

International labour migration ...

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from February 2015. As of December 23, a total of 16,833 workers went to Kuwait. This is almost 3.5% of the total flow from the country. Kuwait imposed ban or restriction on recruiting Bangladeshi workers once in early 2000 and then again in 2006, based on a murder incident as well as malpractices in the recruitment process by Bangladeshi private agencies. Before the ban, it was one of the major destinations for Bangladeshi workers in the Gulf region. It is extremely important to nurture good relationship with the Kuwaiti government to continue the process. Women workers were migrating Saudi Arabia for last few years. This year a substantial portion those who migrated this year is men (75.5%).

In June 2015, the governments of Malaysia and Bangladesh signed a new labour recruitment agreement known as G2G+. Soon after, the Malaysian home minister announced that his government will recruit 1.5 million Bangladeshi workers in the next three years through private sector under the new agreement. After the announcement migration flow to Malaysia increased steadily. On an average, 3,000 workers migrated to Malaysia every month since June this year. On the contrary, only 150 workers were migrating per month in the first half of the year.

Currently labour attaches are posted in 17 countries. Insufficient number of labour attaches creates major problems in providing services to the migrants.

Hosting of GFMD

Global forum on migration and development is a UN initiative that highlights the contribution of migrant workers in development. It also attempts to ensure better protection to migrants and Diaspora. The 9th annual Global Forum on Migration and Development will be chaired by and hosted in Bangladesh in 2016. Preparation for the event has already started, as the event is estimated to attract 500 delegates from around the world.

Role in inclusion of migration in SDG
Bangladesh played an important role in incorporating migration in the sustainable development agenda 2030. In collaboration with SDC, the government hosted the expert group meeting at Dhaka. The meeting was attended by delegates of 60 countries. It made six recommendations under 5 broad categories including health, development and education. Along with other efforts, this meeting sensitised the policy makers, and migration was successfully incorporated in SDGs.

CHALLENGES IN MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

Irregular migration

Despite continuous awareness campaigns by the NGOs, civil society and government agencies, irregular migration has been a major concern. The boat migration to South-East Asian countries particularly to Malaysia and Thailand became a dangerous phenomenon which has been termed as "slave trade" in migration era over the year of 2014 and 2015. A new irregular migration route has been introduced and become highly active in 2015. With the flow of Syrian refugees migrating to the European region, a number of Bangladeshis are trying to illegally reach Europe. Sudan has become a hotspot in 2015 as a transit country for the people from Asia and Africa. The Bangladeshis are going to Sudan on tourist visa and then from

their human smugglers or traffickers help them to cross border and enter Libya.

Migration to volatile countries:
Labour migration to politically unstable countries is also a major concern for Bangladesh. Around 14,000 people have migrated to Iraq in 2015 which is about 2.6% of the total flow. Despite the ongoing crisis in major parts of Iraq and absence of stable governance, why the government of Bangladesh allowed

Inability to provide MRP passports

From November 2015, only MRP passports are acceptable for foreign travel. Bangladesh Government outsourced the task of issuing the MRP passport to a Malaysian Firm. The company is yet to provide such passport to at least 500,000 Bangladeshis abroad. A large number of Bangladeshis are in deep trouble as their work permits are dependent on valid visa stamp on a valid passport.



PHOTO: AFP

people to migrate in this volatile region is a matter of concern.

Expulsion of irregular migrants

Malaysian Government has taken decision to expel the irregular migrants from their country from January 2016. Most of those who are now considered as irregular, may have entered Malaysia with legal visa. Later when the employers failed to provide them with work, they themselves found work at other companies. In this process they have become irregular. Besides, many of the irregular migrants who had entered in Malaysia using maritime route are also in difficulties.

Decision to transfer fund to PKB from WEWF

In 2012, Probashi Kallyan Bank was established to provide loan to would be migrants. It was formed with a capital of 100 crore. 95% of the fund was given from the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund, a fund created by the subscription from labour migrants and only 5% was provided by the government. The founding principle of the PKB states that in future the speed up capital of the bank has to be generated from others sources. In 2015 it could disburse loan only to 5463 would be migrants through 48 branches. However, without

any assessment of the performance of the organisation, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the relevant ministry again recommended to transfer 300 crore taka from WEWF to PKB.

Poor staffing of TTCs

There are 53 Technical Training Centers (TTCs) including 6 diploma level Marine under the BMET. In 2015, 81,000 participants received skill training on different trade. Number of trainees and centers are being increased every year but instructors are not recruited proportionately. Ensuring quality of training is a major challenge.

Role of Labour Attaches

Labour attaches are the main points of contact between the migrants at destination and their country of origin. Currently labour attaches are posted in 17 countries. Insufficient number of labour attaches creates major problems in providing services to the migrants. In Bahrain hundreds of Bangladeshis are in detention centres awaiting trials in prison, or serving sentences or facing deportation. In the growing trend of female migration from Bangladesh, it is essential to appoint more female staffs at labour wings abroad.

This piece shows that in governing migration, Bangladesh has made great achievements in the international arena, it has also been successful in making a breakthrough in re-entering some of its traditional markets. After five years it has been successful in increasing its annual labour flow. New researches show positive outcomes of migration for the migrant families. However, governance of migration needs major improvement. Given the positive outcomes of migration, Government needs to develop a national strategy to integrate migration in every development planning. To host the GFMD successfully, the government should seek collaboration of civil society from the very beginning.

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