural areas.

The Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (OWWA) fund in the Philippines is the world's largest migrant welfare fund, and the source of this fund is a \$25 fee that migrant pay during deployment. So far the fund remained most unutilised but it came in handy during the pandemic. OWWA fund was used to assist the migrants abroad and those who were repatriated. Besides, the administration has also subsidized the cost of hotel quarantine.

A few years ago the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) aided the Philippines government to roll out a national strategy for returnee migrants and reintegration through a project called the 'Enhancing Reintegration Programme for OFW's.' The Philippines has formed a dedicated office for reintegration. Under the project, the Philippines government introduced migration frontliners in the

regional offices of the Department of Labour and Employment, tasked to oversee reintegration efforts by migrant workers, and they are called 'Reintegration Counselors.' There is an entire dedicated chapter in the Philippines National Development Plan for the first time as the Philippine government has realized the development potentials and issues associated with overseas migration and an overall vision called 'Protect the Rights, Promote the Welfare and Expand Opportunities for Filipinos Abroad.' One of the pillars of this strategy is reintegration, and it has been integrated into the Philippine development policy. The pandemic has reinforced the need for the 'whole of government approach'. The Department of Agriculture has been handing out loans for migrant workers, and likewise other ministries and agencies have also developed various types of packages for migrant workers.



**Advocate Shom
Luitel**
**People Forum for
Human Rights
(People Forum),
Nepal**

Reintegration of migrant workers has been prioritised in Nepal's Foreign Employment Policy. Section 33 of the Foreign Employment Act states that foreign employment welfare fund will initiate a reintegration programme. The 'Local Government Office Act,' also obligates the local governments to initiate programmes like data collection of the returnees, financial literacy and skill-training. The Nepal government has undertaken some programmes to reintegrate Nepalese migrant workers into society. Those include Prime Minister's Employment programme, loan programme, skill-testing initiative,

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and skill certification programme. Employment Service Centre has been established to implement Prime Minister's Employment programmes in 753 municipalities and rural municipalities. The Board initiated a soft loan scheme targeting the returnee migrant worker. It has also prepared a guideline to facilitate the reintegration programme, but the Ministry has not approved this guideline to date.

Until April 2021 more than 142,000 migrant workers were repatriated. Therefore, there is a critical need to initiate the reintegration programme immediately. That is why it is obligatory to allocate some budget to create more than 200,000 jobs under the Prime Minister's Employment programme in the current fiscal year. The Foreign Employment Board also initiated a professional certification programme and has provided skill training to 7,360 migrant workers. Likewise the national skill-testing center provided skill training to 10,000 people. An annual 'Facilitation of Successful Returning Entrepreneur' has been initiated by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security.



**Sujeewa Lal
Dahanayake
Lawyers Beyond
Borders- Sri Lanka**

According to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment, at least 1.2 million Sri Lankans are employed in other countries and a large proportion in the Middle East. In 2019, their remittance contributed 6.7 billion US dollars into the economy, representing 8% of the gross domestic product. The Labour minister told Parliament earlier this month that by December (2020) 3,923 workers in the Middle East region had

been infected by COVID-19. The death toll among the migrants abroad from COVID-19 stands at 289. The government has promised to pay SL Rs. 500,000 as compensation to the families of workers who had died abroad. In total as of April 2021 another 68,000 Sri Lankans around the world are awaiting repatriation. The foreign ministry claimed that repatriation was slow because of insufficient quarantine facilities, adding that the ministry has spent only SL Rs. 82 million as relief to migrant workers, including sending direct rations. However, the government's claim of assisting the migrant workers contradicts the reality faced by the migrants and their families at home. There is no proper and transparent system in place to bring these people back. It is unacceptable to say that there is a shortage of quarantine facilities. The unregistered Sri Lankan citizens also need help from the government. There are numerous videos on social media of direct appeals to the country's president, highlighting the harsh conditions the women are enduring, living on charity, and the kindness of strangers. Some are sick but receive no treatment. Others are stranded in embassies without adequate food. Some women even spoke of resorting to prostitution to earn the SL Rs. 250,000 needed or the airline tickets, PCR test and quarantine at home. The government's decision to bring in tourists and open the airport is being widely criticized while it claims it could not repatriate migrant workers due to lack of quarantine facilities in Sri Lanka. Families at home are trying to find whatever funds they can to finance the return of their members in the absence of government assistance. The embassies in the Middle East are short of staff due to a lack of funds, and many officers have returned. Workers complained that embassy staff often do not answer calls for help, or just the women that they have been put on a list, but there is no further communication.

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In Sri Lanka, several organizations demand that the government implement an efficient system to bring stranded migrants back home immediately. At a demonstration outside the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE), the protesters demanded repatriation of their stranded members. Both at home and abroad, there are allegations of corruption, and moneymaking by officials dealing with workers and exploitation of the vulnerable. Some airlines were charging three times more than regular fare for a one-way ticket. Likewise the hotel and transport companies were taking advantage of the situation to earn profits. In the current global setting, our labour migrants are facing additional challenges, including loss of employment and reduction of earnings. Furthermore, we have witnessed a decline in the outbound travel of labour migrants by 57.2% in the first half of 2020, compared to the first half of 2019.

Sri Lanka is struggling to reintegrate the large number of migrant workers returning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the success in implementing health-related reintegration protocols, there are massive gaps regarding the socio-economic reintegration of returning migrant workers. Bringing migrants home during the pandemic increases health concerns for everyone. As such, the first stage of the reintegration process involves evaluating the COVID-19 risk among the returnees. Since mid-March 2020, all returning migrants have undergone mandatory health-oriented reintegration protocol subjected to a PCR test upon arrival and were put in 14-day quarantine either in a state-sponsored facility or at their own cost in a hotel. Those who test positive are treated at the state's expense in a government hospital after that returnee is cleared for socio-economic reintegration. The SLBFE initiated data collection of returning migrant workers to identify their expectations for

employment. A survey showed that 23% of returning migrants preferred to be re-employed in Sri Lanka, 8% preferred to start self-employment in Sri Lanka, while 35% preferred foreign employment. To meet these needs, the authorities are trying to work with the private sector to explore employment opportunities for returnees by matching their skills. For those interested in self-employment, the SLBFE aims to assist up to SL Rs.25,000 per returnee to support their startups.

However, there is no concrete evidence of employment-related reintegration measures being rolled out. Unlike in normal circumstances, most migrant workers return to families suffering from stress because of the pandemic and, therefore, unable to support them as they try to reintegrate. Employed family members in households are likely to be concerned about their job security during the pandemic. Thus, returnee migrants are likely to create additional stress among family members about the sustainability of the family's income amidst the loss of remittance income. Beyond the family, the weak labour market in the new normal has limited capacity to absorb the unemployed returnees.



Akhil Changail
Centre for Indian
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(CIMS)-Kerala, India

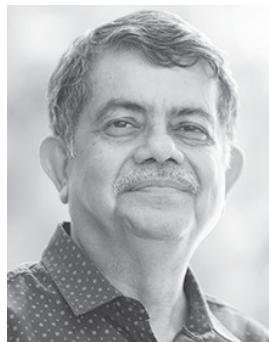
Indian government's emphasis is on remittance and deployment, not on reintegration. India's repatriation programme called 'Bande Bharat Mission' has brought back almost 1.5 million migrant workers of which almost 60% of migrants were workers, most from the Gulf. The challenges facing the migrants had multiplied

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during the pandemic. Even high-skilled workers have returned. A large section of migrant workers returned without any economic capital. India does not have an explicit reintegration framework and policy. Due to the history of temporary labour migration to the Gulf from the state, Kerala is considered as pioneer in migration management. Most of the reintegration programmes are framed around financial loans (short-term financial assistance) and long-term subsidised loans for the migrant workers. Unfortunately, the dedicated department of the Kerala government only has 20 administrative staff members to manage almost 4 million Keralites. The other problem is the state does not encourage any cooperation with non-government entities.

The Indian government has initiated the 'Swadesh' scheme to create workers' arrival database for employment support based on their skill sets. So, the central government plans to hand over this database to both government and private companies to redeploy them for work. The state governments of Kerala, Andhra, and Tamil Nadu also are collecting data of the returnees to facilitate their re-employment. Kerala has a well-decentralized migration governance system. The government has decided to reach out to the local self-governments to implement the reintegration programmes and is planning to coordinate with the local self-governments to identify the beneficiaries to assist them in reintegrating and implementing and monitoring the programme.

Indian parliamentarians are much more aware of reintegration now because of the massive return of these migrant workers. Moreover, several questions and discussions took place in both houses of the Parliament regarding how to reintegrate these migrants. In addition, migrants' associations in the destination countries are also exerting pressure on the policy makers.



C R Abrar
Refugee and
Migratory
Movements Research
Unit

Civil society organizations can amplify the voice of returnee migrants to reach the policymakers. On some issues governments may be receptive to CSO viewpoints, on other instances CSOs may hit stonewalls to put across their messages. That should not deter the CSOs from pushing the migrant's voices.

Recommendations

- The appropriate utilization of the funds collected from the migrants needs to be ensured in the reintegration process and other emergencies.
- Collaboration among the different branches of the government is essential to ensure sustainable and effective social, economic, and psychological reintegration.
- The skill-certification programme will be beneficial to returnee migrants to find livelihood opportunities in the countries of origin and ensure a sustainable reintegration.
- The members of parliament, members of civil society, and development workers should proactively exert pressure on the government to develop reintegration policies, amend the existing policies, and implement the policies framed.

International Campaign against Wage Theft



**Sumitha
Shaanthinni Kishna
Our
Journey-Malaysia**

The global declaration of pandemic and its impact have enhanced the vulnerabilities of the migrant workers. Many are being sent back without clearing their due wages. The relevance and importance of the issue of wage theft have reemerged, although it has been a burning issue for a long time.

Typically, when the migrants return to the country of origin on holidays the many employers retain their wages to ensure the concerned worker returns. However, during the pandemic, the borders are closed, and the migrant workers cannot return to their workplace. Consequently, these stranded migrants have not been able to secure the wages they are owed to in the countries of destination. The migrants, who are staying at the countries of destination during the lockdown, are offered to take a lower wage, under the threat of being deported. In Malaysia, many employers justify the lower wage indicating the severe impact of the pandemic despite the fact there is a minimum wage in the country. Therefore, these trends need to be addressed through the wage theft campaign as well. It is not just about redress but is also about countering this kind of justifications that employers are putting forward. So this campaign on wage theft is crucial, not just to address the plight of workers who are facing nonpayment of wages but also workers who face wage cuts that have been deducted, reduced, or are offered a lower than

contracted or minimum wage.

The wage theft campaign must be publicized widely because the migrant workers need to know that this campaign exists. One of the ways that migrants could be notified is through the embassies. Due to limited resources and other issues, sometimes, the embassies cannot act in time for the wellbeing of the migrant workers. In addition, the media has a significant role to play in this regard. The empowerment of workers is essential, but many workers do not want to take the initiative to access justice because they do not have the confidence and do not get the necessary support of their embassies. Therefore, increasing the embassies' personnel and resources are essential. The embassies need to understand the kind of wage theft the migrants undergo and have a proper system to address that. Even when the migrants go back to the countries of origin, the embassies still need to be the focal point from where the migrant can seek redress.



**Apolinar Tolentino
Building and Wood
Worker's
International (BWI)**

In Qatar, it has been found in a field visit that two-thirds of Filipino migrant workers have experienced contract substitution. One way or the other, the contracts previously signed by the migrant workers were amended even before landing in Qatar. There the recruitment agents were instructing them that the contract they had signed in Manila had no validity, and they had to sign new contracts in Doha, that are entirely different from what they had signed in Manila. The contract substitution is an obvious wage trap for migrant workers.



Rejimon Kuttappan
Migrant Rights
Researcher- India

Three case stories describe how the migrant workers lost their wages during the time of Covid-19 and the responses they received from the countries of destination and origin. These stories appear different but are inter-connected, as migrant workers concerned are the direct victims of wage theft.

An Indian engineer who has worked in the UAE for nearly 12 years in a company with 13,000 employees returned to India in February 2020 on annual leave, and then the Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic. Consequently, he was not able to return. When his vacation period was over, he started to work virtually from home. By July, when the borders were open, he returned to UAE to join the work in person, but the company told him that his contract was terminated by that time. He did not accept the company's decision and protested it. He was not paid his due wages and other entitlements. When he returned to India on vacation in February, the engineer had 6 months' salary pending with the company. He claimed his pending wage, but the company replied negatively and informed him that they had no money and could not pay him due to the pandemic. As a result, he challenged the company decision and approached the Indian embassy, the UAE government, and finally, the judiciary. He filed a case and lived there until February 2021. But as maintaining life in the UAE was becoming expensive and challenging, he returned to India in February without securing his pending wages and any compensation. He does not know what to do and how to get his duly earned money.

A skilled technician migrated to Qatar in November 2019 and worked for the Qatar military through a subcontracting company. He paid around \$1,500 as recruitment fee in India to migrate. However, he did not receive any salary until February 2020 and then there was the outbreak of Covid-19. His family sent money to him to return to India in June 2020. He was unwilling to file a case because he approached the Qatar government and the Indian Embassy, but nobody was helping him. He is very frustrated now.

A group of fishermen migrated to Iran through UAE in October 2019 and returned in July 2020. They received their salary until March 2020. However, the fishermen did not receive anything for the subsequent period and had to spend their savings on food and other expenses. They had to bear the ship fare to return home as well. They are not aware about any mechanism to secure their due wages and other entitlements.



Eswari Krishnadas
Centre for Indian
Migrant
Studies-India

'Crying Out for Justice: Wage Theft against Migrant Workers' is an evidence-based analytical report that Migrant

Forum Asia (MFA) has launched. The report was developed based on the cases collected by partners and members of MFA. It includes 15 different types of wage theft such as wage deduction, which consists of the payment that employers are supposed to pay, unpaid leave, delayed and unfulfilled payments, due compensation, contract substitution, misuse of migrants' signature to modified contact without the workers' consent and the like. The

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phenomenon of wage theft affected not only semi-skilled or unskilled workers but also highly skilled and professional workers. The migrants, who were on vacation and came to their countries of origin, could not return and never got their pending salary and other in-service entitlements.

Seven hundred four cases were collected from 19 November 2019 to 2 January 2021. Of those cases, 55 percent were of group nature, and the rest were individuals. The majority of the group cases are from Nepal. India is another country that has a high proportion of group cases. The cases from KSA constituted the most significant proportion in the report, accounting for 41.5% of the cases, and Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar follow KSA. Besides GCC, from the southeast region, Malaysia was found to have the highest number of cases. Other countries of destination, including China, Singapore, South Korea, Jordan, and Lebanon, have less than 15 cases comparatively. For KSA, 50 percent of the cases are from Nepal, followed by India, the Philippines, and Bangladesh. For Bahrain, the most number of cases are primarily from Nepal and India. For Kuwait, it is from Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. For Malaysia, 23 cases are from the Philippines alone, and the others are from Nepal, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

The highest number of female cases was recorded from Nepal, and in terms of proportion, Indonesia has a high proportion of female cases among their total cases. Most of the female migrants who filed lawsuits are from domestic sector, including salons, parlors, bars, etc. The condition of domestic workers exacerbated by the pandemic not only that the situations but there is a complete lack of monitoring and even the existing system of monitoring could not work in their favour. Domestic workers experienced no payment. Many of them had to perform duties from more than one house and had to perform tasks beyond the job description, which is common, but it

got worse during the pandemic, especially during the lockdowns. There was also a lack of food and privacy, and confiscation of their belongings.



William Gois
Migrant Forum Asia

The countries of destination, countries of origin, and the institutions should recognize wage theft as a severe regression from the rule of law. It needs to be recognized immediately, or it will be undermining the framework of human rights; this in turn will gradually lead to the erosion of human rights standards. Both origin and destination states and civil society institutions need to pay attention to this. The word ‘wage theft’ may sound jarring to some, but it is important to recognize the crime for what it is.

Recommendations

- There has to be a concerted effort of all stakeholders across the borders against wage theft.
- Payment of wages below the contracted amount should be considered as wage theft and injustice to migrant workers.
- The contract substitution works as a trap for the migrant workers and this practice need to be addressed instantaneously.
- The redress mechanism for complaints related to wage theft and other issues needs to be established in both the countries of destination and countries of origin.
- Despite their limitation, the embassies have a pivotal role in addressing the wage theft

issue. The embassies should assist in dissemination information about the wage theft campaign among the migrant workers.

Returnee Reintegration: Essential Pillar of Temporary Labour Migration Programmes



**Francisco
Santos-Jara Padrón**
**Regional Advisor for
Recovery,
Livelihoods and
Human Mobility,
UNDP**

The outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing vulnerabilities for many vulnerable groups and migrant workers are one of them. Their plight has greatly exacerbated in the countries of destination as they have no access to livelihood and to social protection. The pandemic had also triggered reverse migration to the countries of origin resulting in higher number of returnee migrant workers. To ensure the reintegration of the returnee migrant workers, it is pivotal to map their skills and a comprehensive labour market assessment for the required skills in the countries of origin. Digital skill is also a vital element not only for securing job at present but for the future. Likewise, they need to be integrated into the digital banking system, beside the traditional banking process. Hence, a holistic and inclusive training programme needs to be developed and initiated to reintegrate the returnee migrants.

The issue of registration can be the important first step in making sure the returnee migrant workers secure access to support mechanisms including social protection. Returnee migrant workers require

financial literacy, business ideas, and sufficient capital to start a business and they also require entrepreneurial skills and support to market their products. Income generation programmes should be planned targeting female returnee migrants. Relatively young returnee migrant workers may be encouraged to secure further education. Different countries in the region should initiate a holistic approach to develop skills to respond to the needs of demographic shifts and frame a strong social protection mechanism and redistributive mechanism for the migrants.



**Peppi
Kiviniemi-Siddiq**
**Senior Regional
Migrant Protection
and Assistance
Specialist, IOM**

Sustainable reintegration is also a critical component of the migration cycle to ensure the best outcome for the returnee migrant workers and for the communities to which they belong. The government, civil society organisations, and the private sector need to focus on the tailored services, from skill recognition to tailored financial products for the wellbeing of the returnee migrants, collectively for the community. It has been identified by a study of IOM on 3000 returnee migrant workers that they face shared problems, which had amplified during the pandemic. Among those respondents, 71 percent had difficulties in finding jobs, 50 percent were unable to find any employment, and 30 percent returned with financial difficulties e.g., debt, inability to support their families.

The individual migrant's perspective, the community of the origin of the returnees' perspective, and the

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structural social safety nets are three significant factors for ensuring the sustainable reintegration of the returnees. At the individual level, the variance between successful and unsuccessful migration, male and female migrants, voluntary and involuntary returned migrants need to be considered while designing the reintegration programmes. At the community level, social stigma towards female migrant workers and the unsuccessful migrants at the community level needs to be addressed. In addition, it is important to understand the aspirations of the migrants and the types of economic activities that are a good fit for them. At the structural level, the relevant policy approaches are needed to scrutinize to support the returnee migrant workers in terms of social protection policies and employability frameworks.

Besides, economic and social reintegration, the psychosocial reintegration of the returnee migrant workers has immense importance in ensuring sustainable reintegration, especially with the exploited migrants or the migrants with difficult experiences, which is gaining importance. In a dignified and sustainable reintegration, the countries of destination have a vital role and they have to take the responsibility through ensuring orderly migration, better labour protection at the workplace, and more competitive employment schemes. The countries of origin should have a reintegration framework for the forced returnee migrants, and the victims of trafficking through ensuring counseling, financial support, employment in the private sector, and remedies for the exploitation, wage theft, and recruitment fraudulence.



Ellene Sana
Centre for Migrant Advocacy, Philippines

Labour migration has become a global phenomenon and the adoption of the ‘International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families’ is evidence of it. The Convention has been adopted to address the prevalence of labour and human rights violations against migrant workers and the members of their families. Article 1 of the Convention adds ‘return’ as a part of the migration process and article 67 concerns the operation of countries of origin and destination to ensure an orderly return to promote adequate economic conditions for migrant’s resettlement, to facilitate durable cultural, and social reintegration in the countries of origin.¹ Before 1990, due to the scarcity of employment at the countries of origin, migration became a necessity for them and during that time, the migrants found themselves in a vulnerable position in the migration cycle. The situation was more difficult for the women, especially women workers with better education profiles, as they had to attend unpaid care work in their households. Hence, viable return and reintegration programme for migrants is the only way to break this vicious cycle, and the countries of origin need to ensure the viable return and develop the reintegration programmes for the migrant workers. The mass repatriation due to conflict situations and public health emergencies e.g., war, the pandemic requires national reintegration policies to address the situation.

¹ “International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families”, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cmw.aspx>

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Reintegration remains one of the biggest challenges for the countries of origin. Nevertheless, the countries of destination cannot avoid the issue, as they have a role to play in preparing the migrants for their eventual return and reintegration. The pre-migration stage and the migration stage envisage the return and the reintegration of the migrant workers and it is intertwined from the very beginning to the end of the migration phase. In addition, the migrants spend their productive years in the countries of destination; have to retire if sick, and are unable to ensure social protection if unemployed, consequently, these make them vulnerable. Therefore, the employer needs to ensure the social protection of the migrants and the countries of origin need to include these concerns in the reintegration programmes.

Returnee migrants are not liabilities but are resources that must be welcomed and cherished by the nation. The wellbeing of the returnee migrants must be ensured. The successful return and reintegration programmes might not be possible if the national development plan is in disarray. The reintegration must be approached from the whole of government, the whole of society perspective. The sub-national or local level government, the employers, and the private sector must be included in the reintegration programmes. GCM and SDGs can leverage on creating an enabling environment in the context of sustainable development, ensuring no one is left behind.



Sumaiya Islam
Bangladesh Nari
Sramik Kendra
(BNSK)

The lack of preparation against the pandemic is a major challenge for the countries of origin.

Before the severity of the impact of the pandemic was felt, the countries of origin were apathetic to the reintegration of the migrant workers. However, the experiencing of involuntary return of workers in detention and other workers who came empty handed underscored the gravity of the situation. Many returnees were the victims of wage theft and returned empty-handed. Many returned with various physical and psychological issues, and many were stranded and lost their employment at the countries of destination. The returnee migrant workers faced innumerable social stigma upon their return during the lockdown. The government should adopt a holistic way to reintegrate the returnee migrants and the reintegration plan should be covered in the migration process.

Recommendations

- Return and reintegration should be integral part of national development plan and/or any plan framed for facilitation of labour migration.
- A mapping exercise of existing skills training facilities in the country should be conducted.
- Government, civil society organisations and the private sector should collaborate to frame appropriate skills development policy

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geared both towards national and global labour market.

- Policy coherence and coordination among government organisations involved re-integration efforts of migrants are to be ensured. Also there has to be effective collaboration of state agencies with CSOs, the private sector and development partners in implementing re-integration programmes for returnee migrant workers.
- Local government institutions are to be sensitised, motivated and adequately resourced to facilitate reintegration efforts of returnee migrants.
- Migrants subjected to wage theft in the countries of destination should be provided with necessary support to reclaim their due entitlements from the employers even after they return to the country under emergency repatriation programmes facilitated by the government.

Concluding Session (With Asian Parliamentarians-serving and former)



C R Abrar
**Refugee and
Migratory
Movements Research
Unit**

Reintegration has become an essential issue in policy consideration. COVID-19 has provided

the opportunity to engage ourselves with this often neglected pillar of labour migration. It is important to

categorize various groups of repatriated migrants to design programmes for them. Reintegration has to be for the realization of the full potential of migrants. In any reintegration programme, along with economic needs, social and psychological needs of migrants have to be factored in.



William Gois
Migrant Forum Asia

The adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a plethora of problems for the countries of origin such as low flow of remittances, wage theft and reverse migration. It has also contributed to the reemergence of the issue of reintegration in the global arena. The countries of origin are now being conscious of the significance of the appropriate and efficacious reintegration programme for the returnee migrant workers. However, the reintegration has posed numerous challenges for all countries of origin. While developing the reintegration programme for the returnee migrant workers psychological wellbeing, financial literacy, training, etc. are needed. In Bangladesh and Nepal, the government introduced special reintegration loans for the returnee migrant workers, but the disbursement of the loan is significantly low. Nepal is also focusing on already acquired skills of the returnee migrant workers. Many Sri Lankan migrant workers are still stranded in the countries of destination but the government is unable to provide adequate quarantine facilities to those who wished to return and ensure the appropriate reintegration to those who had already returned. In India, reintegration was never a part of national strategy and it does not have a proper national reintegration programme as well.

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Mahjabeen Khaled
Bangladesh
Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration & Development

Reintegration challenges are huge it is a difficult task for the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and

Overseas Employment to accomplish this alone. It requires coordination and cooperation of other ministries and institutions. The countries of origin also need to collaborate in collecting data and initiating dialogues with the countries of destination to address the issues. The Philippines is doing the best in the South East Asia in terms of reintegration. Other countries can emulate 'The Philippines model'.

Hence, they spend the savings in purchasing land or luxury goods. The reintegration strategy should include the second-generation migrants and children of returnee migrants.



Dila Sangroula
Member of Parliament, (House of Representative)
Central committee member of Nepali Congress-Nepal

The regionally coordinated initiatives are required to address newly emerged problems. The countries of origin should share the resources, database, and learning mechanism, and collaborate in the regional dialogues and initiatives. In addition, civil societies and the government would need to work together to address the unemployment problem



Tanvir Shakil Joy, MP
Bangladesh
Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration & Development

The returnee migrant workers face numerous difficulties during their reintegration process. Social stigma is one of the core hindrances to social reintegration of a returnee migrant workers. Families of the female returnee migrant workers often subject them to psychological trauma and often they are perceived as being sexually abused. Finding a suitable job in the local job market is tough for the returnee migrants, as they are barely aware about the demand in the local job market. Many returnee migrant workers have savings but do not have any financial literacy to transform their savings into income-generating endeavours.



Charles Santiago
Member of Parliament for Klan, Malaysia

A re-understanding and re-imagination is needed on labour migration issue based on the experiences of the Covid 19 pandemic and there has to be a paradigm shift. To ensure reintegration, the government's role is critical. Often emphasis is laid in extending loans but not everybody would able to run an enterprise. A couple of parliamentarians said, "Money is available but nobody taking it up, services are available but nobody is coming forward." The reason is that the migrants do not have the confidence to take a loan and run businesses. Therefore, we have to find other

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ways to reintegrate migrants and there is a need for platforms for migrants.



**Barrister Shameem
Haider Patwary,
MP**
**Chair, Bangladesh
Parliamentarians'
Caucus on Migration
& Development**

A holistic approach is needed to ensure justice for the migrant workers. Cooperation at regional and international levels is required as well. It is high time the government shows a partnership approach. Initially, the returning migrants may be engaged in the language schools as language teachers, and they may be effective intermediaries with their real life experience. Moreover, Parliamentary Standing Committee can form a sub-committee on the reintegration issue or returnees' justice issue. 'CPSJP' can be used in the reintegration planning as it stands for- C is for classification of returnees, P for Package for returnees, S for social entrepreneurship for the returnee migrants, J for justice for migrants in case of fraudulence and wage theft, P for priority in treatment, job, skill development, repatriation and compensation. The lack of a proper database is a big challenge in reintegration process.



**Barrister Anisul
Islam Mahmud,
MP**

**Chair, Parliamentary
Standing Committee
on Ministry of
Expatriates' Welfare
and Overseas
Employment**

Reintegration has always been an important element in labour migration issue. The issue of reintegration is now being discussed but never as intensively as has been done in this conference. The outbreak of Covid-19 has given a new life to this discussion. It has also taught that reintegration has to be convenient, social, psychological, and inclusive. In the reintegration programmes, the government should include the NGOs who work in the migration sector, especially in the economic reintegration process. The local government and Union Parishads need to be included in this process. Moreover, the government also needs to develop a database of returning migrants so that migrants can be categorised accordingly and programme can be devised more effectively. The incentive on remittance should be increased from 2 percent to 3 percent. The additional one percent incentive on remittance may be used to make a special fund, which would be used in the reintegration programme.

I thank RMMRU and MFA for organising this very important event involving various stakeholders from home and abroad. I very much hope that the discussion that took place will inform the policy discussions on this critical issue of re-integration.

¹ IOM (2020). COVID - 19 IMPACT ON STRANDED MIGRANTS, October 2020, available at: https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/documents/issue_brief_return_task_force.pdf

² IOM (2021). Returnee Sitrep: Number of Bangladeshi Migrants Returned Due To Covid-19, April-December 2020, available at:

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Returnee%20Sitrep_GoB_Apr%20to%20Dec%202020_19May2021_Final_V2.pdf

³ ibid

⁴ Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy (2016). Available at:

<https://probashi.gov.bd/site/view/policies/-%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%80%E0%A6%A4%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%AE%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE>

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ANNEXURES 1

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার প্রিয়াসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান নীতি ২০১৬

প্রিয়াসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয় জানুয়ারী ২০১৬

১.৮.২ অভিবাসী কর্মী ও তাদের পরিবারের সদস্যদের অধিকারের সুরক্ষা

- অভিবাসী কর্মীরা, বিশেষ করে স্বল্প দক্ষ কর্মীরা সবচেয়ে বেশি ঝুঁকিগ্রস্ত। অভিবাসী কর্মীরা বাংলাদেশ ও প্রবাসে শোষণ, নিপীড়ন ও মৌলিক মানবাধিকার নজরের শিকার হন। এই বাস্তবতার নিরাখে রাষ্ট্র তাদের সুরক্ষা প্রদানে আইনি ব্যবস্থাকে শক্তিশালী করার উদ্যোগ অব্যাহত রেখেছে। তবে একই আইনের যথাযথ প্রয়োগই হলো মূল চ্যালেঞ্জ।
- বাংলাদেশ হতে বহির্ভূত শ্রম অভিবাসন বৃদ্ধির অব্যাহত ধারার কারণে শ্রম অভিবাসন ব্যবস্থাপনার ওপর চাপ সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। সম্পৃক্তি বহিগামী কর্মীর সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি পাওয়ায় অভিবাসী কর্মীদের শোষণ, নিপীড়ন ও তাদের নিয়াগ-চুক্তি লঙ্ঘনের ঘটনাও বৃদ্ধি পেয়েছে। সে বিবেচনায় ‘বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের সুযোগ বৃদ্ধি’ এবং ‘অভিবাসীদের সুরক্ষা’ এ দুই লক্ষ্যের মধ্যে ভারসাম্য রক্ষা করাই হবে ভবিষ্যত শ্রম অভিবাসন সংক্রান্ত নীতিমালা গ্রহণ ও কর্মসূচি পরিকল্পনা করার মূল চ্যালেঞ্জ।
- অভিবাসনের প্রাক-সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ স্তরে শ্রম অভিবাসন-ব্যয় ও অভিবাসনের সুফল, অভিবাসী কর্মীদের অধিকার ও দায়দায়িত্ব, তাদের জন্য সরকারি ও বেসরকারি কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত সুযোগ-সবিধা, এবং বিদেশে কাজের পর্যাপ্ততা ইত্যাদি বিষয়ে পর্যাপ্ত তথ্য না থাকায় অভিবাসী কর্মীগণ অনিয়মিত অভিবাসন, মধ্যস্থত্ত্বভূগীদের দৌরাত, হয়রানি, শোষণ, ও পাচারের মত অভিবাসন সম্পৃক্ত ঝুঁকিতে পরেন। এ ছাড়া, অভিবাসী কর্মীর দেশ রেখে যাওয়া পরিবারের সদস্যদেরও, বিশেষ করে, শিশুর শারীরিক ও মানসিক নির্ধারণ ও যৌন নিপীড়ন হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা থাকে।
- বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানে আঘাত কর্মীদের অধিকাংশই স্বল্প শিক্ষিত আর তাদের অনেকেই ঝুঁকি গ্রহণ করে অনানুষ্ঠানিক মাধ্যম ও সরকারি নিবন্ধন প্রত্রিয়ার বাইরে বিদেশে কর্মসংস্থানের উদ্দেশ্যে যাত্রা করে।

১.৮.৩ অভিবাসী কর্মীদের জন্য সুযোগ-সুবিধা ও কল্যাণমূলক সেবা

- অভিবাসী কর্মীরা প্রায়শ শ্রম অভিবাসন পরিকল্পনার সকল পর্যায়ে বাধা-বিপন্নি ও প্রতিকূলতার সম্মুখীন হয়ে থাকেন। এসব প্রতিকূলতা কাটিয়ে উঠার লক্ষ্যে এবং অভিবাসী কর্মীদের সুরক্ষা নিশ্চিত করার জন্য শ্রম অভিবাসন সংক্রান্ত আইন ও বিধি-বিধানের কার্যকরভাবে প্রয়োগ একটি চ্যালেঞ্জ।
- বর্তমানে অভিবাসী কর্মী এবং তাদের পরিবারের জন্য সরকারি সংস্থাগুলোর পাশাপাশি বিভিন্ন বেসরকারি সংগঠন, অংশীজন (stakeholder) এবং রিউটমেট এজেন্ট কর্তৃক গৃহীত নানাবিধি কর্মসূচি অপর্যাপ্ত, সমন্বয়হীন এবং তৃণমূল পর্যায়ে

অনুপস্থিতি।

- তৃণমূল পর্যায়ে অভিবাসী কর্মীদের কল্যাণমূলক কার্যক্রম সম্প্রসারণ, অভিবাসনে ইচ্ছুক কর্মীদের অভিবাসনের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের প্রবেশি সংশ্লিষ্ট সব বিষয়ের ওপর সচেতনতা সৃষ্টি করা হবে। অনিয়মিত অভিবাসন প্রবণতা ক্রমাগতে ইস পাবে এবং মধ্যস্থত্ত্বভূগীদের দোরাত্ত করানো অপরিহার্য।
- প্রাক-বহিগ্রন্থ পর্যায়ে সকল সেবা অভিবাসী কর্মীদের নিকট পৌছে দেওয়ার লক্ষ্যে বিদ্যমান প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক কাঠামোর কাজের পরিধি, তাদের সংক্ষিপ্তা, ভৌগোলিক অবস্থা, সম্পদ এবং দক্ষ জনবল ও দক্ষ ব্যবস্থাপনা বিষয়গুলো যথেষ্ট সতর্কতা ও গুরুত্বের সাথে বিবেচনা করা প্রয়োজন। একই সাথে প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সংস্কার সাধন গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।
- শ্রম অভিবাসন-ব্যয়ের উচ্চ হার নিয়ন্ত্রণ এবং আঘাত কর্মীদের অভিবাসনের যাবতীয় কার্যক্রমে অর্ধায়নের জন্য সরকারি ও বেসরকারি ব্যাংক হতে সহজলভ ঝুঁপ সুবিধার ব্যবহা করা প্রয়োজন।
- বিভিন্ন কারণে কর্মস্থলের দেশে অভিবাসী কর্মীদের স্বদেশে বাধ্যতামূলকভাবে প্রত্যাবাসিত (deportation) হওয়া, কর্মস্থল তাগ করা (evacuation) কিংবা অন্যান্য জরুরি অবস্থার মতো পরিস্থিতিতে নিয়মিত ও অনিয়মিত উভয় ধরনের বাংলাদেশী কর্মীদের দেশে প্রত্যাবাসন (repatriation) করার কিংবা কর্মস্থল হতে অন্যত্র সরিয়ে নেওয়ার কার্যক্রম সুশৃঙ্খল ও সুচারূপে পরিচালনার বিষয়টি গুরুত্ব সহকারে বিবেচনায় নেওয়া প্রয়োজন।
- দুষ্ট ও দুর্দশাগ্রস্ত প্রত্যাগত অভিবাসী কর্মীদের প্রত্যাবাসন এবং পরিবার ও সমাজে পুনঃএকত্রীকরণের লক্ষ্যে শ্রম অভিবাসন সংক্রান্ত কর্মসূচি ও বিভিন্ন ক্ষীম গ্রহণের সুবিধার্থে প্রত্যাগত কর্মীদের নিবন্ধন ও তাদের দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা রেকর্ডভুক্ত করা অপরিহার্য।

২.৪ নারী কর্মীদের শ্রম অভিবাসন

- নারী কর্মীদের শ্রম অভিবাসনের ভূমিকা ও সম্ভাবনা এবং শ্রম অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ায় নারীর অংশগ্রহণ জোরাদার করার লক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় অভিবাসনে ইচ্ছুক নারী, সরকারি ও বেসরকারি সংস্থা, ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন ও বিক্রুটমেন্ট এজেন্টসহ নিয়োগদাতাদের সংগঠন ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিভিন্ন আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থাসহ সকলের মতমত ও অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমে একটি সমন্বিত ও অংশীদারিত্বমূলক কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- নারী অভিবাসী কর্মীদের শ্রম অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়া অধিকতর সহজকরণের মাধ্যমে গৃহীত ও সম্ভাব্য কর্মসূচির সমন্বিত বাস্তবায়নের জন্য প্রবাসীকল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ের অধীন স্থায়ীভাবে একটি বিশেষ উইং বা শাখা স্থাপনের উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হবে।
- নারী-অভিবাসনের হার বৃদ্ধি ও পছন্দমত চাকরিতে প্রবেশের সুযোগ সৃষ্টির লক্ষ্যে নারীদের কর্ম-দক্ষতায় বৈচিত্র্য আনয়নের সমন্বিত উদ্যোগ গ্রহণ করা হবে। সে লক্ষ্যে প্রশিক্ষণ-প্রবর্তী সহযোগিতা প্রদান, নারী প্রশিক্ষক নিয়োগ, লিঙ্গ-সংবেদনমূলক পাঠক্রম তৈরী এবং প্রশিক্ষণের সহজ সময়সূচি (flexible) প্রণয়ন ইত্যাদি ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- শ্রম অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ায় নারীর অংশগ্রহণ বৃদ্ধি ও তাদের জন্য ভিন্নধর্মী কর্মসংস্থান সৃষ্টির উদ্দেশ্যে বাজেটে লিঙ্গ-সচেতনামূলক (gender-responsive) কার্যক্রমে বরাদ্দ বৃদ্ধি উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হবে।

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ২.৪.৫ বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের উদ্দেশ্যে অভিবাসনে ইচ্ছুক নারীদের উন্নয়ন, সুরক্ষা ও ক্ষমতায়নের লক্ষ্যে কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করতে বিভিন্ন নাগরিক সমাজের সংগঠন, আন্তর্জাতিক সংস্থা ও বেসরকারি সংস্থানের কারিগরী ও পরামর্শমূলক সহযোগিতা নেওয়া হবে।
- ২.৪.৬ দ্বিপাক্ষিক চৃত্তি ও সমর্থনোত্তো স্মারক স্বাক্ষরকালে নারী-পুরুষের পারিশ্রমিক সংক্রান্ত সমতাসহ অন্যান্য শ্রমিক অধিকারসংক্রান্ত সমতা ও সুস্থি এবং নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশের বিষয়টি নিশ্চিত করা হবে। এক্ষেত্রে নারীর অধিকার সুরক্ষায় পর্যাপ্ত ব্যবস্থাসমূহ দেশসমূহের উদাহরণ নিয়মিতভাবে তুলে ধরা হবে।
- ২.৪.৭ বাংলাদেশী দৃতাবাসসমূহের মাধ্যমে সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশে কর্মরত নারী কর্মীদের পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিবরণ সংগ্রহ ও তাদের নিবন্ধনের ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে।
- ২.৪.৮ যেসব গন্তব্য-দেশে বাংলাদেশী নারী অভিবাসী কর্মীর সংখ্যা বেশি বিশেষত সেসব দেশের শ্রমকল্যাণ উইংগুলোতে নারী কর্মকর্তার সংখ্যা বাড়ানো হবে। এসকল নারী কর্মকর্তাদের বিশেষ প্রশিক্ষণ ও দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির মাধ্যমে নারী অভিবাসী কর্মীদের সুরক্ষা, কাজের পরিবেশ পর্যবেক্ষণসহ যাবতীয় প্রয়োজনীয় আইনি, মনন্তরিক, স্বাস্থ্যগত ও আর্থিক বিষয়ে পরামর্শ প্রদানের বিষয়টি নিশ্চিত করা হবে।
- ২.৪.৯ নারীদের জন্য বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থানের ক্ষেত্রে ও পেশার সম্প্রসারণ, দক্ষতার উন্নয়ন এবং অভিবাসী নারী কর্মী ও তাদের পরিবারের সদস্যদের সামাজিক সুরক্ষা প্রদানে ওয়েজ আর্নার্স কল্যাণ তহবিলের আওতায় বিভিন্ন লিঙ্গ-সংবেদনশীল (gender-sensitive) উন্নয়নমূলক কার্যক্রম অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হবে। বিদেশে কর্মরত বা প্রত্যাগত নারীকর্মীদের মধ্যে যাঁরা সামাজিক ও মনন্তরিক ক্ষতি ও অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হয়েছেন তাঁদের জন্য বিশেষ সহায়তামূলক কর্মসূচিসহ সেবা ও পরামর্শ কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৪.১০ অভিবাসী নারী কর্মীদের জন্য বিদেশ থেকে টাকা পাঠানোর উন্নত ও নিরাপদ ব্যাংকিং ব্যবস্থা প্রবর্তন করা হবে। তাছাড়া, প্রবাসী আয় প্রেরণে ব্যাংকিং ও নিরাপদ পদ্ধতি ব্যবহারে তাদের আকৃষ্ট করার লক্ষ্যে সরকারি ও বেসরকারি ব্যাংকসমূহকে বিভিন্ন প্রশংসনোদ্দেশীয় স্বীকৃত ও কর্মসূচি গ্রহণ করতে উৎসাহিত করা হবে।
- ২.৪.১১ নারীদের নিরাপত্তা প্রশিক্ষণসহ বিশেষ ধরনের প্রশিক্ষণের ব্যবস্থা করা যাতে করে তারা বিদেশে নিজেদের শারীরিক বা মানসিক সম্পত্তি বিপদ সম্পর্কে অবহিত হয়ে নতুন চ্যালেঞ্জ মৌকাবেলা করার জন্য যথাযথ প্রস্তুতি নিতে পারে। প্রয়োজনবোধে নিরাপত্তামূলক প্রশিক্ষণের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫ জাতীয় উন্নয়নের সাথে শ্রম অভিবাসন সম্প্রস্তুকরণ**
- ২.৫.১ অর্থনৈতিক সার্বিক উন্নয়ন প্রক্রিয়ায় শ্রম অভিবাসন খাতের ক্রমবর্ধমান গুরুত্ব সম্পর্কে বিস্তৃত ও নিবিড় গবেষণার মাধ্যমে পদ্ধতিগতভাবে বিশ্লেষণ ও রূপরেখা (profiled) প্রণয়ন করা হবে।
- ২.৫.২ জাতীয় পর্যায়ের সকল উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনা ও নীতিতে আন্তর্জাতিক অভিবাসনের গুরুত্বের যথাযথ প্রতিফলনের জন্য আন্তর্জাতিক শ্রম অভিবাসনের গতিপথ নির্ধারণের নিয়ামক সমূহের (যথা: শ্রম চাহিদা ও যোগান, জাতীয় শ্রমবাজারের বৈশিষ্ট্য, নারী শ্রম অভিবাসন ইত্যাদি) নিবিড়ভাবে প্রয়োলোচনা করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৩ বাস্তবসম্মত শ্রম অভিবাসন ও প্রবাসী আয়ের লক্ষ্যমাত্রা নির্ধারণপূর্বক জাতীয় পর্যায়ে মধ্যমেয়াদী সামষ্টিক অর্থনৈতিক কাঠামো বাস্তবায়ন তথা জাতীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনা বাস্তবায়নে কার্যকর পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৪ বৈধ ও সহজ পদ্ধতিতে বিদেশ হতে রেমিটেন্স প্রেরণের নিশ্চিত করণের লক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা (যথা: প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ব্যাংককে সিডিউল ব্যাংকে রূপান্তর এবং এর কার্যক্রম সম্প্রসারণ, গন্তব্যদেশে এবং বাংলাদেশের প্রত্যন্ত অঞ্চলে বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংকসমূহের উপস্থিতি উৎসাহিতকরণ, রেমিটেন্স প্রেরণে ব্যাংক ফি যৌক্তিকীকরণ; ইলেক্ট্রনিক উপায়ে রেমিটেন্স প্রেরণের পদ্ধতির উন্নয়ন) গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৫ অবকাঠাশোখাত সহ অন্যান্য উৎপাদনশীল খাতে প্রবাসী রেমিটেন্সের অর্থ বিনিয়োগের সম্ভাব্য কৌশল নিরূপণ।
- ২.৫.৬ বাংলাদেশের অর্থনৈতিক উৎপাদনশীল বিনিয়োগে আগ্রহী করার লক্ষ্যে প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশীদেরকে (ডায়াস্প্রা) বিভিন্ন আর্থিক প্রশংসনোদ্দেশ প্রদানের স্বপক্ষে সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলকে উৎসাহিত করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৭ গন্তব্য দেশে কর্মরত অভিবাসী কর্মীদের (বিশেষত: নারী কর্মীদের) আর্থিক শিক্ষা, ব্যাংকিং সুবিধা এবং রেমিটেন্স ব্যবহারের সর্বোত্তম উপায় সমূহ সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধি করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৮ প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশীদের (ডায়াস্প্রা) ‘সামাজিক নেটওয়ার্ক’ এর সাথে যোগাযোগ স্থাপনের মাধ্যমে তাদের প্রযুক্তিগত দক্ষতা ও বিশেষজ্ঞতা জ্ঞান ব্যবহারে সহায়ক ও কার্যকরী পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.৯ কর্মী অভিবাসনের প্রতিকূল প্রভাবসমূহ বা Social Cost যথাসম্ভব হাসকরণে প্রয়োজনীয় সামাজিক সুরক্ষামূলক ব্যবস্থা প্রাপ্ত করা হবে।
- ২.৫.১০ শ্রম অভিবাসন সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ, পরিসংখ্যান বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক, জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ের গবেষক ও বিশেষজ্ঞদের প্রয়ার্থন প্রণয়ন পূর্বক একটি সমষ্টিত কাঠামো প্রণয়নে পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ।
- ২.৫.১১ প্রত্যাগত ও প্রত্যাবর্তিত অভিবাসী কর্মীদের দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসমূহ দেশের অর্থনৈতিকে কাজে লাগানোর ব্যাপারে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.১২ গন্তব্যদেশে হতে প্রত্যাগত দুর্দশা গ্রস্ত ও আকস্মিক দুর্ঘটনাকালিত অভিবাসী কর্মীদের পুনর্বাসন ও সমাজে অঙ্গীভূতকরণের লক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.১৩ ভবিষ্যতে জাতীয় কর্মসংস্থান নীতি প্রণয়নসহ অন্যান্য সকল উন্নয়ন নীতিমালা প্রণয়ন/সংশোধনকালে আন্তর্জাতিক সময়ের সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগকে সহযোগিতা করা হবে।
- ২.৫.১৪ বিদ্যমান জাতীয় উন্নয়ন পরিকল্পনার বাস্তবায়ন সংক্রান্ত কাঠামোয় শ্রম অভিবাসন নীতি ও এতদসংক্রান্ত বিষয়গুলো অন্তর্ভুক্ত করণের ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- ২.৫.১৫ Development Agenda 2030 (SDGs) এবং ৭ম পঞ্চবৰ্ষিক পরিকল্পনার সংগে সময়য়ের মাধ্যমে জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে শ্রম অভিবাসন সংক্রান্ত গৃহীত লক্ষ্য ও উদ্দেশ্য বাস্তবায়নে প্রয়োজনীয় পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করা হবে।

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

২.৬ শ্রম-অভিবাসন পরিচালনা (Labour Migration Governance)

- ২.৬.১ একটি আধুনিক ও অগ্রসর দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির শ্রম অভিবাসন পরিচালনা-কাঠামো ও প্রক্রিয়ার জন্য প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধির লক্ষ্যে প্রয়োজনীয় সংস্কার ও নৈতিগত পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করতে হবে। বাংলাদেশের প্রচলিত আইন-কানুন, নীতি ও অন্তর্জাতিক আইনে দলিলের সাথে সামঞ্জস্য রেখে অভিবাসী কর্মীদের জন্য একটি স্বাধীন, মর্যাদাপূর্ণ ও নিরাপদ শ্রম অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ার নিষ্যতাবিধান করাই হবে পরিচালনা-কাঠামোর মূল লক্ষ্য।
- ২.৬.২ বিভিন্ন স্বার্থসংগঠিত পক্ষের কার্যকরী ভূমিকা পালনের মাধ্যমেই নিরাপদ শ্রম অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পন্ন হয়ে থাকে। সমষ্টিত শ্রম অভিবাসন-পরিচালনা কাঠামোর মধ্যে প্রত্যেকের ভূমিকা এবং দায়িত্ব স্পষ্টভাবে চিহ্নিত করা হবে। এক্ষেত্রে স্বার্থসংগঠিত সকলের নিজ দায়িত্বে প্রতি স্বচ্ছতা ও জৰাবৰদিতার বিষয়টি নিশ্চিত করা হবে।
- ২.৬.৩ শ্রম-অভিবাসন প্রক্রিয়ার সার্বিক ব্যবস্থাপনা ও প্রশাসনের দায়িত্বে নিয়োজিত প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ও বৈদেশিক কর্মসংস্থান মন্ত্রণালয়ের অধীনস্থ জনশক্তি, কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যৱস্থা এবং অন্যান্য সংস্থার ভূমিকা বিস্তারিতভাবে পুনর্বিবেচনা করা হবে। শুধু তা-ই নয়, প্রয়োজনমতো মন্ত্রণালয় এবং এর অধীনস্থ সংস্থাপয়ের প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধিসহ সংস্কার কাজ হাতে নেওয়া হবে। নিরাপদ শ্রম অভিবাসন ব্যবস্থাপনা কার্যকরভাবে ও স্বচ্ছতার সাথে বাস্তবায়নে জনশক্তি, কর্মসংস্থান ও প্রশিক্ষণ ব্যৱস্থার সামর্থ্য, দক্ষতা ও সম্পদের চাহিদার দিকে বিশেষ নজর দিয়ে এর প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সংস্কার, আধিনিকায়ন ও সক্ষমত বৃদ্ধি করা হবে। নারী কর্মীদের অভিবাসনের ব্যবস্থাপনার ওপর বিশেষ গুরুত্ব দিতে হবে এবং সেই সাথে জেলা কর্মসংস্থান ও জনশক্তি অফিসের সম্প্রসারণের প্রয়োজনীয়তা ও তৃণমূল পর্যায়ে দায়িত্ব পালনে তাদের সামর্থ্যের বিষয়টি গুরুত্বে সাথে দেখা হবে।
- ২.৬.৪ ক্রমবর্ধমান অভিবাসী কর্মী ও তাদের পরিবারের সুরক্ষা ও কল্যাণের কথা বিবেচনায় রেখে সরকারের চলমান কল্যাণ কর্মসূচি সম্প্রসারণ এবং জোরাদার করার সাথে সাথে এর সুষ্ঠু ও দক্ষ পরিচালনার জন্য একটি প্রাবাসী কল্যাণ অধিদলের স্থাপনের উদ্যোগ নেওয়া হবে।

ANNEXURES 2

**GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE,
ORDERLY AND REGULAR
MIGRATION**

**OBJECTIVE 21: Cooperate in
facilitating safe and dignified return and
readmission, as well as sustainable
reintegration**

We commit to facilitate and cooperate for safe and dignified return and to guarantee due process, individual assessment and effective remedy, by upholding the prohibition of collective expulsion and of returning migrants when there is a real and foreseeable risk of death, torture, and other cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment, or other irreparable harm, in accordance with our obligations under international human rights law. We further commit to ensure that our nationals are duly received and readmitted, in full respect for the human right to return to one's own country and the obligation of States to readmit their own nationals. We also commit to create conducive conditions for personal safety, economic empowerment, inclusion and social cohesion in communities, in order to ensure that reintegration of migrants upon return to their countries of origin is sustainable.

To realize this commitment, we will draw from the following actions:

- Develop and implement bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation frameworks and agreements, including readmission agreements, ensuring that return and readmission of migrants to their own country is safe, dignified and in full compliance with international human rights law, including the rights of the child, by determining clear and mutually agreed procedures that uphold procedural safeguards, guarantee individual assessments and legal certainty, and by ensuring they also include provisions that facilitate sustainable reintegration

REINTEGRATION OF RETURNEE MIGRANT WORKERS
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- b) Promote gender-responsive and child-sensitive return and reintegration programmes, that may include legal, social and financial support, guaranteeing that all returns in the context of such voluntary programmes effectively take place on the basis of the migrant's free, prior and informed consent, and that returning migrants are assisted in their reintegration process through effective partnerships, including to avoid they become displaced in the country of origin upon return
 - human rights law
- f) Establish or strengthen national monitoring mechanisms on return, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, that provide independent recommendations on ways and means to strengthen accountability, in order to guarantee the safety, dignity, and human rights of all returning migrants
- g) Ensure that return and readmission processes involving children are carried out only after a determination of the best interests of the child, take into account the right to family life, family unity, and that a parent, legal guardian or specialized official accompanies the child throughout the return process, ensuring that appropriate reception, care and reintegration arrangements for children are in place in the country of origin upon return
- h) Facilitate the sustainable reintegration of returning migrants into community life by providing them equal access to social protection and services, justice, psycho-social assistance, vocational training, employment opportunities and decent work, recognition of skills acquired abroad, and financial services, in order to fully build upon their entrepreneurship, skills and human capital as active members of society and contributors to sustainable development in the country of origin upon return
- i) Identify and address the needs of the communities to which migrants return by including respective provisions in national and local development strategies, infrastructure planning, budget allocations and other relevant policy decisions and cooperating with local authorities and relevant stakeholders



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