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## IMPACTS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN BANGLADESH

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### ABSTRACT

Migration is an indispensable part of an economy. The purpose of this article was to explore the linkage between poverty and migration through evidence. The study was based on a quantitative approach and used a demographic household survey (1991 to 2011) data accompanied by a theoretical discussion. The theoretical evidence showed that the relationship between poverty and migration was not simple rather than vice-versa. The relationship showed three ways such as migration as a factor of poverty, poverty as a major reason for migration as well as migration as an outcome of poverty. Empirical evidence showed that migration had a great impact on the reduction of poverty at not only the individual level but also the household level, community level as well as national level. It also revealed that internal migration depended on the socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors in Bangladesh such as low income, unemployment, social inequality, higher and quality education, unsatisfactory life leading, and natural disasters like flood, drought, and riverbank erosion. A target-oriented pro-poor policy is required to enhance the off-farm job opportunity, basic public and social services, and disaster management so that people can stay in rural areas with a sustainable livelihood.

**Disciplinary:** Multidisciplinary (Economics, Migration and Mobility Studies, Development Studies, Sociology).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Poverty is a significant cause of migration (Sarker, 2016). Mainly poverty works as the main aspect of every action of it. When there is no work and the abdomen is vacant, a man tries his best to succeed. In the same way when the indigent doesn't succeed to nourish themselves in their local cities have to see the starving encounters of their dearest children and get possibilities, even after trying core, to get rid of poverty, they are forced emigrate to another place. Because of this poverty, they are now the population of cities (Ahamad et al., 2013). Migration has become a vital part of the present international economic system. Truly, 214 thousand individuals were living abroad as migrants. Truly, an approximated US\$440 billion was remitted globally by global migrants (United Nations, 2013). The variety of individuals who move within nationwide boundaries is much higher than global migrants. It has been approximated that the variety of inner migrants is nearly four times the variety of global migrants (UNICEF, 2010). Both inner and globally migrations can have significant growth effects for source and location places. UN systems engaged in migration plans, research and government usually maintain that migration can help to eliminate poverty and activate financial and social growth if favorable coverage is functional at international, local and nationwide stages, showing the interest of both source and location places. The proof is growing on the linkages between migration and growth at both international and nationwide stages. However, the definite evidence is yet to appear on backlinks between migration and poverty (Kimura & Chang, 2017).

This study evaluates the present literary works and finds evidence connecting migration and poverty, as well as migration and growth. The lowest groups in any society are often sidestepped by financial growth and it is quite true for individuals of non-urban places. There is a trend in reducing poverty since freedom, still, a wide array of non-urban individuals (35.2%) is living below the poverty line (BBS, 2015). Rural poverty results from a deficiency of assets, restricted financial possibilities, and inadequate knowledge and abilities as well as disadvantages based on public and governmental inequalities (World Bank, 2008). Without possibilities for adequate earnings in the non-urban places, hardship is being improved and this pressured many non-urban inadequate to seek a career elsewhere, leading to a massive rural-urban migration (Olopade et al., 2019). Migration minimizes the population pressure especially in the non-urban places which stimulate financial conditions and minimizes rural poverty (Ramos et al., 2020). The facility and career opportunity in urban areas are better than rural areas which stimulate rural-urban migration (Ali et al., 2020). The occurrence of hardship is greater in non-urban places than that of the city places. The reduction rate in the non-urban sections of poverty is also greater in non-urban places than the city places. It may be happened due to rural-urban migration (Sultana & Fatima, 2017).

There are few types of migration usually found in the society of Bangladesh like (i) rural-urban migration includes the movement of individuals from non-urban places to towns of the same nation for searching new opportunities; (ii) seasonal migration focuses individual's shift for searching job in a specific season and (iii) return migration includes the voluntary come back of migrants to the previous place from migrated place. Often, adolescents are migrating to nearer town to earn money. The latest studies are on rural to urban internal migration in the aspect of poverty showed that seasonal and circular internal labor migrants were more prevalent among the poor (Sikder et al., 2017). In this article, an attempt has been made to discuss all kinds of migration sources, both in

regular and irregular conditions and short-term and long-term situations. Internal migration has been focused in some studies such as rural-urban migration and policy response (Voss et al., 2001; Lall et al., 2006; Wang, 2008), internal migration and child labor (Binci & Giannelli, 2016), internal migration and poverty trap (Haan & Yaqub, 2008; Guriev & Vakulenko, 2015; Zhang, 2017), internal migration and livelihood (Adjei et al., 2017; Schiff, 2008), poverty alleviation (Awuse, 2013) at the international case as well as Bangladesh cases such as internal migration and livelihood (Al-Amin, 2010; Chowdhury et al., 2012), development nexus (Afsar, 2003), remittance (Sikder et al., 2017; Buchenau, 2008); food security (Bruyn, 2010), and drought (Chakrabarty & Chakrabarty, 2017) but very few of them concentrated on the impact of internal migration on poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study intends to fill the research gap by addressing the research questions: (a) What are the causes of internal migration? (b) Is there any effect of internal migration on poverty alleviation? and (c) Is poverty a root cause of internal migration?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

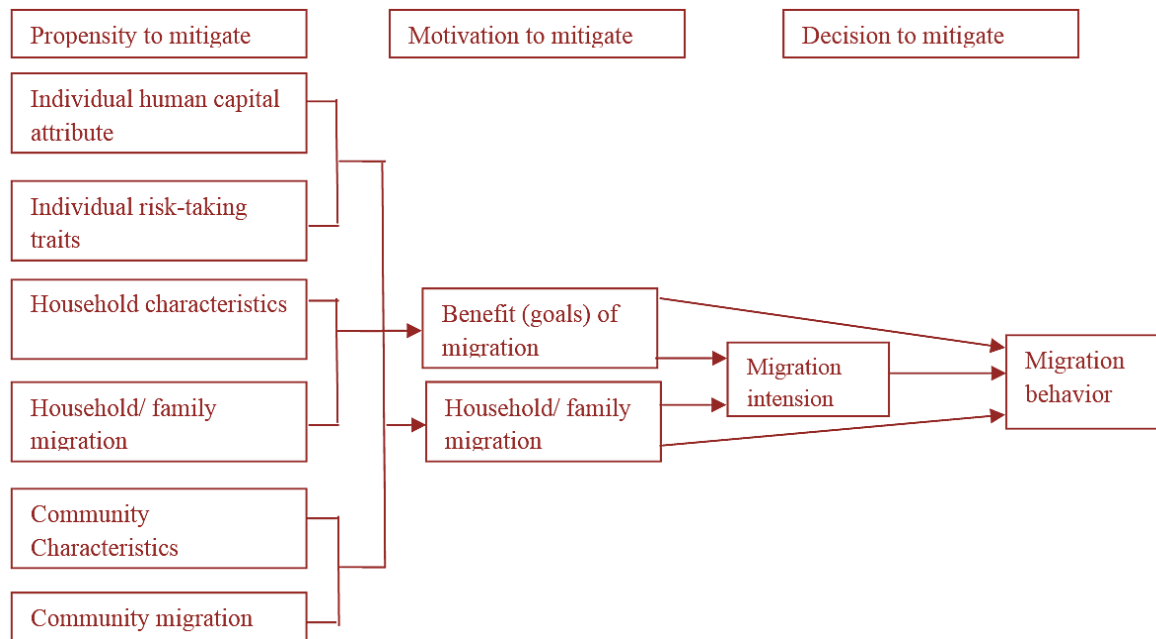
### 2.1 MIGRATION AND POVERTY

Migration has been an extended earnings strategy in Bangladesh. Nowadays, poverty is a key driver of the rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. The city dwellers are far less reliant on farming. Moreover, dependency on off-farming actions among the non-urban individuals is mentionable recently which motivates migration to urban areas for better earnings possibilities. Furthermore, the principle aspect that draws the non-urban the indigent to the city center is the rapid expansion of non-agricultural areas. Another intra-related aspect that motivates the non-urban individuals Bangladesh to move into city places is the frequent repetition of the organic catastrophe which seriously damaged farming growth and caused meals crisis and lack of employment, particularly for those who typically depends on farming actions as a means to earn their daily earnings (Siddiqui, 2012). So, it is obvious that the lowest portion, often cannot move since sources are needed to do so. This often led to a debate about the link between migration and growth. Study on several literary works relevant to rural-urban migration assesses that, in comparison with the other least western world, a greater part of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is because of the powerful forcing aspects relatively on one side and powerful pulling aspects on the contrary (World Bank, 2007). Bruyn (2010) described poverty as the total absence of possibilities, accompanied by high levels of undernourishment, starvation, uneducated, lack of education, mental and physical ailments, emotional and public uncertainty, disappointment, sadness and despondency for the future.

Poverty is also characterized by a chronic shortage of monetary, public, and governmental contributions, relegating individuals to the exemption, preventing accessibility to the benefits of monetary and social development, and thereby restricting their social development (Buchenau, 2008). All these explanations determine poverty from an extensive viewpoint, providing specific requirements such as the condition of employment and earnings, food security, quality of shelter, accessibility to knowledge, wellbeing, and extent of social and financial inclusion.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The study of inner migration is a key significance in social sciences as well as financial aspects and it comes out not only the activity of people between one spot to another position inside the nation but also impacts on livelihoods and concrete development (Figure 1). Internal migration relies on the socio-economic, market and social aspects like great lack of employment rate, low income, and great inhabitants' development, imbalanced submission of the area, the requirement for higher education, prior migration styles and discontentment with real estate.



**Figure 1:** A conceptual model of migration decision making  
Source: Weeks (2008) and Al-Amin (2010).

An attempt has been made to elucidate the reasons for migration, migration decisions and financial factors with their influences by well-established theories like the neoclassical theory, the new economic theory and the network theory.

### 2.2.1 NEOCLASSICAL THEORY

The neoclassical theory is the oldest migration theory that works on both the micro-level and macro-level. It mainly deals with wages which motivated individual for immigration and the various levels of wages which creates an economic balance among various areas (Harris & Todaro, 2015). It also states that differences in wage levels help people to motivate them to move from one place to another due to demand and supply of labor in specific areas. The wage levels are low in those places where labor supply is high on the other hand the wage level is high where labor supply is low. It can be balanced which wage region got sufficient labor supply. Therefore, the migration can be minimized by ensuring equal resource distribution in different areas and depends on the condition of the labor market (O'reilly, 2012). There are push and pull factors which influences by labor availability. This concept is also used through the microeconomic plan. It is based on the foundation that people create their minds emigrate not the only platform on the wages but also a preliminary rumor in human capital that can improvement their financial efficiency and on the whole quality of

life (Massey et al., 1993). They consider their locations according to where they will get the biggest return. People also consider psychological demands like leads of finding a career, the chance of being removed from the host country and the financial cost of migrants (Borjas, 1989). The concept indicates that consumption, knowledge, and experience also impact people for making their decision about migrations.

### 2.2.2 NEW ECONOMIC THEORY OF MIGRATION

According to a new economic theory, people make their decision for the betterment of their households to overcome future barriers. In this circumstance, people do not take decisions individually so their decision making is done by consultation with other members of the family. It generally happens as risk minimization measures. The household wants to extend their dependency not only on income but also on the geographical base to reduce their economic and property losses. The risk of the total safety and wealth of the family can be reduced due to the work of the household members. It can be easily covered by the other members if any of the household members would be laid off or unable to work due to sickness or die (Massey et al., 1993). One family trying to improve their income compared to close relatives. Though migration does not solely depend on wage differences it is a certain level frustration of not having the excellent income to go with the well of the household that relative starvation. This idea shows that migrants try to extent the risk rather than just an increase in income and also not target the wage equilibrium. The main idea of this theory is that people subsidized their livelihood to limit the risk built into societies (Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016). This idea better explains about the property owners and individual actions than the neoclassical concept.

### 2.2.3 NETWORK THEORY

Chain migration happens when migration is going on its own way and slightly isolated from the driving forces which required it going in the prior place. Massey et al. (1993) mentioned that migrants set up interpersonal ties that connect them to previous migrants and non-migrants in origin and principle areas through ties of association, companionship and shared a social origin. The international migration increases due to lower the costs and risks of transformation and increases the expected net returns to migration (Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017). This theory deals with the social networks of people and explains how people take their migration decision by consulting with other community people who already experience. After getting migration, they feel the interest to migrate there because it decreases their mental and monetary cost as well as increases social security (Harris & Todaro, 2015). Not only that social networks also help them to get access to the labor market easily and helps them easy to integrate into the host society. The social network is very important to create a hustle free migration to a new destination. Gradually it becomes a practice of way into adulthood for people of poor areas having diminutive to accomplish with economic supply and demand (Borjas, 1989). Individuals with different conditions normally have different stages of monetary well-being at the same level of income. Generally, poverty can be described as considering money. The individual needs to accomplish the lowest level of well-being not to be considered as poor.

Everyone in the poverty range is taken to be similarly poorly off, and all those below the range are more intense off than all above it. Usually, the people who are living below the poverty line move to



the urban area with a passion for enhancing their earnings. Although the evidence is limited and combined (Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016). But the extremely poor people sometimes bound to migrate with bad conditions because of their belief as to the lower level and by which migration does not change their economic conditions, for example, the insured labor (Tian & Guan, 2008). This is happened due to the shifting of individuals for different reasons across or within the nation. A migrant could be an individual who goes across or within the nation to enhance particular livelihood; a sanctuary who passes across the boundary due to governmental and spiritual suppression; or by an individual who is displaced by natural disasters (Momayez & Atefeh, 2019). Still, the demographer neither could nor achieved to an agreement meaning of migration. This is because migration does not take place under a frequent situation rather the causes of migration are based on particular perspective in which they take place. It continues to be an essential job for the demographer to demonstrate why individuals shift from one spot to another (Khurram et al., 2020). An extensive concept of migration is required for this. This is because only the concepts of migration can best describe why individuals are moving from one spot to another within the broader financial and governmental perspective (Aamir & Iftikhar, 2020). For example, if migration in Bangladesh is proven as the result of the monetary aspect then, it could be fixed through the decentralization of the economic system within the nation. The fact is that often it is almost unachievable. Furthermore, migration was controlled by a push-pull process; that is, negative situation position (oppressive rules, large taxes, etc.) “push” individuals out and beneficial circumstances in an exterior place take them out (Sarker, 2016).

The expense of migration is a significant barrier for the indigent who wants to go. Migrating smaller ranges happens upon lower costs, a statement which has led some to claim that the indigent seems to interact with more in short-range (internal) migration, such as non-urban to non-urban or non-urban to city migration (Tsukada, 2014). However, there are figures of important exclusions to this common concept. For example, in some cases ranges from non-urban places to household city migration centers may be higher than those to cross-border or local migration locations. For some, both the traveling range and the expense of worldwide migration may be less than for inner activity. Those who live in boundary places may choose to combination worldwide boundaries rather than shift internally. For example, a part of Bangladeshis and Indians who live on either side of the Benapole-Petrapole boundary take part in a career in Kolkata or Jessore rather than in Dhaka or Delhi, which are much further away. One of the reasons why the migrants are attracted to certain locations, in particular, is the available public investment and assistance systems there. In addition to public investment, price, and range, well-established northeastern hyperlinks may be an aspect (Sikder et al., 2017). However, as labor migration between Bangladesh and Indian is lawfully limited, individuals seem to go illegally.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

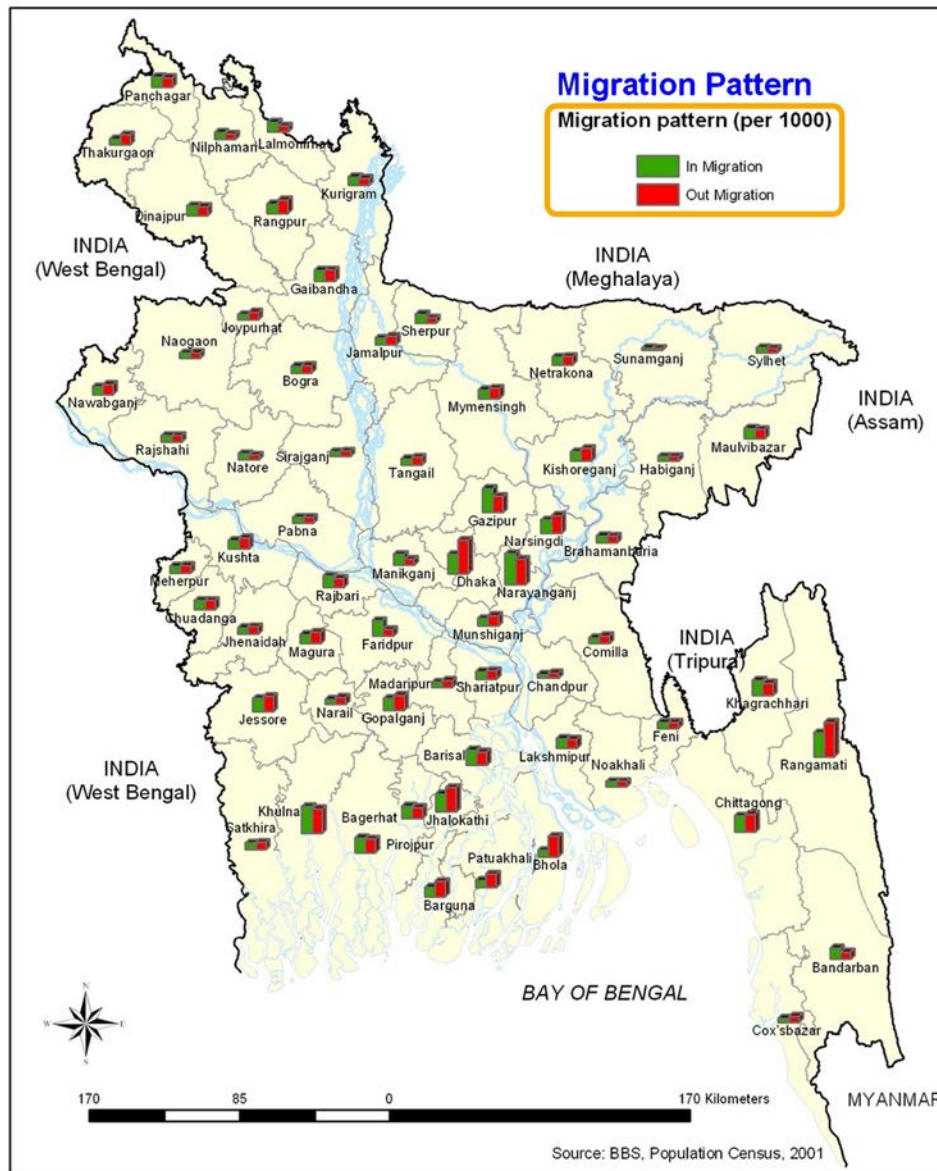
#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN, DATA COLLECTION, AND ANALYSIS**

This study focused on the linkage between internal migration and poverty alleviation of Bangladesh through a quantitative approach accompanied by a theoretical approach. It used data from Bangladesh's demographic household survey from 1991-2011. Theoretical approaches such as

neoclassical theory, new economic theory as well as network theory were used to explore the evidence of linkage between internal migration and poverty. Besides, this study used information from various government reports, journal articles, books and newspapers to shape the article. It was conducted from February-April, 2017.

### 3.2 ETHICAL ISSUES

This study is based on secondary data freely available in Bangladesh's demographic household survey from 1991 to 2011. All the ethical standards have been followed for using the data obtained from published documents of the government of Bangladesh.



**Figure 2:** Migration profile in Bangladesh (Source: BBS, Population Census (2011))

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 PROFILE OF MIGRATION IN BANGLADESH

The people are working to create a new property that causes urbanization. Similarly, migration is a socioeconomic trend suffering from many complicated systems including public, emotional,

financial, governmental, institutional, and other factors. Migration impacts the dimensions, framework, and development of communities (Uddin & Firoj, 2013). Migration may also affect the dimensions of the employees, the submission of employees by expertise, knowledge, market, and profession, a career position, benefits, investment, and efficiency. It also brings to public and emotional effects on both roots and locations. It requires activity from one property to another. Migration can be internal and international. Murata (2018) found that nearly two-thirds of emigration from non-urban to towns. The significance comes out not only from the activity of individuals between places but also from its impact on the lifestyles of individuals and city development. Generally, migration is a process of moving properties from one place to another. However, usually, rural-urban activity rules the sector of research and planning as its part in modifying the lifestyles of migrant family members both at the hometown and location (Imai et al., 2017). In Bangladesh, an enclosed migrant is described as someone who moves from his previous area to new areas, so that the area of location becomes the area of a regular property (Figure 2).

## 4.2 INTERNAL MIGRATION TREND

The total internal migration was 13.5 thousand in 2011 while it was 11 thousand in 1991 and 12.5 thousand in 2004. It was increased to 1.5 thousand in 2004 from 1991. The rural to urban migration rate was higher among other internal migrations. It was gradually decreased from 5.62 in 1991 to 4.29 in 2011. The second highest internal migration was rural to rural migration rate; it was 8.6 in 1991 to 4.2 i.e. decreased gradually (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Internal migration from 1991 to 2011

Internal migration	2011	2004	1991
Number of total migrants	13488973	12564448	11167791
Internal migration rate	9.7	9.34	10.02
Rural to Rural	4.20	2.99	8.6
Urban to Rural	0.36	0.38	1.42
Urban to Urban	0.85	26.41	28.04
Rural to Urban	4.29	4.79	5.62

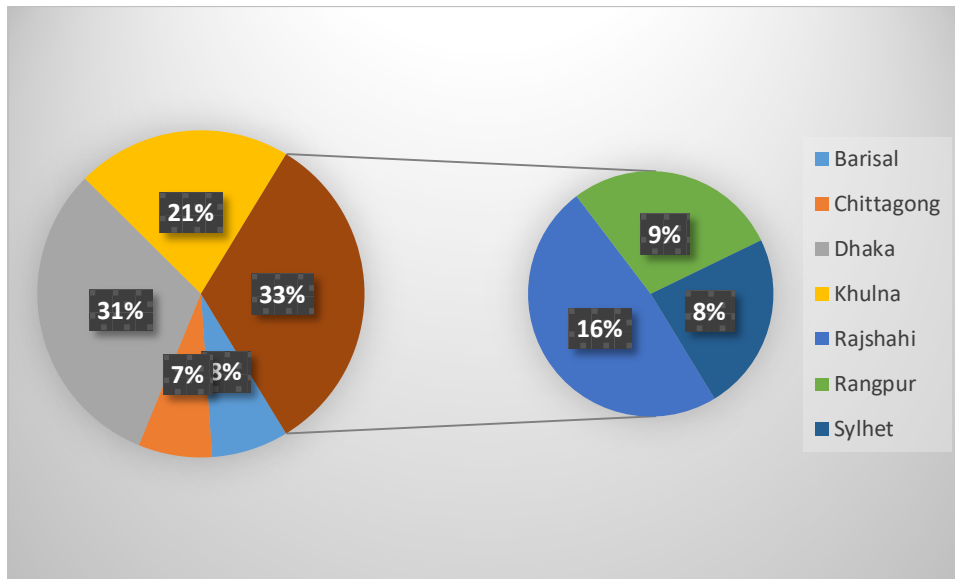
Source: Population and Housing Census (2011) and (2015)

Barisal Division of Bangladesh was rated maximum possible creating the speed of development and development of people of Barisal was lower in Bangladesh, then respectively Khulna division. Some places from the Rajshahi division were also placed as the region of an origin (BBS, 2015). The incident of internal migration in 2011 was 9.7 indicating that among 100 inhabitants 9.7 people move internally from one location to another. This amount was 10.02 in 1991. And, in 2004, it was 9.34 which was nearly 0.36 less than in 2011 and 0.68 less than that of 1991. Though this rate was excellent in 2011 but 0.32% reduced than that of 1991.

### 4.2.1 INTER-DIVISIONAL MIGRATION

Figure 3 shows the inter-divisional bivariate distribution of lifetime migrants according to birthplace and current residence in 2011 of Bangladesh. The maximum inter-divisional lifetime migration rate (31.24) was found in the Dhaka division due to as the capital of Bangladesh. People migrated from other divisions for earning money and better livelihood. The second-largest rate (21.27) was found in the Khulna division due to an industrial city.

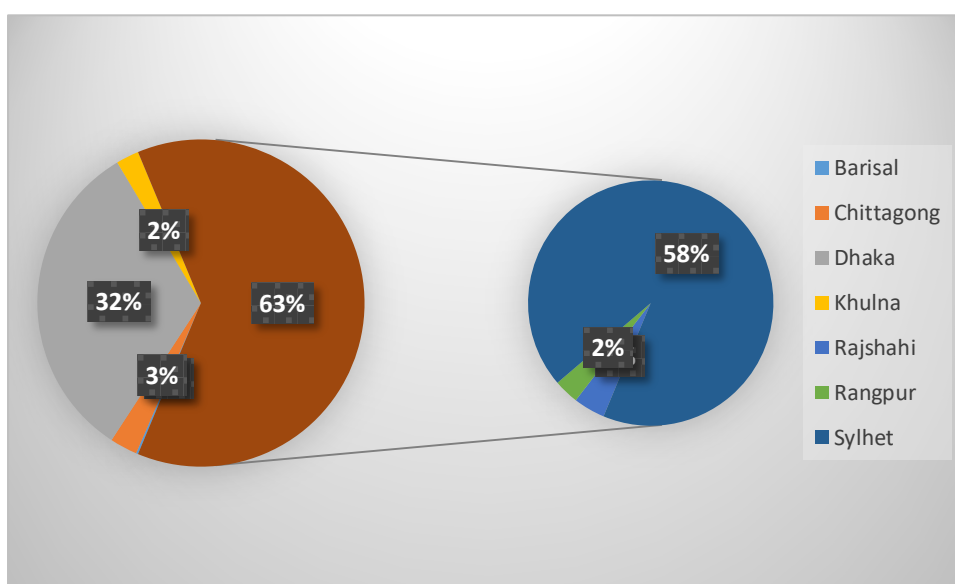




**Figure 3:** Inter-divisional migration rate  
Source: Population and Housing Census (2011) and BBS (2015).

#### 4.2.2 DIVISION WISE IN-MIGRATION

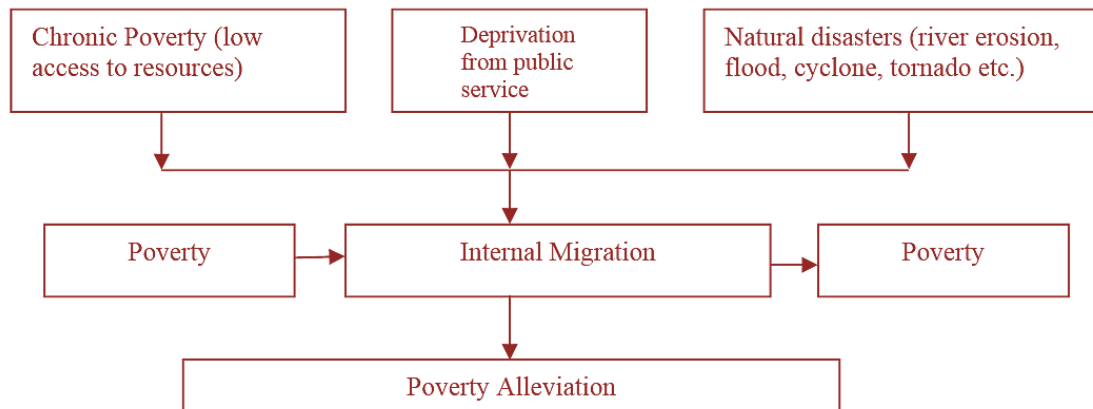
The rate of in-migration was maximum (32.25) in 2011 due to people's movement from other divisions to Dhaka. All the earning facilities and employment opportunities are available in Dhaka so people migrated to Dhaka for earning money, fulfilling desire and better livelihood. The first column indicated that 75.06% of the individuals who live in the Barisal division were locally born and the remaining individuals moved from other places. The third column indicated that 57.51% of individuals of Dhaka local born and the remaining individuals moved from other places (13.13% from Khulna, 9.29% from Rajshahi, 8.09% from Rangpur and 5.04% from Chittagong). The vales indicate that the Dhaka division has the highest in-migration and lowest in Barisal division and the percentage of migrants was less than 50.0% in the other places (Figure 4).



**Figure 4:** Division wise in-migration rate  
Source: Population and Housing Census (2011) and BBS (2015)

### 4.3 LINKAGE BETWEEN POVERTY AND MIGRATION

Poverty is a major obstacle for the people of Bangladesh. 31.5% of the total population are living under the national poverty line (ADB, 2017). Poverty is one of the main causes of migration. It is an important factor for poverty reduction in Bangladesh. The relation between poverty and migration is complex. This relationship was found in three ways like migration as a factor of poverty, poverty as a major reason for migration as well as migration as an outcome of poverty. According to development theory, as a heterogeneous group, poor people's representation is noticeable but practically they were deprived of access to powers, resources, and control (Akhter & Bauer, 2014). The people are experienced by different vulnerabilities which shaped their livelihood as a poor in Bangladesh. That is why many people choose migration as a means of poverty alleviation. Since there were no available options to tackle poverty so they took migration as a means for survival and livelihood security (Adjei et al., 2017). The lacks of opportunities like shelter, education, health treatment, and employment are the major responsible factors for migration. As a result, people think of themselves as poor which created by migration. It stimulates them to further migration for improving their life and livelihood. Sometimes, the rural poor people faces a natural disaster like flood, cyclone, tornado, and river erosion which damages their houses, physical assets, livestock, poultry and other daily necessity items (Al-Amin, 2010). As a result, they could not carry on their livelihood in the countryside as usual, so they migrate to the city for earning money and carrying on daily life (Figure 5). In the city area, the migrated people could earn money because jobs are available.



**Figure 5:** Linkages between major factors of internal migration and poverty alleviation  
Source: Author's contribution.

Some people could lead their life as usual but migrated people in the city area faces some difficulties like shelter problem, water and sanitation problem, health problems, children's education problem and social security problems. Migrated women in the city area often harassed at their working place (Chakrabarty & Chakrabarty, 2017). Sometimes people migrate to other cities or return to the countryside to leading a better life and livelihood. Migration is dependent on the situation and characteristics of the people who were intended to migration as well as demographic, cultural and socio-economic factors which sometimes force them to migrate from one place to another place within a country (Etzold & Mallick, 2015).

#### 4.4 IMPLICATION FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary to concentrate on the issues of the contribution of migration and urbanization. A large gap still remains between migration and urbanization. Migration and urbanization should be considered in the National Development Plan for ensuring sustainable socio-economic development (Zaman et al., 2010). Generally, rapid urbanization without vigilant planning can create a negative effect on sustainable development. Since migration rates are highest bound to Dhaka, the government should emphasize to develop all the big cities of the country for reducing migration flow to Dhaka. It will require a handsome investment for developing infrastructure and creating job opportunities for other cities of the country. This investment should focus the equal opportunities for urban citizens of all cities of Bangladesh so that people tend to migrate to other cities equally (Islam et al., 2013). A macro-level policy should be made by the government considering economic motivations, on-going economic expansion, and better management. Distributional equity and environmental vulnerabilities should be considered for making a plan in favor of migrated people (Kuhmonen et al., 2016).

Since migration plays a key role in reducing poverty, it should be managed properly to facilitate reducing socio-economic failures. Rural-urban flows of migration should be a primary concern that emerges severe deprivations in urban areas (Kimura & Chang, 2017). Due to rural-urban flows of agricultural laborers, rural agriculture faces a shortage of labor that hampers the agricultural production of marginal, middle and large farmers. Evidence showed that the productivity level of urban areas is greater than in rural areas (Peou, 2016). That is why; people are interested in migrating to major cities of the country. A new strategic focus is necessary to address high growth, social equity, and national urbanization properly. It is implied that the private sector should come forward to absorb surplus labor for equal growth in the rural as well as urban areas. New forms of decentralization are necessary at the local level for empowering urban and rural people to face the challenges. The rural economy should be improved for managing rural-urban migration, increasing agricultural production, and off-farm job opportunities (Radel et al., 2018). It can be developed through developing infrastructure, communication, marketing channels, value chain, and supply chain for agricultural products.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that rural-urban migration was higher than other internal migrations. The rural people were migrated for ensuring better livelihood opportunities. Evidence showed that 4.5 million people had done the internal migration in 2007 of which 75% of people moved within urban or rural areas. Poverty alleviation is a major goal in Bangladesh like other developing countries. A strong policy is necessary to reduce poverty affect the poor. Though developing countries governments have an urban bias in their development policies which helps a small part of the population of city dwellers by ignoring people of rural areas. The diversification process of rural livelihoods should be improved by increasing employment opportunities in off-farm activities in addition to traditional agriculture which enabling rural people to escape from poverty. Stronger interventions like creating income-generating activities, capability enhancement, motivational works and planned supportive activities should be ensured during a natural disaster as a disaster-prone country. The study also revealed that three key factors were responsible for internal migration such as

economic factors, public services, and environmental factors. Firstly, people tend to migrate to city areas as they were economically poor and could not afford their livelihood and eventually fall into poverty. They migrated to overcome the poverty situation. Secondly, people usually faced low health care, education, no modern facilities, and public services in rural areas. So, they tend to migrate to urban areas for getting better public services. Thirdly, there were so many environmentally vulnerable areas in Bangladesh like a riverine island (char), and a coastal island that faces natural disaster regulatory. People of those areas tend to migrate to urban areas for obtaining better safety of life. This finding suggests that a proper pro-poor policy should be taken by the government to ensure off-farm job opportunities, providing better public and social services and environmental protection for rural people so that people feel better in the rural areas and leading their livelihood sustainably.

## 6. AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding authors.

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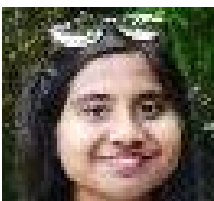
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