

Surviving Pattern of Women and Children Migrants in Urban Bangladesh

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Abstract: Migration is a relevant phenomenon with important implications at three different levels: local, regional and international. On the wider level, migration is tightly related with globalization and with the workflow of human resources towards the host countries; on a local level, rural to urban migration is one of the most important aspects of the economy of the state. This paper analyses the situation of Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the causes and consequences of women and children migration, who move to big cities like Rajshahi to find work and to enhance their livelihood. The paper looks at the role of work in acquiring dignity, the filial duty in a traditionally hierarchically structured society and also women and children as active-decision makers in the migration process. The paper also focuses on the characteristics of migrant people, with sex and age disaggregated data, and statistics about the different families' situations and the type of work in which the migrant people are involved in.

1.1. Introduction

Migration is an important aspect of globalization and has implications on local, regional and international development. Women and children are vulnerable segments of population almost in every part of the world. It is also true for Bangladesh because of its social inequality, unfavorable economic condition, political climate, joblessness etc. The large-scale migration of women and children to urban areas is not entirely a recent phenomenon, nor is it equally common in all parts of the world. In Asian context women have many outstanding characteristics, such as their industrious, dutiful, conscientious and intelligent personalities, but most of all their roles in keeping the society in stable development.

In view of the above vulnerable situations women and children often become the victims of immoral migration locally and internationally. The presence of poor migrant children in Bangladesh is the symptom of social phenomena like broken families and underdevelopment, such as poverty, over population, unemployment and illiteracy. With the escalation of polygamy, remarriage after death or divorce, lack of family responsibility and others, children are forced to the streets. It is clear that most of the street children migrated from rural to urban area for various socio-economic causes and they live in hazardous conditions in urban areas (Rahman, 2002). Another way in which children migrated to Rajshahi city is

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through the increasing demand for domestic workers, which are often recruited from poor families in rural villages. Therese Blanchet (1996) in her study on child servants in Bangladesh has pointed out that “unlike the trend observed in many parts of the world, domestic service in Bangladesh is not a disappearing occupation” and this job victimizes young children, especially girls. They generally are 6-16 years old and most of them are employed full time on a residential basis (Shamim *et al.*, 1995). Many empirical studies from different rural areas in Bangladesh show that most child domestic servants come from very poor families (Blanchet, 1996; Rahman, 1995). In other cases, the rupture of families, such as the death of one of the parents or their divorce, may be a reason for putting children into domestic services. In the same circumstances, children may decide autonomously to take up this kind of employment for their own security rather than living on the street (Rahman, 1995).

Rural to urban migration has been a major explanation for the dramatic increase in the urban population. The most remarkable characteristic of this urbanization is the mushrooming growth of slums and squatters with the increased migration of poor rural people in search of employment and income (Afsar, 2000). Although the implications of rural-urban migration for socio-economic development are of long-standing interest to social scientists, very little work has looked at the effect of migration on the health and survival of the most vulnerable members of migrants’ families – infants and children in Bangladesh. In the days of urbanization and the destruction of rural socio-economic condition as well as the polarization of socio-economic condition of rural society, people internally migrate from rural to urban area with the hope of better livelihood option. In this way, the children have been also migrating with his/her family as well as personally (Rahman, 2002).

Bangladesh is a highly patriarchal society in terms of women’s mobility (Farhana, 2008). Within the household and through the legal bodies and local decision-making process, men have control over women’s sexuality, labour, income, assets and choice of partner. Women’s access to social, economic, political and legal institutions is mediated by men. They are dependent on men throughout their lives, from fathers through husbands to sons. State legislation and institutions underpin this gender subordination and dependence, in spite of constitutional affirmations of sex equality. Men’s authority over women is reinforced by pervasive gender-based violence (Farhana, 2008).

2. Institutional communication of the United Nations

Rural to urban migration is a very important topic on which United Nations have worked in the past years as a particular declination of the problem of urbanization. The UN website for Bangladesh reports many official publications on different topics, such as education, child labour, adolescents’ social environment, gender equality, health problems, poverty, but there is no specific document for rural-urban migration of women and children.

In 2008 the United Nations Population Division held an international conference in New York to bring together specialists of urbanization to discuss the situation of different countries. The Expert Group on Population Distribution produced a paper titled "An Overview of Urbanization, Internal Migration, Population Distribution and Development in the World", which is not specific to Bangladesh, but the state is cited many times as one of the seven countries with a level of urbanization ranging from 26 to 50 percents together with China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan (UN, 2008). The same source tells that Bangladesh has a rural population of 116 million inhabitants and an urban population of 42 million which means that the percentage of people living in the cities is 26.6 percent. Bangladesh is also one of those countries (with Benin, Nepal and Pakistan) where female migrants outnumber male migrants by over 10 percent.

From 1995 to 2007 the United Nations have produced a conspicuous number of resolutions titled "Violence Against Women Migrant Workers", adopted by the General Assembly or by the Human Rights Council. These resolutions focus on the gender-related dimension of the phenomenon, highlighting the problems faced every day by migrant women. Even if the main focus of the resolutions is on international migration and the link between countries of origin, transit and destination, many considerations about women migrant workers can also be applied to the rural-urban migration. In fact it is said that "this feminization of migration requires greater gender sensitivity in all policies" because the reports underscore the persistence of "grave abuses and violence committed against migrant women and girls, including gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, trafficking, domestic and family violence, racist and xenophobic acts, abusive labour practices and exploitative conditions of work" (UN, 2007). Bangladesh has also ratified two documents of the International Labour Organization about gender equality at work: the "Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration" and the "Convention 111 on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation", but national laws have still to implement these international treaties.

In 2007, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Mr. Ismat Jahan, presented the main points for a sustainable urbanization. His speech does not focus on the situation of women and children, but considers the influence of poverty on the phenomenon of migration and insists on the development of both urban and rural areas with a "coordinated approach among UN-Habitat, UN Funds and Programmes, Specialized Agencies, BWIs and other relevant stakeholders". This objective is extremely important: a projection (UN, 1998) reveals that in Bangladesh urban population will exceed 50 million by 2025.

Among the problems related to rural-urban migration, child labour is one of the most important situations to be solved. A research conducted by the International Labour Organization (2006) shows that in states where the per capita income is \$500 or less, the percentage of children working is 30-60%. Bangladesh

has a per capita income of \$489, but 36% of population lives with less than \$1 a day and 82, 8% with less than \$2 a day (UNDP, 2005).

The causes of child labour are complex and related to very different aspects: a vulnerable economy is surely one of the first indicators of the presence of this phenomenon, but we have to consider also social inequalities, a weak legislative system and the low quality of schools. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) indicates compulsory and free primary education as a fundamental and indivisible right for all children. Nevertheless, many children drop out from school at a very early age (nearly 50% of students before they complete Grade 5) and begin to work, sometimes leaving the family to reach a big city, where they live alone in hazardous conditions.

This situation violates different international treaties, like the “Convention on the Rights of the Child” (UN, 1989), the “Minimum Age Convention” (No.138, ILO) and the “Convention on the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour” (No. 182, ILO). In 2008 ILO, UNICEF and UNESCO jointly sponsored a document called “Child Labour and Education in Bangladesh: Evidence and Policy Recommendations”. The study shows that the percentage of children involved in child labour is still high, even if there has been a decline since 2000.

3. National Communication on Child Labour

Actually, Bangladesh has many laws which regulate child labour. One of the first document is the “Primary Education (Compulsory) Act” (1990), with which the state made primary education free and compulsory for all children. Other national plans were signed in the following years, dealing with the elimination of child labour (“National Plan of Action for Children 2004-2009”), eradicating illiteracy and providing education for all the children (“National Plan of Action on Education for All 2003-2015”). In 2006, two important documents were signed: the first one, the “National Non-Formal Education Policy Framework” is a consideration of the government on the activities and framework of NGO non-formal education programs. In the same year, the government signed the “Labour Act”, with which it explains the definitions of children (below 14 years) and adolescents (14-18 years).

Finally the Ministry of Labour and Employment developed a national policy on child labour, explained in the “National Child Labour Elimination Policy”. This document is still a draft but has been submitted to the government for approval.

Bangladesh has a total child population (5-17 years old) of 42, 3 millions: 19,7 millions are female children and 22,7 millions are male children. The table below shows how many of them are involved in the economy of the state.

Table 1: Child Labour in Bangladesh

Components	Percentage
Child Labour (5-17)	3.2 million
Rural Child Labour	2.4 million
Total Economically Active Children	7.4 million
Rural Economically Active Children	6 million
Male, Female Child Labour Ratio	3:1
Hazardous Child Labour (HCL)	1.29 million
% of HCL Male Child Labour	90.7%

Source: BBS, 2003

These data demonstrate that, even if the awareness about the negative aspects of child labour is increasing, the phenomenon is still a huge problem. The strategies have to be implemented to become more effective. Nowadays, the low quality of the educational system pushes parents to send children to work, because they have low confidence in the returns from school education.

4. Methodology:

This research on poor migrant women and children surviving patterns in urban localities has been conducted in two adjacently located neighbourhoods of Ramchandrapur and Vadra areas of Rajshahi City. The most important rationale for selecting these two places lies in the fact that we have evidence that comparatively poor women and children migrants had settled there from time to time (BBS, 1991). A total of 500 households have been identified from both the neighbourhoods of Ramchandrapur and Vadra, who were interviewed with a set of small questionnaire in the form of a face sheet. This is based on a total enumeration through which we have been able to identify

the poor migrants. Subsequently, after identifying a total number of 250 households, we found that 110 among them were poor women and children migrants.

In this research we mainly followed both participant-observation and survey methods. We have also conducted a few case studies and used the key-informant of the slum dwellers' family of migrants as well as the family of women migrants. This study also followed techniques such as: a) collected general background data of the women and children migrants; b) both structured and unstructured interviews to were used, and c) formal and informal meetings with women and children migrants were held on a periodic basis. Quantitative data are presented in tables, which may exhibit meaningful results. This research used the classification of data to trace meaningful differential trends. The quantitative data were analyzed to provide information on the patterns of women and children migrants' age, sex, occupation, education, politics, family structure, family numbers, kinship, marriage and lastly socio-economic condition and livelihood.

5. Causes and Consequences of Women and Children Migration

In Bangladesh children clearly have an economic value for their families since they contribute substantially to household's welfare from a very early age. The structure of the household, reinforced by the socio-economic conditions and the agrarian intensive labour market, promotes a perceived economic value attached to the newborn, especially if male. Large traditionally hierarchically structured families rely on the perception that a child is an economic asset, able to provide an income and extra labour power, which can be controlled by the household through traditional attitudes of parental power and filial duty. Parents also agree that for the children work is an opportunity to gain experience and the dignity necessary to achieve a recognized position in the society. In this regard, child work is, therefore, seen as an initiation into adulthood.

Rajshahi city has to cope with the increasing pressure of population growing at a rate far beyond the ability of the economy to provide an adequate level of basic social services. Rural-urban migration of women as well as children has been the major cause of this fast growth. Women and children migration is not a unique phenomenon of Bangladesh; it is widespread across South Asia, as well as in Africa. Most of the people have been migrating from rural villages to cities, either to escape from a violent and oppressive situation at home or to find employment opportunities more available in the city. The purpose of this section is to explore the characteristics of migrant children and women. In doing so, we will emphasize that in some cases children and women are active-decision makers rather than passive players in the migration process. The present section also explores the causes which induce parents and their children to move to Rajshahi city, attempting to highlight the position of children within the migration process. It also examines the livelihood strategies that children and women set in place once they arrive at the destination such as the work they do and the places where they settle.

Children and women, who come from very poor families where everybody's work is essential for survival, generally see as their responsibility to work and earn money. The children usually do not criticize their parents for sending them to work since they perceive it as a duty they have to accomplish to contribute to their families' income. Sometimes, they also "feel proud of the money they earn which gives them importance in the family" (Farhana, 2008).

In our study we have seen that women and children also play the role of household's heads. Here we asked the causes of their coming to the city, information about nature and age of migration, family background, adjustment process, profession, and the environment of working places. The data are presented below.

Table 2: Causes of Women and Children Migration in Urban Areas (in percentage)

Causes	Women	Children
Poverty	48.00	40.00
Natural disaster	27.00	38.00
Marriage	17.00	0.00
Others	8.00	22.00
Total	100.00	100.00

In Bangladesh the average family size is six persons. In families where children work, the father often is a rickshaw puller or a day labourer and the mother is a domestic help. Poverty leads to quarrels; tension can ultimately result in the cruel treatment of children. The mother, being over burdened with work, can lose interest in her children and neglect them. In our study 48 percent women and 40 percent children migrated due to poverty (Table 2). Without a stable income children become a burden on parents and must find work for their own survival in the urban society. Twenty seven (27%) percent women and thirty eight (38%) percent children (Table 2) migrated because of natural disasters e.g., floods; land erosion, cyclones etc., which further increases the pressures on poor families and lead many children to enter the labour force. Child workers always face bad working conditions, unfixed wages, health hazards, lack of recreation and are exposed to mental, physical and sexual harassment. Seventeen (17%) percent poor women migrated because of marriage and after that they went with their husband to the city, but after their arrival in the city their partners got married again and left them; eight (8%) percent women and twenty two (22%) percent children migrated for other causes, like pushed out of house work, enticement for marriage, offer of work, helping family income, influence of local people for getting job, illiteracy and ignorance, running away from family, family pressure, living freely and earning lot of money for family etc.

6. Age at Migration

Concerning age, we find that children aged from 5 to 15 and women aged above 16 to 26 migrated to Rajshahi city. Thirty nine (39%) percent children aged from 8-10 came to the town mainly for domestic work. Beside this, thirty seven (37%) percent children aged from 11-15, come to Rajshahi to find a job and earn money for their family and twenty four (24%) percent from aged 5-8 came for poverty, missing parents, in search of work etc. Women came to the city in search of job, or with their husbands or during natural calamities when they lost everything. Most of them were aged from 16-20, but women aged above 21-25 belonged to the second highest position.

Table 3: Age of Women and Children at the Time of Migration (percentage)

Age Level	Children	Women
5-8	24.00	0.00
8-10	39.00	0.00
11-15	37.00	0.00
16-20	0.00	52.50
21-25	0.00	32.50
26 Above	0.00	15.00
Total	100.00	100.00

7. Work Pattern in Urban Society

In our study we find that in Rajshahi city women and children are involved in different types of occupation.

Table 4: Types of Work at the Urban Areas (percent)

Type of work	Women	Children
Maid servants	47.00	-
Hotels and restaurants	23.00	35.00
Day laborer in construction works	20.00	31.00
Rickshaw/ van puller	-	21.00
Others	10.00	13.00
Total	100.00	100.00

In our findings forty seven (47%) percent women are maidservants. Some of them are working on part time basis, some permanently and some on hourly basis, for example, two times in a day at 6 am to 1 pm and 5 pm to 8 pm, or 6 am to 8 am; some are working from 8 to 10 and 10 to 12 (only half-day work) and some are working whole day such as 6 am to 6 pm.

Their monthly salary depends on their work type. The lowest salary is Taka 200 (\$2.86¹) and the highest salary is Taka 1000 . Most of the women are working in low and middle income families and only a few of them are working in upper income families. The salary and other benefits are greater in the upper income families than the middle income families. They get Taka 300-500 and one to two meals by working 3-6 hours in a day in the middle income families. On the other hand they get Taka 500-700 and three meals by working whole day in upper level families. Majority of them feel more satisfied to work in the upper income families because the meal they receive is enough for their entire family. Thirty five (35) percent children and 23 percent women are working in hotels and restaurants. The children are mainly working as waiter, cleaner and water puller. The women are washing dishes, cooking the food and grinding spices. The salary depends on their work duration. Children usually get 50-150 Taka; the women usually get Taka 100-300 and they get food on the basis of their working time. Children usually work whole day in the hotels and restaurants and the working hour of the women usually depends on their work type. Twenty (20) percentage women and thirty one (31) percent children work as daily labourers in the construction of roads and highways, buildings, bridges, culverts, etc. They get their wages on daily basis. It depends on their work pattern. Some works are highly risky especially for children i.e. brick, the building material, carrying heavy or weighty materials, building construction etc. They start their work in the early morning and continue until evening. Children get Taka 30-60 and women get Taka 40-100 per day. In the case of wages, the woman are deprived compared to the male labourers. The authority gives lame excuse that the women worked less than the male workers even if the women claim that they work the same as the male workers. Twenty one (21) percentage children are involved in rickshaw and van pulling. They earn 40-70 Taka per day. But they have to pay the rickshaw owners a big amount of their income. Sometimes they have to spend money for repairing the rickshaw if it is damaged in accidents. Ten (10) percent women and thirteen (13) percent children are involved in other types of work such as mobile hawkers, peddler, working in garage and factories and some even begging. They earn 20-50 Taka per day.

We find that the children got jobs in their working places individually or with the help of family members, relatives or neighbors. The majority of children works in a hard, dangerous, health hazard environment, and is always harmed mentally and physically. Obviously this situation is in contrast with what is said in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: "the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and

¹ \$ 1= 70 Taka (aprox)

understanding” (UN, 1989). In March 2000, US President Bill Clinton gave Bangladesh \$14 millions to combat child labour, \$8.7 million in particular to against hazardous work conditions. What “hazardous conditions” mean is that children do not get medical facilities, do not have adequate attention if handicapped, work dangerously with chemical and acid materials. Children working as domestic servants are also exploited in the sense that they do not have access to education and medical care.

In 1999 UNICEF published the “Asian Child Labour Report”, in which it is said that in Bangladesh there are 40 industries which use child labour. In these places children are exposed to dust, gases, noise and fumes which bring them diseases affecting their muscular, skeletal and respiratory systems.

8. Children’s Relationship with Parents

Our study reveals that most of the children who have migrated to Rajshahi city have an organized family composition having mother and father together. Sixty three (63) percent children have not been detached from their father and mother. Children having parents are generally free from regular work, but due to low income, children also try to supplement their family. Twenty five (25) percent children are living with their mother as their family has broken down due to separation. This section of children regularly works in the urban areas to support their mothers. Their fathers either died or shifted to other areas and not maintaining any contact or responsibilities. Nine (9) percent live with their father and three (3) percent of the children have not parents. They are orphans, live with their relatives and work to survive

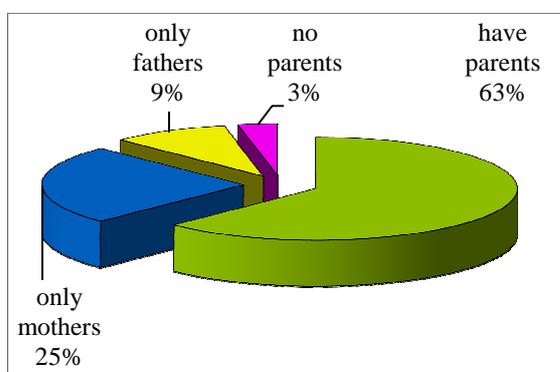


Figure 1: Information about Children’s Parents

9. Working and Living Environment

Migration is best understood as one of the strategies adopted by individuals, households or communities to enhance their livelihood. When migrant children arrive at their destination, Rajshahi city, their experience of adaptation to the new urban setting changes drastically according to the reasons that induced children and women to migrate, and the way the departure took place.

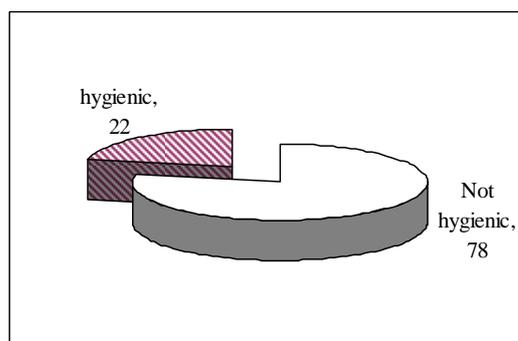


Figure 2: Working and Living Environment

In this context, the environment and pattern of work are totally opposite of the rural areas. Here we find that the work and living environment in urban areas for seventy eight (78) percent not to be hygienic and only twenty two (22) percent of women and children feel that their work place and living environment are hygienic. That means nasty, narrow, not sufficient light, congested work or living places, polluted air and water etc. The cities' slums do not have any permanent sanitation system: because of that situation, women and children's health is affected by many diseases like diarrhea, for whom Bangladeshi population spends nearly \$70 million a year in treatments. In addition to that, slums do not have specific areas to wash the dishes and there is no drinkable water. So that, people clean their things in the open air water bodies, increasing the pollution of the areas. People are also exposed to Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) because of air pollution due to smoke from cars and other vehicles, open air garbage and weak sewerage system.

10. Case Studies

Case -1 Jarina Khatun

Jarina is a 16 year old girl working in a house in the city. She came from Nilphamary, a neighboring district of Rajshahi with her relative to work as a domestic servant. Before migration a rickshaw puller proposed to her to marry him when she was 12 years old. First time she and her family refused him, but the rickshaw puller was very much inclined to marry her. Finally Jarina married him, but her husband left her in the village and came to Rajshahi City. Jarina waited six months but, he did not contact her. So she decided to go to Rajshahi to find him and she came to the city. After migration she stayed at her neighbor's house in Ramchandrapur's slum area. After three months, she found her husband living with another wife and pathetically he refused to take her. So Jarina got engaged in different jobs (daily labourer, restaurant worker) and finally she got a job as a maidservant. Since then she has been working as a maidservant and her monthly income is 700 Taka. She is living in this city for more than four years. She was very young when she came here for the first time, but now she is an adolescent girl. Interestingly, she got married again but her 2nd husband died in a road accident. Now she is living alone with her two year old son.

Case-2 Khodeja Begum

Khodeja was a resident of Rangpur district. She was eight when she first migrated to Rajshahi city with her uncle. She has five sisters and two brothers. Her father is a poor farmer of a shared land and the income was not sufficient to maintain their livelihoods. One day Khodeja's uncle came from Rajshahi city and influenced her father to send his daughter for work in Rajshahi. First time her parents did not agree to send her but finally they accepted, she was then a student of class three. Her father dropped her out from school and sent her to the city with her uncle. At first, she stayed with her uncle in a house of Seroil area where her uncle worked as a servant. The house master's wife and their children were cruel and rough on her. They always threatened and beat her. She was always crying and one day she tried to go back to her village. But the master didn't agree. One day her father came to Rajshahi and observed his daughter's condition, but he was unable to help her. So, Khodeja escaped from that place to another relatives' house at Ramchandrapur slum area. He was a restaurant worker from whom Khodeja got shelter and managed housework beside her new residence. Khodeja's relative told her "If you want to stay with us you must pay for a room". So, she started another two house works at the same time. One day Khodeja was raped by a man who lived in her slum. But she was afraid to expose it to anybody. After few days of this incident Khodeja's father arranged marriage for her with a boy who worked in a motor garage. But pathetically five years later her husband got married again and left her. Now Khodeja and her two children are living with her parents. She admitted her children in a school but her elder son dropped out and now is working in a restaurant. First Khodeja was not adjusted with the new environment but after few days she got herself adjusted in urban life. Now she likes the city very much but her parents do not like urban life. They want her to come back to their village but it is not possible for her.

Case-3 Nazma Khatun

Nazma is a resident of Ramchandrapur area of Rajshahi City. She came alone from Rangpur district, leaving her family, to find a job when she was 15. She was unmarried and extremely poor. Before migration, her father earned very little amount of money. So, she decided to migrate in Rajshahi city and at the beginning she stayed with her relatives in Ramchandrapur area of the Padma riverbank. Every day early in the morning she walked one and half mile to reach her working place in a hotel, where she was engaged for more than two hours and earned only Taka 200 which was not enough for her, so she managed another two house works. She also sends Taka 300 every month to her family in Rangpur where she also has one school going brother and sister, and she wishes to continue their education.

Case 4 Sujanuzzaman

Sujan is a 10 years old child. He migrated from Dinajpur, because one day his father beat him. The first days of his migration he begged slept on the footpath beside the road. Then he got a job in a motor garage, found a room at Bhadra Slum. Now Sujan is a 15 years old rickshaw puller. One day he met a man who was a neighbor from his village. He told Sujan that his mother is now living alone with his brothers and sisters because his father got married again. After hearing this news he went to his village and met his mother. Now he is staying with his family in the city and wishes to be married in one year. His mother is working in a restaurant. She doesn't like the city and wants to go back to her village.

Case-5 Marjina

Marjina's father was a marginal farmer with a few acres of land adjacent to the river in a village of Nowgaon district. Their economic conditions have never been stable and it became desperate when all of their lands were eroded away by the river during 1970. So, her father started work as an agricultural labourer in the village, but the earning was not enough for the whole family. Her grandparents, who lived with them, were perennially ill because of their old age. Their economic condition further deteriorated with the outbreak of the liberation war in 1971. They became destitute and their poverty became unbearable for her father. They all, therefore, decided to move to the Rajshahi city in 1972 where all of them could be involved with some kind of work and fight poverty. Thus, Marjina and her family migrated in Rajshahi city.

1.11. Conclusion

Bangladesh is a country with rapid urbanization: this situation has significant economic, social,

demographic and environmental consequences. Rural to urban migration can have both positive and negative aspects. It permits a reallocation of people to more productive activities, giving to poor people opportunities that are not available in their original locations. Nevertheless, urbanization also creates many problems of urban governance, because local politicians have to provide facilities to a great number of people, including women and children living alone. The services for improvement include health-care services, schools, hospitals, drinkable water and security. The analysis shows the importance of large-scale migration of women and children to the urban areas in Bangladesh.

This paper started with a general overview of the literature on this topic made by the United Nations: the documents underline that Bangladesh is undergoing massive urbanization and that the policies have to take into consideration gender-related problems particularly when migrants are women. The literature review also looked at the problems dealing with child labour: Bangladesh has signed many international treaties proposed by the United Nations on this topic and produced national plans and laws to combat school dropout and child labour.

Poverty, broken families, unemployment and illiteracy are only few of the causes which can bring people to cities like Rajshahi, where they mainly find difficulties related to discrimination at work and lack of facilities. Other causes are natural disasters or the family size, which force children to leave their houses to contribute to the family income. The majority of the children migrate when they are between 8 to 15 years old, while women migrate between 16 and 26 years of age. The study analysed the conditions in which people live when they reach their destination, considering the kind of jobs available, the average salary and the conditions of hygiene. Young children are often employed as domestic workers, waiters or cleaners in hotels and restaurants, while women work as maidservants or wash the dishes, cook the food and grind the spices in hotels and restaurants. In any case, 78 percents of them live in conditions which cannot be considered hygienic. Only 9 percents of children are orphans, while 63 percent live with their parents. Most children do not criticize their families for sending them to work, because it is perceived as a filial duty to earn money to contribute to the family income. The five case studies at the end of the article were used to illustrate the situation as examples which are representative of thousand other cases.

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