Bangladesh's Labour Migration Practices: Government's Unjustified Priority for Out-Migrants (Expatriates) Rather Than Pre- and Post-Migrants – An Analytical Study Over Cumilla, Bangladesh

Amalan Penghijrahan Buruh Bangladesh: Keutamaan Kerajaan yang tidak wajar untuk Pendatang Luar (Ekspatriat) dan bukannya sebelum dan selepas pendatang - Satu Kajian Analisis ke Atas Cumilla, Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT *The objective of the article is to refine and shape the government policy of Bangladesh so that the country can exist in the competitive world labour market and earn much foreign remittances. This article would find out the ideal attitudes and policies for the three categories of migrants: pre-migrants, out-migrants and post-migrants for the consideration of the concerned ministry of Bangladesh. For this article, empirical data has been collected from the survey area. This survey was conducted over Chandina Upazila of Cumilla district in August, 2019 through a structured questionnaire. This paper will investigate the capabilities and backgrounds of those three categories of migrants on seven criteria: age, education, language-efficiency, trade-skills, bank account experience, familiarity with insurance policy and leave-before profession at place of origin. Then the data-set has been input in the SPSS programme for analysis. Due to the government policies regarding labour migration at the place of destination, e.g. Gulf States, the three categories of migrants are significantly influenced. As the government, surprisingly, has no minimum ceiling of education and age for probable male migrants abroad, the pre-migrant category is not encouraged to enrich their minimum literacy and hardly wait for maturity up to 21 years of age fixed by the government. Henceforth, the successful out-migrants are mostly teen-agers, less educated, and unskilled. Moreover, as per government policy, the post-migrant category is not cared much after coming back from abroad and this category cannot settle down smoothly with their money and foreign experience. In means that the government gives utmost importance to out-migrants, a little for post-migrants and a very little for pre-migrant categories. How ever, the pre-migration scenarios take place earlier than out-migration or post-migration. The article could show the government how to set up acceptable criteria by which pre-migrants would feel pressure to become educated and skilled before overseas employment. Due to efficient policies, a huge number of less-skilled and unskilled labourers will have become unable to migrate and the more literate cum skilled people will be able to come in the front-line for overseas migration. The contribution*

of the study is two folds. First, it contributes to improve policy making of the Bangladesh government by giving equal importance for all the three categories of migrants or the best one is to give much priority to the pre-migrants and second, to post-migrants and out-migrants.

Keywords: *Labour migration, Migration policy, Migrants' criteria, Role of Bangladesh government*

1. Introduction

Since the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the country has not been in the limelight of labour migration during its first five-year regime (Rahman 2012; Mannan 2016). The formal labour migration commenced in 1976 through the government-established Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). In that year, only a countable number of labourers, around 6,087 individuals, migrated through governmental arrangements responding to the oil boom in the Gulf States, where a huge number of labourers were demanded (Dannecker 2013; Siddiqui 2006). Currently, the government is desperate for overseas employment to cover a substantial part of GDP and unload its huge number of unemployed citizens regardless of unskilled/semi-skilled manpower (Hassan and Shakur 2017; Masum et al. 2012). Until now, the highest number of annual labour migration arose in Financial Year 2017 when the number crossed one million and earned 12.769 billion US dollars in foreign remittances (IOM 2019). In F. Y. 2019, the country earned 16.42 billion US dollars from 692,978 overseas workers, which was 8.73% of the country's total GDP (Bangladesh Bank, January 2020). Bangladesh today is the fifth largest country sending international migrants (Ullah 2018). But the posterior of the migration scenario is that 44% are skilled, 14% semi-skilled, 41% less-skilled (almost unskilled) types of migrants, and only 1% are professionals, e.g., doctors, engineers, teachers/professors' etcetera (MoEWOE Annual Report 2019, Table 1).

Table 1
Category-wise out-migrants from Bangladesh (2015) from Bangladesh and Regions of destinations (1976-2019) of the migrants

Categories	In percent (%)	Regions/countries	In percent (%)
Skilled	44	Gulf States	77
Less skilled	41	South-East Asian countries	15
Semi-skilled	14	Rest of the world	08
Professional	01		

Source: MoEWOE 2019; BMET 2017; Bureau of Manpower, Enployment and Training (BMET), 2000

The mainstream of overseas employment has taken place in the Gulf States (KSA, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain) since its oil boom in the 1970s, and South-East Asian countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, etcetera (Evertsen and Geest 2020). In the last few years, other doors for unskilled/semi-skilled labour migration have extended towards Hong Kong, South Korea, and recently Japan. Migration towards Europe and North America is mainly for professionals and skilled workers (Table 1)

Behind this entire migration scenario, the policy of the government of Bangladesh should be extremely vital in shaping people's awareness before migration and after-care. But the fact is that, now, almost all overseas recruitment rights have been delivered to licensed recruiting agencies since 1984 (Das et al. 2014). In the same year, the government organ BMET withdrew one of its activities, that is, sending manpower. However, another government organ, BOESL (Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited), was established simultaneously with a view to sending limited selective manpower through Government to Government (G-G) arrangements (Mahmud 2023). Until now, the government could not develop an efficient public awareness among pre-migrants at the root-level. The recruiting agencies are not properly monitored and yet classified as per the Migrants' Act 2013 (Rahman and Hassan 2017). To some extent, they are doing monopoly business with malefaction and unethical migration. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) is giving emphasis and priority to dealing with out-migrants and their remittances. Every year, a huge number of less-skilled and semi-skilled migrants travel abroad for overseas jobs, taking high risk and being absorbed into so-called "3-D jobs" (difficult, dangerous, and dirty). Bangladeshi migrants can neither communicate well in English nor in Arabic. As a result, their earnings have become low compared to other nationalities from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and India (Erling et al. 2019). Due to lack of technical skills, Bangladeshi migrants have less security in jobs and less possibility of financial advantages. After returning from abroad, post-migrants feel difficulties integrating perfectly into their original village societies. They hardly find employment at home and sometimes, the misuse of their remittances gets them into trouble (MoEWOE 2019; BMET 2017).

There are more than 1200 licensed recruiting agencies and other vital stakeholders who are leading in sending workers abroad (Rahman 2012). But all the agencies are not fair and transparent with their clients, i.e., the aspiring pre-migrants. A huge number of middlemen (locally 'Dalals'), neither authorized nor registered, are intervening in the migration procurement, having the upper hand over the agencies (Azad 2019). As a result, an unethical migration process starts with an unhealthy competition among the agencies. If the pre-migrants have proper education, mature age, bank and insurance experience, trade-skills, language efficiency, etcetera, the recruiting agencies and the middlemen can hardly exploit and blackmail that category. Ultimately, the following two categories (out-migrants and post-migrants), which were originally generated from the first category, will be refined (Donato 2016). The GoB should give proper attention to monitoring, regulating, and disciplining the agencies' policies. Unfortunately, after eight years of the Migrants' Act 2013, the government could not yet classify the agencies, although they were empowered by the

Act. If the agencies are classified and categorized, as per best criteria, into A, B, C, and D grades, the overseas employers would feel more convenient to contact the first-class agencies for manpower hiring and the pre-migrant category will easily find the best recruiting agencies (Azad 2019). Besides, if the provision of classification is established, the agencies will be under pressure to prove themselves efficient, transparent, ethical and more responsible for their clients. Very recently, an initiative has been taken by the ministry to assign some points against the performance of the agencies, but it might be hard to execute because of the clever tricks of the recruiting agencies.

In Bangladesh, there are a considerable number of vocational centres (TTCs and IMTs) for skill-development. Notwithstanding, it is noticeable that a huge number of less-skilled and semi-skilled workers are rushing for overseas employment. The GoB keeps much attention to the out-migrants category and a few schemes for post-migrants under the name of re-integration at their place of origin (Abrar and Billah 2016; Liton et al. 2016; Islam 2010). But the government cannot pressurize and motivate the pre-migrant category through policies to be skilled through the existing low-cost vocational training centers. Moreover, until today, the government had no minimal education-ceiling, no clear-cut age-bar or no required language-efficiency (English/Arabic) for them for overseas employment (Erling et al., 2019; Chowdhury and Hamid 2016). There are many such pre-requisites which the government has not yet made compulsory for out-migrants. For this reason, the pre-migrant group does not feel an obligation or incentive to achieve vital skills, which are very much demanded by overseas employers. As such, government policies can neither make pre-migrants interested nor compel them, so that they can be skilled and efficient beforehand. This study will investigate this issue through an empirical survey of how pre-migrants prepare themselves to fulfill their ambitions. Obviously, these pre-migrants will later be out-migrants and, subsequently, post-migrants. If the pre-migrants are not convinced to be skilled and educated themselves, they will be in trouble due to lack of skills and education in their next upcoming lives abroad. So, it will be inquired whether the pre-migrants themselves are responsible for not having skills, or the government's top-down governing approach towards the humble rural inhabitants. Moreover, if the pre-migrant group make them skilled and educated prior to their planning for overseas jobs, the migration cost would be lower and the possibility of being exploited by middlemen or recruiting agencies would be minimized.

2. Governmental instruments and stakeholders for labour migration

After creating BMET in 1976, the government started an overseas employment race in the international market on a small scale. Gradually, the authorities intend to develop a legal framework and policies for such a lucrative sector (Farid et al. 2009; Siddiqui and Billah 2020). The first legislation for labour migration was created in 1982 by the name of "Emigration Ordinance, 1982". Due to the enormous demand for labour in the Gulf States

and in the South-East Asian countries, the government was looking forward to maturating better policies for fair and ethical migration towards those destinations (Rahman 2012; Chanda 2012). The government established a full-flagged ministry in 2001 named as the "Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment" and the BMET and the BOESL will work under this ministry. The government evolved the "Overseas Employment and Migrants' Act 2013" by repealing the "Emigration Ordinance, 1982" with a view to updating the provisions in conformity with the "International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and the Members of Their Families 1990" (IOM 2018). This act is working as a milestone, though late, which is controlling and shaping the government's subsequent rules and regulations on overseas recruitment. This act provides a wide scope to monitor, regulate and discipline the huge number of recruiting agencies, around 1221 (MoEWOE, 2020, accessed 16 April, 2020). But the fatal event is that neither the ordinance in 1982 nor the act induced in 2013 could acutely address the aspiring migrants at the root-level and develop a pro-migration mental set-up among the public with minimal education, age, language-efficiency (English/Arabic), technical skills, and other necessary pre-migration criteria (Erling 2019). This study will finally focus on this context referring to the government's policy. The government, however, has wonderful arrangements to make its people skilled through 64 TTCs (Technical Training Centers) in each of the districts, 6 IMTs (Institute of Marine Technologies) and the other 4 divisional TTCs (Buchenau 2008; Islam 2015; Shonchoy et al. 2018). In addition, there are 46 DEMO (District Employment and Manpower Office) offices in significant 46 district head-quarters to create awareness among the rural people and disseminate the government's rules and regulations to overseas emigrants from Bangladesh. Having such facilities, the government, due to lack of mass policy, could neither develop volunteering attitudes among the pre-migrants nor compel them to avail themselves of those advantages (IOM 2018; BMET 2017; Ali et al. 2015).

Presently, the authorized stakeholders for sending overseas workers/employees are mainly licensed recruiting agencies and a few by the government-owned company BOESL (Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited), established in 1984. But the formal sending of overseas workers was initiated in 1976 by the BMET, which continued until 1983, just one year before the BOESL was established (Monem and Baniamin 2015; Paul et al. 2019). Regarding the sending scenario in 1984, the BOESL managed to send only 0.28 per cent of the total overseas employment workers and the rest were sent by the recruiting agencies and relatives/individuals living abroad. Usually, a huge number of jobs/employment/work-visas come through living individuals or relatives of Bangladeshis abroad, which are finally processed by the recruiting agencies (Rahman 2012; Martin 2012). One of the roles of the BMET is to provide final clearance permission to leave Bangladesh for overseas countries (IOM 2018). So, the vital role in exploring and hoarding overseas employment/jobs from overseas employers is played by the recruiting agencies and the relatives/individuals. The government of Bangladesh holds the authority to give permission only (Azad 2019). Even until recent past, approximately 35 per cent of labour migration visas were procured by recruitment agencies, more than 60 per cent through migrants' social

networks, and only 2 per cent by the BOESL (IOM 2018). But the complexity arises from a huge number of unlicensed/unregistered sub-agents who are closely related to the agencies that find potential and aspiring migrants eager for overseas jobs. The sub-agent is almost synonymous with broker, middleman, intermediary, or locally, 'Dalal', who are spread over the countryside, i.e., in the rural areas of Bangladesh where the majority of pre-migrants live (Figure 1). These sub-agents work for the agencies on payment of money exchange, coordinating from Dhaka to rural areas, usually undocumented. Normally, 'Dalals' are very much acquainted with the local villagers through whom they approach the agencies for overseas jobs. The 'Dalals' first collect the job-orders for certain jobs from the recruiters and propose them to the villagers (Ramachandran 2005; Rashid 2012; Watson et al. 2017). From this very initial stage, unethical and illegal migration processes evolved. As the villagers are mostly less-educated or even illiterate, they heavily depend on those middlemen, where there is a scope for blackmailing, misguiding, and manipulation (Rahman 2012). Among the existing literatures, a few researches have addressed the local circumstances of the pre-, out- and post-migrants. The problems of labout migration are deeply rooted at the place of origin which add the problems at the place of destination, that is in abroad. The pre-migrants are mainly from rural area of Bangladesh, the out-migrants send their remittances also at rural area for their families and the post-migrants finally come back at rural area with his savings. So, the roots of the migrants are important which are huge ground for the careful researchers. As per this, it is observed that the government policies can hardly influence the ground-level migrants through its organs mostly based in the city areas.
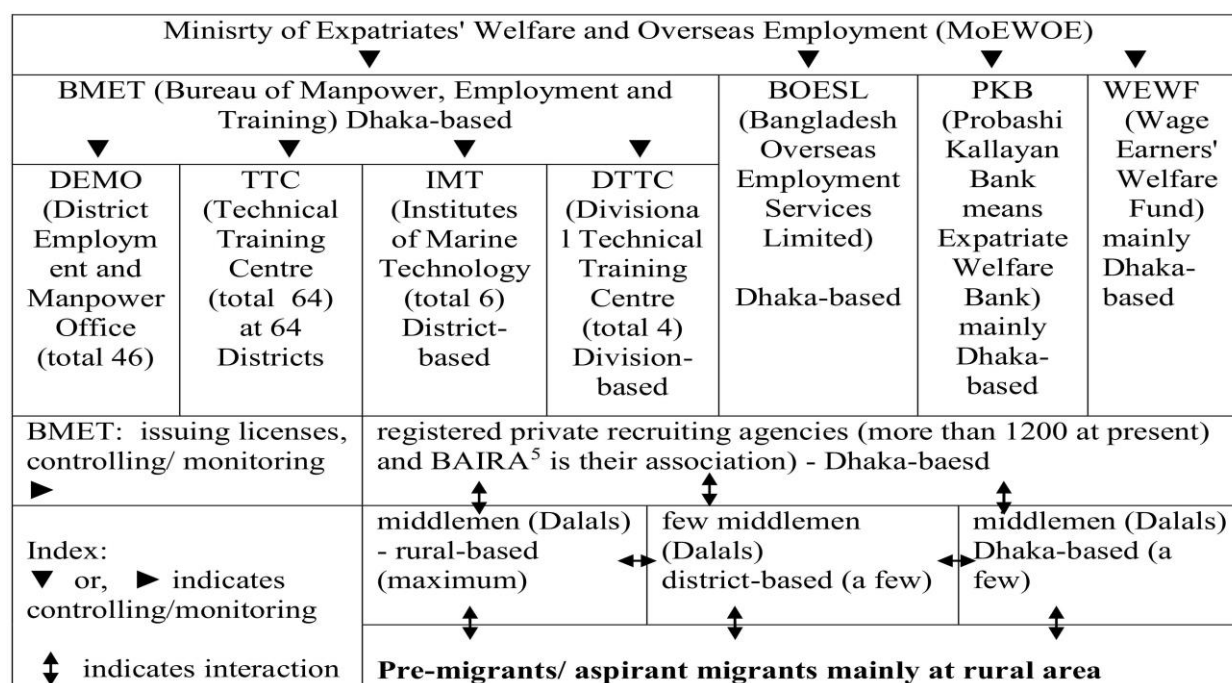
Minisrty of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE)						
BMET (Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training) Dhaka-based				BOESL (Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited) Dhaka-based	PKB (Probashi Kallayan Bank means Expatriate Welfare Bank) mainly Dhaka-based	WEWF (Wage Earners' Welfare Fund) mainly Dhaka-based
DEMO (District Employment and Manpower Office (total 46)	TTC (Technical Training Centre (total 64) at 64 Districts	IMT (Institutes of Marine Technology (total 6) District-based	DTTC (Divisional Technical Training Centre (total 4) Division-based			
BMET: issuing licenses, controlling/ monitoring ►	registered private recruiting agencies (more than 1200 at present) and BAIRA[5] is their association) - Dhaka-baesd					
Index: ▼ or, ► indicates controlling/monitoring	middlemen (Dalals) - rural-based (maximum)		few middlemen (Dalals) district-based (a few)		middlemen (Dalals) Dhaka-based (a few)	
↕ indicates interaction	**Pre-migrants/ aspirant migrants mainly at rural area**					

Figure 1. Governmental instruments and other stakeholders including private recruiting agencies and intermediaries/middlemen for labour emigration

Source: Based on BMET 2017; MoEWOE 2019

3. Study Area

Among the leading districts of Bangladesh in sending workers abroad, the top four districts are Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Chottogram, and Tangail. As per the database from the BMET, Cumilla has held the number one position for almost the last 10 years (BMET 2020, www.bmet.gov.bd assessed on 16 April, 2020) and this district has been chosen as the study area to get a modal glimpse of the characteristics of pre-migrants, out-migrants, and post-migrants. From the Figure 4, the overall picture is that the western, southern and far eastern (Chottogram Hill Tracks area) parts of Bangladesh are sending less manpower abroad than the eastern part of Bangladesh. Accordingly, remittance inflow among those areas is proportionally different. As the greatest accumulation of potential pre-migrants exists in rural areas, Chandina, one of the 16 Upazilas (Sub-districts) of Cumilla, is taken as a pinpoint study area which is 70 K.M. away and at best a 2-hour drive from Dhaka city (Figure 4). The total population size of the Upazila as per 2011 Census is 350,273. The average literacy rate is 43.97%. The main sources of income are agriculture (56.71%), commerce (14.07%), service (8.24%), transport (4.54%), remittance (3.91%), non-agricultural labour (2.46%) and the rest (10.07%). The study area has a population density of 1734 per km^2. So, the area has typical circumstances for being a hinterland for overseas employment and an emigration culture has been developed for a long time. Therefore, a social network has been established to get an upper hand in the chain migration-process through relatives already working abroad.
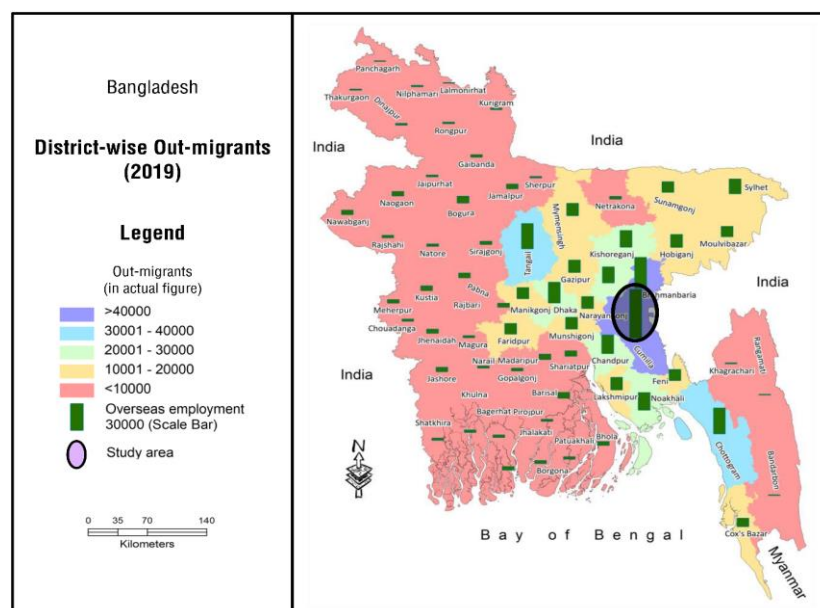

Figure 2. Study area and concentration of labour migration from Bangladesh
Source: Map based on data from BMET 2020 and MoEWOE 2019

4. Research Methodology

The data was collected through an empirical questionnaire survey. The author stayed in that area with some assistants in the month of August (2019) in order to collect the data through a structured questionnaire. There were three categories of questionnaire. And altogether there were 75 (25×3) respondents. All respondents are male here. The first set of questionnaires were for pre-migrants who may be called aspiring migrants. Here the sample size was 25, that is, there were 25 respondents for the questionnaire. This size is less than 10% among the willing migrants. This category of migrants is planning and taking preparation actively for overseas employment at their earliest capability, that is, as soon as possible. They have made up their minds to work abroad and are looking for avenues to go abroad at any cost. Unfortunately, this category hardly approaches the government's DEMOs (District Employment and Manpower Offices), who are actually assigned by the government to provide free consultancy to all categories of migrants. This pre-migrant category establishes contact with the next-door middlemen who are connected with the licensed recruiting agencies. Here is the limitation of government policy that the DEMOs cannot campaign in a proper way to guide this category initially, who (some of them) later become out-migrants and subsequently post-migrants. The second set of questionnaires was prepared for out-migrants who are already abroad and their families live in their place of origin, that is, in the study area. Here the respondents were also 25 which is close to 10% of the total out-migrants' families. A responsible person (may be spouse/father/ /brother) from those families participated in the questionnaire survey and survey ethics and privacy have been maintained. The third set of questionnaires was for the post-migrant group who have returned home after at least one year staying with work experience abroad. Here the sample size was also 25, close to 10% among the total post-migrants. It should be mentioned here that in this study all are male migrants, because in Bangladesh male migrants are leading and a very few female migrants are arising recently. There are so many variables subject to be investigated, but few relevant variables have been later considered for commonplace remarks. These variables are applicable to check the reflection of the government's top-down policies regarding overseas migration processes. After collecting information about these three categories of migrants, the data was saved under the SPSS programme and later became ready for analysis and interpretation. The SPSS programme was useful to find out the measures of central tendency, (i.e. mean, median, mode etcetera) of migrants' age, education, etc. and these measures were required to analyse and interpret those variables for further comments.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Demographic analysis

In this survey, the pre-migrant category has been very scrupulously observed how they have prepared themselves for overseas employment and how the government policies are pressuring and inspiring them to be skilled at such a root-level. This is the initial-stage of all the three categories who later become out-migrants or post-migrants. It is observable how government policies shape, nurture, and influence their mental set-up to achieve certain capabilities, such as minimal education, mature age, language-efficiency (English/Arabic), and technical skills, etcetera. Very often, pre-migrants have less or sometimes no education, because the government, unexpectedly, has not yet assigned any lowermost education-ceiling for overseas employment (for males), not even the PSC (Primary School Certificate) of 5-year schooling. Although it is made compulsory for female migrants, who made up 12% of the total out-migration in 2017 (IOM 2018; MoEWOE 2019).

In this study, the seven common criteria are age, education, language skills, profession at place of origin, trade-courses (vocational) from the Technical Training Centres (TTCs), bank account experience and insurance at the place of origin. The age and education of these three categories have been scrutinized in numerical format in order to view the discrepancies at the place of origin before departing for abroad. It is observed here that the pre-migrants are comparatively younger than the other two groups. It states that the tendency to go abroad at a young age, when maturity barely comes, is growing up. For each category, the criteria were appropriated at the place of origin before leaving for overseas employment, which corresponds to the out-migrants and post-migrant categories. During questionnaire survey, ages (when left Bangladesh for abroad) of both out-migrants and post-migrants were collected and considered. It is noticed that the mean age of pre-migrants is only 25.26 years, of out-migrants is 26.56, and of post-migrants (the returnees) 25.95. If the mean age of out-migrants is compared to post-migrants, it is higher (26.56 years) than post-migrants (25.95 years). The range of age among out-migrants and post-migrants is also significant for analysis. Among these two categories, the lower-limit of out-migrants starts at 16 years of age and the upper-limit at 47, but of post migrants the limit was 18–43. From the Table 2, it is noticed that out-migrants are older than the post-migrants during the time of their departure, and some out-migrants migrate at almost old-age (range 46-55 years) which is absent at the post-migrant category. So, it indicates that among current out-migrants starts overseas migration later than former post-migrant category. So, observing the overall average age (Table 2) of these two groups, it can be concluded that the trend of going abroad is always being dominated by both the younger people (60% from age group 16 – 25 years). Recently few (4%) aged people are also moving abroad because of family-burden with children, parents, or even other relatives.

Table 2.
Age of out-migrants and post-migrants during their time of departure from Bangladesh

Variables ►	Age range			
Migrants' category ▼	16-25 Years (%)	26-35 Years (%)	36-45 Years (%)	46-55 Years (%)
Out-Migrants N=25	56	24	16	4
Post-migrants N=25	64	28	8	0
Average age	60	26	12	2

Source: Author's own field survey over Chandina Upazila of Cumilla district, August, 2019

Overall, these young groups fall into trouble in foreign countries where culture, social system, norms and values are often mismatched. Then they can hardly cope with the foreign environment and stay in an unpleasant mood. It certainly hampers their commitment at work and their day-to-day lifestyle. Earning money without enjoying their work/profession makes them exhausted and bored, which hinders the employer-worker relationship.

In Bangladesh, marriage is not a pre-condition for overseas migration for the male, any married or unmarried male can migrate at any age. But for female, 35 years of age and marriage is a pre-condition for migration designed by the government. In this study, all are male respondents. It is observed (Table 3) from the study area that 43.3% out-migrants were married and 56.7% unmarried before departure. So, unmarried out-migrants are dominating in migration process.

Regarding destinations, among out-migrants 83.3% went to Gulf States which is higher than the average out-migrants from 1976-2019, South-East Asian countries 10% which is lower than the average and rest of the world 6.7 which is also lower (Table 3). So, it indicates that the demand for migrating towards Gulf States is increasing, for South-East Asian countries and rest of the world are decreasing comparing to the concerned average.

Table 3
Marital status before departure abroad and place of destination of out-migrants of the study area

Marital Status (%)		Destinations (%)	
Married	43.30	Gulf States	83.30
Unmarried	56.70	South-East Asian countries	10.00
		Rest of the world	6.70

Source: Author's own field survey over Chandina Upazila of Cumilla district, August, 2019

From the above table (Table 4) it is observed that on average about 72% migrants of all three categories do not know either English or Arabic and only 21% have little knowledge on foreign language. Regarding profession, about 30% were unemployed and 10% labour before departure. It indicates they know a few official manners. Similarly, among them 83% have no trade course skills and 95% have no bank account experience at origin. Surprisingly, none of them has idea on insurance policy which is very much required in the Gulf-States. In such circumstances, they can hardly cope with the foreign environment efficiently.

It is quite ambiguous why the government allows male migrants for overseas employment in the competitive labour market with such poor qualifications, even sometimes no-qualification, i.e., zero-qualification. Although, in Bangladesh there is a huge surplus of young men who are unemployed and willing to avail themselves of foreign jobs having 5/8-year schooling (P.S.S./J.S.C.) or 10-year schooling (S.S.C.). Even if the government accredited P.S.C. (only 5-year schooling) at a minimal education level, as assigned for females, there would be no dearth of workers for overseas employment. In addition, those out-migrants would be valued and cared for by their employers and would hold a better position in communication, paper-work, notice-reading, and schedule-checking, etcetera, which are frequently required in the working environment in foreign countries. Besides, the minimum qualification ceiling could certainly reduce the migration costs and shrink the unethical and unhealthy competition among the recruiting agencies.

Table 4.

Characteristics/criteria of pre-migrants, out-migrants, and post-migrants at the place of origin/study area (Chandina Upazila of Cumilla district)

Variables ▶ Migrant Category ▼	Language (English/Arabic) (%)			Profession at origin (%)			Vocational trade course skill (%)		Bank account experience (%)		Insurance policy known (%)	
	Yes	No	Few	Unemployed	Labour	Other	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Pre-migrants (N=25)	00	53.0	47.0	47.0	3.0	50.0	10.0	90.0	3.0	97.0	00	100
Out-Migrant (N= 25)	10.0	80.0	10.0	13.0	17.0	70.0	7.0	93.0	7.0	93.0	00	100
Post-migrant (N= 25)	10.0	85.0	5.0		*n.ava.		35.0	65.0	5.0	95.0	00	100
Average for 3 categories (without fraction	7.0	72.0	21.0	30.0	10.0	60.0	17.0	83.0	5.0	95.0	00	100

*n.ava. means "not available"

Source: Author's own field survey over Chandina Upazila of Cumilla district, August, 2019

5.2 Skill of migrants

The criteria are language-skill (English/Arabic), profession at origin, trade-course achievement, having your own bank account experience and own insurance policy. These criteria are split out for all three categories, correlating with their mean value. It is noticed from the table that no language-efficiency is leading (72%). Before migration to their place of origin, 30% were/are unemployed, 10% labourers and 60% engaged in other minor professions. Regarding skills, 83% have no trade-course or vocational training. It is also observed from the table that 95% have no own bank account and, surprisingly, 100% have no insurance policy (Table 4). Among these five criteria in the table, the pre-migrant category holds the worst position concerning language-skills, profession at origin, vocational trade-course and bank account experience. For insurance policy experience, all categories hold the same status. That is, they have no experience in such a criterion.

Certainly, better qualities and skills are recognised worldwide for better salaries, honour and due advantages from the employers' side. But it is very conspicuous that the new generation is more negligent in such matters. The government, through its 42 DEMO offices at 42 district head-quarters, could not make cognizant of its pre-migrant category of the supreme importance of skills and qualifications in all job-markets: home and abroad. Due to having no own bank account, out-migrants often fall into trouble sending remittances and they often send them through informal channels at high cost. Lacking insurance experience, out-migrants suffer if any injury takes place abroad or a death casualty happens there.

From the above table (Table 4) it is observed that on an average about 72% migrants of all three categories do not know neither English or Arabic and only 21% have few knowledge on foreign language. Regarding profession, about 30% were unemployed and 10% labour before departure. It indicates they know a few official manners. Similarly, among them 83% have no trade course skills and 95% have no bank account experience at origin. Surprisingly, none of them has idea on insurance policy which is very much required in the Gulf-States. In such circumstances, they can hardly cope with the foreign environment efficiently.

5.3 Discussion and recommendation: prioritizing which category?

It is clear from the name of the ministry that the ministry (Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment) is prioritizing expatriates'/out-migrants' welfare. A short interview was taken place with the high officials (Secretary of the ministry and the Director-General) of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). They informed that the expatriates (out-migrants) were given much emphasis than all other categories, because apparently, they are sending remittances for their homeland. It might be happened because of foreign remittances, which raise the government's reserve fund at the state bank of Bangladesh. It is a part of the country's GDP. The economy of the country heavily depends on it. Moreover, through expatriation, the government is unloading its unemployed and unskilled/less-skilled populace abroad in the name of employment. But by doing so, the

government is losing its image and reputation in foreign countries with such inefficient manpower/labourers. On the contrary, if the government imposed some restrictions on pre-migrants through criteria (e.g., minimum age, education, trade-skills, language-efficiency, etcetera) for employment abroad, an efficient base for manpower would be developed. Also, the aspirant migrants/pre-migrants would be compelled to qualify first before overseas employment and would enjoy professionalism during their work abroad. By imposing criteria, the government could develop a refined section of pre-migrants/aspiring migrants where out-migrants would come out. The quality pre-migrants can defend themselves from exploitation and blackmailing by the recruiting agencies and the 'Dalals'. Moreover, after arriving abroad, these efficient out-migrants (expatriates) can adjust to the foreign environment through banking experience, insurance policies, mature age and education gained at their place of origin. By language efficiency, they could develop excellent relationships with the manager, supervisor, or even employer through colloquial interaction. Then there would be no communication gap between employees and employers. Even so, they would be able to send remittances in the proper way (e.g., through the bank) and the government would receive more remittances than their illegal way of sending remittances. This section of out-migrants would be able to extend their contracts and exchange papers with the concerned embassy/office without any intermediaries. Moreover, when they come back home (e.g., Bangladesh) as post-migrants, they are supposed to arrange a pleasant ending with the employers, leaving a clean image, which would be helpful for the upcoming aspirant migrants/pre-migrants who are looking forward to having overseas employment. Naturally, these types of post-migrants would be able to utilize their foreign money by themselves and they have less possibility of being exploited by cheats. Eventually, if they get proper patronization from the government, they will be able to integrate with their left societies at their place of origin. Through the government's reintegration programmed, they can, however, absorb themselves into a job/work with the skills they gained abroad.

Now, the question arises about the government's attitudes towards these three categories of migrants: pre-migrants, out-migrants, and post-migrants. It is observed from the study that the government is desperate to send labourers to overseas employment regardless of their age, education, language-efficiency, trade-skills, bank experience and the like. Henceforth, the government is giving unjustified emphasis on out-migrants (expatriates) and less importance to developing a skilled pre-migrant/aspiring migrant group who is the founder of out-migrant category. As per sequence, pre-migrants come first, then out-migrants (product of pre-migrants) and finally post-migrants (product of out-migrants). But it seems to be that the government starts with the second one (out-migrants), then with the third one (post-migrants) and lastly with the first one (pre-migrants). The ministry has developed ProbashiKallayan Bank (PKB), Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF), Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited (BOESL) etcetera (Figure 3) who all are mainly serving for the post-migrants (expatriates) and very passively, for the post-migrants and the pre-migrants. To show the government's proportionate emphasis on these three categories, a hypothetical diagram was developed. (Figure 4). Here, the volume

of emphasis is shown by circles: large, medium and small. In the government's top-down policy, the large circle is for crude out-migrants, the medium for post-migrants and the small for pre-migrants. The impact of the government's such an unjustified attitude would be clear from the above discussion. To make a balance between these three categories of migrants, two compromising proposals may be proposed to the government: equal importance attitude or bottom-up. In equal importance, all circles are equal. It means that the government should emphasize all the migrant categories equally. Here, attention should be equally given to pre-migrants, out-migrants, and post-migrants. If so, both three categories will have harmony and coordination among them and will be treated and nurtured equivalently. In a bottom-up importance attitude, the pre-migrant category will get the topmost attention. This category will be skilled and proficient through imposing strict criteria, so that impotent and inefficient people will automatically be ousted from the pre-migrant list and be scanned beforehand (Figure 3).
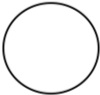
volume of emphasis shown by circle (hypothetical) ▶ Migrants' category ▼	top-down importance (Government's existing policy)	equal importance (proposal 1)	bottom-up importance (proposal 2)
out-migrants	◯ (large)	◯ (medium)	◯ (small)
post-migrants	◯ (medium)	◯ (medium)	◯ (medium)
pre-migrants	◯ (small)	◯ (medium)	◯ (large)

Figure 3. Bangladesh Government's unjustified priority for out-migrants (expatriates) on top-down basis. Two proposed ideas on equal importance and bottom-up importance are introduced here.
Source: Researcher's own idea based on field survey 2019 and interview with the BMET and the MoEWOE 2020

Here post-migrants will get the next priority, so that they can get much after-care from returning home and will have a smooth re-settling with their original village societies. Clean image left abroad by the post-migrants and proficient pre-migrant categories will jointly

produce the out-migrants as their outgrowth. If this pattern of bottom-up importance continues, then the out-migrants category will be demanded by the overseas employers. Right away, if the government takes up, at least, equal importance model towards all type of migrants, then the present name of Misnistry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment is likely to be modified. Present naming pattern is very much biased with the out-migrants category, and here pre-migrant and post-migrant categories appear to be underneath. If the ministry is renamed as "Ministry of International Labour Migration (MILM)", then it equally addresses and encompasses all categories of migrants and links all government's auxiliary bodies symbiotically.
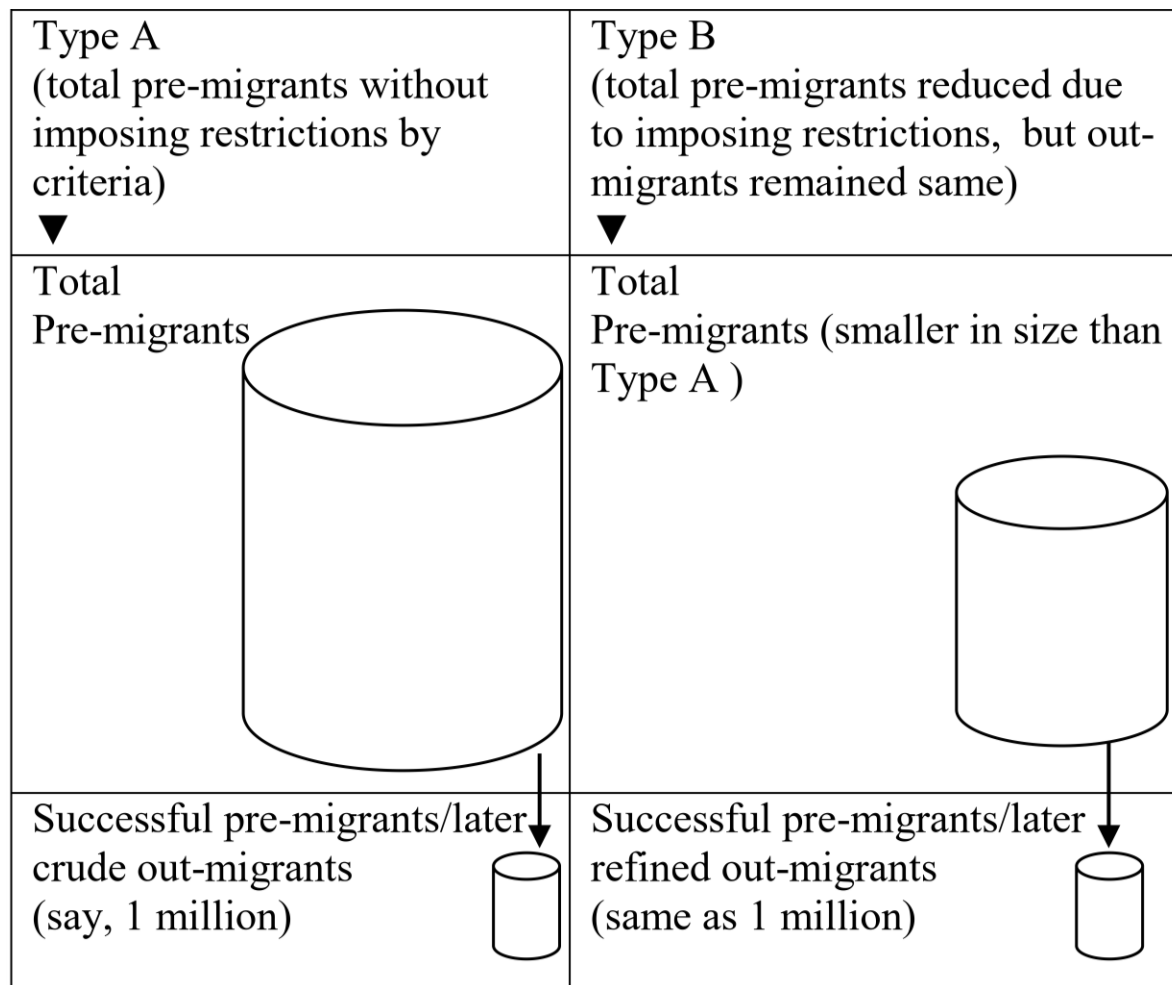
Type A (total pre-migrants without imposing restrictions by criteria) ▼	Type B (total pre-migrants reduced due to imposing restrictions, but out-migrants remained same) ▼
Total Pre-migrants	Total Pre-migrants (smaller in size than Type A)
Successful pre-migrants/later crude out-migrants (say, 1 million)	Successful pre-migrants/later refined out-migrants (same as 1 million)

Figure 4. From the pre-migrant category to successful pre-migrants who are actually crude out-migrants or refined out-migrants: Type A and Type B
Source: Researcher's own idea (hypothetical)

However, it is pellucid that neither the equal importance nor the bottom-up importance model will decrease the total number of out-migrants at all. The Figure 4 tells that if there are no restrictions of criteria imposed on pre-migrants in Type A, the crude out-migrants will be, say, 1 million. There will be exactly the same number of out-migrants, but refined; if there are restrictions imposed on pre-migrants in Type B. Government here will not lose any number of out-migrants or remittances. Only difference exists in numbers between Type A and Type B. Pre-migrants of Type A are larger than those of Type B. The pre-migrants of Type B are reduced due to impose of restrictions of criteria, but the number of successful migrants remains the same. The out-migrants of Type B are a refined section of pre-migrants, but this is not the case of Type A. Thus, it is puzzling why the "Migrants' Act 2013" have not imposed any of the above stated restrictions to refine the aspirant migrants. After refining, the required manpower (demanded by overseas employers) will not be reduced at all. Here the question arises, whose interests have been upheld or preserved by not imposing restrictions on pre-migrants: the government's or recruiting agencies'? Certainly, a larger number of aspirant migrants matters to the recruiting agencies, not the government. If the number of aspirant migrants (pre-migrants) is larger, the recruiting agencies will have an advantage in bargaining with the aspirant migrants. Naturally, the inefficient group of crude pre-migrants will be much desperate for overseas employment at any cost and presumably, be ready to spend more money than the qualified refined pre-migrants. Henceforth, the recruiting agencies take the advantage of such circumstances. Consequently, a remarkable number of out-migrants will be less-skilled/unskilled labourers abroad. On the contrary, if the size of pre-migrants is reduced and refined by imposing selective criteria (age, education, language-efficiency etcetera), the bargaining advantage of the recruiting agencies will automatically be curtailed and the efficient pre-migrant's category will get benefit of demand due to being smaller in size than the Type A (Figure 4).

However, a huge outflux of less-skilled/unskilled overseas recruitment can be disciplined and restrained. So, it is the government who can decide to choose Type B instead of the existing Type A. Then, it will be necessitated to modify the "Migrants' Act 2013". In such happenstance, it is assumed that strong objections and obstructions can come from the recruiting agencies and other tricky beneficiaries such as intermediaries.

6. Conclusion

So, considering all the criteria of the three categories of migrants, it is distasteful and alarming for the government in respect of labour migration in the world market. If this trend continues, there is a high likelihood that the category of less-skilled and semi-skilled workers would be escalated. Only the governmental role in policy-framing in labour migration abroad can alter this disgraceful scenario. The governmental policy should be pro-parental than the top-down controlling approach. The government should inspire, provide incentives and make the people interested in such a way that the aspiring pre-migrant's category will

automatically feel pressure and be encouraged to upgrade their capabilities and skills in order to have an extraordinary demand by the overseas employers. If the pre-migrant's category is informed earlier about the choice of the overseas employers and job recruiters by the government's district-level DEMO offices, they would be compulsorily and drastically eager to enhance their qualities in the light of education, language-efficiency, trade-course, in operating own bank account, insurance policy etc.

The governmental policy should be in such a state that the government will simply offer the scopes and opportunities of better education, vocational trade course, relevant language course etcetera. The aspiring migrants will be inspired by themselves to achieve those qualities and understand the reasoning of acquiring these qualities and skills behind. If the government can implant self-motivated mind set-up among its vast rural inhabitants for overseas job, the curious pre-migrant's category will find out the avenues in order to improve them and to make them acceptable by the overseas employers in the labour-shortage countries.

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