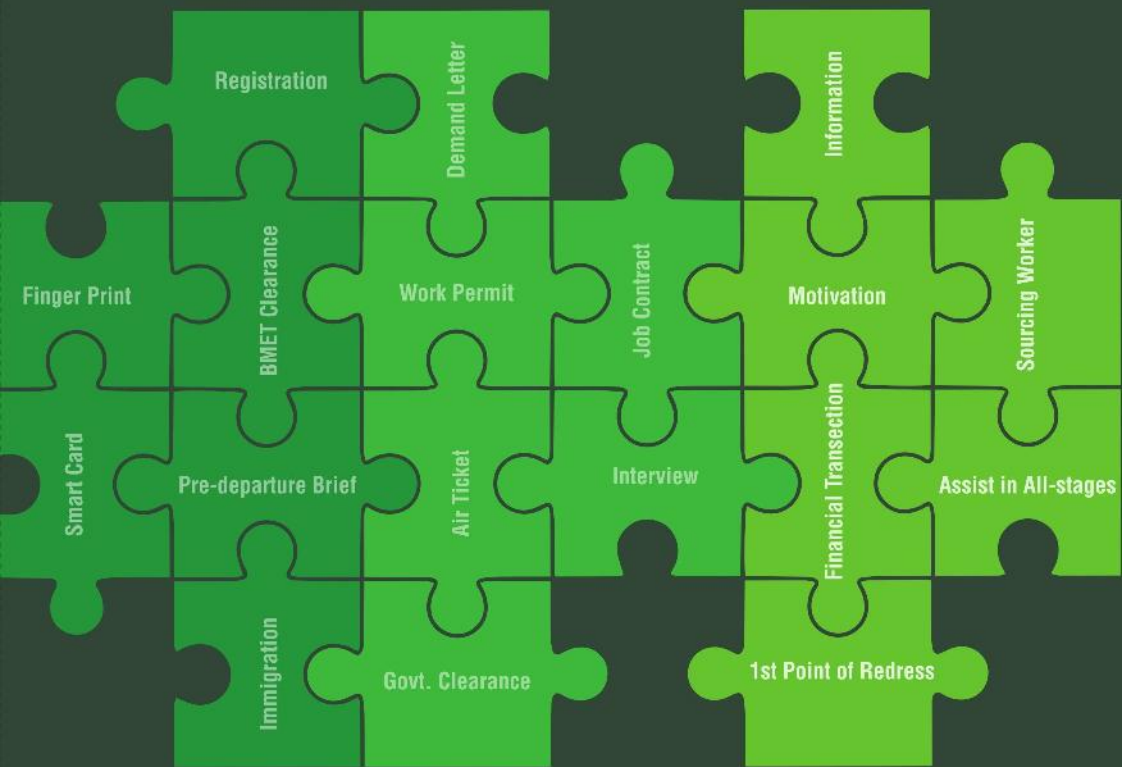


MAKING DALALS VISIBLE

Towards Transparency in Recruitment



Tasneem Siddiqui
C R Abrar

About the book

This book is on informal recruiters of short term international labour migrants, popularly known as dalals in Bangladesh. In policy discourse they are perceived as source of all evil. The book delves deep into exploring the roles and functions of dalals. It finds that the recruiting agencies cannot recruit workers from different parts of the country without the services of dalals. Along with the direct services of sourcing workers dalals also offer a range of personalized services to the migrants. It would be almost impossible for the not-so-educated migrants to navigate through the complicated formal processes of recruitment without availing the services of dalals. In order to bring transparency and reduce fraudulence in the recruitment system, this book makes a strong case for formalizing their role and function.



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Chair of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU). She has published nationally and internationally on drivers and impact of migration, female migration, remittances, climate change related migration and adaptation. Her research has contributed to important national policy changes. Her recently published books are: *Impact on Migration on Poverty and Growth in Bangladesh* (2018) and *Accommodating Migration in Climate Change Adaptation: A GBM Delta Bangladesh Perspective* (2019).

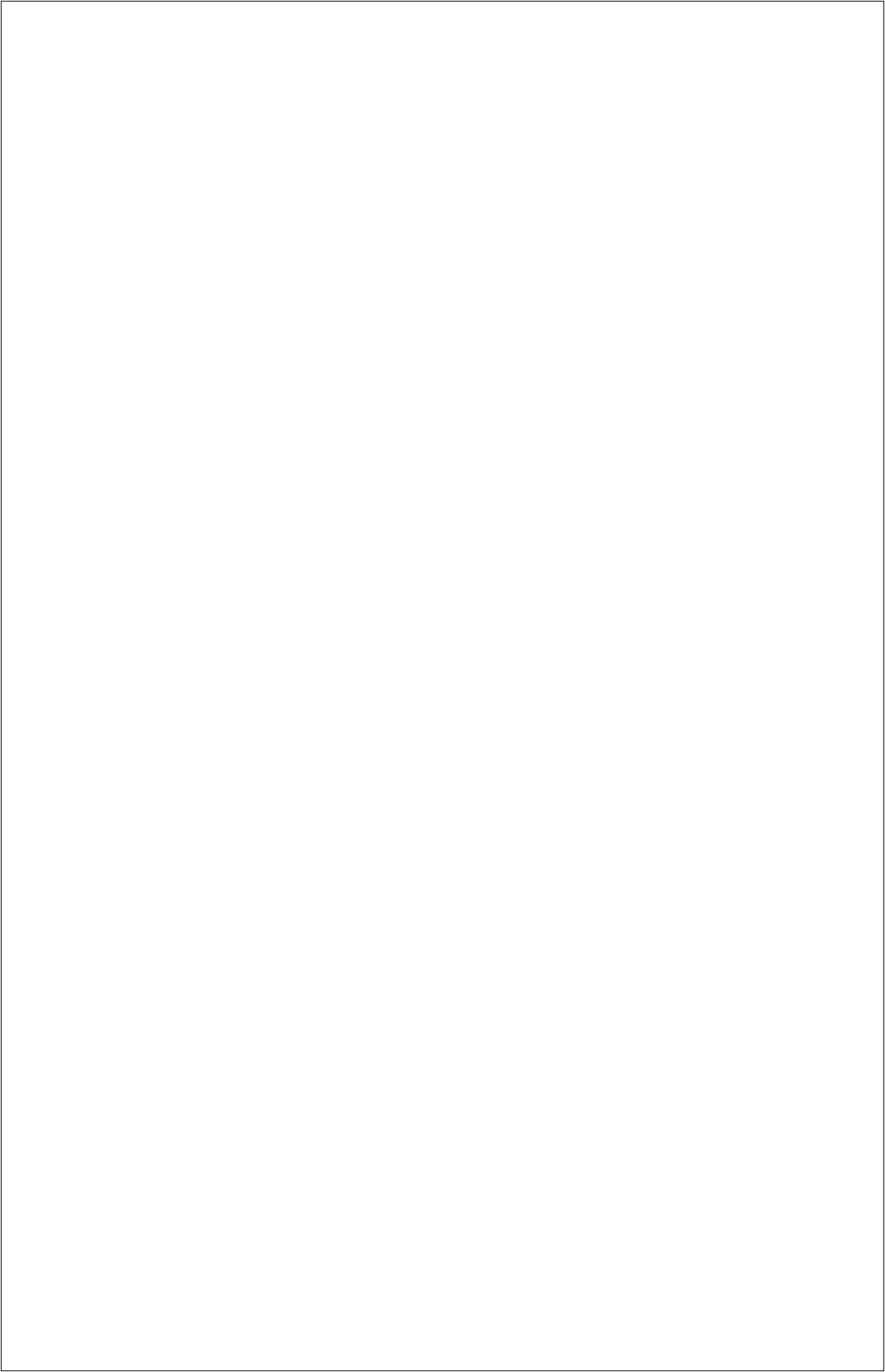


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Towards Transparency in Recruitment

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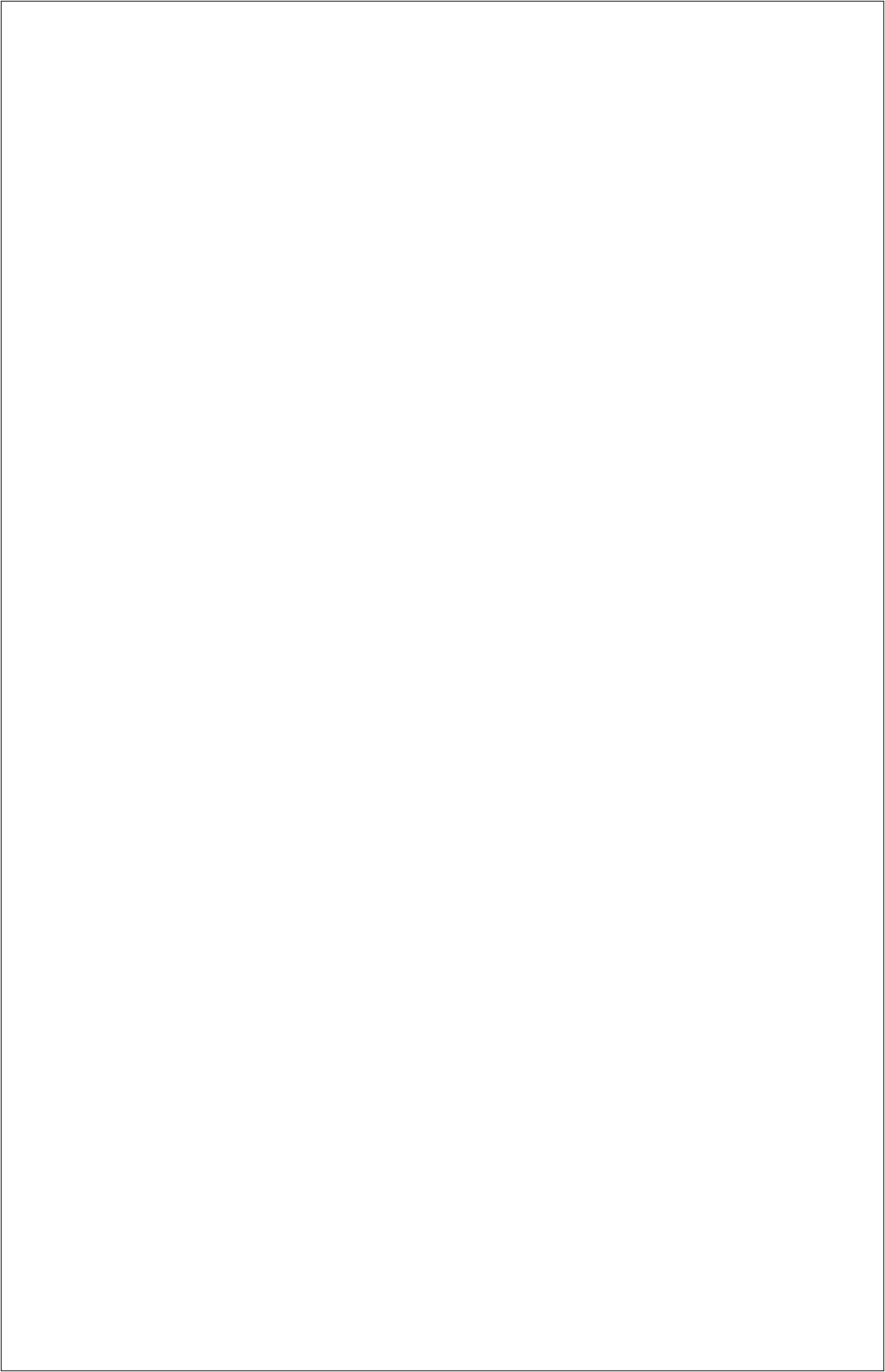
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Glossary

<i>Adam Bepari</i>	Derogatory term used to describe those who recruit workers for overseas employment
<i>Capu</i>	Menial work
<i>Dalal</i>	All types of middlemen are referred to as <i>dalals</i> . In this study <i>dalals</i> are referred to as those who work as informal sub-agents in recruiting workers at the grassroots for overseas employment.
<i>Obhibashir Adalat</i>	Migrants' Court
<i>Probashi Kallyan</i>	Welfare of migrants
<i>Union Parishad</i>	Union Council - lowest tier of administration in Bangladesh
<i>Upazila</i>	<i>Upazila</i> is the second last tier of administrative boundary in Bangladesh

Acronyms

BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
FLM	Fairer Labour Migration
GAMCA	Gulf Approved Medical Centres Association
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TTC	Technical Training Center
UP	<i>Union Parishad</i>
UAE	United Arab Emirates

Preface

Streamlining labour recruitment has been a core area of research and policy advocacy interest of RMMRU. Many of the suggestions of the strategy document prepared by RMMRU on Streamlining Labour Recruitment Process in Bangladesh (for the Ministry of Labour and Employment of the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh, 2001) have been implemented by successive governments. Important among those are establishment of a separate ministry, lifting restrictions on female migration, adoption of a policy for overseas employment, enactment of a new legislation and ratification of UN International Convention on Migrant Workers, 1990. So far the toughest policy problem is the issue of recognition of the role of intermediaries in labour recruitment. This issue has largely remained unattended. Invisibility of functions of *dalals* is linked to incidence of cheating and fraudulence in labour recruitment process. RMMRU has been persistent in its advocacy with the government for regularisation of *dalals* as it has major ramifications in bringing about good governance in labour migration.

To provide with concrete evidence in 2017, RMMRU initiated a research to look into the role and functions of *dalals* under its Fairer Labour Migration (FLM) project. This book is an outcome of the research.

RMMRU received support from various quarters in pursuing this study. First of all, we thank migrants and members of their families who eagerly participated in the interviews and shared their stories. To respect the privacy of the migrants and members of their families we have changed their names. We acknowledge the contribution of the members Migrants Rights Protection Committees, Grievance Management Committees and Youth Volunteer Groups facilitated by RMMRU under its FLM project. Members of these committees relentlessly worked with the migrants and members of their families and collected the case studies.

This research involved a participatory approach where two district level consultations were organised. Local public representatives, government functionaries and members of civil society of Tangail district provided their valuable input on findings of the research. Their insightful comments helped us in understanding the complexity of labour recruitment system and *dalals*' role in that.

We also benefitted from the deliberations of national level consultations that were attended by senior government functionaries, migration experts, *dalals* and recruiting agencies. We deeply thank Justice Mohammad Nizamul Huq Nasim, retired Judge, Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, who was convinced that the middlemen should be brought under the legal cover. We are also thankful to former officials of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Mr. Javed Ahmed, Additional Secretary and Mr. KM Ali Reza, Deputy Chief for reflecting on the findings. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training is appreciative of new research findings. We acknowledge its support in conducting the research. We are grateful to Mr. Benjir Ahmed, President of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, for his candid remark that "it would be difficult to recruit workers by the recruiting agencies without the service of intermediaries".

We are also thankful to 113 *dalals* who came out of the closet, gave interviews and participated in district and national consultations. We particularly thank Mr. Sanwar Hossain for effectively articulating the voice of the *dalals*.

This book is a result of a team work. We are deeply indebted to all our RMMRU colleagues who painstakingly conducted the field work, processed data and compiled case studies. We particularly thank Sayed Nurullah Azad for leading the field research team and H M Fazle Jahid, Legal Support Officer, RMMRU for shouldering the responsibility of publishing this book. We are deeply indebted to Joel Toorenburgh and Zachary Brabazon, former interns of RMMRU from Canada, for their efforts in copyediting the book. We also thank Marina Sultana for her leadership to the FLM project of RMMRU under which this book has been published.

RMMRU expresses its gratitude to UKaid funded British Council's Prokas project for enabling it to conduct the research and publish this volume.

We specially thank Mr. Gerry Fox, Team Leader of Prokas and Ms. Shirin Lira, IBP Manager and Gender and Social Inclusion Advisor, who took immense interest in this study. It was Mr. Fox who insisted that we reflect on possible path through which the *dalals* can be regularised.

Tasneem Siddiqui
C R Abrar
31 March 2019

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This book examines the role of intermediaries or brokers, popularly known as *dalals*, in the recruitment of workers in Bangladesh for overseas employment. Remittances received from short-term contract migrants is one of the three most important driving forces that have contributed to the transformation of Bangladesh into a low middle-income country¹. The Government of Bangladesh has acknowledged the importance of this sector and attempted to mainstream migration in all of its development efforts ranging from the Seventh Five Year Plan, the 2011 National Skills Development Plan, the 2015 draft National Strategy on Disaster and Climate Change Induced Displacement, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the SDGs and the Delta Plan.

In order to establish an effective and efficient migration governance system, successive governments have undertaken various measures. They have created a separate ministry in 2001, developed a national policy on migration as early in 2006, updated the same in 2016 and enacted the Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013. However, despite all these efforts, recruitment of workers still remains an area which could be streamlined. Fraudulence and cheating faced by the migrants dominate most of the discussions on recruitment. Informal agents such as local or regional level *dalals* are generally identified as the perpetrators. The mainstream prescription for reducing cheating in recruitment is to eliminate the informal *dalals* and make recruiting agencies responsible for all functions of recruitment. Major policies, laws and regulations of the government are framed from such a conceptualization.

This book attempts to find out why, after so many strong measures, the recruitment system is still *dalal* dependent at the grassroots level and

1 Manufacturing and the services sectors are the other two.

why it is so difficult to sever fraudulent practices from recruitment? Is it because *dalals* offer a service that the formal system cannot? Is it only the *dalals* who are responsible for the current state non-transparency in recruitment? Or is it that, the informal *dalals* are nothing but continuum of formal recruitment agencies? Does the informal nature of the *dalals*' operation and their invisible existence, help others involved in the business to avoid their responsibility and pass on the blame to the *dalals*?

It is important to understand the following questions: Who are these *dalals*? Are they outsiders? Why do aspirant migrants from rural areas trust them? Would it be possible for a less-educated, less-connected, rural individual to access migration without the help of a local service provider? This study aims to look at these issues in details. It aims to explore the steps that a migrant has to go through in order to be recruited for overseas employment. Who performs all the necessary functions of recruitment at the local level? In the backdrop of the existing recruitment system, is it possible to conduct recruitment without the function of local *dalals*?

Broad objective

- To help policymakers reduce fraudulence in the current recruitment system.

Specific objectives

- To develop an in-depth understanding of the current recruitment system from the bottom up.
- To gauge the extent of fraudulence and losses incurred from current recruitment system which officially does not provide any space to *dalals*, but which nonetheless depends heavily on them.
- To make the unseen functions of local labour recruiters visible.
- To find out why so far *dalals* have not been replaced even after various legal and administrative measures taken by successive governments?
- To explore if the functions of the service providers i.e. the *dalals* could be formalized and whether such formalization would result in a reduction of fraudulence in recruitment.

Methodology

This research is based on both primary and secondary information. Secondary information includes published and unpublished materials, BMET data, Bangladesh Bank data etc. The primary data collection involved six types of interventions. These are miking (use of public address system), collection of case studies from the field and through television shows, the household census, detailed surveys, interview of *dalals* themselves and district and national-level consultations with government functionaries, local-level public representatives and civil society representatives.

The field survey for this study was conducted in the district of Tangail. It is the third highest migration intensity district of Bangladesh (BMET 2016). As discussed earlier, the broad aim of this study is to gather knowledge on the current system of recruitment of workers at the grassroots, the extent of assistance required and the fraudulence experienced by migrants in the process. The fieldwork used an innovative method of informing local population about the survey by miking in selected villages and wards of one union and one municipality of Kalihati *upazila* using the public address system. Public announcement helped the study team to inform the local community about the research. The study deliberately selected the Kalihati *upazila* from among twelve *upazilas* in Tangail. Two locations of Kalihati *upazilla*, one urban and one rural were randomly selected. The urban location was composed of 11 wards in the Elenga municipality and the rural location was composed of 9 villages in the Paikora union. Elenga is situated 105 kilometres northwest of Dhaka and 10 kilometres north-east from Tangail district headquarters. Paikora Union is also situated 10 kilometres northeast of Tangail.

According to the 2011 BBS Population Census, the total population of the Elenga municipality is 55,000 and the Paikora union has 28,852 inhabitants. This survey covered 22 percent of the households in the Elenga municipality and 36 percent of the Paikora union. The population size of these villages varied. Therefore, the villages were divided into clusters. Each cluster contained 300 households. From among these clusters, one cluster for each village and one cluster from each ward were randomly selected for listing the migrant and non-migrant households. The listing was conducted using serpentine method. Each household in 20 selected clusters (9 village & 11 wards) were enlisted through this

method. However some of the households could not be located during the detailed survey. Therefore, the number of households was lower in some clusters. Nonetheless, altogether 5407 households were listed under the household census. Of these, 2155 were migrant households. These migrant households were further stratified on the basis of their experience of fraudulence. One group contained those who experienced fraudulence and the other group by those who did not. The detailed survey was conducted on those who did experience fraudulence.

Therefore, through the household census the research found that out of 5407 households 2155 had at least one migrant member. Of these migrant households, 1128 experienced fraudulence. Some 438 households faced fraudulence before their migration and failed to migrate. Another 690 households faced fraudulence and other problems in the countries of destination. By using a random sampling method, around two-thirds of those who experienced fraudulence were selected for the detailed survey (763 households). Among them, 171 experienced fraud and could not migrate and 592 migrated overseas, but faced fraudulence in the country of destination. Among those who have migrated and faced problems, 284 are current migrants and 308 are returnee migrants. The detailed survey covered all the returnee migrants, considering that first hand information could be gathered from them. Information on the fraudulence experienced by current migrants had to be gathered from their household members living in Bangladesh.

The case studies of 32 cheated migrants were collected from among the survey households. The aim of collecting these case studies was to find how migrants are cheated, what forms of redress they seek and when redress is not available how they cope with it?

In other words, the samples included both those who could go abroad and those who could not because they were cheated in the process. Along with survey of 763 migrant households and 32 migrant case studies, interview of *dalals* was another important tool for information generation. They were identified through snowball technique. During the census survey and as response to public announcements, some *dalals* were identified. With the help of these *dalals*, later we located a few pockets of *dalals* in Tangail district. These areas are, Kalihati, Tangail Sadar, Korotia and Kaliakoir. Altogether 113 *dalals* were interviewed.

The data generated through the households census, detail households survey and the interviews of *dalals*, were processed using the SPSS

programme. Once the data was entered, they were cleaned, cross-checked, edited and tested for any inconsistencies. The statistical tools used to analyze the data included frequencies, cross-tabulation and reports. The data analysis was preceded by the preparation of a detailed set of dummy tables covering all the issues of interest for the survey. Case studies were recorded, then transcribed and after that they were translated to English.

Literature review

Intermediaries are a reality in the migration industry in many parts of the world. They include both formal, registered companies such as recruitment agencies and on the other hand informal ubiquitous individuals. The nature these intermediaries' functions are contingent upon the national and transnational market conditions in which they operate. There is a growing recognition of the need to unravel the role of informal intermediaries in labour recruitment, particularly the sub-agents, popularly known in Bangladesh as *dalals*.

Lindquist et al. (2012) have focused on the infrastructure that facilitate migrants' mobility and argue that focusing on brokers/*dalals* is one of the most productive ways of opening the "black-box" of migration research. They found that "profit, trust and empathy run hand in hand in the relationship between brokers and migrants and distinction among them is impossible to sustain in practice." This study is also premised on the idea that the relationship between formal and informal intermediaries "should be viewed as a continuum rather than as dichotomy".

Both the Hernandez-Leon (2005) and Lindquist et al (2012) studies provide important insights on role of *dalals*. The two studies provide an inclusive framework to capture the recruitment dynamics and interplay of various factors such as the Bangladesh state, the market and the migrants themselves, as well as the formal and informal practices, and regular and irregular flows. All these have differential impacts on the outcome of the migration experiences of individual migrants and their family members.

The *dalals* play a major role in the recruitment industry in Bangladesh. A number of RMMRU and other studies have established the dependence of migrants and also of formally registered recruiting agencies on these informal sub-agents. Despite this, the role of *dalals* is not recognized by the government and they (the *dalals*) remain outside the purview of any legal framework.

As early as 2001, the strategy documents of the government of Bangladesh on streamlining the labour recruitment process (Siddiqui ed. 2002) highlighted the factors that contribute to the growth and pervasiveness of the *dalal* phenomenon. It notes that registered recruiting agencies are mostly based in Dhaka, and in rare instances, in other metropolitan cities. As their clientele is mostly in rural areas, they have few options but to depend on these sub-agents or the *dalals* to reach the former. Two of the most important functions of recruitment, mobilizing potential clients and transferring of funds, are facilitated by the *dalals*. The study recommends that the government should take active measures to create conditions in which the demand for *dalal services* is replaced by formal institutions, thereby rendering the *dalals* redundant. If that option cannot be made operational then one must make the *dalals* accountable by bringing them under the legal purview of the state (Siddiqui and Abrar 2002).

Das et al (2015) help to gain a much nuanced understanding on the relationship between the migrants and the *dalals*². Some of the key findings of their study are: (a) the propensity to secure the services of middlemen is low in high migration intensity areas as migrants are likely to have strong networks to arrange migration through personal connections; (b) the less educated and less skilled workers are more likely to avail the services of the middlemen when compared with their relatively higher educated and skilled counterparts; (c) if middlemen originated from the same village or locality as the migrant in question then the chances of failed migration were likely to be lower; (d) even when jobs are secured in the destination, the subsequent migration through middlemen still yields lower wages than those secured through social networks, and finally, (e) the recruitment process is completed relatively faster by middlemen or agencies than those arranged through social networks.

Siddiqui and Razia (2014) highlight that there are many loopholes in the system that results “in creating abusive recruitment or abusive work conditions for those unskilled and semiskilled men and women who migrate on contractual job”. It goes on to note that the “scope of informal arrangement between recruiting agencies and *dalals* in recruiting workers is one of the major reasons for lack of accountability in the process”. The study recommends that “the government should

2 Baseline survey of BRAC’s Safe Migration Project

either strictly eliminate the sub-agent system or formalize it through tying the sub-agents with recruiting agents”.

Abrar et al (2017) in their research on recruitment of workers sought to understand why Bangladeshi men continued to migrate through brokers for construction work despite all the efforts to discourage this practice. It also uncovered how migrants view the process themselves in terms of exploitation, hardship, success and failure and how closely this corresponds to the way in which it is conceptualized by outsiders. The study reveals a more complex picture of the relationship between migrants and *dalals* and challenges the dominant public discourse that portrays the *dalals* as demons and migrants as victims. Contrary to the way in which brokers are demonised in most accounts, migrants’ own stories indicate a more-nuanced relationship based on culturally-grounded notions of trust and reciprocity. While the hardships encountered by migrants may lead outsiders to regard their migration as a failure, the migrants themselves describe the process in more ambivalent terms and appear to accept hardship, as well as some cheating by the brokers, as necessary costs in their quest for a better future. The variation between the promises of brokers and what is delivered in terms of wages and working conditions is accepted because the ultimate goal of migrating abroad seems to override other considerations. While outsiders measure the success or failure of migration against the yardstick of decent work, labour laws and personal freedom, migrants themselves have in mind long-term goals of self-development, access to employment and the advancement of their families. In current system of recruitment, *dalals* are seen by the aspirant migrants as indispensable in achieving those goals (Abrar et al, 2017).

Migrant Forum in Asia produced a documentary on the role of sub-agents in the recruitment of Nepalese migrant workers³. Many migrant workers rely on “*dalals*” or sub-agents to facilitate their recruitment for work abroad. These sub-agents can be family members, friends, and members of the communities where migrant workers come from.

The documentary reveals that the informality of sub-agents’ operations presents a challenge for states in regulating their activities. They are often difficult to identify and/or contact, as most operate independently

3 This was done in collaboration with CIMS Kerala in 2017 with the support of ILO’s Work in Freedom project. <<http://mfasia.org/bangladesh-a-documentary-on-the-role-of-sub-agents-in-the-recruitment-of-migrant-workers/>>

and are accessible only via mobile phones. Recruitment agencies that subcontract such agents claim that they would not be able to reach prospective migrants without their services, as the agencies are generally located in cities; sub-agents help them to reach distant rural areas. The documentary concludes that the subcontracting system enables recruiters to distance themselves from the illegal and unethical activities of their sub-agents, and sub-agents profit from the lack of regulation- a mutually beneficial and reinforcing arrangement.

Book Structure

This report is divided into seven chapters including this introductory one. Chapter II gives a brief account of the labour migration scenario in Bangladesh and analyses the laws and institutions involved in governing recruitment of workers from the country. It also elaborates step by step the formal procedure of labour recruitment starting from collecting demand letters in the destination country to the local recruitment of workers. Chapter III presents the extent of migration from the two study locations, percentage of return migrants, and destination of migrants. It also introduces the basic socio-demographic characteristics of the migrant households interviewed. Chapter IV documents fraudulent practices experienced by different groups of migrants. Chapter V captures how a migrant at the grassroots realise his or her aspiration to migrate. It explains why it is not possible for a less-skilled and less-educated migrant to realise their migration dream without the *dalals*. Chapter VI provides the *dalals*' perspective. It explains why *dalals* see themselves as merchants who help materialise the dream of migration for the less-educated and less-skilled rural population. Chapter VII explores if the regularization of *dalals* would be feasible. Finally, it summarises the findings, draws some conclusions and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH TRENDS, LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS

This section provides a brief overview of short-term labour migration from Bangladesh. It also presents the legal and institutional frameworks under which labour recruitment for overseas employment is performed. It sketches the different steps of recruitment as prescribed by the law of the country. The chapter also attempts to highlight the gaps in the system and shows how certain services are still not captured here. First, we will discuss the nature and extent of labour migration.

2.1 Nature and Extent

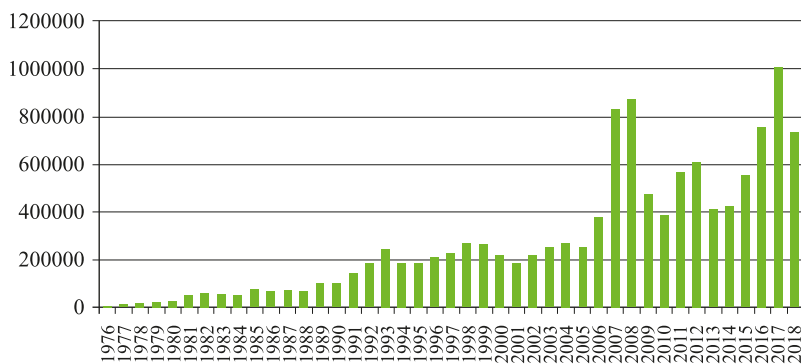
The current form of short-term international labour migration from Bangladesh began since the mid-1970s when the oil price hike created major demand for professionals, skilled and unskilled workers in the Gulf and other Arab countries. The economic growth in Southeast Asia also attracted the migration of Bangladeshi workers to that region. For quite a long time, mostly men have participated as the principal migrant. Since the 1990s, more women are also taking part, but mostly in lower skilled jobs.

Annual flows

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is the executing agency of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. It is a repository of information for those who migrate to the Gulf, other Arab and Southeast Asian countries. BMET data show that from the 1976 to 2018 about 12.2 million Bangladeshis migrated overseas for employment. However, this is the stock of total migrants; there is no mechanism in place to keep record of returnee migrants. Therefore, there is

no way of knowing how many Bangladeshi migrants are currently working abroad. In 2018, 734,181 Bangladeshi workers migrated to the Gulf, other Arab, South East Asia and a few other destination countries. In 2017 a total of 1,008,525 Bangladeshi workers migrated. Compared to 2017, the flow of migration has reduced by 27 percent in 2018 (RMMRU, 2019)

Graph 2.1.1: Labour Migration from Bangladesh from 1976 to 2018



Source: Prepared from BMET data (RMMRU, 2019)

Female Migration

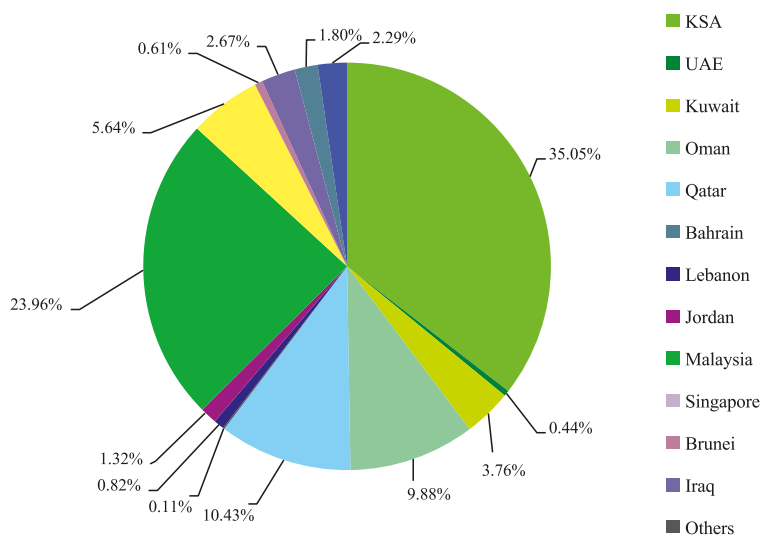
In 2018, 101,695 women have migrated internationally for work. This represents around 14 percent of the total migration flows for 2018. This is 17 percent less than the previous year. Up to 2003, there have been restrictions or bans on the migration of unskilled and semi-skilled women from Bangladesh. As a result, most of the lower-skilled female workers migrated through irregular channels. In 2003, the Government lifted some restrictions and allowed lower-skilled women to migrate. Up to the year 2000, less than 1 percent of short-term international migrants were women. Since 2003, female migration from Bangladesh has increased significantly, particularly over the last few years. In 2016, 16 percent of those who went overseas for work were women (RMMRU, 2017). In 2017, the highest number of women migrated for overseas employment. The figure stood at 121,925. Though the total number of female workers had registered a record high that year its percentage share of the total flow reduced to 12 percent. This was due to substantial increase in male migration as well in that year.

Countries of Destination

It is generally claimed, particularly by the policy makers, that Bangladeshis are working all over the world. However 95 percent of all migrants go to just 12 countries. These 12 countries are Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea. In 2018, almost 64 percent of the total number of workers who had migrated from Bangladesh went to the Gulf and other Arab countries. Most of the remaining 36 percent went to Southeast Asian countries. In 2017, almost 81 percent of the all workers who migrated from Bangladesh went to the Gulf and other Arab countries. Another 15 percent went to different Southeast Asian countries and only 4 percent went to rest of the world such as Mauritius, UK, Japan, and Italy.

The year 2018 saw the highest number of Bangladeshi workers migrating to Saudi Arabia, some 257,317, which is about 35 percent of the total flow. Malaysia (24%) and Qatar (10%) and Oman (almost 10%) were the second, third and fourth largest migrant-receiving countries. About 6 percent of all migrants went to Singapore (RMMRU, 2018).

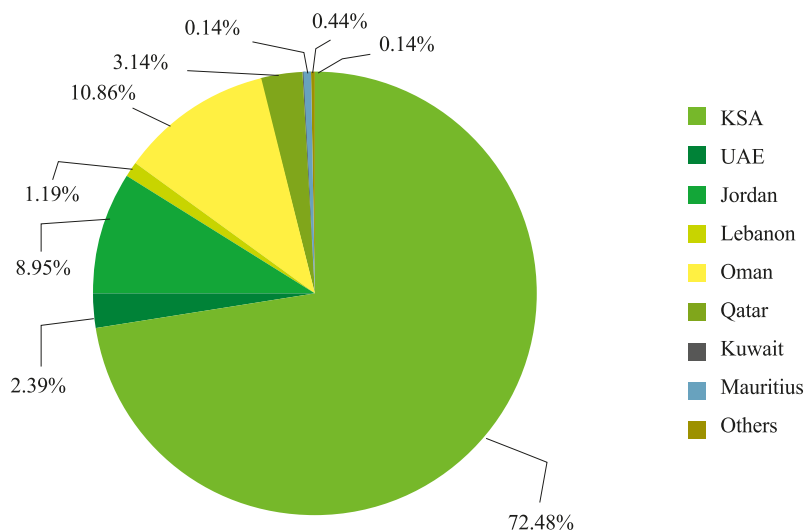
Chart 2.1.1: Destination Countries of Migrants in 2018



Source: Prepared from BMET data (RMMRU, 2019)

Similar to male migration, Saudi Arabia also received the highest number of female workers from Bangladesh in 2018. A total of 73,713 female workers went to this country, which was almost 72 percent of the total flow of female migrants. 11 percent of female workers went to Oman and 9 percent to Jordan. One can see 92 percent of all female migrants went to these three countries and the rest to Lebanon, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Mauritius and others.

Chart 2.1.2: Destination Countries of Female Migrants in 2018



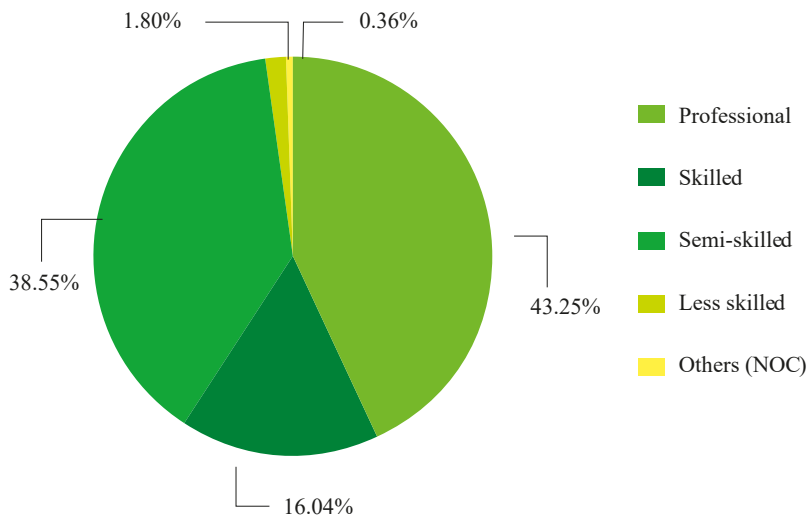
Source: Prepared from BMET data (RMMRU, 2019)

Skill composition

BMET classified short-term migrants into four categories: professional, skilled, semi-skilled and lower skilled. Doctors, engineers, teachers and nurses are considered as professionals. Manufacturing and garments workers, skilled construction workers, electricians, drivers and domestic workers are considered as skilled. Tailors and masons are considered as semi-skilled. Agricultural labourer, bearer, cleaners, gardeners and security guards are considered as lower-skilled workers. Chart 2.1.3 presents the skill composition of outbound migrant workers in 2018. It shows that the proportion of skilled workers remains almost the same in 2018 (43.25%) as it did in 2017 (43.07%). Sixteen percent of all migrant workers fall under the “semi-skilled” category and 39

percent of the workers fall under “lower skilled” category. The shares of “semi-skilled” and “lower skilled” categories also have not changed in a significant way from the previous year. Only 0.36 percent of the migrants belong to the professional category and 1.8 percent belongs to other categories.

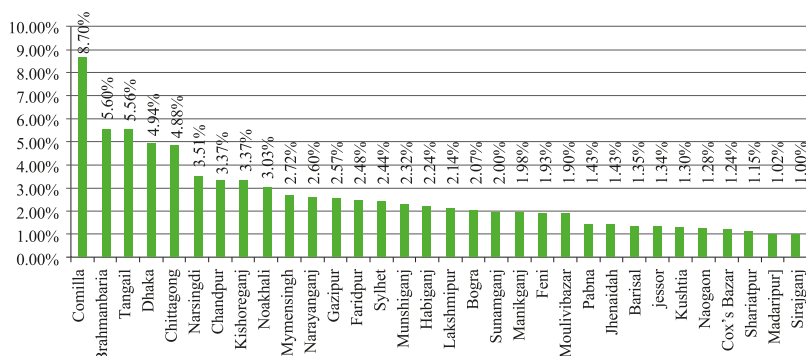
Chart 2.1.3: Skill Composition of Migrants in 2018



Source: Prepared from BMET data (RMMRU 2019)

Source areas

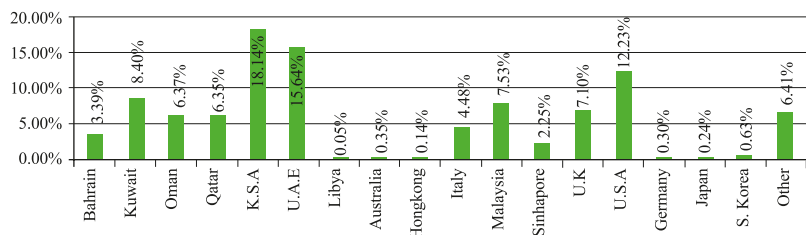
Bangladesh is divided into 64 administrative districts. It is interesting to note that a majority of migrants originates from just twelve districts. These are Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Tangail, greater Dhaka, Chattogram, Narsingdi, Chandpur, Kishoreganj, Noakhali, Mymensingh, Narayanganj and Gazipur. In 2018, 9 percent of the workers who migrated for overseas employment are from Cumilla. Around 6 percent migrated from Brahmanbaria and Tangail each. 5 percent migrated from greater Dhaka and Chattogram each (RMMRU,2019).

Graph 2.1.2: Source areas of migrants in 2018

Source: Prepared from BMET data (RMMRU, 2019)

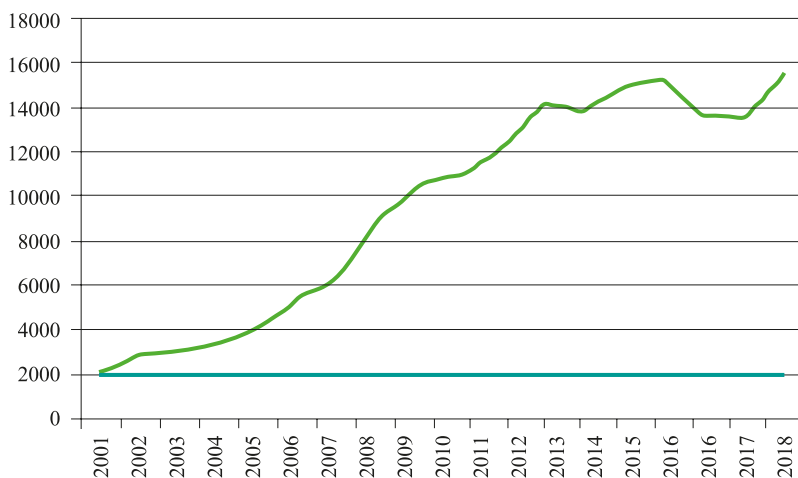
Remittance

The Bangladesh Bank documents the flow of remittances to Bangladesh from all over the world. This means it records the remittances from diaspora communities and short-term international contract migrants. It is understood that a sizeable amount of remittances are still transferred through unofficial, informal channels. In 1976, the total remittance flow to Bangladesh stood at US\$23.71 million. By 2018, it had grown to US\$15.54 billion⁴. Compared to 2017, the remittance flow in 2018 was 15 percent higher. This increase is explained by the fact that a large number of migrants went abroad in 2017 and they consequently began sending remittances in 2018. In 2018, Bangladesh received the largest amount of remittance from Saudi Arabia (18%). It is followed by the UAE (16%), the USA (12%), Kuwait (8%), Malaysia (8%) and the United Kingdom (7%).

Graph 2.1.3: Major source countries of remittance flow in 2018

Source: Prepared from Bangladesh Bank data (RMMRU, 2019)

4 USD 1= BDT 82.46

Graph 2.1.4: Remittance flow from 2001 to 2018

Source: Prepared from Bangladesh Bank data (RMMRU, 2019)

2.2 Legal Framework

Labour recruitment in Bangladesh is governed under the Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013 and the rules framed therein. The Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013 is divided into nine chapters and consists of 49 sections and a preamble. Chapter 3 of the Act deals specifically with recruiting agencies. It contains 10 sections (section 9-18). It explains the powers of the licensing authority, authority to revoke license, transferability of license, duties of recruiting agencies etc. Chapter 4 of the Act describes how migrants should be recruited for overseas employment. BMET has an online database where potential migrants are invited to register. Recruiting agencies should recruit workers from this online database. If the database fails to provide the type of workers needed then the recruiting agencies are supposed to use newspaper advertisement to invite potential migrants to apply for the jobs for which demand letters have been secured from destination countries. Sub section 1 of Section 9 clearly states that ‘No person shall conduct any activity relating to recruitment unless issued a license under this Act.’ Sub section 1 of Section 14 further clarifies that, ‘A recruitment agent with prior approval of the Government may run one or more branch offices.’ It is quite clear that, there is no scope in the law for the recruiting agents to involve or appoint *dalals*.

2.3 Institutions and Processes

Institutions

Labour recruitment from Bangladesh involves various ministries and agencies of the government, private recruiting agents, medical centres, and aspirant migrants and their families. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is the lead ministry. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training is the line agency of ministry. This section presents formal institution involved in processing migration.

MoEWOE

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) was established in December 2001. The power of implementing the Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013 and the rules framed in 2002 under the Emigration Ordinance 1982 and accordingly, promoting, monitoring and regulating the migration sector are vested with this ministry.

BMET

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) is the executing agency of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in respect to processing labour migration. Since the promulgation of 2013 Act, it has been working as the implementing agency of the Act. Currently, BMET is involved in regulating the recruiting agents, registering the foreign job seekers, providing emigration clearance to migrant workers, developing and implementing training programmes, organizing pre-departure briefing sessions, and resolving disputes. 42 District Employment and Manpower offices (DEMO) and 69 Technical Training Centres (TTCs) of government are also managed by BMET.

DEMO

There are 42 District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMO) across the country. DEMO is the first access point for migrants and their families. Presently, DEMO is responsible for functions such as the online registration of aspirant migrants, online complaint, and the welfare system for families of deceased migrants. Recently, some functions of the BMET are being decentralized including the collection of biometrics.

BOESL

In 1984, the government also set up the Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) as a limited company to take up a direct recruitment role. Since its inception, BOESL has only recruited a handful of workers, making up just 0.31 percent of the total number of those who went overseas through this official channel. However, BOESL only sends skilled workers. Incidents of cheating or fraudulence are very rare in case of recruitment through BOESL. More importantly, the involvement of *dalals* in recruitment is lower in case of BOESL.

Private Recruiting Agencies

Recruitment and placement stages are important in the overall labour migration process. In the 1970s, the government performed the recruitment functions. However, since 1981, as part of the development of the private sector, private recruiting agents have been taking over the task. Presently, there are approximately 1211 licensed recruiting agencies (RMMRU, 2019). The BMET is responsible for the licensing process for these recruitment agencies. Under the 2013 Act, the BMET verifies the applicant's solvency character, office and other facilities and if satisfied, issues licenses upon payment of a security deposit. The government can cancel the license of recruiting agencies for providing false or wrong information or if the licensee violates any of the terms and conditions of the license. While canceling the license, the government may forfeit the security deposit of the license holder. The law also authorizes the government to pay funds to affected migrants or to contribute to the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund. In 1984, the recruiting agencies formed their association - Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA). Over the years in response to the demand of the government and civil society, BAIRA has drafted its own code of conduct to monitor its members and reduce unethical recruitment.

Diagnostic Centres

In order to process migration, migrant workers also have to go through a health check-up. The health check includes an examination of physical fitness and of any potential illnesses, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis A, VDRL, HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, Leprosy etc. In addition to these, female migrant workers must submit to a pregnancy test. These tests are performed by diagnostic centres. The receiving countries have their

pre-selected diagnostic centres to conduct these tests. GAMCA is the association of these diagnostic centres. Currently, it has 28 members in Dhaka.⁵ There are some other members in Chattogram and Sylhet.⁶ Even after health tests in Bangladesh, authorities of some receiving countries administer the same tests after the migrants arrive in those countries.

Processes

Collection of demand letter

On paper, the recruitment process begins with the collection of a demand letter by the licensed recruiting agencies and their legal representatives or employers or legal representative of the employers. Demand letter involves a statement from the employer that the concerned company or the individual is interested in employing one or a group of workers. They submit the demand letter for attestation to the concerned Bangladesh mission abroad.⁷

Attestation of Demand Letter

The Bangladesh missions verify the foreign worker recruitment permission granted by the host government and also credibility and capacity of the concerned company/employer. The verification includes accommodation, work environment, security, salary and other facilities. If a company is new then a physical verification is also conducted. If the verification is satisfactory, the Labour Attaches then attest demand letters. The attested document bears the number, date, signature and stamp of the authorized official. The attestation report is then sent to the Ministry of EWOE and the BMET.

Formal Procedures of Worker Recruitment

A recruiting agency has to submit an attested Demand Letter, the Power of Attorney and the contract to the Ministry of EWOE or the BMET for the selection of the worker. The BMET then issues permission to the recruiting agency to select the worker(s). The recruiting agencies are meant to recruit workers through the online government database. If

5 http://www.gamcabd.org/index.php?cat_id=9

6 Recently the MoEWOE has suspended all functions of GAMCA until further notice.

7 Emigration rules 2002, Section 10 and Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013

the concerned agency is unable to find suitable workers in the database, then it can recruit worker through print advertisements. Recruiting agencies are not permitted to collect workers from rural areas through sub-agents and *dalals*.

Issuance of work permit

After the selection of worker, the recruiting agency sends all the necessary documents to the employers to apply for work permit/visa. The employer, if satisfied, then applies to relevant government authority of their country to issue the work Permit or Visa for applicant migrant. The BMET provides an Online Visa Checking service for the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Singapore and Saudi Arabia.

Fingerprints and Pre-Departure Briefing

Migrant's fingerprints are stored in a database and need to be matched for emigration. The BMET conducts two-hour briefing programmes for workers who are recruited to four countries: Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Kuwait and South Korea. Pre-departure briefing is mandatory for all those who go to these countries. Earlier, pre-departure briefing used take place only in BMET, Dhaka. In recent years it has been decentralized to four other districts.

Emigration clearance and Issue Smart Card

Emigration clearance is issued to the migrant workers by the BMET once the concerned recruiting agency submits the application with the following documents: application in a prescribed form, attested demand letter, attested power of attorney, attested contract paper signed by employer and employee, work permit/visa and passport, registration, fingerprints, advance income tax statement and welfare fees.

2.4 Process of Issuance of Work-permit in Destination System of work permit issuance

Gulf and other Arab labour-receiving countries make five year projections for labour needs. Accordingly, the concerned ministry issues work permit to their recruiting agencies as well as some employers and outsourcing companies once they place their demands for recruitment of foreign workers. They recruit workers on the basis of the number of work permits that has been allocated in the name of an individual

recruiting agency or the employers who mostly originate from the country of destination. Some recruiting agencies and outsourcing companies are also owned by nationals of other countries who have legal registration with the government to conduct business.

Distortions in the process

Over the years, however, many distortions have surfaced in the work permit issuance system in different destinations. Siddiqui *et. al.* (2014) found that the direct collection of the demand letters by Bangladeshi recruiting agencies from employers has reduced overtime. Recruiting agencies of Bangladesh are forced to collect a large number of visas from various tiers of visa traders who are operational in the destination countries. Siddiqui and Razia (2014) showed that the work visas granted by the governments of destination countries on many occasions end up on the black market.

The recruiting agencies and large scale brokers in destination countries book work visas by making a partial payment of the placement fees. Once the booking is made, based on the paper signed between the authorities and recruiting agents or placement agencies, the latter usually sells all the visas at a higher price to the next tier of intermediaries in the destination countries. The second tier of the intermediaries, who could be a local, a foreign national, or a Bangladeshi, then sells those visas to the highest bidding recruitment agencies in Bangladesh. There is evidence of existence of third and even fourth tiers of intermediaries. They also buy some visas from the market. They sell these visas to individual workers i.e. relatives, neighbours, friends etc. Some are Bangladeshi migrants.⁸ Data from the BMET reveal that over the last five years around 70 to 80 percent of the visas are acquired by the aspirant migrants through their own contacts who could be friends, relative or their acquaintances in the destination country. This group of intermediaries buys those visas and sells them to the aspirant migrants or their families directly or through local *dalals*. This has a direct consequence on the role of informal *dalals* in Bangladesh.

8 Shah (2008:80) provides some evidences on the practice of visa trading in some of the GCC countries. She quoted the Saudi Minister of Labour, who acknowledged that 70 percent of the visas issued by the government are sold in the black market and his government was determined to crack down on this. The Bahraini Minister of Labour and Social Affairs regretted that the practice of visa trading has plagued the Bahraini job market for the last 20 years. The government undertook an investigation where 43 businesses were found to be engaged in such practice.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter provides information on the extent of international labour migration from Bangladesh, including the countries of destination, the source areas from where they originate the skill level of the workers and the flow of remittances. The chapter has explained the formal procedures regarding how the recruitment of workers takes place. There are policies, laws, and institutions which are operational in both Bangladesh and in the countries of destination. It is clear that the process of migration is extremely complex and navigating through those laws and institutions could be difficult for those less-educated, rural, aspirant migrants, particularly women. On top of that, a distortion has also taken place in the countries of destination whereby various tiers of intermediaries control the placement of workers. This chapter asserts that the Overseas Employment and Migration Act 2013 has no provision on *dalals* in labour recruitment. In the following three chapters (III, IV and V), we will try to learn from the cheated migrants, uncovering how they went about realising their migration dream in the first place and where things went wrong, how they fell prey to fraudulent practices and how they have coped with any losses. Chapter VI will present the perspectives of the *dalals* and a self assessment of their own role in the migration process.

CHAPTER III

OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT AND EXPERIENCE OF FRAUD

This chapter probes into what percentage of those who aspire to migrate actually succeed in attaining their goal and what percentage of them become victims of fraudulence. It examines the socio-economic background of those who fail to migrate due to various types of fraud encountered in the migration process and those who experience the same even after reaching the countries of destination. These include: age group, gender, family size, education, occupation and income of the migrant. This chapter is mostly based on household survey of two areas of Tangail district. It also uses some of the cases provided by migrants and their families in a serialised television programme of RMMRU titled Migrants' Court⁹.

3.1 Migration Scenario of Paikora and Elenga

Extent

Household census survey, conducted under this study, covers 5407 households in 11 wards of Elenga municipality and 9 villages of Paikora union. Table 3.1.1 shows international migration experience of these wards and villages. It demonstrates that the percentage of migrant household is very high in both the areas. Forty percent of the 5407 are migrant households. In other words, from these households at least one member has migrated or failed to migrate even after paying a good amount of money. In this study those who have failed to migrate are treated as migrants as per the definition used in 1990 UN Convention.

⁹ This programme is hosted by RMMRU in DBC, a national television channel, under Prokas Programme of the British Council. In 2018, 29 episodes have been telecast. 113 migrants who have experienced fraudulence placed their cases before legal experts and government functionaries. 32 cases have been used in this report.

The Convention defines migrant workers as those who are currently processing documents for migration, those who are currently migrants and those who have returned home after migration (UN Convention 1990)¹⁰.

A comparison of the extent of migration from wards under a semi-urban municipal area and village areas under a union demonstrates that the number of migrant households is more among the households surveyed in the rural union. In Paikora union, 2735 households were surveyed. Forty-seven percent of these households have at least one migrant. In Elenga municipality on the other hand 2672 households were surveyed. Thirty-two percent of these households are migrant households. Interestingly, in three villages of Paikora union, i.e., Golora, Chatihati and Paikora the number of migrant households is higher than non-migrant households. In Golora, 64 percent households are migrant households. In other two villages more than 50 percent households are migrant households. In case of Elenga, only in Pathaikandi the number of migrant household is higher than non-migrant households. One may conclude that people migrate more from rural areas than from urban areas. There could be a few reasons behind this. Perhaps compared to rural areas, job opportunities are higher in the urban areas; hence the propensity to migrate is lower. It may also indicate that it is easier to commit fraud in rural areas compared to urban areas and therefore, rural households are targeted more by those who recruit workers.

Table 3.1.1: Extent of migration from Paikora union and Elenga municipality

Areas	Migrant HH	Non migrant HH	Total HH
Paikora Union	1289 (47.1%)	1446 (52.9%)	2735
Elenga Municipality	866 (32.4%)	1806 (67.6%)	2672
Total	2155 (39.9%)	3252 (60.1%)	5407

Source: RMMRU HH Census on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Destination

Table 3.1.2 shows that the countries of destination of migrants from these two areas are also diverse. This table includes destination of both groups who succeeded in migrating and those attempted to but did not succeed. It shows that 2155 respondents have gone or was supposed to go to 18 countries. These are Bahrain, Brunei, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Korea, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius,

10 UN Convention on the the Protection of Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, 1990

Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Thailand. Saudi Arabia is the most important destination for the migrants of these two locations followed by Malaysia, UAE, Singapore and Qatar. Thailand is not a typical destination country of Bangladeshi workers. However a few people from the study areas have taken part in migration through maritime route of Bay of Bengal. Their ultimate destination was Malaysia but they got stranded in Thailand (Table 3.1.2).

Table 3.1.2: Country of destination including those who failed to migrate

Country	Number of cases	Percentage
Saudi Arabia	658	30.5
Iraq	41	1.9
UAE	404	18.7
Malaysia	433	20.1
Qatar	142	6.6
Kuwait	103	4.8
Libya	34	1.6
Singapore	175	8.1
Maldives	29	1.3
Oman	45	2.1
Jordan	8	0.4
Bahrain	46	2.1
Lebanon	7	0.3
Brunei	7	0.3
Egypt	3	0.1
Laos	7	0.3
Mauritius	10	0.5
Thailand	3	0.1
Total	2155	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Experience of fraudulence

Now let us look into experiences of fraudulence of current and returnee migrants as well as those who paid migration cost but could not migrate. Table 3.1.3 details the number of migrants who have experienced fraudulence in Bangladesh and could not migrate. As seen earlier, of the 5407 household surveyed, a total of 2155 persons from the two localities wanted to migrate for overseas employment. Accordingly, they have been processing migration through families, friends or

formal and informal institutions. Among them, around 81 percent could migrate, but the other 19 percent have failed to do so even after paying substantial portion or full amount of migration cost. Thirty-two percent (of 2155 households) have managed to migrate abroad but experienced fraud or cheating either in destination or both in Bangladesh and in destination. Forty-nine percent (of 2155 households) could migrate and have not faced any fraudulence. They have been gainfully employed in the countries of destination or have returned after finishing their migration stint. If we combine the two groups, those who aspired to migrate and failed, and those who succeeded to migrate overseas, 51 percent (1128) of the total migrants have encountered fraud in different stages of migration.

Table 3.1.3: Percentage of those HHs who experienced fraud

Response	Total
Migrated abroad, did not face fraudulence	1056 (49%)
Migrated abroad, faced fraudulence	690 (32%)
Paid but could not migrate	409 (19%)
Total	2155 (100%)

Source: RMMRU HH census on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

3.2 Socio-economic Profile

This section provides an understanding of the socio-economic background of those who experienced fraud, be it in Bangladesh or in the countries of destination. Who are these migrants? What is their gender composition? Which age group do they belong to? What is their marital status? During the time of interviews what have been their average income? It is based on the data generated through detailed household survey of around 70 percent of those who experienced fraud. We followed purposive sampling technique. Those who experienced fraud have been divided into three groups - (a) those who have paid migration cost but could not migrate, (b) current migrants and (c) returnee migrants. The total number of respondents has been 763. All the returnee migrants who have been enlisted in the household census are purposively included in the survey. This has been done to gain first hand information on fraudulence in destinations.

Sex

Table 3.2.1 shows that migrants who have been cheated are predominantly men. Only 2 percent are women and the rest 98 percent are men. Up to 2003 there has been either ban or restriction on female migration from Bangladesh. Due to such restrictive policies, the total stock of female migrants from Bangladesh was than one percent prior to 2003. This is perhaps the reason for the low number of females experiencing fraud. The government has lifted restriction on female migration in 2003. We have seen that in 2017, 12 percent of the total migrants from Bangladesh were female (Chapter II). Even then in the areas where the survey was conducted the percentage of female migrants is very low. This is perhaps because female migration mostly takes place from particular pockets of Bangladesh. Tangail does not fall into those pockets. Nonetheless, changes in the scenario are apparent from time segregated data. Compared to current and returnee migrants, the number of female migrants who faced fraudulence is higher in the group of failed migrants. As demonstrated in table 3.2.1 female migrants who complained about fraud mostly belonged in the category of aspirant migrant (4%) as against returnees who reported experience who experienced least fraud (0.6%).

Table 3.2.1: Sex of Migrants

Sex	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	164	95.9	280	98.6	306	99.4	750	98.3
Female	7	4.1	4	1.4	2	0.6	13	1.7
Total	171	100	284	100	308	100	763	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Average Age

Table 3.2.2 shows that the average age of the migrants who have been cheated is quite high. The average age of those who paid but failed to migrate and returnee migrants at present are 37 years. This means they must have migrated at a relatively young age and finished their work overseas and returned. 34 years is the average age of current migrants and naturally is lower than the returnees. Interestingly the average age of those who paid and could not migrate is quite high. This may indicate that in recent years compared to the past along with the young ones older people also migrate. Ranju Sharker recently attempted to migrate and got cheated. He is fifty years old. His eldest daughter has already

been married and deserted by her husband. At such an age, he attempted to migrate as he has to feed three children as well as a grandchild.

Table 3.2.2: Average age of the migrants

Migrant	Average	Maximum	Minimum	Total No.
Paid but could not migrate	37	64	20	171
Current migrant	34	65	20	284
Returnee migrant	37	65	20	308
Total migrant	36	65	20	763

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Marital Status

Earlier studies have not only shown that relatively young persons migrate, they also demonstrated that at least 50 percent of them were unmarried (Siddiqui and Abrar 2003). In this study only 15 percent of those who paid their migration costs but could not migrate due to cheating are unmarried; 84 percent are married. In case of current migrants only 19 percent are unmarried and 76 percent are married. Among returnee migrants quite understandably only 9 percent are unmarried and 90 percent are married. It may also be that a section of those who failed to migrate have past migration experience. They are planning to re-migrate. Nonetheless, increase in average age and participation of higher number of married persons in migration is a major departure from previous socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants.

Table 3.2.3: Marital status of migrants by type

Status	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	26	15.2	53	18.7	29	9.4	108	14.1
Married	144	84.2	215	75.7	278	90.3	637	83.5
Separated	0	0.0	5	1.8	0	0.0	5	0.7
Divorced	1	0.6	5	1.8	0	0.0	6	0.8
Widow/Widower	0	0.0	6	2.0	1	0.3	7	0.9
Total	171	100	284	100	308	100	763	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Average family size

The average family size of migrant households who experienced fraud is four at present (Table 3.2.4). There are not too many large joint families. A few families only have one member. One member families have been found in case of returnee migrant households. The member should be the migrant himself/herself.

Table 3.2.4: Average family size

Family size	Average	Maximum	Minimum	Total No.
Failed migrant	4	7	2	171
Current migrant	4	6	3	284
Returnee migrant	4	8	1	308
Average of total	4	8	1	763

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Level of education

Table 3.2.5 shows the educational background of the migrants. More than one-fourth of them are not literate (26%) and it is consistent among all three groups: who have failed to migrate, who are currently migrants as well as who have returned. However, it is the highest among the returnees. As high as 30 percent of the returnee migrants are not literate. Another 26 percent studied up to Class V and among this group the highest are the current migrants. Altogether 31 percent studied up to Class X and only 11 percent had SSC degree. The level of education is more or less consistent among the three groups. A comparison on level of education of those interviewed in this study with the SDC and RMMRU household panel survey data of 2017 shows that the percentage of not literate migrants is much higher among the respondents of this study¹¹. SDC and RMMRU study only interviewed those who successfully migrated and stayed abroad for more than four years. It may be therefore be inferred that less educated persons are more likely to be cheated.

11 18% of the male migrants of SDC and RMMRU survey were not literate whereas 26% of the migrants who were cheated and covered in this study had no education (Siddiqui et al. 2018)

Table 3.2.5: Level of education of migrants

Level of education	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not literate	44	25.9	64	22.7	92	30.0	200	26.4
1 to class 5	43	25.3	83	29.4	69	22.5	195	25.7
6 to class 10	56	32.9	89	31.6	89	29.0	234	30.8
SSC/ equivalent	16	9.4	30	10.6	40	13.0	86	11.3
HSC/ equivalent	11	6.5	13	4.6	14	4.6	38	5.0
Undergraduate/ equivalent	0	0.0	2	0.7	2	0.7	4	0.5
Masters/ equivalent	0	0.0	1	0.4	0	0.0	1	0.1
Diploma	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.1
Total	170	100.0	282	100.0	307	100.0	759	100.0

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Note: responses of four interviewees are missing

Main Occupation at Present

Table 3.2.6 presents current occupation of those who paid the migration cost but failed to migrate and those who completed their migration period and returned to Bangladesh. Occupation of the current migrants mentioned here are the ones they are engaged in destination. Only 10 percent of those who have failed to migrate and 16 percent of the returnee migrants are involved in agriculture. Another 15 to 16 percent of these two groups are involved in business, petty trading etc. Fourteen percent of those who failed to migrate and 8 percent of the returnee migrants are day labourers working in both farm and non-farm agriculture. Main occupation of a large number of migrants is driving. It is quite high in case of those who have failed to migrate. Fourteen percent of them are currently working as drivers. Twenty percent of the returnee migrants are involved in this profession. Driving includes car, microbus or truck drivers, as well as, rickshaw, van and easy bike drivers. Six percent of those who failed to migrate and 5 percent of returnee migrants are potters, ironsmiths, weavers and boatmen. It is important to observe that 10 percent of the returnee migrants are currently unemployed.

Occupation of current migrants in the countries of destination is different. Eighteen percent of the current migrants work as construction workers.

Table 3.2.6: Main occupation of migrants at present

Occupations	Failed %	Current %	Returnee %	Total %
Agri farmer / fish farmer / poultry farmer	10.1	0	16	8.8
Business / small business	15.4	1.4	15.6	10.4
Carpenter	1.8	3.3	1	2
Catering / Hotel boy / Waiter	0.6	7.2	0.7	3.1
Cleaner / Messenger Sweeper	0	8	0.3	3.1
Construction worker	1.2	17.8	1.3	7.3
Day labourer / Agri labourer	13.6	0	7.5	6.1
Domestic worker	0	0.4	0	0.1
Driver	14.2	5.1	19.5	13
Electrician	2.4	5.4	0	2.5
Factory/Garment worker/Machine operator/Tailor	8.9	11.6	3.6	7.7
Vendor	0	0.4	0	0.1
Gardener / Night guard	0	2.9	0	1.1
Government employee	0	0	0.3	0.1
Housewife	2.4	0	1	0.9
Weaver, Welder, Potter, Boatman, Fisherman	5.9	0.7	5.2	3.7
Mason	5.3	7.2	4.2	5.6
Others	2.4	7.2	3.3	4.5
Painter / Plumber	0.6	0.7	1	0.8
Professionals (Doctor, teacher etc)	1.2	0	0	0.3
Receptionist	0	0.4	0	0.1
Retired	0.6	0	0.7	0.4
Salesman	6.5	3.6	5.9	5.2
Shepherd (camel/ship)	0	0.4	0	0.1
Steal fitting	1.2	1.1	0	0.7
Student	0	0.4	0	0.1
Supervisor	0.6	0	0	0.1
Unemployed	3	10.9	9.8	8.6
Total number	169	276	307	752

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Note: Responses of eleven interviewees are missing

Another 7 percent work as masons. If these two are combined then 23 percent are involved in the construction sector. Twelve percent of the current migrants are working in different factories. Seven percent of them are involved in catering sector as cook, helpers of the cook, waiter etc. Seven percent of current migrants are working with different cleaning companies and another 5 percent as drivers and 4 percent is working as salespersons. Carpenters and students are found in Malaysia only.

Average monthly income

The average monthly income at present of those who have failed to migrate and returnee migrants in Bangladesh is close to Tk. 10,000 (Table 3.2.7). In case of current migrants who are residing in destination at present, the amount stands at Tk. 17,000. The highest monthly income recorded among these groups is of current migrant (Tk. 100,000) and the lowest income recorded is Tk. 400 to 1,000 by all three groups. This indicates those cases who are in fact not employed.

Table 3.2.7: Average monthly income

Type	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Paid but could not migrate	9839.81	80000.00	400.00
Current migrant	17122.76	100000.00	1000.00
Returnee migrant	9486.45	50000.00	1000.00
Total	12347.41	100000.00	400.00

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter reveals that two-fifths of the households of Paikora union and Elenga municipality are migrant households. It also shows that more than one-third of the migrant households are the households of returnee migrants. 2155 interviewees migrated to 18 labour receiving Gulf, other Arab and South East Asian countries. A large number of migrants have experienced fraud. Nineteen percent have been cheated in Bangladesh and failed to migrate. Thirty-two percent have migrated overseas but experienced fraud and the rest 49 percent successfully migrated overseas for work and did not experience any significant fraud during processing or while working at destination.

Socio-economic profile of the migrants who faced fraudulence demonstrates that migrants of the study sites are predominantly male. Their average family size is 4. In general the educational status of those who migrate internationally is low. In case of those who experienced fraud and failed to migrate it is even lower. Around one-fourth of the migrants are not literate. Compared to the migrants captured in earlier studies, the migrants interviewed for this research seems to be much older. Similarly, compared to the marital status recorded in earlier studies, the number of migrants who are married is also much higher (84%). Around one-sixth of the current migrants who were residing in destination countries are working in the construction sector. More than one-tenth of the current migrants are unemployed in the countries of destination. The average income of current migrants is more than 50 percent higher than the returnees and also those who failed to migrate. The next chapter attempts to detail out different dimensions of fraudulence that the migrants have endured including type and nature.

CHAPTER IV

NATURE OF FRAUDULENCE IN BANGLADESH AND IN DESTINATION COUNTRIES

This chapter deals with among other issues the extent, place, types and stages of occurrence of fraudulence, as well as the identity of those who commit fraud and the amount of money lost and recovered. It mostly relies on cases presented by affected families in the serialised TV show entitled ‘Migrants’ Court’ that is attended by lawyers and experts offering advice to the victims seeking redress.¹² It is also backed by information generated through household survey as well.

4.1 Nature of Fraud in Bangladesh

The previous section noted that 19 percent of prospective migrants were not able to migrate even after making substantial amount of payment. This section examines 8 cases of those who paid migration fees but failed to migrate and attempts to understand the reality of the 19 percent who experienced fraud and could not fulfill their migration dreams.

Md. Motaleb Mia is one of those who failed to migrate. He is forty years old. Seeing many villagers changing their economic condition through migration in June 2016, he approached a *dalal* named Shahin of Kalihati *upazila*. They came to an arrangement under which Shahin would send Motaleb Mia to Oman at a cost of TK. 230,000. According to Motaleb Mia, “I paid an advance of Tk. 90,000. Since then, Shahin did not take any more money nor did he send me abroad. After a year or so, I got impatient and asked for my money back. He agreed to return the money, set a date but did not honour his commitment. I do not want to go abroad for work anymore; I just want my Tk. 90,000 back”.

12 Information on the programme is provided in footnote 8.

The same *dalal* also cheated Niloy Roy. Niloy was hardly 19 years old. His father said, “My son dropped out of college and joined Pran Company. Motaleb Mia is my next door neighbour. He was processing his migration with Shahin *dalal* and he convinced me that Shahin is a good *dalal*, as he had sent at least ten people whom I knew. In 2016, I gave Tk. 200,000 for facilitating my son’s migration to Oman. He could not send my son even after two years. He returned only Tk. 40,000 and refused to pay me rest of the amount. Subsequently he stopped all communication after informing me that he will not be able to send my son abroad. Shahin *dalal* has left the village. I hear he now resides in Dhaka. Now I am running from post to pillar to get my money back”.

Zillur Rahman states, “Processing migration is like gambling. It may click, it may not. If it clicks, then you can change your fortune! We take the risk knowingly. I paid Shamsul *dalal* of my own village Tk. 300,000 in 2015. First Shamsul promised to send me to Libya and later to Oman. But nothing happened. I tried for arranging a mediation to solve the problem but he did not attend the sessions. He keeps on promising to return the money for the last 4 years. He has not returned the money nor has he sent me abroad. I console myself thinking that I am not among the lucky ones”.

Ali Hossain is from Elenga. He is 32 years old and married, with 3 children. He was cheated quite a while ago. He attempted to process his migration through a *dalal* called Ayub Ali from Chatihati village of Kalihati *upazila*. In his own words, “*Dalal* Ayub Ali is a neighbour of my sister’s in-laws. In-laws of my sister knew Ayub Ali quite well and they vouched in his favour. In 2009, Ayub Ali took Tk. 90,000 to send me to Dubai. By then I had been married for 7 years and just moved out of my father’s household and started my own family. I was desperate to earn a handsome amount of money. But my *dalal* could not arrange a visa for me. He kept on coming up with new dates for years. Then I realised that he would not send me anywhere. After a while I asked him to return my money. Initially he said he would keep on trying, or else he would return the money. To my utter disappointment, after a few years he stopped all communication with me. In the process, 9 years have passed by”.

Ranju Sharker is 48 years old and is father of 3 daughters. He is from Dwimukha village of Kalihati. With a great hardship he managed to marry off his elder daughter paying Tk. 100,000 as dowry. Due to ill

treatment of her husband and in laws his daughter came back with a daughter of her own. Ranju said, “To feed so many mouths at this age I decided to go abroad in 2016. I gave all necessary documents to a local *dalal* named Malek Mia who hailed from Elenga municipality to facilitate my migration to Malaysia. My family knew him for a few years. He successfully sent my other two brothers broad. I paid Tk. 130,000. He promised me to find work in the construction sector. He took me to Dhaka three times on the pretext that he was processing my papers for migration. All the costs were put on my shoulders. At the end he secured a visa. I wished good-bye to my family and started my journey. To my utter surprise, the airport authority denied me boarding the plane on ground that I had a fake visa. After the incident Malek Mia was hiding from me. One day I managed to catch him. He claimed that it was the fault of the recruiting agency that brought the visa. He still promises to get my matter settled with the recruiting agency”.

Forty year old Md Intaz Ali has 4 daughters. He says, “In 2016, I paid Asma Begum [whose husband Shahidul lives in Malaysia] Tk. 250,000 to go to Malaysia. I know *dalals* commit fraud but I trusted Asma and her migrant husband as they are from my neighbouring *upazila* Shakhipur. In the past they have sent quite a few people abroad on employment from my village. These people migrated successfully and were sending remittances to their families regularly. Unfortunately, even after two years of the date of payment Asma and her husband failed to process my migration. I have taken a loan from a money lender. Since then I am paying an interest of Tk. 5,000 per month. I desperately need to get back my money”.

Rahmat Mia wanted to go abroad for work and reached out to several *dalals*. In 2012 he paid *dalal* Sikder, whom he knew through relatives, Tk. 265,000 to go to Singapore. Sikder lives in Tangail sadar. To Rahmat Mia the *dalal* appeared to be a professional one. In Rahmat’s words, “He took me for a training course in construction for which I paid a handsome amount. I completed the training successfully and received a certificate. Despite repeated promises he was unable to send me abroad. He refused to pay when I demanded my money back. Since then I am trying to secure help from whoever I can in recouping the money from him”.

The above cases show that *dalals* are known persons or local residents. People consider whoever processes a visa on their behalf as *dalals*.

Thus, relatives, next door neighbours, current migrants and their family members and professional intermediaries all fall into the category of *dalals*. The above cases reveal that migrants often identify as relatives people who are not necessarily close or blood relatives. Sometimes the *dalals* are relatives of in-laws or siblings of migrants or their uncles. Another interesting finding is that women are also seen as *dalals*. Nonetheless, the female *dalal* Asma has not entered into this profession by her own volition. She is in fact wife of a male migrant. This is a typical case of migrants in destination transforming into *dalals* and using their left behind family members to work as work permit vendors. It also demonstrates that *dalals* are successful in sending some people abroad. This generates trust among the aspirant migrants and that induces them to seek their help. In a large number of cases it is not the *dalals* who approached the migrants; it is the migrants who seek their support. Another important lesson learnt from these cases is that if the *dalal* can successfully convince one person of a locality, then it is that person who tries to encourage others to secure the services of the same *dalal*. This is perhaps out of a belief that if the *dalal* commits fraud with the concerned person, then all of them can collectively hold him/her accountable. The hard reality is that without the assistance of professional intermediaries there is no other way of ensuring successful migration. Hossain Ali's case particularly reveals that fraudulence is not a recent experience. Migrants have faced this problem for decades. Unfortunately the government regulatory bodies have not been able to reduce such fraudulent practices.

Number of migration attempts and experiences of cheating

The detailed survey of 763 cheated migrants gives an idea on the number of migration attempts in which they were cheated. Most of them attempted to migrate only once and experienced cheating. A section of them attempted to migrate more than once and were cheated in one case or both. Some attempted to migrate even three times or more. They may have not been cheated in all three attempts. Table 4.1.1 shows that as high as 13 percent of households experienced fraudulence in both their first and second migration attempts. Three percent attempted to migrate 3 times and were defrauded. Altogether, 763 cheated households have reported 887 migration attempts, in some of which they experienced fraud. Table 4.1.1 also demonstrates that fraudulence is not a new problem for prospective migrants. If those who have experienced fraud are divided into three groups - those paid the cost but could not migrate,

current migrants and returnee migrants - then all three groups have experienced fraudulence of some form or the other. However, among the three groups, the number of fraud is experienced more by those who paid but could not migrate.

Table 4.1.1: Experience of cheating by migration attempts

Times fraud	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1st time	171	100.0	284	100.0	308	100.0	763	100.0
2nd time	27	15.8	40	14.1	33	10.7	100	13.1
3rd time or more	5	2.9	5	1.8	14	4.5	24	3.1
Total experiences of cheating	203		329		355		887	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Kurban Ali of Elenga is an example of those households who had experienced fraudulence more than once. He stated that “In 2016, my father Neyamot Ali paid *dalal* Md Sanwar Hossain of Hijuli village of my own union Tk. 300,000 to facilitate my migration to Oman. Sanwar’s son Sony works in Oman. Sony sent a work visa for me to go to Oman, but I did not get any work there, survived on charity for seven months and subsequently got back home. I demanded return of the money from Sanwar. He explained that it was his and my bad luck. He promised me to negotiate a new contract and assured me that this time it would work. Sanwar took another Tk. 20,000 from my father and sent me to Oman again. This time as well I had to return home as I was not placed against any job there. I have been fooled twice. I am at a loss, where do I go for justice?”

Md. Shahab Uddin was also cheated more than once. He states, “While pursuing my dream of migration I have endured fraudulence twice. First, with the help of a local *dalal* I went to Malaysia in 2013. After arriving there I realized my papers were not in order. Although I suffered in many ways, I managed to work there for three years. A Bangladeshi *dalal* living in Malaysia promised to help in regularizing my status. He told me in order to do so I have to return to Bangladesh. Accordingly I returned in April of 2017 and paid the *dalal* Tk. 300,000. Along with me, 5 others paid the same amount to him. Twice I was taken to the airport only to be told that my flight was cancelled. When I got hold of the *dalal*, he gave me a cheque of Sonali Bank as security. Later I found out that the account was closed for a long time”.

The above cases reveal that some households are desperate to participate in migration. People who process migration at the local level are known to the villagers. As demand for visa outstrips supply, aspirant migrants waste little time in making initial payment and submitting passports. The case studies show that after taking the money the *dalals* and others who are involved in processing can play with the hope of migrants for a long period. To keep the hope of migration alive they even bring the aspirant migrants up to Dhaka and even up to the airport. It is the hope of eventual migration that makes the aspirant migrants forget the past experience of failure and proceed with another attempt. A section of migrants have been defrauded even thrice.

Identity of the cheaters

Altogether, 763 migrants provided 938 responses on who cheated them. Cheaters are located both in destination countries and in Bangladesh. A majority of course identified the *dalals* as the main cheaters. As high as 52 percent of the total responses identified the *dalals* as cheaters (Table 4.1.2) who are from different locations in Bangladesh. Among both, current and returnee migrants, 34 percent identified employers in the countries of destination as the cheaters. Again among all three groups only a handful of cases have been noted where the immediate family members (be it in Bangladesh or in the country of destination) were the ones who cheated the migrants. However, in 4 percent of cases fraudulence were committed by relatives both in Bangladesh and in destination. Among all groups, 6 percent of the fraudulent acts were committed by the friends and neighbours who were residing both in Bangladesh and in destination countries. Because of their limited involvement in the recruitment process, the recruiting agencies hardly come into the radar of migrants as cheaters. Only around 1 percent of respondents identified them as cheaters.

Now, we will concentrate on the 52 percent of cases where *dalals* operating in Bangladesh have been identified as the cheaters. Thirteen percent of all three groups have been cheated by *dalals* from their own village. Ten percent of them have been cheated by *dalals* from the same union and another 10 percent from the same *upazila* and municipality, in this case, Kalihati *upazila* and Elenga municipality. Sixteen percent have been cheated by the *dalals* from Tangail district. Only 4 percent of the *dalals* are from other districts. Current and returnee migrants mostly experienced fraud in the countries of destination. Table 4.1.2 is

highlights that 41 percent of the current migrants and 46 percent of the returnee migrants experienced fraud in their countries of destination and they identified the employers as the cheaters.

When we separate those who paid but could not migrate from the current and returnee migrants, it shows that 50 percent of them have been defrauded by *dalals* from their own village, from their own union or from the same *upazila*/municipality. Twenty-five percent of them have experienced cheating by *dalals* who hailed from their own district i.e., Tangail.

Table 4.1.2: Cheated by whom (multiple responses)

Cheated by whom	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Family members in BD	2	0.9	1	0.3	2	0.5	5	0.5
Family member in destination	4	1.9	1	0.3	2	0.5	7	0.8
Relatives in BD and in destination	13	6.1	15	4.4	7	1.8	35	3.7
Friends and neighbours in Bangladesh and in destination	14	6.6	19	5.6	19	5	52	5.6
<i>Dalals</i> from the same village	47	22.1	32	9.5	40	10.3	119	13
<i>Dalals</i> from same union	29	13.6	39	11.5	24	6.2	92	9.8
<i>Dalals</i> from same <i>upazila</i> /municipality	30	14.1	27	8	29	7.5	86	9.2
<i>Dalals</i> from Tangail district	53	24.9	46	13.6	55	14.2	154	16.4
<i>Dalals</i> from other districts	15	7	7	2.1	14	3.6	36	3.9
Recruiting agencies	4	1.9	5	1.5	7	1.8	16	1.2
Employers from abroad	0	0	137	40.5	178	46	315	33.6
Others	2	0.9	9	2.7	10	2.6	21	2.3
Total responses	213	100	338	100	387	100	938	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Eight cases are presented below to highlight the differences in nature of fraud, if any, on the basis of the location of the cheaters.

Salma Akter is from Paikora union. She states that “In 2016, Samad Mia, who is from our own union, took Tk. 450,000 from my husband Rashid Miya. He promised that he will facilitate Rashid’s migration through the proper channels and he would get a professional visa with a monthly salary of Tk. 40,000. Only after arriving in Malaysia, did my husband (Rashid) realize that the documents provided by Samad were not genuine. He was provided a job that secured only Tk. 12,000. If anyone wants to go abroad for work then they will have to take the service of *dalals*. My husband trusted Samad Mia as he is known to us and he believed he could hold him responsible if anything went wrong. Now it seems even if the *dalal* is from your own area you can do nothing to hold them accountable. Why there isn’t any other way to get a job abroad?”

Shariful Islam of Tangail states that “In 2015 I paid an advance of the Tk. 50,000 to Mofizullah, a *dalal* of Tangail sadar to send me to Iraq. My brother-in-law introduced me to Mofizullah. In 2016 Mofizullah informed me that everything was finalized and demanded the outstanding amount of Tk. 350,000. However, on the date of the flight, Mofizullah informed me that it was cancelled. He kept on postponing my departure date now that he received the whole amount. Since then I was given many departure dates but could not go abroad over the last two years”.

Joran Ali of Tangail is victim of fraudulence that was committed by a *dalal* from Korotia. One of his relatives works in Korotia Sadat College. Joran went to visit him in Korotia and through this relative got introduced to the *dalal*. In his words, “I gave *dalal* Nurul Islam Tk. 350,000 on the condition that he would get me a two-year work term in Qatar that would fetch Tk. 30,000 monthly in cash, with the employer paying for my food and lodging. He also promised me to process migration formalities within a month after I made the payment. At the stipulated time I went to the *dalal*. He showed me a piece of document, claiming it to be the photocopy of the visa, and said within a month I should be able to take my flight. He asked me to prepare for the journey, but after taking the money he disappeared. I went to Korotia but failed to locate him”.

There are a few cases where migrant families directly identified recruiting agencies as perpetrators of fraud. Shirajul Alam of Tangail states that “I got in touch with a registered recruiting agency in Dhaka for migrating to Singapore. On the advice of the agency I attended a three-month training course on aluminum fitting. I stood first among my group of trainees and was awarded by the training centre. In total I paid Tk. 650,000 to the recruiting agency for training as well as processing my migration. Eventually the agency arranged for me to go to Singapore. However, my Singapore work permit allowed me to work in land and construction. The recruiting agency confirmed I would be appointed as worker as aluminum fixer under construction category. After arriving there I was assigned to a landscape project where my job was to carry soil. I contacted my recruiting agency and it again confirmed that I will be given the promised job and it asked me to continue the soil carrying work for some time. I did as they suggested. However, within three months I became ill. Instead of providing me medical service my employer sent me back home. I have contacted my recruiting agency. It claims that nothing can be done as I had returned home due to illness”.

Thirty year old Shamsul Siddiqui of Dorishoya village saw a newspaper advertisement of a recruiting agency and became interested in going abroad for work. He states, “In 2017, I went to Singapore by paying Tk. 410,000 to a recruiting agency. Twice my flight date was changed but eventually I could reach my destination. Only after arriving there I found that the work and pay did not match the contract document that I was carrying. When I asked for the job I was promised, the company cancelled the visa and sent me back home. After returning home when I contacted the agency it said that it would be in touch with the concerned company in Singapore and get back to me. Since then it is continuously asking for more time from me. I am spending my days in great misery”.

Md. Humayun of Fultala is 21 years old, married with 1 child. His case reveals that migrants’ close relatives also cheat them. Humayun says “In 2017, I gave my cousin Aminur Tk. 240,000 to facilitate my migration to Oman. Subsequently he took me to Oman. Once I went there I was not given any fixed job and was assigned various kinds of work from time to time. Later I ended up in collecting stones. After working there for two months I was shifted to another place where I did not get work or payment. When I wanted to file a complaint in the labour court the company employer forcibly sent me back to Bangladesh”.

Julekha of Tangail also identified her relative as cheater. She says, “*Dalal* Monir Hossain is my husband’s nephew’s brother-in-law. He took Tk. 140,000 to send my 22-year-old son Milon to Malaysia. Milon was brought to Dhaka with the promise of getting a flight. But the *dalal* abandoned him in a hotel and stopped all communication. After staying in the hotel for three days, and unable to clear the hotel bill, Milon left behind all his belongings and returned home. When we approached the *dalal*, he said he would not return the money and that we could lodge a complaint wherever we wanted”.

Kahinoor Alam of Tangail was cheated by his neighbour. In his own words, “My neighbour’s son-in-law stays in Bahrain and he has taken some of my neighbours to that country. I expressed my interest to go to Bahrain on cleaner’s visa. They agreed and I made the first payment of Tk. 110,000. But my neighbour’s son-in-law secured a construction related visa. I declined to go on construction visa and wanted my money back. They have refused to return the money and on top of that they are asking for another Tk. 300,000 since they had already made payment in purchasing the visa”.

These cases show that migrant households often enlist the help of *dalals* located in close vicinities, but some use *dalals* from nearby *upazilas* and in a few cases they are from the capital city. Along with professional *dalals* some also enlist neighbours, friends and the recruiting agencies. Earlier studies noted that the cost of migration used to be cheaper and the migration experience used to be safer when it was facilitated by neighbours and relatives. In the past, social networks played a role in reducing and securing better work conditions for migrants. These examples highlight that the situation has changed. In respect to committing fraud, there is hardly any difference between the social network of kith, kin and neighbours with the professional *dalals*. Nonetheless, migrants would prefer *dalals* residing in their vicinity or at least within their own district as they can catch them if they think they have been cheated. In the cases presented where *dalals* or recruiting agencies are from the capital city or relatively distant *upazilas* of the same district, it is near impossible to get hold of them when defrauded.

Average financial loss

On average, 19 percent of households who experienced fraud had lost Tk. 194,000 (Table 4.1.3). It is important to highlight that this amount may not have been lost in one incident of failed migration. A section of

households suffered multiple losses and they counted losses incurred in all the cases. Another important finding is that village population lost more than those who live in urban areas. Losses of the rural migrants of Paikora union are 45 percent higher than urban migrants of Elenga municipality.

Table 4.1.3: Average financial losses of HHs who could not send their members abroad

losses	Average	Maximum	Minimum
Elenga municipality	154000	850000	10000
Paikora union	224000	1000000	5000
Total	194000	1000000	5000

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Sources of money that was cheated

As many migrant households have borrowed money from various quarters, multiple responses are received. Altogether 1375 responses are received from 763 cheated migrants. The sources vary from migrants' own savings and family savings, debts from family and formal sources and selling and mortgaging out property etc. Money lenders as one of the sources of migration cost have been mentioned by 32 percent of the migrants, making it the single biggest source. Access to resources through kith and kin is also quite high and it is in fact almost close to money lending. If we combine migrants' own savings, family savings, support from extended family and capacity to borrow from extended family, altogether 30 percent of the respondents have gathered a section of their migration cost from these four sources. Borrowing from money lender, however, does not mean that highest amount of money is gathered from this source. It only says that this source has been mentioned by the highest number of respondents. It is understood that money lenders charge a hefty sum as interest. That means in conditions like failure to migrate, not securing jobs or irregular or non-payment of wages would take an immense toll on the migrants and their households.

When data is segregated on the basis of those who failed to migrate, who are currently migrants and returnee migrants it appears that taking loan from money lender for payment of migration cost has reduced in recent times. Those who failed to migrate have used money lenders less than current and returnee migrants. Thirty-four percent of both returnee and current migrants have used this source, whereas 26 percent of those who failed to migrate have done so. Compared to current and returnee

migrants, higher number of those who failed to migrate have used own savings. Selling of agricultural land and other assets (20%) and mortgaging out land (11%) are the other three major sources of funding of migration cost. Earlier studies showed that migrant households did not have any access to formal loans from banks. In this research all three groups (6%) borrowed from different banks.

Table 4.1.4: Sources of money that was cheated (multiple responses)

Source	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Own savings	28	9.1	27	5.4	26	4.6	81	5.9
Family savings	23	7.5	30	6.0	27	4.7	80	5.8
Support from extended family	27	8.8	43	8.6	52	9.1	122	8.9
Borrowed from larger family	19	6.2	49	9.8	62	10.9	130	9.5
Borrowed from lender	81	26.4	169	33.9	191	33.5	441	32.1
Borrowed from bank	17	5.5	31	6.2	28	4.9	76	5.5
Borrowed from foreign bank	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Borrowed from recruiting agency / will pay by doing job	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Sell of agri land or homestead land	57	18.6	68	13.7	95	16.7	220	16.0
Land mortgage	27	8.8	53	10.6	71	12.5	151	11.0
Sell of other asset	24	7.8	18	3.6	14	2.5	56	4.1
Do not need to pay any money	0	0.0	1	0.2	0	0.0	1	0.1
Others	3	1.0	9	1.8	4	0.7	16	1.2
Total responses	307	100	498	100	570	100	1375	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

A few cases are presented below which shows how the migrants accumulate the resources required for payment of migration cost. Mamun did not have any savings. Nor his family was able to support him. He arranged his migration cost from two sources. He sold a portion of his land and took a loan from a money lender at high interest.

Mihir Siddiqui had little savings of his own. But that was not enough. He generated a major portion of his migration cost from relatives. As it fell short of the total amount required, he borrowed from money lenders at high interest.

4.2 Nature of Fraud in Destination

Thirty-two percent of cases involving fraud and cheating had been committed in destinations. A section of them were also defrauded in transit as well as in destination. Table 4.2.1 gives an idea of the type of fraud committed in destination. This includes return from transit and destination country's airport, not receiving appropriate remunerative work in the destination, not receiving salary, not employed in the sector for which the migrants were recruited, untimely return, extortion in destination etc. Twenty-eight percent of the current migrants and 26 percent of the returnee migrants either did not receive a salary at all or received a salary less than contracted or the payment of salary were irregular. Twenty-seven percent of the current migrants and 24 percent of the returnee migrants did not get the job they were promised. Eighteen percent of both current and returnee migrants could not find any job once they reached the destination. Ten percent of the current migrants and 12 percent of the returnee migrants had to return to Bangladesh before their contract period was over. Return from transit was experienced more by current migrants. Seven percent of the current migrants had to return from transit or from airports of destination countries. In the cases of returnee migrants, the share was 4 percent. Five percent of current migrants and 3 percent of the returnee migrants experienced extortion/blackmail at destination.

Table 4.2.1: Types of fraud in destination

Types of fraud	Current migrant (%)	Returnee migrant (%)
Return from transit or airport	6.6	3.9
Declared medically unfit	9.2	5.5
Not provided proper documentation	12.0	6.5
Blackmail or extortion	5.11	3.1
Did not get any work	18.1	18.3
Received salary less than contracted/Irregular payment/denied salary	28.3	26.3
Did not get promised job	27.1	23.6
Untimely return	9.4	11.8
Others	10.4	15.7

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Note: Each cell represents 100 percent of the total response

Forty-year-old Mostafa Mahmud is married and he has a 9 years old daughter. He followed the official process to migrate and arrived in Malaysia in 2017. *Dalal* Sanwar, who is from his neighbouring union, took Tk. 329,000 from Mostafa Mahmud as migration cost. He went through a medical test in Bangladesh, was found fit, and only then he was allowed to migrate to Malaysia. However, he had to face another round of medical tests in destination and was declared unfit. He says, “They gave me Tk. 10,000 at the airport and sent me back home. I don’t have any medical condition. I strongly think my *dalal*’s goal was just to make money. They have connections with unethical diagnostic centres in Malaysia. Through false test results they declared me and many others medically unfit and sent us back home”. He feels that this group of cheaters do not have any job lined up for the workers, they just make money in the name of processing migration. Once that is done they send the workers back.

Md Berek Mia of Paikora village has also experienced an untimely return from Qatar. *Dalal* Abul Kalam Azad is from the same village. Berek has known him for a long time. Abul Kalam Azad is also a distant relative of Berek Mia. For quite a while, Azad was residing in Tangail. He took Tk. 360,000 from Berek on the promise of providing him a job in construction sector in Qatar in 2017. In Berek’s words “After medical tests in Dhaka I was given the clearance. Within seven days after I reached Doha I had to go through tests once again. But that was

not the end. Again after 15 days another round of tests was conducted. Finally after 3 rounds of tests I was told that I am not medically fit to work. I was not assigned to any job. After two and half months I was sent back. When I contacted *dalal* Azad, he said there was nothing that he could do”.

Bajlur Rahman has also been declared medically unfit at the destination. In his own words, “I was sent to Qatar on 13 December 2013 by a *dalal*. It cost me Tk. 330,000. A month after I reached there, I was declared medically unfit by the medical authorities of that country and was sent back home. Upon return when I met the *dalal*, he reimbursed me Tk. 50,000 with a promise that he will clear rest of the amount but that was never to happen”.

Ranesh Chandra Shil is 30 years old and he is from Baniyapur. He failed to find work after going to Malaysia. He states “*Dalal* Bishwanath facilitated my migration to Malaysia in 2016 on payment of Tk. 380,000. Bishwanath is a distant relative of mine. He hails from Bolla. I was promised a salary of Tk. 50,000 per month. I was also promised to be given work within a month of my arrival, but that did not happen. My *dalal*'s counterpart in Malaysia could not give me proper documents. When I asked for work and documents, he assaulted me and threatened to kill me. I felt very insecure. I begged my family to send me Tk. 33,000 and purchased ticket to return back to Dhaka”.

Dalal Wasim took Tk. 260,000 and sent Golam Azam of Tangail to Oman. Azam states “I was so happy to be in a new country. But a month passed by; I was not assigned with any job. I was not provided with sufficient food. At one state I asked for proper food and enquired about my work. In response I was physically assaulted. Three months passed by. At this point, when I became sick, they sent me home. When I confronted Wasim he agreed to send me to Oman again. He assured me that this time nothing will go wrong and I will get a proper job. But the second attempt was also not successful. This time also I could not find any work and had to return”.

Forty-year-old Abdul Alim of Kazipur states that “I went to Bahrain on a free visa paying an amount of Tk. 450,000 to *dalal* Lal Mia by a cheque of Brac Bank, Tangail Branch. Lal Mia is a friend of my wife's cousin. He is from Chumariya village of Elenga union. There I remained unemployed and the *dalal* stopped communicating with me. For four months I wandered around looking for a job but after failing to

get one I finally returned home as my visa ran out. I was given a tourist visa which expired after three months. When I contacted Lal Mia upon return, he said the recruiting agency gave him a bad visa. I have no way of making Lal Mia or the recruiting agency accountable. I also need to know why BMET cleared my visa”.

Among the experiences of fraud that were gathered in this research there were clear cases of extortion. Aminur states “I went to Malaysia with the help of a *dalal* in 2015 by paying Tk. 20,000. The arrangement was that subsequently I will pay him Tk. 380,000 after he gets me a job at a service station with a monthly salary of Tk. 40,000 for a ten year period. But things did not work out as planned. The associates of my *dalal* in Malaysia picked me up from the airport. To my utter surprise instead of giving me a job they confined me to a place and asked me to get money from my family. I was subjected to a lot of torture. Finally they made me contact my family over phone and demanded they pay a ransom of Tk. 360,000 to the *dalal*’s wife. Once my family did that, I was released. Upon return, I went to the *dalal*’s wife. She took my passport and said she will work it out with the recruiting agency, but she never returned my passport. I was told by others that she took the passport so that I cannot take any legal steps”.

Khadija Akter of Tangail states, “*Dalal* Nasima is my next door neighbour. She took Tk. 450,000 from my husband. He was promised a welder’s job for a salary of Tk. 50,000 per month. It was only after arriving in Malaysia my husband realized that the papers the *dalal* provided were not genuine. Because of this, he could not get a job. Currently for the last one year or so my husband has resided in Malaysia in an irregular status. The arrangement with the *dalal* was my husband would pay upfront Tk. 100,000 in cash and the remaining Tk. 350,000 would be paid by working in Malaysia. Little did we realize that the *dalals* were extortionists! After taking my husband to Malaysia he was confined against his wishes. The *dalals* from Malaysia phoned us and demanded Tk. 350,000. We were threatened that if we did not pay, anything may happen to him. We are very poor. The reason we arranged the deferred payment is because we did not have any savings. But when it came to save the life of my husband we had to take a loan at high interest and secure his release”.

Reshma Khatun went to Jordan after securing a job through BOESL. She informs, “I got to know about the job through BOESL notification. Altogether I had to spend about Tk. 60,000. After working there for 2 years and 7 months the garments factory was destroyed by fire and I was stranded. I was looking for another job. It was at that time I fell into the hands of bad people. I fell prey to their promise of finding me a job. Instead of getting me work they confined me in a house. There they exerted a lot of physical and mental torture and demanded ransom for my release from my family at home. My family paid the ransom through a bKash account to one Mehedi Hasan who lived in Kushtia. Finally, on 8 January 2018 I returned home”.

This section reveals that untimely return and not getting a job or being declared as medically unfit are the major ploys of the cheaters. Extortion has been a new addition in cheating. Interestingly, the nature of fraud varies between male and female workers. Like men, women also face non-payment, irregular payment or untimely return. Along with these, women experience physical violence and sexual harassment.

Degrading and Inhumane Treatment in Destination

As seen earlier, 592 migrants who had been cheated in destination were interviewed in the detailed survey. The detailed survey reveals that along with cheating, migrants were also subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment in the countries of destination. Jail, detention and deportation for being in irregular status, police harassment and torture are some forms of degrading treatments. Other experiences of hardship include having to serve in deserts, deep forests or isolated islands without being previously informed. Accommodation and food related problems are also common.

Seven percent of the current migrants and 9 percent of the returnee migrants experienced detention and jail. Cases of police harassment are also quite high. Thirteen percent of current and returnee migrants each were harassed by the police. Experience of physical abuse and torture is much higher in the cases of current migrants. Eleven percent of the current migrants and 3 percent of the returnee migrants experienced torture and physical abuse. The nature of physical abuse and torture varied between current and returnee migrants. Returnee migrants from Singapore particularly were physically assaulted by the supervisors if they were not satisfied with the performances of the worker. Cases mentioned by current migrants involved more incidents of assault

and torture for extracting ransom money. Seven percent of the current migrants and 9 percent of the returnee migrants complained that their work involved living in deep forest area or desert or isolated islands. Staying in isolated areas affected them psychologically. Some of them thought they were not going to see human settlements again. Thirty-two percent of the current migrants and 26 percent of the returnee migrants complained of lack of adequate food and congested accommodation. One particular complaint was specific to women. They experienced restriction on communication with family back home. The female adults, in many cases wives of the male household heads, did not like domestic workers regularly talking with their children, husband or family members. Some were not allowed to keep mobile phones.

Table 4.2.2: Incidents of Inhumane and degrading treatment faced in destination (592 migrants' response)

Type	Current migrant %	Returnee migrant %
Jail and detention	7.0	8.7
Physical abuse and torture	10.9	2.6
Police harassment	12.6	13.1
Posting in desert, forest and remote island	7.2	9.2
Poor accommodation	5.8	9.2
Restriction on contacting family	2.1	1.3
Food problem	31.6	26.2
Sexual harassment	Not mentioned	Not mentioned

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Note: Each cell represents percentage of total number of respondents.

Seven cases are presented below to understand how the migrants experienced inhuman and degrading treatments in destinations.

Twenty-two years old Sumon of Haorapara village went to Saudi Arabia about two years ago. He is currently residing in Saudi Arabia. His father Saidur Rahman informs that Sumon was denied food and salary in Saudi Arabia. He says, "I paid *dalal* Kamrul Tk. 560,000 to send my son to Saudi Arabia. Kamrul is from my same union and a distant friend of mine. As per the contract Sumon was meant to work as a cleaner. Instead he was sold to a supply company. Even after working there for a month, he was not paid any salary. More importantly, the supply company does not give him adequate food. I saw my son on IMO a few days ago. I could not stop crying when I saw that he has been reduced to

a skeleton. Since that day his mother stopped eating. She asks, how can I eat when my son cannot?”

Morshed's wife spent Tk. 26,000 and went to Saudi Arabia in 2017 through a registered recruiting agency. Morshed says, “My wife used to look after an elderly lady. Initially she received her salary and other benefits regularly. Unfortunately after a year the husband of the lady passed away. Once the husband died her son began to look after the household matters. He stopped paying her salary. He further said, at some point the son also began harassing his wife and threatened to disseminate her photo and video in the internet. They subsequently managed to bring her back to Bangladesh”.

Shabnom spent Tk. 60,000 to go to Saudi Arabia through a registered recruiting agency to work as a domestic worker. In her words, “I had a tough time understanding what the wife of my employer wanted me to do. Nonetheless I kept on trying to make her happy with my work. She didn't trust her husband. On one occasion her husband called home and I picked up the phone. I didn't understand what he said but the lady got very angry and hit me badly. Since then she abused me on any pretext. At one stage I contracted eczema in my hand. She did not buy medicine for [me, but] rather used that as pretext to forcibly send me back home”.

Hamida states, “I went to Saudi Arabia nine months ago, paying an agent Tk. 30,000. The lady of the house did not like me contacting my children over phone from time to time. She was an abusive lady and used to hit me when she was angry. Despite her bad behaviour I continued to work there as I and my husband had plans to improve our homestead. I worked there for nine months but she was never happy with my work. I was sent back home after being paid only four months' salary. All our plans have come to nothing”.

Bulbul states, “In 2015, I gave agent Abdul Mannan Tk. 450,000 along with my passport to send me to Iraq on a two year contract. After two years of waiting instead of sending me to Iraq he proposed that I go to Malaysia. Since I had no [other] option I agreed to his proposal. Instead of sending me to Malaysia directly he sent me through Indonesia. On my way I was detained in Indonesia for eight days and later the authorities there allowed me to go to Malaysia. Once I reached Malaysia the counterpart of my *dadal* took me from the airport and instead of giving me job, confined me for 12 days. I was subjected to various kinds of torture including [the] pouring of hot water on my body. I realised

then they brought me to Malaysia for extortion. My family arranged the payment of Tk. 380,000. After receiving the amount they released me and I was supposed to find my own job. Unfortunately I was apprehended by the Malaysian police only after 12 days of my release. After spending a year in jail again I had to secure an amount of Tk. 70,000 and returned to Bangladesh”.

4.3 Sources of Redress

In Bangladesh

The majority of migrants, when cheated in Bangladesh, seek redress from various sources. However, a section of them do not seek redress at all. Eighty-nine percent of those who failed to migrate took multiple steps to seek redress, whereas eleven percent of the failed migrants, 75 percent of the current migrants and 75 percent of the returnee migrants did not seek redress from anyone. In Bangladesh, *dalals* are always the first source for seeking redress. Eleven percent of the failed migrants, 75 percent of current and returnee migrants who were cheated, only went to *dalals* for redress. A number of failed migrants first went to *dalals* and then to other sources. Twenty-seven percent of the failed migrants, 8 percent of the current migrants and 5 percent of the returnee migrants went to locally influential persons or relatives. At the local level, *Union Parishad* Chairman or members are seen as important mediators. Fifteen percent of the failed migrants, 3 percent of the current and 5 percent of the returnee migrants seek support from public representatives. Another 2 percent went to police to seek redress. Though BMET conducts arbitration for the aggrieved migrants, only one of the migrants of these three groups had taken his case to BMET. Shamsul Islam complained to BMET. Through BMET arbitration he got back Tk. 200,000.

Recruiting agencies claim that they have a system of arbitration in operation. However, none of the groups stated seeking its assistance. In only one case a migrants family secured redress from *dalal*. With the support of locally influential Ranesh tried for a long time to get his money back from his *dalal* Bishwanath who was his distant relative. But his efforts did not produce any result. At one stage, when Bishwanath, who resides in Malaysia, came to his village on holiday Ranesh and his family detained him and recouped Tk. 115,000 from him. Mostafa

Mahmud also managed to get back Tk. 75,000 from the *dalal* through mediation. Recently, he presented his case on national TV programme ‘Obhibashir Adalat’. The *dalal* came to mediation organised by RMMRU and agreed to give him Tk. 75,000 back.

Table 4.3.1: Sources of Redress in Bangladesh (multiple responses)

Sources explored for redress	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Local influential	65	27.0	28	8.1	20	5.2	113	11.6
UP members/ Chairman	35	14.5	10	2.9	18	4.7	63	6.5
<i>Dalal</i>	103	42.7	41	11.9	49	12.8	192	19.9
Police / law enforcement agency	9	3.7	3	0.9	4	1.0	16	1.7
DEMO office	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.1
Lawyer	0	0.0	1	0.3	2	0.5	3	0.3
NGOs	0	0.0	1	0.3	2	0.5	3	0.3
Recruitment agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET office	1	0.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Ministry	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Others	2	0.8	2	0.6	0	0.0	4	0.4
Did not seek redress from anyone	26	10.8	259	74.9	289	75.3	574	59.1
Total responses	241	100	346	100	384	100	971	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Source of redress when cheated at destination

In the case of contract violation or cheating in destination, migrants sought redress mostly in Bangladesh. Forty percent of them got in touch with the *dalals* and informed them about the situation. Seven percent asked their relatives in Dhaka to seek redress through the *dalals*. Only 5 percent tried to resolve the problem themselves with their employers. As high as 36 percent did not seek any redress from any quarter. It is interesting to note that only 1 percent approached the embassy for redress.

Table 4.3.2: Sources of Redress in destination (multiple responses)

Sources explored for redress	Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Complain to employer for redress	14	4.0	24	6.3	38	5.2
Go to Bangladesh embassy for help	4	1.2	4	1.0	8	1.1
Register complaint with fellow Bangladeshis in destination	28	8.1	29	7.5	57	7.8
<i>Dalal</i> in Bangladesh	138	39.8	156	40.7	294	40.3
Relatives	24	6.9	28	7.3	52	7.1
Others	5	1.4	11	3.0	16	2.2
Did not seek redress to anyone	134	38.6	131	34.2	265	36.3
Total responses	347	100	383	100	730	100
Total respondents	284		308		592	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on Role of *Dalals*, 2017

All these cases show that in cases of fraudulence, migrants have little option but to seek redress from *dalals* who were part of the process that cheated them. They do not register their complaints even with BMET, let alone file cases in the court.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter highlights the experience of fraudulence faced by the migrants. It shows that 51 percent of the migrants have been cheated. Of them, nineteen percent faced fraudulence in Bangladesh and could not migrate even after making financial transactions. Thirty-two percent of the migrants faced fraudulence after reaching the country of destination. Thirteen percent of the migrants have experienced multiple fraudulences.

Of the total cases of fraudulence, 52 percent were committed by *dalals*. These *dalals* are from different locations of Bangladesh. Thirteen percent were committed by the *dalals* who resided in the same village. Ten percent of the *dalals* are from the same union from where migrants originated, 9 percent resided in the same *upazila*/municipality, 16 percent from the same districts and only 4 percent from other district (Dhaka).

On average these migrants have lost Tk. 194,000. The amount of financial loss is higher in the cases of villages compared to municipal

areas. The types of fraudulence experienced in the destination country include: return from transit countries or from the airport of the destination country, were unable to find work, received salary less than contracted, irregular or non-payment of salary and untimely return etc. Sixteen percent of the migrants also experienced degrading and inhuman treatment in the destination. Some examples include jail, extortion, physical abuse and torture, police harassment, blackmail, deportation, being taken to stay in desert, remote forest area and islands. This chapter also reveals that migrants usually seek redress from *dalals*. It is natural that when a migrant experienced fraud he or she will seek redress from the *dalal* however the migrants mostly communicated with the *dalals* when they experience fraudulence in destination as well.

Now the question is: when so much fraudulence is taking place while attempting to migrate through *dalals*, still then why do people continue to secure their services? The following chapter will help us understand the extent of migrants' dependency on *dalals* in availing different services required for processing migration.

Chapter V

***DALAL*: THE ONLY SERVICE PROVIDER AT THE GRASSROOTS**

The previous chapter shows that a large number of migrants and members of their families face fraudulence when they pursue their migration dreams. The perception is pervasive among the policy makers that problems that government faces in streamlining recruitment of workers to a great extent are created by the *dalals*. It was also noted in the previous chapters that more than half of the migrants blame the *dalals* for the fraud and misfortunes faced by them in Bangladesh and abroad. This chapter examines why, despite the existence of a number of measures to abolish the *dalal* system, the *dalals* remain firmly entrenched in labour migration process. It also identifies all the necessary steps that a migrant has to go through in processing migration and what services are available at the grassroots to assist the migrants in securing those services. Issues dealt with here include securing migration information and passport, procuring visa, accessing skills training, establishing contacts with recruiting agency, undertaking medical examinations and skills tests, securing BMET clearance and smart cards, opening bank accounts, purchasing air tickets and finally accompanying migrants to the airport. This section is based on detailed survey of 763 migrants.

5.1 Migration Decision

Information on migration

Information on availability of jobs is a crucial part of migration decision-making. However, obtaining information seemed to be a significant challenge for the migrants. Table 5.1.1 shows that respondents received migration information from multiple sources. Altogether, 1168 responses were received from 763 migrant households. When the migrants or their families began exploring employment opportunities through

overseas migration, they started looking for information. Forty-eight percent of the migrants have first received information from the *dalals*, 17 percent received information from returnee migrants, 16 percent have prior knowledge about short term contract migration, 10 percent have received information from relatives and another 8 percent have received the same from immediate family members. What is important here is that not a single person has received information services from DEMO, NGOs, travel agency and BMET. Only one returnee migrant has received information from a recruitment agency. It is clear that migration information is disseminated in the market by *dalals*, and also by extended and immediate families.

Table 5.1.1: Sources of information on migration (multiple responses)

Source of information	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	14	5.6	42	9.4	33	7.0	89	7.6
Relatives	32	12.9	46	10.2	41	8.7	119	10.2
Returned migrant	46	18.5	67	14.9	82	17.4	195	16.7
Neighbours	0	0.0	7	1.6	14	3.0	21	1.8
<i>Dalals</i>	115	46.2	222	49.4	220	46.8	557	47.7
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	42	16.9	65	14.5	79	16.8	186	15.9
Total responses	249	100	449	100	470	100	1168	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Procurement of Work Permit/Visa

Altogether, 1076 responses were received from 763 of the people who failed to migrate as well as current and returnee migrants on sources from whom they procured or attempted to procure visa. Table 5.1.2 shows that visa procurement involves more than one institution and *dalals* are present in every aspect of the process. Seventy-eight percent of these sources are *dalals*. These *dalals* are operating from different locations. However, only 6 percent of the *dalals* are from other districts. The remaining 72 percent are from within the migrants' own districts. If we divide them according to location of *dalals*, 21 percent of the respondents procured visas through the *dalals* who have been operating from their own village. Thirteen percent of the *dalals* used by the migrants are from their own union. Fifteen percent of the respondents procured visa from *dalals* who have been operating at their *upazila* or municipality. This indicates that *dalals* are individuals who are located

close to the migrants. When this issue was followed up migrants informed that they prefer to give money to those individuals who they can trust or they think they can make accountable if anything goes wrong.

Table 5.1.2: Procurement of Work Permit/Visa (multiple responses)

Procurement of Visa	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Dalal-own village	46	19.9	103	24.3	79	18.0	228	20.8
Dalal -own union	28	12.1	59	13.9	58	13.2	145	13.2
Dalal -own upazilla	33	14.3	71	16.7	61	13.9	165	15.1
Dalal -own district	61	26.4	73	17.2	99	22.5	233	21.3
Dalal -other district	20	8.7	19	4.5	27	6.1	66	6.0
Own family member in Bangladesh	0	0.0	2	0.5	2	0.5	4	0.4
Own family member in abroad	4	1.7	7	1.7	3	0.7	14	1.3
Relatives in Bangladesh	14	6.1	26	6.1	26	5.9	66	6.0
Relatives living abroad	6	2.6	3	0.7	3	0.7	12	1.1
Friends and neighbours in Bangladesh	2	0.9	7	1.7	8	1.8	17	1.6
Friends and neighbours living abroad	3	1.3	8	1.9	10	2.3	21	1.9
Recruiting agency in Bangladesh	14	6.1	40	9.4	48	10.9	102	9.3
BOESL	0	0.0	2	0.5	0	0.0	2	0.2
Recruiting agency overseas	0	0.0	4	0.9	15	3.4	19	1.7
Walk in interview	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1
Total responses	231	100	424	100	440	100	1095	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of Dalals, 2017

Altogether 11 percent of the respondents identified formal recruitment agencies as their visa procurer. Nine percent of these recruiting agencies are from Bangladesh and around 2 percent from the destination countries. If we disaggregate the data among those who failed to migrate, current and returnee migrants, it appears that 4 percent of

them have been cited by returnee migrants and another 1 percent by current migrants. None of them who failed to migrate has any contact with recruiting agencies in respect to procurement. Around 2 percent procured visa through immediate family members. Relatives are also a source of visa procurement. Six percent of the respondents identify relatives in Bangladesh as their work permit/visa procurer.

The above scenario has major ramifications for policy changes particularly when we analyse these findings against the recruitment channel they pursued. In only 7 percent of cases formal recruiting agencies have been involved from the beginning of their migration process. The rest depend either on close family members, friends or *dalals*. The next step of this research will further unravel the dependency on *dalals*.

Information on training opportunity

Skilled migration reduces exploitation and increases income. Nonetheless only a small number of migrants have acquired the skills to position them favourably as per the demand of the market. Skills referred here include language training, training on plumbing, electrical repairing, AC fitting and repair, construction, housekeeping, care giving, machine operating etc. Table 5.1.3 also indicates that not very many migrants who have experienced different types of fraud have accessed training. Only 163 migrant households (21.36% of the respondents) have responded to this question, and the remaining 600 have not obtained any information on training opportunities. Sixty-six percent of those who have information again identified *dalals* as the network through which they have received information on skills training, 17 percent have identified immediate family and relatives, and 7 percent have collected information on their own. Again, not even a single case has been found where migrants have secured information from recruiting agencies, BMET, DEMO and Deputy Commissioner's office.

Table 5.1.3: Information on training opportunity

Training opportunity	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	5	6.1	1	1.9	6	3.7
Friends, relatives and acquaintances	4	14.3	7	8.5	10	18.9	21	12.9
Returned migrant	2	7.1	0	0.0	1	1.9	3	1.8
Neighbours	1	3.6	3	3.7	3	5.7	7	4.3
UP chairman / Members	0	0.0	2	2.4	0	0.0	2	1.2
Dalals	19	67.9	55	67.1	33	62.3	107	65.6
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
NGO	1	3.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6
Travel agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Probashi kallyan desk in DC office	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	2	2.4	2	3.8	4	2.5
Medical center	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	1	3.6	8	9.8	3	5.7	12	7.4
Total	28	100	82	100	53	100	163	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Language Skill

Learning the language of the country of destination can help aspirant migrants in finding jobs. Around half the migrant households did not have any information on language training opportunities in the locality. Only 56 respondents had knowledge about language training institutions prior to their migration (Table 5.1.4). Sixty-three percent of those who had prior knowledge on this learnt about language training institutions from the *dalals*. DEMO and Probashi Kallyan Desk did not play any role in disseminating information on opportunity of language skill training centre.

Table 5.1.4: Language Skill

Language Skill	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	1	3.4	1	4.8	2	3.6
Relatives	2	33.3	2	6.9	2	9.5	6	10.7
Returned migrant	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Neighbours	0	0.0	1	3.4	0	0.0	1	1.8
UP chairman / Members	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dalals	1	16.7	20	69.0	14	66.7	35	62.5
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Travel agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Probashi kallyan desk in DC office	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	1	16.7	1	3.4	0	0.0	2	3.6
Medical center	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	2	33.3	4	13.8	4	19.0	10	17.9
Total	6	100	29	100	21	100	56	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

5.2 Navigating through Government Procedures

BMET online registration

Only 76 of the 763 migrants who have experienced fraud responded to this query. Thirteen percent of those who have responded registered online with BMET with the facilitation of the Migrants' Rights Protection Committees (Table 5.2.1). Three percent have secured the services of DEMOs, one percent used the UP Information Centre and another seven percent have taken help of immediate families and relatives. For the remaining 76 percent online registration has been taken care of by the *dalals*. Given the educational background of the migrant it is natural that they will require the help of those who know the process. Here also one finds that recruiting agencies did not have any role and the role of DEMOs was marginal.

Table 5.2.1: Assistance to BMET online registration

BMET online registration	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.0	1	1.3
Relatives	1	7.7	1	3.3	2	6.1	4	5.3
UP chairman / Members	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.3
Dalals	10	76.9	20	66.7	28	84.9	58	76.3
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
DEMO	1	7.7	1	3.3	0	0.0	2	2.6
MRPC	0	0.0	8	26.7	2	6.1	10	13.2
Total	13	100	30	100	33	100	76	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Support in processing passport

Earlier researches have shown (Siddiqui, 2000) that a large number of short term contract migrants used to process their passports through *dalals*. This survey however shows that such dependence has reduced significantly. Sixty-one percent of the migrants have processed their passport on their own. Only 33 percent used the help of *dalals*. A few accepted the help of relatives. These indicate that dependence on *dalals* in securing passports has reduced.

Table 5.2.2: Support in making passport (multiple responses)

Making passport	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	1	0.5	2	0.5	2	0.5	5	0.5
Relatives	7	3.7	13	3.5	9	2.4	29	3.1
Returnee migrant	0	0.0	3	0.8	0	0.0	3	0.3
Neighbours	4	2.1	5	1.4	6	1.6	15	1.6
UP chairman / Members	5	2.7	0	0.0	1	0.3	6	0.6
<i>Dalals</i>	54	28.9	138	37.6	112	29.7	304	32.7
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.2
Medical center	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	116	62.0	205	55.9	246	65.3	567	60.9
Total responses	187	100	367	100	377	100	931	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Meeting Recruiting agencies

When migrants are recruited by the *dalals* they usually get in touch with recruitment agencies during the final stages of the recruitment process. Out of a total of 763 respondents, only 271 (35.5%) households have gone to the office of a recruiting agency. Eighty-one percent of those who went to recruiting agency offices were accompanied by *dalals* or their representatives (Table: 5.2.3). Eight percent went to the recruiting agency office on their own. Another 9 percent accessed the recruiting agencies with the help of relatives, neighbours and family members. This indicates that the migrants require assistance to access the services that recruiting agencies provide at the final stage of migration. In rare cases migrants participated in the walk-in interviews arranged by recruiting agencies in their Dhaka office. Their numbers are very insignificant.

Table 5.2.3: Connecting with recruiting agencies for interview

RA for interview	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	4	3.5	1	0.8	5	1.9
Relatives	3	13.0	5	4.3	5	3.8	13	4.8
Returnee migrant	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8	1	0.4
Neighbours	1	4.4	2	1.7	3	2.3	6	2.2
UP chairman / Members	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Dalals	16	69.6	93	80.2	110	83.3	219	80.8
Travel agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.8	1	0.4
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	3	2.6	0	0.0	3	1.1
Own	3	13.0	9	7.8	11	8.3	23	8.5
Total	23	100	116	100	132	100	271	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Payment for migration

The most important task of recruitment of worker is the payment of migration cost. 763 migrant households have paid money as migration cost 931 times (Table 5.2.4). This indicates that migration costs are paid in installments. It is noteworthy that 90 percent of the migrants have paid the installments to the *dalals*. Only 3 percent paid directly to the recruiting agents. It was seen earlier that only a small percentage of migrants are recruited by the recruiting agents. The small number of those migrants who went through family, relatives and neighbours made payment to those sources.

Table 5.2.4: Medium of paying migration costs (multiple responses)

Medium	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	1	0.5	7	1.9	3	0.8	11	1.2
Relatives	9	4.7	24	6.5	14	3.8	47	5.1
Returnee migrant	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.1
Neighbours	0	0.0	5	1.4	4	1.1	9	1.0
UP chairman / Members	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Dalals</i>	175	92.1	316	85.9	343	92.0	834	89.6
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
NGO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Travel agency	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Probashi kallyan desk in DC office	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	3	1.6	13	3.5	8	2.1	24	2.6
Medical center	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	0	0.0	2	0.5	1	0.3	3	0.3
Total responses	190	100	368	100	373	100	931	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Pre-departure briefing

Pre-departure briefing is mandatory for all departing migrants. Up to 2016, the Dhaka office of BMET used to offer this training. Only recently BMET has decentralised the programme to 3 districts. Pre-departure briefing takes place just before deployment. It is natural that aspirant migrants would not be availing the briefing at this stage. Six of the aspirant migrants are almost ready to depart and they have availed such briefing (Table 5.2.5). Of the total 763 migrants, only 142 have received this briefing. In 90 percent cases, it is the *dalals* who accompanied or arranged their briefing at BMET. Seven percent of them have gone on their own. They are mostly second time migrants.

Table 5.2.5: Pre-departure orientation

Pre-departure orientation	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.5	1	0.7
Relatives	0	0.0	1	1.4	1	1.5	2	1.4
Returned migrant	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Neighbours	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
UP chairman / Members	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Dalals</i>	6	100.0	64	90.1	58	89.2	128	90.1
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Travel agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Probashi kallyan desk in DC office	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.5	1	0.7
Medical center	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	0	0.0	6	8.5	4	6.2	10	7.0
Total	6	100	71	100	65	100	142	100

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the Role of *Dalals*, 2017

Accompanying the migrant to Dhaka

806 responses were received on whether the migrants needed any kind of support for coming to Dhaka to complete the formalities of migration. In 65 percent cases, the *dalals* or their representatives accompanied the aspirant migrants when they came to Dhaka for processing migration (Table 5.2.6). Twenty-one percent migrants came on their own, 8 percent came with their relatives and 4 percent with their immediate family members. In cases where migrants and their families came on their own, *dalals* established the contact between the migrants with their counterparts in Dhaka. Occasionally, the representatives of Dhaka based counterparts of the *dalals* received the migrants from the bus and rail stations.

Table 5.2.6: Accompanying the migrants to Dhaka (multiple responses)

Accompanying to Dhaka	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	3	2.0	16	4.8	11	3.4	30	3.7
Relatives	10	6.7	34	10.2	22	6.8	66	8.2
Returned migrant	0	0.0	1	0.3	2	0.6	3	0.4
Neighbours	1	0.7	6	1.8	5	1.6	12	1.5
<i>Dalals</i>	99	66.4	199	59.6	226	70.0	524	65.0
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
BMET	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Own	36	24.2	74	22.2	57	17.7	167	20.7
Others	0	0.0	4	1.2	0	0.0	4	0.5
Total responses	149	100	334	100	323	100	806	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Facilitation of medical test

Once an employer agrees to appoint, the worker then has to go through a medical test. The tests are conducted by diagnostic centres that are accredited by the labour receiving countries under the aegis of the GCC Approved Medical Centres' Association (GAMCA). Migrants or their household members are hardly aware of the need for medical tests. They have learnt about this requirement mostly from the *dalals* in Bangladesh and also relatives/*dalals* operational in the destination. The diagnostic centres are located in the capital city of Dhaka. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents accessed these medical centres with the help of *dalals* (Table 5.2.7), 22 percent went on their own. Some of them who went on their own are second time migrants. They have some knowledge about diagnostic centres. Another 7 percent directly contacted the medical centres. It is the friends and relatives who sent visas from abroad who informed the migrants about the particular medical centre and asked them to proceed with medical tests with that centre. Eight percent were accompanied by their family members. It is again the local *dalals* who connected the migrants with the diagnostic centres through their network in Dhaka.

The dependence on *dalals* in respect to medical tests becomes clearer from table 5.2.8, which lists how migrants deposit the fees of medical tests. It shows that 69 percent of the migrants deposited the money to the *dalals* and 23 percent deposited the money directly to the medical centre themselves. Four percent made the payment to the recruiting agencies.

Table 5.2.7: Accompanying migrants to medical centres (multiple responses)

Medical test	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	3	2.3	8	2.4	9	2.6	20	2.5
Relatives	4	3.1	22	6.7	17	5.0	43	5.4
Returned migrant	0	0.0	1	0.3	1	0.3	2	0.3
Neighbours	3	2.3	4	1.2	3	0.9	10	1.3
<i>Dalals</i>	93	72.7	208	63.0	243	71.3	544	68.1
DEMO	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.1
Medical center	4	3.1	26	7.9	23	6.7	53	6.6
Own	21	16.4	60	18.2	45	13.2	126	15.8
Total responses	128	100	330	100	341	100	799	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Table 5.2.8: Depositing money for medical test (multiple responses)

Deposit money for medical test	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Relatives	5	4.1	12	3.8	10	3.0	27	3.5
Neighbours	0	0.0	2	0.6	2	0.6	4	0.5
<i>Dalals</i>	98	79.7	207	65.5	224	68.3	529	69.0
Travel agency	1	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1
Recruiting agency	2	1.6	9	2.8	21	6.4	32	4.2
Medical center	17	13.8	86	27.2	71	21.6	174	22.7
Total responses	123	100	316	100	328	100	767	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Assistance for Skills test

Some jobs require a skill test. Construction work is a good example. There are centres which provide training on different trades associated with construction work, such as electrical, plumbing and bricklaying. Table 5.2.9 shows that, only 54 migrants went through some form of skills test. In securing that 74 percent received assistance of the *dalals* and another 11 percent from Technical Training Centres (TTC).

Table 5.2.9: Help in skill test (multiple responses)

Help in Skill test	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.9	1	1.9
Relatives	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.9	1	1.9
<i>Dalals</i>	4	100.0	19	79.2	17	65.4	40	74.1
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	1	4.2	0	0.0	1	1.9
TTC	0	0.0	1	4.2	5	19.2	6	11.1
Others	0	0.0	3	12.5	2	7.7	5	9.3
Total responses	4	100	24	100	26	100	54	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

BMET Smart Card

As seen in the previous chapter, emigration clearance is issued to migrant workers by the BMET once the recruiting agency submits an application with the following documents: (a) application in a prescribed form, (b) attested demand letter, (c) attested Power of Attorney, (d) attested contract paper signed by the employer and the employee, (e) Work Permit/Visa and Passport, (f) registration, (g) fingerprint ID, (h) advance income tax statement and (e) welfare fees. When BMET is convinced of the authenticity of the documents it issues clearance and provides a Smart Card. An important area of investigation was confirming who the migrants received the Smart Card from. Only 40 households responded to this question. The rest did not know about this. Table 5.2.10 shows that 73 percent of those who responded had received this smart card from the *dalals*. Around 18 percent had received it from BMET. Another 5 percent had received it from the recruiting agencies.

Table 5.2.10: BMET Smart Card (multiple responses)

BMET Smart Card	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	2.5
Relatives	0	0.0	1	5.3	0	0.0	1	2.5
<i>Dalals</i>	1	50.0	13	68.4	15	79.0	29	72.5
Recruiting agency	1	50.0	0	0.0	1	5.3	2	5.0
BMET	0	0.0	5	26.3	2	10.5	7	17.5
Total responses	2	100	19	100	19	100	40	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Assistance in fingerprinting

Table 5.2.11 shows around 180 households have responded to the question of fingerprint. Of them 76 percent sought the assistance of the *dalals* in accessing the BMET service for fingerprinting. Only 11 percent did not need any assistance, accessing BMET on their own. In handful of cases immediate family members, relatives and neighbours accompanied them.

Table 5.2.11: Accompanying to the place of fingerprint (multiple responses)

Finger Print	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Dalals</i>	9	25.7	19	18.3	20	22.0	48	20.9
DEMO	2	5.7	0	0.0	1	1.1	3	1.3
Recruiting agency	3	8.6	5	4.8	3	3.3	11	4.8
BMET	21	60.0	80	76.9	67	74.6	168	73.0
Total responses	35	100	104	100	91	101	230	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

5.3 Travel Arrangement

Arrangement of air ticket

Usually in processing migration the migrant comes to an understanding with a *dalal*, who then takes care of all the necessary steps. It is usually a verbal contract of a lump sum amount negotiated with the *dalal*. Table 5.3.1 shows that 85 percent of those who went abroad had received the air ticket from the *dalals*. Five percent of migrant households had received an air ticket from the recruiting agencies. Another 5 percent had used travel agencies.

Table 5.3.1: Facilitation of air ticket (multiple responses)

Take air ticket	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	0	0.0	3	1.0	6	1.9	9	1.4
Relatives	0	0.0	11	3.6	7	2.2	18	2.8
Neighbours	0	0.0	2	0.7	4	1.3	6	0.9
<i>Dalals</i>	17	94.4	253	83.8	276	86.5	546	85.4
Travel agency	0	0.0	15	5.0	14	4.4	29	4.5
Recruiting agency	1	5.6	18	6.0	12	3.8	31	4.9
Total responses	18	100	302	100	319	100	639	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Travel to the Airport

Migrants in this study originate from Tangail. Most of them have not travelled by air in the past. They are accompanied by those who have knowledge of Dhaka city and airport. Table 5.3.2 shows that 33 percent of the migrants have been accompanied to the airport by the immediate family members and 26 percent were accompanied by relatives. Around 6 percent went to the airport on their own. This group perhaps is constituted by second or third time migrants. The number of those who had taken the assistance of *dalals* is relatively small. Even then one-third of the migrants had taken assistance of the *dalals*.

Table 5.3.2: Accompanying migrants to airport (multiple responses)

Accompanying to airport	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	12	44.4	111	33.2	112	32.2	235	33.2
Relatives	4	14.8	99	29.6	83	23.9	186	26.2
Neighbours	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.9	3	0.4
<i>Dalals</i>	9	33.3	102	30.5	126	36.2	237	33.4
Recruiting agency	0	0.0	1	0.3	2	0.6	3	0.4
Own	2	7.4	21	6.3	22	6.3	45	6.4
Total responses	27	100	334	100	348	100	709	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Help in opening bank account

Departing migrants must open a bank account for sending remittances. Earlier the number of migrants who had bank accounts was quite low (Siddiqui and Abrar, 2003). They used to send money to their family members or relatives' accounts. Nowadays the number of migrants who open a bank account before departure is increasing. Table 5.3.3 shows that 103 migrants have opened bank accounts before they departed for overseas jobs. Of those, around 50 percent have opened bank accounts with the help of immediate and extended family members or on their own. The rest took the help of *dalals*. These *dalals* may not be the same *dalals* who were processing their migration, but might simply be the fixers who hover around the banks offering their services for small fees. It is important to note that bank accounts are mostly opened by current and returnee migrants. That is why of those who paid but could not migrate, only four had bank accounts. The important point is that at least half required the assistance of *dalals* in opening bank accounts.

Table 5.3.3: Help in opening bank account (multiple responses)

Help in opening bank account	Failed		Current		Returnee		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Immediate family	1	25.0	6	10.2	3	7.5	10	9.7
Relatives	0	0.0	8	13.6	2	5.0	10	9.7
<i>Dalals</i>	2	50.0	26	44.1	26	65.0	54	52.4
Own	1	25.0	19	32.2	9	22.5	29	28.2
Total responses	4	100	59	100	40	100	103	100
Total respondents	171		284		308		763	

Source: RMMRU HH survey on the role of *dalals*, 2017

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter shows us how the migrants navigate through a variety of institutions to realise their migration aspirations. It convincingly demonstrates the validity of the *dalals*' claim of providing an extensive range of services to the migrants.

More than half of the migrants received initial migration information from the *dalals*. About one-fifth received information from immediate families and relatives and a little less than one-fifth already had information about migration opportunities from interactions with would-be migrants or from other migrant members of their family. Along with information on the scope of migration, around 65 percent of the respondents received information on training centers and the types of trainings available, such as language and vocational skills from *dalals*. Ninety percent of the migrants pay the cost of their migration to the *dalals*. Negating earlier study findings this research shows that dependency on *dalals* in procuring passport has reduced compared to the past. Nonetheless, around 33 percent of them still use the *dalals*. Almost 78 percent of the migrants accessed work permits through the *dalals*. We have seen that along with professional *dalals*, it is the current and returnee migrant families who sell visas, and they are also treated by the migrants as *dalals*.

Once the formal procedure of clearance begins, migrants will be completely lost without a service provider. Only 15 to 20 percent were aware of some official formalities that are required to migrate. Even in those cases, more than 60 percent identified *dalals* as facilitators of those services. The steps include payment of migration cost, interviews with recruiting agency, fingerprinting with BMET, receiving Smart Cards, air ticket, travel to airport etc. This chapter establishes that *dalals* work as an essential bridge among the government agencies, recruiting agencies and the potential migrants.

CHAPTER VI

DALALS ARE NO OUTSIDERS

In Chapter IV we have seen that more than half of the migrants identified *dalals* as cheaters. In Chapter V we have also noted that migrants identified the *dalals* as the only service provider available to them when they want to process migration. The government recruitment agency, BOESL, and licensed private recruiting agencies have legal authority to recruit workers. However, these agencies are not present in the field where most of the recruitment tasks take place. It has also been seen that licensed recruiting agencies or BOESL that are meant to perform recruitment functions are not only absent in the village or *upazilas*, they are not even operating at the district level. It is under such conditions the recruiting agencies recruit workers through the local *dalals* and BOESL recruits through newspaper and online advertisements. This section attempts to understand the problem of recruitment from the perspective of *dalals*. It begins with giving an idea about who these *dalals* are in Tangail. Are they indispensable? How do they recruit workers? How do they get information on the availability of work permits and then match those with aspirant migrant workers? This section is based on interviews with 113 *dalals* of Tangail and district level consultations also held in Tangail Sadar.

6.1 Who are the *Dalals*?

Dalals are intermediaries who connect the aspirant migrants with Bangladeshi recruiting agencies, intermediaries of destination countries and individual migrants in destination who sell work visas. They work as bridge between aspirant migrants and all types of service providers that include, among others, BMET, recruiting agencies, and diagnostic centres. This chapter provides an understanding of the socio-

demographic and economic background of the *dalals* as well as their perspective on the vacuum in the current worker recruitment system and the essential role they perform in fulfilling that. The chapter also presents the demands that they have raised before policy makers. First let us examine where the *dalals* are located.

Locations of *Dalals*

Table 6.1.1 shows that 22 percent of 113 *dalals* are from Paikora Union and Elenga municipality, 17 percent from Kalihati *upazila*, 19 percent from the neighbouring *upazilas* of Elenga and Kalihati, and 20 percent are from Tangail Sadar. The rest 23 percent are from *upazilas* close to Tangail Sadar, i.e., Korotia, Mirzapur, and Kaliakoir. This shows that *dalals* who are identified for this research operate in village, union, *upazila*¹³ Tangail sadar and a few *upazilas* of Tangail district. More importantly, around half of them are part of the local population. They are not outsiders to the migrants.

Table 6.1.1 Location of *dalals*

Location	Number	Percentage
Within the study union and municipality	25	22.1
Kalihati <i>Upazila</i>	19	16.8
Close by <i>Upazilas</i>	21	18.6
Tangail <i>Sadar</i>	22	19.5
Within Tangail district	26	23.0
Total	113	100

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Years of Involvement

On an average these 113 *dalals* are involved with recruitment of workers for overseas job for 12 years (Table 6.1.2). One is pursuing this business for more than 40 years. The most recent one to join this business has been functioning for one year. The fact that *dalals* are local residents and are operating for a long time may indicate that they enjoy a certain degree of trust among the local population who aspire to migrate or send their family members abroad. This may also indicate that rural populations do not have access to any other formal institutions that would provide the services required to process short term international contract migration. The experiences of a few *dalals* are shared in the following that explains how they got involved in this business.

13 Second tier of local government of Bangladesh.

Table 6.1.2: Average years of involvement in *dalal* profession

Involvement in <i>Dalal</i> profession	Year
Average	12.22
Maximum	40
Minimum	1
Total number of cases	113

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

As one *dalal* narrates, “I am known in my locality as Anwar *Dalal* however my name is Anwar Hossain. Currently I am 56 years old. I studied only up to class 8. My family did not possess much of agricultural land. Since I was a teenager, I had been involved in different professions, ranging from agricultural labourer to trading in fabrics. Along with these I got involved in sending workers abroad since 1990. One of my fellow villagers knew the owner of a recruiting agency. He asked me if anyone from my locality would be interested to go abroad for work. I talked with some potential families and it clicked. Since then I have been in this trade. Of course, I am also involved in a few other trades”.

Sixty-year old Abdul Goni Sarkar informs, “I have lived in Tangail Sadar since my birth. My family circumstances did not allow me to pursue education. I could study only up to primary level. I was involved in the trading of fabrics. I also own a tailoring shop where I work as the tailor master. Accidentally I got involved in sending workers abroad as one of my clients introduced me to an owner of a recruiting agency. For the last 22 years sending workers has become my major profession”.

Mohammad Berek Mia of Uttar para village of Kalihati *upazila* narrates, “I only studied up to class 8. When I was only 15, I went to Saudi Arabia and worked there for 12 years and returned in 2001. I maintained my contacts with the recruiting agent who sent me to Saudi Arabia. After my return I approached him whether he would be interested to recruit people from my locality. I began recruiting from my locality for him. Later I established contacts with others as well. I even followed up on newspaper advertisement of recruiting agencies and supplied them with workers”.

These narratives show that most of the *dalals* came into this profession accidentally. None of them planned to get into this profession. While doing other jobs, their networks exposed them to institutions or people who were involved in recruiting and looking for potential migrants.

Other Current and Prior Occupation of *Dalals*

Current Occupation

An analysis of the work of *dalals* reveals that sending workers abroad is not the only work these *dalals* are engaged in (Table 6.1.3). Ninety-four percent of *dalals* have at-least one other profession. Many of them have multiple professions. The extra work perhaps helps them mitigate the risks associated with sending workers abroad. In this table, we included the most important profession other than sending workers abroad. Thirty-six percent are involved in small and medium scale business/trade. This includes trading in handloom sarees and other readymade garments, printing press, etc. Twelve percent own shops in the marketplace. This includes stationary stores, car lubricant stores, furniture stores and corrugated sheet stores. Fifteen percent of them work as contractors/suppliers of bricks and other materials. Seven percent are involved in land brokerage. Three percent of them are involved with local politics. One of them is currently a member of *Union Parishad*¹⁴. Six percent of the *dalals* are not involved in any other trade. Sending workers abroad is their only profession.

Prior Occupation

Prior occupation of *dalals* is an important indicator to understand the background of *dalals*. Interestingly, Table 6.1.3 also shows that 100 percent of them were pursuing some other occupation prior to sending workers abroad. Only two percent were students. The most intriguing finding is 40 percent have been migrants themselves. Twenty-two percent were involved in some kind of small or medium scale trading or business before they took up the profession of facilitating migration of workers abroad. Only eight percent of them has been involved in agriculture and another 8 percent were working as contractors and suppliers. Four percent were in the service sector. The other four percent owned different types of stores. Three percent worked as land brokers. The rest were involved in poultry, life insurance, and owning of printing presses.

14 Lowest tier of local government of Bangladesh.

Table 6.1.3: Previous occupations of *dalals* and other most important occupations at present

Type of occupation	Prior occupation	Percentage	Current additional occupation	Percentage
Working abroad	45	39.8	0	0.0
Small/medium scale business	25	22.1	41	36.3
Farming	9	8.0	12	10.6
Service	5	4.4	11	9.7
Contractor / supplier of brick and other material	9	8.0	17	15.0
Housewife	3	2.7	0	0.0
Foreign currency exchange business	1	0.9	0	0.0
Poultry business	2	1.8	0	0.0
Student	2	1.8	0	0.0
Sanitary fitting factory	1	0.9	0	0.0
Land broker	3	2.7	8	7.1
Politics	2	1.8	3	2.7
Life insurance	1	0.9	0	0.0
Printing press	1	0.9	0	0.0
Shopkeeper	4	3.5	14	12.4
No other profession	0	0.0	7	6.2
Total	113	100	113	100

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Razeda is a UP member. She became engaged in this line of work to serve her constituency. In her own words, “I am a member of the local *union parishad*. I own sanitary and clothing stores in the marketplace. Sending female workers abroad is a new profession for me. I am involved in this not to make money, but rather for creating employment for the destitute women of my constituency”.

In Sanowar Hossain’s own words, “Although I have sent 30,000 workers abroad, I do not solely depend on this business. I also own a printing press. I started that business before I became a *dalal*”.

Khorshed Alam of Korotia is 45 years old. So far he has sent 500 workers abroad. He says, “I was not among those whose prosperous families owned land good for agriculture. I began my career as a petty trader and hoarder. I would buy chilli when it is produced and then sell when the price increased. Over the years I also got involved in trading in land. Currently I am involved in different professions. Sending workers abroad is only one of them”.

Mohammad Mosharaf Hossain of Korotia, who is 43 years old, is involved in multiple types of brokerage. In his own words, “For a long time I mediated between buyers and sellers of land, shops etc. Supplying brick and other construction materials is also part of my business”.

Migration Experience of *Dalals*

We have seen in Table 6.1.3 that 40 percent of the *dalals* themselves were migrants before they got engaged in sending workers abroad. Six percent of them have more than one migration experience. Twenty-six percent went to Saudi Arabia, 21 percent went to Malaysia, 12 percent to UAE, 7 percent migrated to Korea, 10 percent to Libya, and 12 percent went to Qatar. Abrar *et. al.* (2017) find that many *dalals* first turned to this profession upon return from overseas. The networks they established in the country they reside in create the opportunity for them to get involved in this business. In all likelihood some of the *dalals* in this research might have also taken up the profession on the basis of their social networks in the countries of destination.

Table 6.1.4: 21 Migration destinations of *dalals* when they were migrants

Destination country	No.	%
Malaysia	9	21.4
Saudi Arabia	11	26.2
Singapore	4	9.5
Qatar	5	11.9
Libya	4	9.5
UAE	5	11.9
Oman	1	2.4
Korea	3	7.1
Total	42	100

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Note: Information on 3 *dalals* are missing.

6.2 Involvement in Migration Trade

Number of Migrants Sent

Table 6.2.1 shows on an average these *dalals* have sent more than 900 workers abroad. One claimed to have sent around 30,000 and the lowest number of workers (5) was sent by a *dalal* who has been operating for a year. Sending an average of 900 workers by 113 *dalals* may indicate that *dalals* enjoy certain credibility and trust of the local population. This could be the reason why they could facilitate recruitment of such

a huge number of migrants. It may also even be the case that though migrants get cheated in the current recruitment process, they have to avail the services of these *dalals* as no other mechanism is available to them.

Table: 6.2.1 Number of migrants sent

Migrant sent	Number
Average	900
Max	30000
Min	5
Total response	113

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Nikhil Chandra Pal of Korotia has a BSc degree. In his own words, “I have been involved with business of sending workers since 1980 and to date I have sent 30,000 workers to different parts of the Middle east and Malaysia. I mainly send male workers. This is because I do not want to get involved in sending female domestic workers, as it may adversely impact my reputation. However, I have sent 40 females to work in hospitals as cleaners”.

Rafique says, “I am known as a very successful *dalal*. People of my area are confident that if they can come to me they will be able to go abroad for work. By the grace of God I have been able to send around 25,000 workers to more than 10 countries. I was a migrant myself in Saudi Arabia. I began to send workers first to Saudi Arabia and later to other countries”.

Razeda Begum, a member of Paikora *Union Parishad* states, “I am the only female *dalal* in my area. I have been working as a member of the *union parishad* for the last two terms. A few disturbing cases of female workers sent abroad came to my notice during my time as a *union parishad* member. We had to mediate these cases with *dalals*. At that time I also attended a few training sessions on safe migration with RMMRU. RMMRU provides pre-decision training to aspirant migrants. Later many aspirant migrant women started coming to me asking to be sent abroad. In this process I got connected with the Tangail DEMO office, as well as with representatives of some recruiting agencies. After the initial contacts these agencies began to inquire if I knew any woman who would be interested in going abroad. All along I wanted to serve those women who desperately needed work. Since 2013 I have been sending female workers aboard with the help of recruiting agencies.

However, I always verify the visas which are provided to me by the recruiting agencies with the local DEMO office. To date I have sent 80 female and 8 male workers".

The experiences of Gopal, Rafique and Razeda show that they have established certain credibility among the local people as recruiters. Otherwise they could not have continued to send workers.

Countries where they send Migrants

Table 6.2.2 indicates there is a correlation between a *dalal's* own migration destination and the countries where they send workers. They may send workers to many countries, yet the country to which they migrated in the past constitutes an important destination for the migrants whose cases they process. These 113 *dalals* altogether provided 380 responses. On average they are sending workers to 3 to 4 countries. Twenty-six percent have been sending workers to Saudi Arabia and the other 23 percent to Malaysia. Qatar is another important destination where 21 percent of workers are sent. It is interesting that Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Qatar are the three destinations where majority of the *dalals* had earlier been migrants themselves. Besides these countries they also send workers to UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Singapore, Lebanon, Libya, South Korea, Jordan, Bahrain, and Iraq. This means that their prior migration experience works as a link to subsequent involvement in the profession of sending workers abroad.

Of course sending workers for overseas job also depends on the policy of destination countries. For example, the recent increase in participation of Bangladeshi workers in the Saudi market is directly linked with the Saudi government's policy of withdrawing restrictions on male migrants of Bangladesh after a long gap of seven years. The same is true for Malaysia as well. Malaysia periodically changed the source countries of its migrant workforce. In 1991 Bangladesh replaced Indonesia as a source country. During the mid 1990s, Malaysia was the largest employer of Bangladeshi workers. However, in around 2000, the Malaysian government stopped taking Bangladeshi workers. It replaced Bangladeshis with Nepalese migrants. In 2007, a large group of Bangladeshis migrated to Malaysia almost entirely replacing Nepalese workers. Again around 2010, Malaysia stopped taking migrants from Bangladesh. The cases of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia highlight that although returnee migrants who turn themselves into *dalals* begin their business by using their networks in the countries of destination, over the

years they diversify the countries on the basis of the availability of work visas in the market.

Table 6.2.2: Countries where they send migrants (multiple responses)

Destination	Number	Percentage
Saudi Arabia	100	26.3
Malaysia	89	23.4
Qatar	81	21.3
Kuwait	13	3.4
UAE	46	12.1
Oman	13	3.4
Singapore	10	2.6
Iraq	3	0.8
Libya	3	0.8
South Korea	1	0.3
Maldives	9	2.4
Bahrain	3	0.8
Jordan	2	0.5
Korea	2	0.5
Roman	1	0.3
Brunei	2	0.5
Lebanon	2	0.5
Total responses	380	100

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Accessing work visa

Dalals access visas from different sources. These may be recruiting agencies, close relatives in the destination country, other contacts in the destination country, newspaper advertisements, travel agencies, etc. They also provide services to migrant families who receive their work permits through their own contacts in the destination country. A *dalal* uses different sources at different times. Recruiting agencies are the main source of work visas for *dalals*. About 43 percent of *dalals* mentioned that they received demand from recruiting agencies for supplying workers. Twenty-four percent of the migrants also followed newspaper advertisements, and 14 percent had some contacts in the destination country. It is mostly Bangladeshis involved in trading in work visas. About 10 percent are families of current migrants. Current migrants send work visas from abroad and their family recruits new workers. These are the cases where family members of current migrants have become *dalals*. Around 5 percent mentioned that travel agencies also

recruit workers through them. The procedure of receiving information on the availability of new visas is simple. *Dalals* receive calls from recruiting agencies and others about the need for new workers. They also periodically contact recruiting agencies and others to enquire about the availability of new visas. For example Kudrat Ali returned from Saudi Arabia years ago. His acquaintance, who was his supervisor, sends him visas every now and then. He then recruits workers from his locality and at the final stage manages government formalities through a known recruiting agency.

In some cases, *dalals* have close relatives in the country of destination. They are either returnee migrants turned into *dalals* or relatives of current migrants turned into *dalals*. The relatives procure and send visas to these *dalals*. A good example of this is Asma and her husband. They were working in Qatar. Asma has returned as her children needed her. But her husband is still working in Qatar. He regularly sends work visas and she sells them to her fellow villagers.

A few *dalals* receive verbal demand for workers from other intermediaries located in Dhaka. Some intermediaries who operate in other *upazilas* of Tangail district such as Korotia, Mirzapur, and Kaliakoir also have connections with *dalals* operating in our study sites, Elenga and Kalihati. If they do not get the workers matching their needs then they get in touch with the local *dalals*, in this case *dalals* operational in Elenga and Kalihati. None of them had mentioned any working relationship with *dalals* of other districts. BOESL and recruiting agencies often publish circulars in newspapers about job opportunities. These *dalals* then follow up on the circular and get in touch with the concerned agencies.

Interestingly, a few mentioned travel agency as the source of work permit. Officially, the travel agencies are not authorized to send workers. However, it is generally perceived that some recruiting agencies have their own travel agencies. In all likelihood the identity of recruiting agencies and travel agencies gets blurred on such occasions.

Table 6.2.3: Main sources of acquiring work visa (multiple responses)

Source of visa	Number	Percentage
Recruiting agency	90	40.9
Close relatives in destination	20	9.1
Contacts in destination	30	13.6
News paper advertisement	50	22.7
Travel agency	10	4.5
Potential migrants themselves receive and RAs process them	20	9.1
Total responses	220	100

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

Financial benefits of *Dalals*

Table 6.2.4 shows the financial benefits received by the *dalals* from their recruitment functions. The *dalals* interviewed inform that 10-15 years ago on an average they would make Taka 5000 from processing a work visa. Since then income has increased. However, income from processing migration may vary according to the country of destination. The highest amount of profit they made in 2018 was from sending workers to Saudi Arabia. The margin of profit ranged from Taka 30,000 to 40,000 per person. For quite a while Saudi Arabia put a bar on recruiting workers from Bangladesh. However, Saudi visa is the most sought after visa among the migrants. This is because in Saudi Arabia a worker can stay back for unlimited period subject to renewal of his/her contract by the employer. Perhaps this is the reason for such a high profit margin. Their profit from sending workers to the UAE ranges from Tk. 20,000 to 25,000. In case of Malaysia, it is Taka 15,000-20,000. During the study period (2017-2018), the lowest amount of profit they made was when they sent workers to Qatar and Oman. Their profit ranged from Tk. 10,000 to 15,000. The reason behind low profit in case of Qatar and Oman is that once the Malaysian market opened, demand to go to Qatar and Oman has reduced. The interest to go to Saudi Arabia and Malaysia superseded the interest to go to other countries.

However, the figure mentioned above could be the information that the *dalals* shared publicly. There could be a gap between actual profit they make and what they have revealed. We must also consider the financial gains the *dalals* may reap through cheating the migrants. Although they put the blame on the recruiting agents it is likely that in the absence of any mechanism to monitor them, many of the *dalals* themselves cheat migrants for windfall profit.

Table 6.2.4: Earnings of *dalals* from processing recruitment of workers

Country name	Amount (Taka)
Saudi Arabia	30,000-40,000
Malaysia	15,000-20,000
Qatar	10,000-15,000
Oman	10,000-15,000
UAE	20,000-25,000

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitments, RMMRU 2017

The process of recruitment of workers at village level

The next issue is how a *dalal* recruits workers from the grassroots once he has information about potential of receiving new work visa. Once *dalals* have information about new visas they match that with local aspirants in many ways. *Dalals* claim that the aspirant migrants and members of their families are in constant touch with them to receive information if any new job opportunities have arisen. In some instances the families know the *dalals* and in other cases the families secure their whereabouts from relatives or fellow villagers whose migration the *dalal* had earlier facilitated. An important consideration for the families is whether the migrant concerned became successful in his or her migration effort. The aspirant migrant or their families begin to trust the *dalal* based on the latter's track record. Earlier *dalals* used to go door to door to provide information on prospect of migration. At present, migrants continuously visit the *dalals* to enquire if any new visa has arrived. When *dalals* receive any information, they pass it on to the aspirant migrants. *Dalals* may not have formal establishment such as an office but they make themselves available to aspirant migrants in particular locations. These could be their own stores, stores of others, tea stalls in the local markets etc. They disseminate information about new visas that are available. The type of information that the *dalal* pass on include type of job, reliability of the job offer, country of destination, likely cost of migration, and monthly salary. Women *dalals* do not operate from tea stalls or shops. One operates from UP office and the other two from their own homes.

Once the potential migrant agrees to prescribed terms and conditions the *dalal* then collects necessary documents from the migrant for processing the visa. Passport is the most important document. The initial financial transaction begins at this stage. If the visa is directly procured by the

dalal through his or her social network in destination then the *dalal* approaches a licensed recruiting agency to secure the BMET clearance. If the visa is received through the recruiting agencies then all necessary documents including a section of the cost is transferred by the *dalal* to the licensed recruiting agency. *Dalal* or his/her paid staff accompanies the aspirant migrant to the recruiting agency office for interview. If the interview is successful then the migrants are advised by the *dalal* to do the medical test.

6.3 Other Related Services Provided to the Migrants

We have seen earlier that the most important tasks of recruitment such as dissemination of migration information, procurement of workers at grassroots and receipt of payment are conducted by the *dalals*. Ninety-one percent of the *dalals* mentioned that they are the major source of information for the migrants (Table 6.3.1). While performing these jobs they also provide some other related services. If the *dalals* do not render those services it would be difficult for the migrants to access those on their own. Twenty-four percent of the *dalals* state that they have helped the migrants in securing a passport. Forty-three percent claimed that they either provided information or accompanied the migrants to training centers. Forty-seven percent of the *dalals* have helped the migrants in attending the pre-departure training. In this case as well they either accompanied them or arranged people to accompany them to BMET for pre-departure training. Forty-two percent has helped the potential migrants to register online with BMET. Sixty-six percent of the recruiting agencies have rendered services to the migrants to go through medical tests from the medical centers which are recognized by the destination countries. Forty-four percent identified some role of the *dalals* in procuring Smart Cards while 78 percent helped migrants to secure fingerprints at BMET.

Table 6.3.1: Services provided by *dalals*

Services provided at different stages	Yes	%	No	%	Total	%
Information regarding the possibility of migration (work permit)	103	91.2	3	2.7	106	93.8
Help in making passport	27	23.9	79	69.9	106	93.8
Bringing them to Technical training Centres	49	43.4	57	50.4	106	93.8
To bring them for taking Pre-departure training	53	46.9	52	46.0	105	92.9
To help register online with BMET	47	41.6	58	51.3	105	92.9
To obtain medical certificate from GAMCA	75	66.4	29	25.7	104	92.0
To receive Smart Card and give it to the migrant worker	50	44.2	53	46.9	103	91.2
To bring the worker for giving finger print	88	77.9	10	8.8	98	86.7
Total responses	492		341		833	

Source: Interview of *dalals* on recruitment, RMMRU 2017

Note: Each cell represents percentage of total number of responses.

Abu Sayeed's statement elaborates the functions performed by the *dalals* further. He states, "In popular discussion we are portrayed as demons. Newspapers only report bad things about us. My question is why then do local people come to us? They come to us because we render them services that others do not and they know they can catch us if anything goes wrong. They come to us because there is no other way of connecting with the recruiting agencies. The journalists do not understand this. They do not understand recruitment system at all. People like us can continue our trade as we have earned the faith of the local people".

6.4 Challenges Faced by the *Dalals*

During the district and national level consultations *dalals* were presented with the complaints that migrants raised against them. The most common problem noted is that *dalals* unnecessarily withhold migrants' passports so that the latter cannot switch to a different *dalal*. Another common complaint is that *dalals* have not sent workers abroad even though they have paid the cost of migration quite sometimes ago. Some of those who have been able to go abroad complain that they have not been able to secure job in the country of destination as promised by the *dalals*. Non-payment of salary, physical torture, jail and deportation, being subjected ransom after illegal detention, untimely return are also experienced by the migrants. The *dalals* also acknowledged that migrants face a host of problems. However they noted that these issues are complicated. They have identified challenges for which they are unable to help the migrants go overseas within stipulated period of time

or to reduce fraudulence from migration experiences. Following are some of the challenges identified by the *dalals* which not only make the migrants insecure; they also make the *dalals* insecure.

Professional versus amateur *dalals*

The *dalals* who participated in the discussions highlighted that recruiting workers at the grassroots require certain skills. Professional *dalals* can muster that over a long period of time. Besides, they have the experience of managing other types of business that require continuous negotiation. Earlier, some returnee migrants did join this business and learnt the trade over a period of time. Now many amateurs have entered this trade. They are also lumped together as *dalals*. For example, a section of the migrants who is currently working abroad, purchase visa in the place where they work and send those to Bangladesh for their left behind family members to sell. These families do not have any knowledge about processing visa. They create all types of problems. People refer to them as *dalal* as well. The mess they create at the end are treated as problems created by the *dalals*. A section of returnee migrants are also source of the problem. According to *dalal* Akhter Hossain Babu “After returning from abroad a section of migrants themselves get involved into this trade without knowing the ins and outs of the business”. He laments that there is no set qualification or criteria to become a *dalal*. These amateur groups have made the market extremely volatile. There has to be a way of determining who can or cannot eligible to be a *dalal*, he argues.

Anwar Hossain also echoed Akhter Hossain when he says, “Due to lack of any regulation, any person can get involved in this business. This has created a situation where some people enter this business, commit fraud and then they are nowhere to be found. Vis-à-vis that we the professional *dalals* are from the localities of the migrant; we are involved in the same trade for a long time and have some commitment to this trade. When frauds are committed, all *dalals* have to shoulder the blame”.

Visa processing is complicated

Dalals appreciated migrants’ concerns about delay in issuance of visa. However, they identified that there are some genuine complications that delay the visa process. Akhter Hossen Babu explained the situation. In his words, “We have been accused by our customers that we are harassing them by not delivering visa by agreed upon date. Sometimes

they get impatient and demand their money and passport back. We cannot make them understand that it is not our doing. Sometimes there are complications from where the visas are issued. We cannot give the passports back as by then we had already handed those over to the recruiting agents. The recruiting agents claim they had already made the payment for visa and thus cannot return to the money or the passport. It is not possible to return the passport unless we receive those back from the recruiting agencies. More importantly, money has already been spent for the visa to be used; we cannot return the money as the recruiting agency has already made the payment for the visa. Declining the visa will cause major financial loss to us and the recruiting agency. But the migrants only know us and that's why we have to bear the brunt".

Moksud Ali also reiterated this point. He says "In case of delay when migrants want their passport back we are unable to return those. This is because by that time we have already sent the passports to the offices of the recruiting agencies and money has already been transacted in the migrant's name. Under such circumstances there is no other option but to resort to delaying tactics".

Business conducted verbally

Some of the *dalals* opined that sometimes recruiting agencies also do not process applications with correct name and information which delays visa process. Muksed Hossain says "On many occasions, we are in trouble as recruiting agencies do not keep their commitment in furnishing us with visas. Our whole business is conducted based on verbal agreement with the recruiting agencies". It is true that, as there is no legal basis of *dalals*, they have to conduct their business with the recruiting agencies through verbal agreements. If the recruiting agencies violate some of the conditions of their verbal agreements, the *dalals* are helpless. They cannot go to court and seek legal redress. Abdus Salam Mintu says, "We are the service providers but we are the worst sufferers. If we ask who enjoys the fruits of recruiting workers, it is the recruiting agencies who gain the most while we are stigmatized. In effect it is the recruiting agencies who take the sugar from the cane and we the *dalals* are left only with fibers".

Lack of access to legal redress

The vulnerability of *dalals* for not being able to file a case or to seek any other legal redress is adequately portrayed in the statement of

Mohammad Anowar Hossen. Currently he is in big trouble. He narrates, “A registered recruiting agency asked me to recruit 10-12 workers by charging them Tk. 450,000 per person. I have done all the necessary work including collecting the prescribed portion of the money and transferring the amount to the recruiting agency. However, the agency is not sending me the work permit as per their verbal agreement. My clients and their relatives have become impatient. They do not understand my vulnerability and are pressuring me to return the money. Who is there to protect my interest?” Sarcastically Anwar says, “*Office a poreche tala, amar hoiche jala*” (the office door has been padlocked increasing my agony). Majnu Mia of Kumuli notes “the recruiting agencies stab us from the very beginning while they live a glitzy life in the capital”.

Mainuddin Manik expresses his frustration. He says “We do not have any place to seek redress if we are subjected to fraudulence. Since 2014 an employee of a recruiting agency with whom I always transacted has taken Tk. 2,000,000 for issuing visas. Until now, the agency did not issue any visa and only returned Tk. 100,000. Now where do I go?” They would like to have a new title instead of *dalals* or *adam beparis*.

Police harassment

Tota Mia of Paikora states the absence of a legal cover creates scope for the police to harass sub-agents. “My work demands I carry passports from migrants to recruiting agencies. As carrying other people’s passport is not allowed under the law, I have to perform this task clandestinely, like a thief. If I am caught by the police I have to bribe them a handsome amount”.

Physical torture

Motiur Rahman says, “Migrants are not always fair when they complain against us. Recently I am facing a complaint from a migrant that he was not given the job he was promised. He was asked to do heavy lifting in the country of the destination. He is claiming that he thought he would get an office job. I told him when I took you for interview you were asked to lift a 40 kg weight and place on your head. It is natural that they were testing you for *Capu* (menial work) visa. Once you went there, you do not want to do such work and have come back. Is it my responsibility to compensate you? Some of us have been physically assaulted by migrants or their families on such flimsy ground.”

The *dalals* claim in many cases they do not have any control over conditions that migrants face in the countries of destination. In good faith, they receive visa from the recruiting agencies, migrants who are staying abroad and sub-agents of destination countries. They feel vulnerable as migrants or their families hold the *dalals* accountable for the misdeeds committed by other parties. Tota Mia says, “Those who have been able to migrate mostly know their *dalals* and they come to the *dalals* for redress”. Although *dalals* do not have any control over conditions in destination countries, when things go wrong there the migrants blame the *dalals*. They continuously ring them and say rude things. Recently one of clients told him, “Wait, I am coming to Bangladesh. I will break your leg and teach you a lesson that you will never forget”. He further says, “In some cases, we can provide solutions to the aggrieved migrants, but in many others we cannot. If it is a case of failed migration the families or the migrant want their full investment back. In those cases we are held liable for the entire cost although we may earn Tk. 10,000 to 20,000 per migrant. And thus the *dalals* try to negotiate a lower amount as compensation. Nurul Huq says this is when we try to buy time and see if recruiting agencies or others involved in sending the worker can solve the problem. In some cases we may have to refuse payment of any compensation as the fault may lie squarely on the migrant, such as refusing to do hard work, not being able to adjust to particular diets that may be offered, or being simply home sick”.

Lack of human dignity

Dalals who are involved in recruiting workers are socially looked down upon. According to Akhter Hossen Babu “In our society there is no respect for the *dalals*”. My son-in-law is ashamed that I am involved in this profession. He pressed my daughter that I quit this business as soon as possible. I am reminded that I should give priority to my daughter’s happiness. I wish someday people who are pursuing this profession will be respected. A major problem of this trade is that educated people do not participate in this”. Lal Mia Shikder of Delduar informs “People not only defame me by calling me *dalal*, they also address my son and brother as *dalal*’s son and brother”.

Psychological trauma

When things go wrong with a migrant, *dalals* also go through severe mental pressure. Many of them think that some harm will happen to them or to their family members. Ismail Hossen states, “Manpower

business is very sensitive, not everything rests on me. Every now and then I fear that sufferers' curse will chase me and my family". When a migrant is in trouble, their family members continuously put all kinds of pressure on the *dalal*. Family members threaten to beat up the *dalals* or put them behind the bar. During such period many cannot stay home at night. All these take psychological toll on *dalals* and members of their families.

Frustration of *dalals*

Dalals are particularly saddened by fact that only those cases are associated with *dalals* in which something go wrong. They feel that no one gives them credit for so many success stories. Karim Mollah says, "A majority of the migrants do not face major problem while participating in short term labour migration. In fact we have helped many of them to change their fortune. Some of them have constructed new houses and purchased agricultural land. Some others have even purchased commercial land. Migrant's families have invested in poultry, fisheries, establishment of shops in local market. The most successful ones have even constructed buildings in marketplaces. A section of the families have invested in handloom and other factories". *Dalals* roles are never acknowledged in those success stories.

Nikhil Das is quitting this business. He states, "I have done so much good not only for the migrants but also for our society. Due to lack of employment in Bangladesh some of my clients were involved in cheating or theft. Once they went abroad and experienced a stable earning they have changed into responsible human beings. Their families are not the only beneficiary, society at large gained from their contribution. More importantly, we have helped society in reducing the scope of anti-social activities. It is my bad luck that I was never appreciated for my work rather I have endured social humiliation and physical assault. I may have earned Tk. 10,000 but had to refund an amount that was three times more. I do not want to sell my father's property any more that is why I have decided to quit this trade."

Hashmat Ali of Kaliakoir states, "Nine out of ten workers that I sent are doing reasonably well but I never receive any word of gratitude from them. The lone person who is in bad condition threatens me to break my bones over phone from overseas. After returning home he mobilizes others against me".

In addressing the problems faced by the migrants in the destination countries the *dalals* express their helplessness. Hanif Sheikh says, “Migration is a matter of luck. Some people get good employers, others experience hardship. In these cases as well we are the ones who receive the complaints of the migrants. We try to connect with the recruiting agencies in Dhaka or our contacts in country of destination concerned and try to negotiate. In some cases we can reduce the misery of migrants, in others there is very little we can do”.

6.5 What do the *Dalals* Want?

Almost all 113 *dalals* have expressed their desire that their role in recruitment of workers for overseas employment be recognized. There should be a system of regularizing the functions of *dalals*. They should be respected for their contribution in recruiting workers from the grass roots. They also felt that government must find a way of controlling the recruiting agencies from committing fraud with the *dalals*. The recruiting agency should take the responsibility if there are cases of bad visa instead of passing the same on the shoulders of the *dalals*.

Dulal Mia was quite clear why *dalal*'s role should be formalized. He says, “If the government wants to continue labour migration then it should recognize us. If we are not there who will do all the complicated tasks that are needed to be performed to migrate. The government should give us registration or any legal document through which we can perform our task with dignity. The police harassment should stop” says Dulal Mia.

The *dalals* have given various reasons on why they need such recognition. Some feel this will lead to reduction of the psychological trauma that they have to endure. Others think it will give them an identity in the society as they will be able to introduce themselves with dignity and are likely to be treated with honour. They also feel it will also increase their responsibilities. They will not be referred to in demeaning name. According to Nasimuddin of Patrail “I am in such a business that I cannot stay in my own house from time to time. If my business is brought under the purview of the law then I will be able to stay in my home at night”.

Others feel that recognition of their role will lead to accountability of the system. They will not be treated as the source of all evil in recruitment of workers. Their work will receive legal status. They will be free from police harassment. Instances of cheating of workers will reduce and society will benefit from migration through formal channel. Some feel that if their work is recognized they will be able to provide services to the migrants at a lesser cost. It will do away with the police harassment while carrying passport. No less important is that it will also allow them to transact money with recruiting agencies through banks. Thus overall it will reduce the risk of their work and thus in all likelihood will lead to an increase in the volume of their business.

A few of them of course did not see much benefit in such legal status. They thought harassment of general public will not be reduced. Recruiting agencies have legal status. Even then they could not be made accountable. The same thing will happen in their case as well.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter gives an idea about the identity of the *dalals*. It provides an account how they receive information of new job opportunities abroad and how they recruit workers. It also shows that along with recruitment, they provide many other auxiliary services. The chapter amply demonstrates that *dalals* are no outsiders. They live in the locality of migrants and are involved in the trade for a long time. On average they spend almost 12 years in this trade. These 113 *dalals* had sent around 900 workers abroad each on an average. Labour brokerage is not their sole profession. They are involved in many other professions including brokerage such as land. Forty percent of them were migrants themselves in the past. There is a strong correlation between them going abroad and subsequently upon return becoming *dalals*. The countries they had migrated earlier are one of the major destinations where they send workers. The *dalals* secure visa from different sources: direct contacts with recruiting agencies, through newspaper advertisements of recruiting agencies and receiving visas from overseas through own contacts or through links with the locals. Interestingly, *dalals* no longer collect workers by approaching individuals door to door. It is mostly migrants and their relatives who come to the *dalals* to be recruited. Migration related services such as online registration, receiving training, pre-departure orientation, medical test and biometrics, are specialized

services for which migrants require assistance. It is the *dalals* who become the bridge between the migrants and all those service providers. They want recognition for their services. They no longer want to take the full blame of fraudulence in recruitment which they think take place due to gaps in services in the system.

CHAPTER VII

IS REGULARISATION OF *DALAL* FEASIBLE?

This chapter explores whether *dalals* can be regularised and what could be the probable method of doing so? Until now not many countries of origin of short term contract migrant workers have attempted to bring the *dalals* under the legal cover. Only Sri Lanka at one stage initiated a process to regularize *dalals*. However, after the change in government that initiative got stalled.

This chapter draws from district and national level consultations as well as brainstorming session of IBP FLM partners meeting on “Political economy of labour migration from Bangladesh”¹⁵. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section deals with an analysis of stakeholders, i.e., migrants, *dalals*, recruiting agencies and government. The second section presents a few alternatives through which *dalals* can be regularised.

7.1 Interests of Stakeholders

Migrants

If regularisation of *dalals* takes place then migrants will have information about contact details of recruiting agencies on whose behalf the latter operate. In the same vein cheated migrants will have information about the parties involved. In all likelihood this will lead to reduction of fraudulent and irregular practices. It will also enhance the migrants’ trust on the recruitment process as migration outcome will be more predictable. Likewise, the financial losses of migrants who fail to go abroad after paying money are likely to be reduced. This, in turn, may protect aspirant migrants from the loss of asset and other resources and thus the likelihood of indebted migrant families falling into poverty trap.

15 Organised by Prokas on 31 January 2019 in Dhaka.

This research has shown that 19 percent of the total migrants have failed to go abroad even after paying a substantial amount of money. Each of them has lost Tk. 194,000 in their failed attempt. If we extrapolate from the Tangail experience and estimate the loss at national level, we find that the rural poor have lost Tk. 2706.2 crore in 2018. If the functions of *dalals* could be made formal then the financial loss of the migrants can be reduced substantially.

Dalals

Currently the financial and other risks of conducting recruiting business are solely borne by the *dalals* whereas the recruiting agencies remain invisible from entire grassroots recruitment process. Regularization of *dalals* in all likelihood will split the risk between *dalals* and recruiting agencies. Personal security risks of the *dalals* will also be minimized. The income of *dalals* will increase as they will not be the only party liable in case of fraud. It will also lead to enhance professionalism in the *dalal* business as it may make it difficult for returnee migrants or household members of current migrants to become recruiters straightaway. It will also likely to reduce police harassment. Such recognition will free *dalals* from paying bribes at different points particularly for carrying passport of aspirant migrants. Regularization of their role is likely to improve the *dalal's* overall image as the *dalal* business will be recognised as any other respectable job. Thus the social stigma attached with the trade will largely be minimized. Currently there are more than 100,000 *dalals*. Psychosocial stress of such a huge community can be reduced.

Recruiting agency

If the system of recruiting workers through *dalals* is formalized the recruiting agencies can conduct their business openly. This will help the recruiting agencies to get the right kind of workers that matches the job demand. The tasks that recruiting agencies are currently performing illegally will come under the legal purview. Therefore abiding laws will be easier for recruiting agencies. Recruiting agencies will be able to maintain proper documentation of the workers and the *dalals* who have delivered the workers. It will also lead to transparency of their recruitment function. The image crisis that the recruiting agencies face in Bangladesh will largely be addressed through this and their social status will also enhance.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment has recently instructed the recruiting agencies to establish branch offices at the local level in order to recruit workers directly. The catchment areas for recruiting workers by the recruiting agencies are not fixed. This may entail a recruiting agency to open offices in a number of places. From the perspective of recruiting agencies such move will incur major costs. Initiative to regularize *dalals* will offset the need for setting up offices at the lower tiers and save the recruiting agencies from incurring substantial additional costs.

Government

Soon after taking oath the new government has engaged in an image building exercise. As part of that effort it has pledged that it is going to root out corruption from every sector. The regularization of *dalals* will be a concrete action of the government's commitment to eradicate corruption.

All ministries have received instruction from the Prime Minister's secretariat to implement relevant commitments of the Election Manifesto of the ruling party. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment can take the issue of regularizing *dalals* as part of the Ministry's function in materializing the Election Manifesto of the government. This will be an example of good governance, something that the ruling party has been espousing since coming to power for the third time.

It will be easier for the government to govern recruitment once the whole range of activities is brought under the formal structure. This will increase transparency of the government. The government will be able to apprehend the unscrupulous *dalals*. It will reduce the cost of migration that the government is attempting for a long time. It will also be able to implement the Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013. Over the years, major labour receiving countries of Bangladesh have expressed their concern about the existence of different tiers of informal recruiters and viewed it as a problem in establishing good governance in the recruitment of workers in Bangladesh. Some countries such as Malaysia even attempted to introduce Government to Government (G2G) recruitment system to bypass formal and informal agents. Bringing *dalals* into the formal fold of recruitment will create a positive image of the government about its effort in streamlining recruitment

system in Bangladesh. This is likely to increase the scope of migration of Bangladeshi workers which will complement the government's effort of market expansion.

GoB plays a major role in the UN Global Forum on Migration and Development and it is currently the Co-chair of the Global Compact on Migration. The irregularities in recruitment at home harm the image of the government at the global level. Regularization of *dalals* will indicate its commitment to improve the conditions of migrants and enhance the government's image at the global level. All these will help government improve in the US State Department's annual rating on Trafficking in Persons (TIP). The government of Bangladesh has established a Cell at the Planning Commission to develop mechanism to ensure various goals of SDG. Target 8.8 of Goal 8 deals with protection of labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment. Regularization of *dalals* will help attainment of this goal of SDG. The government can show this as one of the measures undertaken in reducing precarious employment.

7.2 Exploring Avenues for Regularisation of *Dalals*

The regularization of *dalals* would necessitate establishment of some institutional arrangement. If so decided, *dalals* would be required to register with a relevant institution. In the following a few alternatives have been suggested to ensure registration as well as guideline under which the *dalals* may be made to operate. These could be: government led processes or recruitment agency led processes.

Registration through DEMO office

The study amply demonstrates that *dalals* provide various services to the migrants. Any business or service providing entity is required to register with the concerned government department. In this case it is the BMET. It is the line agency of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment in respect to regulating and governing migration. BMET is located in Dhaka. However, it was seen in Chapter II that BMET has its presence at the district level through District Employment and Manpower Offices (DEMO). *Dalals* are operational at the grassroots level. Therefore, registration directly with BMET is not feasible. However, the *dalals* can register themselves with the DEMOs.

A guideline has to be prepared by the BMET that lays out the terms and conditions that need to be met for registration. Recommendation from local public representative and clearance from local police station should be part of the guidelines. Concerned functionaries of DEMO will have the responsibility of verification of *dalals* before registration. Provision should be kept for renewal of registration upon satisfactory past performance.

Dalals are operational at the local level. The recruiting agencies can attain services of these *dalals* in recruiting workers from the grassroots. While processing recruitment currently the name of recruiting agency is stated in the document that is issued by the BMET. Once government agrees to this method, then along with the recruiting agencies the name and registration number of the concerned *dalals* should also be stated in the clearance document. Recruiting agencies can also directly recruit workers without taking the services of the *dalals*. In that case only concerned recruiting agency's name should be stated in the clearance as it is currently done. In case of any irregularity or breach of contract the BMET can ensure accountability of all parties, the recruiting agency and the *dalal*. In cases where recruiting agencies do not avail *dalal's* services, the former should be solely liable.

Registration with individual recruiting agencies

The system of registration can also be materialized through individual recruiting agencies. Recruiting agencies may recruit workers through employing *dalals* or it may conduct the functions through its own establishment. The recruiting agencies will have to provide registration to individual *dalals*. Some of those who want to regularize the services of *dalals* would like to assign a stipulated number of *dalals* that a recruiting agency would be allowed to register. We feel that there is no need to restrict the number. A recruiting agency may provide registration to as many *dalals* as it may want to ensure recruitment from diverse and remote areas. As long as the recruiting agency mentions the name and registration number of *dalals* while taking BMET clearance the purpose of establishing transparency and accountability is achieved. In case of misdemeanor it is the concerned recruiting agency that will make the *dalal* liable. This method in all likelihood would bring about transparency in recruitment.

Registration with BAIRA

Another form of registration through private sector can be done through involving the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies. Since *dalal* is a person who acts on behalf of the principal agent, i.e., the recruiting agency, it is desirable that registration system is managed by the private sector. It may turn out to be difficult for individual recruiting agencies to maintain a system of registration, monitoring the performance of their sub-agents, registration through BAIRA can emerge as an effective alternative. Under the process BAIRA will require to establish district level offices. District offices of BAIRA will scrutinize the application of *dalals* before registration. In this case BAIRA should prepare guidelines based on which its district level office functionaries will select the *dalals*. The list of *dalals* will be subject to continuous updating and be made available online. All recruiting agencies will be able to use registered *dalals* in recruiting workers by providing a fee to BAIRA.

Three alternatives for registration of *dalals* have been discussed above. However, registration system will not produce result unless there is incentive for government functionaries to ensure implementation of rule of law. To bypass unholy alliance of private sector and law enforcers an incentive structure may be built in. Experiences of incentives offered to traffic police and officials of Board of Revenue should be studied thoroughly to develop a system of incentives for the government functionaries with respect to establishing accountability of the wrongdoers.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter shows that all four parties related to recruitment of workers will gain through formalization of *dalals*. It shows that the ultimate beneficiaries will be the migrants. Their financial loss will be reduced in a substantial way. Migrant families will not fall into poverty trap while attempting to migrate. *Dalals* will also benefit in a major way from regularization of their functions. Their work will be considered as a legitimate service and the stigma attached to their profession is likely to go. Their income will increase as they will not require bribing. Recruiting agencies will be able to conduct grassroots recruitments openly. It will help them to effectively screen workers to match the job demand. The government will be able to take credit of bringing

transparency in recruitment of workers and apprehend annual loss of Tk. 2706.2 crore to the aspirant migrant households. This will also improve the image of the government to the labour receiving countries and in various global forums that highlight the need for good governance in migration. The three alternatives for formalizing the functions of *dalals* suggested in this chapter are: registration through DEMO offices, registration with individual recruiting agencies and registration through BAIRA. Of the three forms, registration through BAIRA appears to be the most feasible form.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Summary and Conclusions

This book is on informal labour recruiters. In Bangladesh they are popularly referred to as *dalals*. In the mainstream policy discourse, *dalals* are perceived as source of all evil in recruitment of workers at the grassroots. Migrants and their families also identify *dalals* as the perpetrator when they face fraudulence or cheating in Bangladesh as well as in destination. Since the early 1980s, the government began streamlining recruitment of overseas workers through promulgation of an Ordinance and other measures. Among other objectives those measures were aimed at discouraging *dalals* from participating in labour recruitment process. This book tries to examine why after taking such measures recruitment at the grassroots is still dependent on *dalals*? Why is it so difficult to reduce fraudulent practices from recruitment? Is it only the *dalals* who are responsible for such practices or is it part of the current day recruitment system of workers operational both in countries of origin and destination? Why is it so difficult to abolish the *dalal* system? Is it because the *dalals* have some services to offer that formal system cannot? This study aims to find answers to some of these questions.

This research is based on quantitative as well as qualitative method. Four types of instruments have been used in generating quantitative data. These are: public address system, door-to-door census, household survey and interview of *dalal*. Case studies, interviews and district and national level consultations are used in generating qualitative data. The study is conducted in two locations of Kalihati *upazilas* of Tangail district. The door to door census covered 5,407 households. From among them a household survey was conducted on 763 families. The

qualitative data involved gathering of 35 case studies and 3 district and national level consultations.

Findings of the research are presented in seven chapters. Chapter II provides with an overview of nature and extent of short term international labour migration from Bangladesh. It shows that in 2018 more than 730,000 Bangladeshis have migrated mostly to the Gulf, other Arab and Southeast Asian countries. In the past it was the men who mainly migrated. Since the lifting of ban and restrictions on women's migration, they are also participating in the short term labour market. In 2018, 17 percent of the total flow was women. In the same year male and female migrants of Bangladesh have sent US\$15.54 billion as remittance. The role of private enterprises, formal and informal, which facilitated such migration and indirectly contributed to transfer of such huge amount of remittances, cannot be underestimated.

To understand legal standing of the *dalals* the same chapter reviews the laws, institutions and procedures of labour recruitment. It reveals that procedures of labour recruitment are extremely complex. At the national level those are governed by the Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013, the Overseas Employment Policy, 2006 and 2016, and three Rules of 2002. All these instruments clearly specify that licensed recruiting agencies, be those private or public, are the only authorised entities to perform labour recruitment functions for international short term employment from Bangladesh. However, it highlights that labour recruitment functions at both destination and Bangladesh ends have become very complex. In most cases the recruiting agencies are no longer able to collect work permits directly from the overseas employers as they did in the past. Tiers of intermediaries, including current migrants serving in destination, are performing this work. Engagement of these intermediaries have increased the cost of migration, reduced the protection of migrants and compromised the conditions of decent work in a major way. In Bangladesh the aspirant migrants need to register with BMET, undergo fingerprinting and pre-departure briefing, secure immigration clearance and smart card. They have to perform many other functions such as undergo medical tests, purchase of work permit and air-ticket etc. It is well understood that performing all these functions on their own may not be easy and they may require assistance from appropriate service providers.

Chapter III gives an idea about the percentage of those who could realize their migration dream and those who could not, from two locations of Tangail district. The study reveals that 19 percent of those who wanted to migrate and made substantial payment have failed to materialize their dream. The rest, 81 percent had succeeded in migrating. The socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants who experienced fraud show that their average age is relatively high. The average migrant is 36 years old. Ninety-eight percent of them are men, 84 percent of them are married and their average family size is 4. Twenty-six percent of those who were cheated are not literate and another 26 percent studied up to grade 5.

Chapter IV probes into the extent and types of frauds experienced by the migrants before they migrated as well as in destination. The chapter shows that *dalals* who defrauded in many instances are known to the migrants or the members of their families. The reality is *dalals* are successful in sending some people. This generates trust among the aspirant migrants and that induces the migrants and their family members to seek their help. It is no longer the case that if the *dalals* are from the local areas as that of migrants then incidence of fraudulence will be less. Fraudulence is an outcome of the malfunctioning of the overall recruitment system on which the *dalals* may not have much control. Many a time migrants experience fraud. Nineteen percent of the total migrant (HH census) could not go abroad after paying the cost to the *dalals*. On an average the migrants who could not go abroad lost Tk. 194,000 in their migration effort. Incidence of fraudulence is higher at the destination. Thirty-two percent of the total migrants experienced fraud in destination countries. At the destination the type of fraud the migrants had experienced are: return from the transit or airport of the destination country, declared medically unfit, not being provided proper documentation, extortion, withholding of passport, not getting promised job or any work, receipt of less than contracted salary, irregular payment and non-payment of wages and untimely return. Forty-nine percent of those who processed migration from the study area did not face any major problem.

Again, a section of migrants were cheated more than once. Thirteen percent of the migrants were cheated more than once and 3 percent were cheated more than two times. Along with fraud in the countries of destination, migrants also faced inhuman and degrading treatment. Experience of inhuman and degrading treatment varied among current

and returnee migrants. Compared to returnee migrants, such treatments in destination are experienced more by the current migrants. Inhuman and degrading treatments reported by the migrants include jail, extortion, physical abuse and torture, police harassment, blackmail, deportation and placement in desert, forest and remote islands.

Migrants and migrant households mostly identified *dalals*, employers, friends and relatives as the perpetrators of fraud and cheating. Fifty-two percent identified *dalals* as cheaters, 34 percent identified employers, and 10 percent identified friends and relatives residing both in Bangladesh and in the destination country. Because of their limited involvement in the recruitment process, the recruiting agencies hardly come in the radar of migrants as cheaters. Only around 1 percent migrant households identified recruiting agencies as cheaters. The role of intermediaries in the countries of destination also does not surface in this research as the migrants hardly have any knowledge about their involvement. That does not mean that all these parties are free of the crime of committing fraud with the migrants. The study finds that when migrants experienced fraud in Bangladesh they go to different sources for redress. But when they face fraudulence or any other problem in destination migrants communicate with the *dalals*.

Earlier studies found that the cost of migration reduces when migration from the area increases. This is because less and less people depend on availing the services of *dalals* or recruiting agencies as they gain access to migration through social network. It became clear from this study that relatives, neighbours, migrants who are currently residing abroad, referred to as social network, have also become involved in committing fraudulence. Social network reduces risk and cost, this theory does not hold ground in the context of current migration system operational in Bangladesh.

In analysing the drivers of migration rational choice theory shows that migration decisions are rational choices of the individuals. The individual decides to stay back in their origin area or whether to move to another destination on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. Case studies gathered for this research particularly reveal that a large group of individuals are desperate to migrate, so are some of their family members. It seems that a section of them are obsessed with migration. Therefore, they do not compare the costs that they would be incurring and benefits that would be derived from migration. A major reason behind this is lack

of information on salary, food and other likely expenditures in the destination or the risks of not getting a job. The choice they make is based on verbal assurances provided by *dalals*, migrants who trade visa or kith and kins. Under such a circumstance, migration decisions are arrived at by the individuals or households can no longer be explained by rational choice theory.

Chapter V locates the whole range of functions of *dalals* that are currently invisible in any policy or official documents. *Dalals* are the most important source of migration information for 57 percent migrants. Seventy-eight percent of migrant households availed overseas work visas through *dalals*. Ninety percent of the migrants and their families have paid their cost of migration to the *dalals*.

Along with direct services of availing jobs, *dalals* offer a wide range of personalised services that many poor, not so educated, migrants require at every step of the otherwise complicated migration process. These include online registration with BMET, information on availability of training or assistance in skills test, final stage interview with recruiting agencies, accompanying migrants to Dhaka, facilitating medical tests etc.

Chapter VI introduces who these *dalals* are. It demonstrates that they are no outsiders to the migrants. Mostly they hail from the same locality. Some are performing the function for many years. On average they facilitated migration of more than 900 workers. A close examination of *dalals'* profile informs that before engaging in the business of brokerage they were involved in many other similar businesses. Earlier 40 percent were migrant themselves. *Dalals* have long standing relationship with migrants and their families as well as with recruiting agencies and informal recruiters of destination.

Contrary to popular perception that *dalals* go door-to-door to recruit workers, in many instances it is the aspirant migrants or members of their families who come to *dalals* for their service. *Dalals* employ a range of methods to link migrants with overseas employment: sometimes they contact recruiting agencies, sometimes recruiting agencies contact them, *dalals* also look for newspaper advertisement of recruiting agencies. Left behind family members of migrants also contact *dalals* for helping them in securing BMET clearance through recruiting agencies for the work permit their migrant members send. An element of trust exists between the migrants and *dalals*. Migrants feel if any problem arises

then they will be able to seek redress through mobilizing support from the local community.

This study shows that *dalals* bear all the blames of cheating in the recruitment process. However, the experience of fraud in reality is linked with the overall system of recruitment. Gaps in the law, inability of recruiting agencies to source workers from the grassroots, involvement of *dalals* in recruitment process outside the legal purview, the distorted system of procuring visa from the countries of destination, lack of decentralisation of state institutions – all contribute to such incidents of fraud. The 2013 Act and the Rules framed as well as policy of the government do not provide any space to the *dalals* to operate. This has created conditions for the *dalals*, recruiting agencies, medical centres and members of GAMCA to commit fraud and blame each other and thus avoid responsibility.

Chapter VII attempts to find out the losses and gains that different stakeholders may experience if *dalal* system is regularised. The major benefit will be experienced by the migrants. Financial loss of failed migrants will be reduced in a substantial way. This will protect potential migrant households' investment and save them from falling into poverty trap. *Dalals* will also benefit from regularization. Current system of financial risk solely borne by the *dalals* can be replaced by a system of sharing of risks by *dalals* and recruiting agencies. It also shows that the income of *dalals* will increase as they will be subjected less to pay bribe. Recruiting agencies will be able to conduct grassroots recruitments openly. It will contribute to screening of workers to match the job demand. The image crisis of the recruiting agencies will be largely addressed. Government will be able to take credit of bringing transparency in recruitment of workers and apprehend annual loss of migrants' that is estimated to be Tk. 2706.2 crore. This effort to regularise the recruitment system will enhance the image of the government. The chapter also suggested three alternatives for formalizing the functions of *dalals*. These are: registration through DEMO offices, registration with individual recruiting agencies and registration through BAIRA. Of the three, registration through BAIRA seems most feasible.

To make both *dalals* and the recruiting agencies accountable and transparent, this study strongly recommends for recognition of the role and functions of *dalals*. This would require amendment to the Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013. Since it is a new law it may not

be possible. However, efforts can be made to innovatively accommodate functions of *dalals* in the Rules that are being framed to implement the law. This study is conducted in one district. To make the findings of the study representative, it needs to be expanded all over Bangladesh.

8.2 Recommendations

- A large number of migrants experience fraud. An extrapolation on the basis of this study shows that poor migrant households who have paid the partial migration cost but been deceived and failed to migrate abroad have been losing around Tk. 2706.2 crore annually. Government is committed to serve the migrant community. Now the highest priority in streamlining the recruitment process of the government should be to reduce fraudulence at the grassroots and save migrants from being pauperized while attempting to advance their status economically and socially.
- In order to bring transparency and establish accountability, invisible functions of recruitment should be made visible. Functions which are performed by the *dalals* should be formalised. *Dalals* should get recognition as service providers.
- *Dalals* should be brought under legal purview. Overseas Employment and Migration Act, 2013 does not recognize the role of *dalals*, neither does the 2016 policy. Either the law and the policy have to be reformed or space has to be created for formalization of *dalals* through liberal interpretation of the Rules made under the law.
- The study has offered three alternative methods for regularisation of *dalals*. The first is registering *dalals* through DEMO offices, second is registration with individual recruiting agencies and the third one is registration with BAIRA. Among these, the third option seems more suitable.
- A minimum standard has to be prescribed by the government for being eligible to be registered as a *dalal*. The current practice of migrants and their families becoming informal *dalals* has to cease. If current migrants and their families want to participate in visa procurement and recruitment business, then they must register themselves and be under the same system of scrutiny that formal *dalals* would go through.

- In case of dispute, the *dalals* should be able to file complaints to BMET and in the court of law. At the same time, the recruiting agencies should also enjoy the right to take recourse to legal procedure if the *dalals* commit fraud.
- The title “*Dalal*” should be replaced by a new one that recognises their contribution in sending workers overseas for work.

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Often problems created by others fall on our shoulders as local people only know us, not the recruiting agencies or other institutions. Our role and function as service provider should be recognized and be brought under legal cover.

Sanowar Hossain, a Dalal, Tangail

