

BANGLADESH ANNUAL MIGRATION REPORT 2017

MINISTRY OF EXPATRIATES' WELFARE AND OVERSEAS EMPLOYMENT



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FOREWORD

The world today is witnessing unprecedented human mobility driven by a number of factors like demographic dividend and socioeconomic disparities among others. In today's ever-changing world, the factors that affect migration and the range of sectors affected by migration is becoming more diverse and complex. Often a times, accurate and factual presentation of data is crucial for programmatic interventions. This call is reflected through the need for evidence in major development frameworks like the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration which calls for collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies. Similarly, at the national level, the subsection on Migration and Development in the Seventh Five Year Plan reiterates the importance of evidence base on human mobility and its effects.

Although various government agencies and development partners have been producing research papers, there is a need to have a single and comprehensive source for migration data. With this view, the International Organization for Migration supported the Government of Bangladesh to develop the Annual Migration Report (2017). The first report of its kind is a reflection on labour migration trends and emerging issues, highlighting some challenges and paving the way for addressing them.

The International Organization for Migration is particularly indebted to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for the guidance provided during the development of the Annual Migration Report 2017. We are grateful to the Advisory Committee comprising officials from the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training for working in close coordination with the report writing team. We thank the consultancy firm, Quay Asia for their efforts and hard work in completing this assignment.

We are thankful to the participants from different government agencies, development partners and research institutions who participated in the national consultation forums to finalize the report. Our appreciation to the European Union for funding the assignment through the project "Prottasha: Bangladesh Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance".

We hope this 2017 edition of the Annual Migration Report is a useful reference and will assist you in better understanding of labour migration issues and inform subsequent actions and interventions aiming to improve the situation of migrants and the societies in Bangladesh.



Giorgi Gigauri
Chief of Mission
IOM Bangladesh



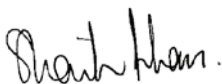
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is the first Bangladesh Annual Migration Report and I would like to thank all the writers, reviewers, and stakeholders that have contributed to the development of the report. I very much appreciate the contributions of the officials of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment including the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, the Wage Earners Welfare Board, and Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited. Particular thanks go to Additional Secretary Mr Mohammed Azharul Huq, Additional Secretary, Md Aminul Islam, Additional Secretary M Badrul Arefin, Joint Secretary Ms Nasrin Jahan, Joint Secretary Md Shujayet Ullah, Deputy Secretary Mr Mukhlesur Rahman Akand, Deputy Secretary Mr Mohammad Shaheen, Deputy Chief Mr K M Ali Reza, and Director of Training Dr Md Nurul Islam, among others.

I also thank all the officials of the International Organization for Migration for their guidance, contributions, reviews and comments. Particular thanks go to, Sharon Dimanche, Shahreen Munir, Jasi Phineas, Ashfaqur Rahman Khan, and Nissara Spence among others. The support from Quay Asia's international partner, Ecorys UK Ltd through the contributions of Khalid Miah and Charis Reid were also warmly received.

Finally, thanks go to Dr ASM Ali Ashraf and Phillip Choudhury for their hard work in compiling the contributions from all stakeholders, drafting the report, and incorporating the invaluable feedback from the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and the International Organization for Migration. I also thank the wider Quay Asia team for supporting Ashraf and Philip during the preparatory work for the Bangladesh Annual Migration Report.

The Bangladesh Annual Migration Report has been produced with financial assistance of the European Union, through a project entitled "Prottasha: Bangladesh Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance." The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors, Quay Asia, and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union, the International Organization for Migration and their Member States.



Shaila Rahman
Managing Director
Quay Asia Ltd



Message

With around 1 million people migrating for employment opportunities and USD 13.5 billion remitted in 2017, Bangladesh remains as one of the top workforce sending countries in the world (source). Recent efforts of the Government of Bangladesh, including improved migration governance initiatives, showcase the commitment towards safe, orderly and regular migration.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment welcomed the initiative by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to support the production of the Annual Migration Report (2017) as part of the project "Prottasha: Bangladesh Sustainable Reintegration and Improved Migration Governance," funded by the European Union. While the report for 2017 focuses primarily on workforce migration, the Ministry recognizes the complexity and inter-connectivity of migration and the need for inter-agency exchanges for the subsequent reports.

This is the first ever report produced in Bangladesh capturing the emerging issues in the arena of workforce migration and the first in a series of planned Annual Migration Reports. The report highlights progress as well as challenges which requires the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders to address.

We think the Annual Migration Report will be an instrumental source of information and a useful reference in migration discourse at the national, regional and global levels. We hope in its future incarnations, it will progress towards becoming the useful source for all migration related information for the country.


6.9.18
Dr. Nomita Halder ndc

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADD	Abu Dhabi Dialogue
ATAB	Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh
AVSEC	Aviation Security
B2B	Business to business
BaP	Bali Process
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies
BCG	Bangladesh Coast Guard
BDT	Bangladesh Taka
BGB	Border Guards Bangladesh
BLA	Bilateral Labour Agreement
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOAF	Bangladesh Obhibashi Odhikar Forum
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited
BOMSA	Bangladesh Mohila Sramik Association
BuP	Budapest Process
CP	Colombo Process
CSO	Civil society organization
DEMO	District Employment and Manpower Office
DWPWP	Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy
EPS	Employment Permit System
EU	European Union
EWOEP	Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
G2G	Government to government
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMT	Institute of Marine Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
MGI	Migration Governance Index
MWIMS	Migrant Workers Information and Management System
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoCAT	Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

MoL	Ministry of Law
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoLGRD	Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoU	Memorandum/Memoranda of Understanding
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDC	National Skills Development Council
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
OCUP	Obhibashi Kormi Unnoyon Programme
PKB	Probashi Kallyan Bank
PSHTA	Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act
RCP	Regional Consultative Process
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable development goal
TITP	Technical Intern Training Program
USD	United States Dollar
VTF	Vigilance Task Force
WARBE	Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladeshi Emigrants
WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board
WEWF	Wage Earners' Welfare Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



MIGRATION POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Migration in Bangladesh is managed and facilitated through the Government, private sector and Civil Society Organizations (CSO). Further support is provided by the labour wings of Bangladeshi diplomatic missions in countries of destination. Governance is maintained through national legislation and adherence to several international agreements on migration.

Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 (OEMA) is the principal legislation on labour migration from Bangladesh. The Act emphasizes the rights, safety, and human dignity of migrant workers, making it an obligation of the Government to ensure social protection of migrants both at home and in their countries of destination. It also governs the negotiations of MoU with destination countries. OEMA 2013 is complemented by EWOEP 2016. This offers a more comprehensive framework for safe labour migration, including the modernization of policies in light of ICRMV 1990, and SDGs. As part of the Government of Bangladesh's implementation of EWOEP 2016, efforts were taken in 2017 to expand the labour market, to promote skills development of migrant workers, and to ensure the safe and dignified migration opportunities for women. The Government of Bangladesh also formed a multi-agency task force to prevent fraudulence in the recruitment process. The Cabinet approved the draft the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB) Act 2017. Once passed by Parliament, the Act will provide a legal framework for improved welfare services for migrant women and men workers.

As of 2017, Bangladesh has signed two Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) and 11 MoUs with different Country of Destination to regulate the terms and conditions under which Bangladeshi workers are employed. Bangladesh is an active participant in various Regional Consultative Process on Migration (RCP). It chairs the Thematic Working Group on ethical recruitment in Colombo Process (CP). In other RCPs, Bangladesh focuses on good practices in migration management, public-private partnership on combating human trafficking, and facilitating the return and re-admission of irregular migrants. In 2017, Bangladesh served on the 14-member Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The Committee worked with the International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UN-Women, and several United Nations organizations to promote a human rights focused and gender-responsive migration regime around the world. At the international level, Bangladesh is active in Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and the Global Compact for Migration. In addition, the Government of Bangladesh has a demonstrated commitment to develop a gender sensitive migration system in compliance with global human rights norms.





TRENDS IN LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH

In 2017, 1,000,525 Bangladeshi workers migrated through BMET's procedures. This is an increase of 33 per cent over the previous years' figure of 757,731. Historical data indicates a consistent growth in international labour migration from Bangladesh since 1976.

Women workers from Bangladesh first entered the international labour market in 1991. From 1991 to 2003, less than 1,500 women, on average, migrated annually. This figure increased to an annual average of 25,700 between 2004 and 2013, resulting from a change in Government policy that reduced restrictions on women's migration. During the past four years (2014–2017), on average 99,500 women migrated. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon, and Oman are the top five countries of destination for Bangladeshi women where they are mostly employed as housekeepers. In 2017, 121,925 Bangladeshi women went abroad for work. Of this total, 68 per cent went to Saudi Arabia, 16 per cent to Jordan, and 8 per cent to Oman.

Skill training is a high priority for the Government of Bangladesh. Just 35 per cent of migrant workers from Bangladesh are classified as skilled workers or professionals while 48 per cent are low skilled. The Government of Bangladesh established NSDC for greater uniformity in migrants' skills and qualification. In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh also signed an agreement with City & Guilds, a leader among global restaurants and apprenticeship programmes to provide certification of skills training.

Countries in the Gulf and South-East Asia have been traditional destinations for Bangladeshi labour migrants. In the period from 1976 to 2017, 30 per cent of migrants went to Saudi Arabia and 21 per cent to United Arab Emirates. More than 25 per cent went to four other Gulf countries combined: Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Malaysia and Singapore have hosted 14 per cent of Bangladeshi migrant workers since 1976. A review of destination labour markets from 2013 to 2017 confirmed that Saudi Arabia remains the top destination for migrant workers from Bangladesh.

There are broadly two types of destination country labour markets: traditional labour markets with large or stable numbers of Bangladeshis working predominantly in the construction sector, and growing labour markets often with more specialized labour requirements.

Saudi Arabia remains the primary destination for Bangladeshi workers. Malaysia and Singapore remain major destinations in South-East Asia, with Bangladeshi migrants mostly employed in the construction sector. The Government of Bangladesh has signed a series of agreements with the Malaysian Government to provide recruitment services. These include facilitating migration through private business entities.

Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain are growing markets where the construction sector drives demand. The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar is likely to drive further



demand in construction, hospitality and tourism sectors. Kuwait, with ambitious targets for New Kuwait 2035, may have potential to hire more skilled workers in the oil and utility sectors, as well as in education and health-care sectors.

Bahrain has hosted more than 400,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers in the past four decades. Jordan has a relatively small market share of Bangladeshi migrant workers, but it has a well-regulated migration regime. More than 150,000 Bangladeshis have migrated to Jordan in the past decade. Jordan needs trained workers in domestic caregiving and in the ready-made garment industry.

Brunei Darussalam, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China (China, Hong Kong SAR), and the Republic of Korea have smaller market shares in overseas labour migration from Bangladesh, but they are models for safe and skilled migration. The tourism sector in Brunei Darussalam, domestic caregiving sector in China, Hong Kong SAR, and the manufacturing sector in the Republic of Korea have the potential to hire more skilled workers from Bangladesh. BOESL is directly involved in managing migration to China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea.



WOMEN AND LABOUR MIGRATION

Between 1991 and 2000 women migrating from Bangladesh constituted only 1 per cent of all labour migration. In 2017, the number of women migrating abroad for work was 121,925. This represented 12 per cent of total outmigration in 2017.

The majority of Bangladeshi women labour migrants remain in traditional roles such as housekeeping in countries in the Gulf region. A smaller number work in other fields such as ready-made garment manufacture in Jordan. The Government of Bangladesh wants to explore other occupational opportunities for Bangladeshi women beyond housekeeping. In 2017 high level visits were made to Japan to explore employment opportunities for women for higher band professions such as nursing, day care, and rehabilitation.

Training for outgoing female workers is provided by both government and non-governmental agencies. BMET provides a residential 30-day training on housekeeping for women, foreign languages and culture, and using household appliances. Women can enroll in other technical trainings such as driving, tailoring, plumbing, and welding, all offered by BMET. These are six-month long non-residential training and classes that are held three days a week. A total of 87,700 female workers were trained through the TTCs during the 2016–17 fiscal year.

Women remitted 72 per cent of their income in comparison to male migrant workers, who remitted 54 per cent. However, larger scale and more frequent national surveys on how women use or intend to use their remittances could inform specific policy elements related to women's migration and the design of financial and other services that respond to their needs.



EWOEP 2016 protects women migrant workers by preferring countries where women's protection is ensured by local laws. The policy includes the provision of trained women attachés in labour wings of missions in destination countries. The Government of Bangladesh has also established safe homes in Saudi Arabia, Oman, the Republic of Korea, and Jordan, as well as call centres to address complaints. BMET has set up a complaint management cell for expatriate women workers to address the complaints of women migrants. In addition, the Probash Bondhu call centre has been set up to provide support to women migrants in Malaysia, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. NGOs also continue to play an important role in supporting victimized women migrant workers. They have established mobile phone applications and grievance receiving centres that allow migrant workers to lodge complaints.

RECRUITMENT

There are two broad categories for recruitment: private and government-managed. First, recruitment at the private level is managed by more than 1,000 licensed recruitment agencies. BAIRA is the main trade association for recruitment agencies. MoEWOE through BMET regulates Recruitment Agencies by issuing, suspending and cancelling licenses. Fines for non-compliance are levied and deducted from Government-held deposits. Second, recruitment by the Government is carried out by BOESL. The Government of Bangladesh has launched a pilot scheme of G2G agreements with specific countries to further reduce the cost of migration and ensure the protection of workers. BOESL operates the EPS with the Republic of Korea. Migrant workers report low recruitment costs under this system and higher earnings, as well as higher levels of worker satisfaction. BOESL also manages recruitment schemes for Jordan and Japan.

The Government of Bangladesh has set country specific ceilings for the recruitment agencies to charge jobseekers and has fixed the maximum migration costs for low-skilled male and female migrant workers. In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh announced caps on migration costs for 14 countries. Despite the Government's numerous efforts to keep migration costs down, migrant workers continue to pay high costs due mainly to payments to intermediaries. This cost is usually higher for men than women. This variation in migration costs could be an area for further research.

The collaboration with the Republic of Korea through EPS operated by BOESL is an example of a model recruitment practice. Within the EPS system workers report satisfaction with their contract-based salaries, benefits, and low living expenses. Under this process, migration costs amount to BDT 80,000–85,000, and employees can earn more than BDT 120,000 including overtime per month. The employers provide free food and accommodation for migrants. Between 2008 and 2017, BOESL sent 16,721 migrants to the Republic of Korea.

Similarly, since 2010, BOESL has also sent more than 40,000 women migrant workers to the Jordanian ready-made garment sector. BOESL charges only BDT 12,000 in



fees for each applicant and each worker can earn up to BDT 18,000 per month. Potential migrants are selected by representatives of Jordanian ready-made garment companies during visits to Dhaka.

Clear and transparent selection procedures and policies, participants of bona fide representatives of Country of Destination, clearly defined remuneration and other benefits, and reasonable or no costs to the migrant worker are all hallmarks of ideal recruitment practices.



MIGRATION ISSUES MANAGED ACROSS GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

MoEWOE is the focal ministry for labour migration policies and programme implementation but it performs these functions in cooperation with other government institutions. Migration is a concept that encompasses a wider range of cross-border movement such as forced migration, refugee movements, trafficking, reintegration and family reunification. These are all complex issues that require a cross-government approach.

The Government of Bangladesh has established a multi-agency AVESEC force to enhance security in its international airports (Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet). It has also introduced smart border management to strengthen its capacity to deal with cross-border smuggling and goods and commodities and human trafficking. As part of the initiative of the Government of Bangladesh to develop a coordinated border management plan with India, BGB and Indian BSF have agreed on joint patrolling of border areas and holding regular meetings of senior and mid-ranking officials.

In 2017, Bangladesh received a large influx of 700,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar. In November 2017, the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a memorandum of understanding for the repatriation of Rohingyas. The Government of Bangladesh decided to involve both IOM and UNHCR in the Rohingya repatriation process.

The Government of Bangladesh has implemented a number of initiatives to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants. These include the promulgation of PSHTA 2012, and adoption of the National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking 2012–2014. Bangladesh has strong cross-departmental collaboration to prevent human trafficking and promote safe migration.

In 2015, Bangladesh received USD 15.27 billion in remittances, which decreased to USD 13.61 billion in 2016 and USD 13.53 billion in 2017, respectively. In the past two fiscal years (2015–2016 and 2016–2017), the top five sources of remittances for Bangladesh were Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Malaysia and Kuwait. Remittance utilization has both micro, and macro level impacts. An IOM study showed that remittances are utilized in five major categories: food and clothing; home construction and repair; purchase of land; loan repayment;

and savings. The vast majority of remittances are sent to Bangladesh through formal channels including banks, Western Union, and Money Gram.

IOM is implementing a pilot project under its assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programme to reintegrate irregular migrants from the EU. IOM is also implementing a project focusing on sustainable reintegration for returnees, in partnership with BRAC and funded by the EU. IOM is also working closely with the ILO and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to develop a framework of services for the returnee migrants' reintegration in Bangladesh.



CONCLUSIONS

International demand for workers from Bangladesh remained strong in 2017. Existing markets in the Gulf countries were strong while new markets were explored. Throughout 2017 progress was made on several challenges, and safe migration and decent work remained priorities.

The Government has shown a strong commitment to develop a migration system that complies with global human rights norms and that respects gender sensitivity. Efforts to regulate the formal and informal recruitment agents to reduce the cost of migration and to promote an ethical recruitment process have also been taken.

The current trend in labour migration from Bangladesh is expected to continue, with an increasing number of men and women joining the international labour market. In 2017, more than 1 million Bangladeshis, with various skills categories, left the country to accept jobs mostly in the Gulf countries and in South- East Asia. MoEWOE has prioritized creating a skilled workforce for deployment around the world.

Promoting safe and dignified migration opportunities for women is one of the major commitments of MoEWOE. The provision of zero cost for women migrant workers serving as domestic caregivers in Saudi Arabia is a major success. The introduction of a labour market for women migrant workers in China, Hong Kong SAR, even on a limited scale, is also an important achievement.

The state-owned recruitment agency, BOESL, is making good progress in promoting fair, low-cost, and ethical recruitment process. BOESL's success in establishing model recruitment practices for countries such as the Republic of Korea, Japan and Jordan need to be replicated. MoEWOE continues to work with Recruitment Agencies to reduce the cost of migration.

Although MoEWOE is the lead ministry for managing labour migration from Bangladesh, there are several migration-related issues which require shared responsibilities and are thus managed across government. These include prevention of human trafficking, remittance regulation, and reintegration of returning migrant workers.



INTRODUCTION

This is the first Bangladesh Annual Migration Report, which reflects on the country's progress and challenges in 2017 across a range of labour migration issues. Its development involved a participatory process overseen by MoEWOE, through a supervisory committee of senior officials, and involving its stakeholder organizations: BMET, BOESL, PKB, and WEWB. Workshops, interviews, and meetings were held throughout the year and information from a number of recent reports and studies was incorporated along with a review of current legislation and international agreements. A number of supporting exercises were conducted ahead of drafting the Bangladesh Annual Migration Report. These included an assessment of MoEWOE's capabilities to formulate migration reports and a process handbook to guide MoEWOE in formulating a Bangladesh Annual Migration Report focusing on labour migration.

The report content is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is entitled migration policy and governance. It examines the domestic legal framework and international agreements governing labour migration. Chapter 2, trends in labour migration from Bangladesh, analyses destination labour markets and chapter 3, women and labour migration, concentrates on occupations, training and safeguards for women labour migrants from Bangladesh. Chapter 4, recruitment, compares respective practices by government and private sector agencies including the costs incurred by Bangladeshi labour migrants. Finally, chapter 5 notes that while MoEWOE is the focal ministry for labour migration, other government institutions have important roles.

MIGRATION POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

There are several public, private, and civil society organizations involved in governing and facilitating labour migration from Bangladesh. Migration governance is an evolving process where the Government of Bangladesh continually tackles complex global challenges. Migration related laws and policies, and regional and international cooperation for governing outbound migration from Bangladesh are all part of migration governance.



LABOUR MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

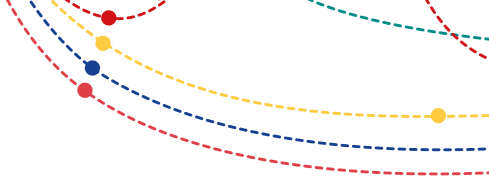
There are four major types of migration: labour migration, student migration, forced migration (refugees and asylum seekers), and migration for family reunification. This Bangladesh Annual Migration Report focuses on international labour migration from Bangladesh and looks at trends and issues of 2017.

Government

The lead ministry for overseeing labour migration from Bangladesh is MoEWOE. Under its authority, there are four major agencies: BMET, BOESL, PKB, and WEWB (MoEWOE, 2017). Each of these agencies has a clearly defined role in overseeing labour migration. BMET is the main executive arm of MoEWOE and responsible for monitoring private Recruitment Agencies, facilitating the process of recruitment and migration of Bangladeshis for overseas employment including overseeing DEMOs and TTCs. BOESL is a state-run recruitment agency with a small market share in China, Hong Kong SAR, Jordan, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. PKB's services include loans to aspirant migrants and reintegration loans to returnees. WEWB offers welfare services to migrants and their families in Bangladesh. In Country of Destination, the labour attachés work closely with WEWB to channel services to Bangladeshi migrants. Currently, there are 29 labour wings in Bangladeshi diplomatic missions. The officers of these labour wings monitor the welfare of workers, inspect workplaces, provide legal aid, and facilitate the return of deceased migrants.

DEMOs and TTCs act as district-level decentralized service points for managing labour migration from Bangladesh (Ashraf and Arafat, 2018). Currently there are 42 DEMOs, 64 TTCs (MoEWOE, 2017), and 6 IMTs in Bangladesh. Both DEMOs and TTCs operate under the authority of BMET. Currently, aspirant migrants in Bangladesh are required to complete online registration, record their fingerprint, and collect a digital smart card from selected DEMOs. In collaboration with WEWB, DEMOs also provide a range of welfare services for migrants and their families. These include financial support for the burial service of deceased migrants, stipends for the children of migrants, and financial support for the health-care needs of migrants. TTCs offer a wide range of skills training programmes for both men and women





migrants. Currently, women migrant workers pursuing careers as housekeepers receive a mandatory housekeeping training at TTCs. The housekeeping training is free of cost and the duration is one month for women wanting to work in the Gulf states and three months for China, Hong Kong SAR (MoEWOE, 2017: 17).

Migrant workers also receive mandatory pre-departure orientation which prepares them for a career in a foreign country and for living and working environments in destination countries. The pre-departure orientation programmes cover information related to rights and regulations, cultural aspects and language, climate, complaint mechanisms and support systems in Country of Destination. BMET provides two types of pre-departure orientation in 62 of its training centres: a 3-day mandatory pre-departure orientation and a 7-day pre-departure orientation for labour migrants to the Republic of Korea.

In 2017, the range of skills training offered by the technical training centre included automobile maintenance, electrician and electronics, electrical machine maintenance, refrigeration and air conditioning, mason, rod binder and tiles fixer, welding and fabrication, mid-level ready-made garments supervisor, merchandizing for ready-made garments sector, civil construction, graphics design, machine tools, and plumbing and pipe fitting. This skills training is in line with the Government's NSDP, which emphasizes technical and vocational education and training.

The labour wings in the embassies of Bangladesh support migrants to adapt to a new environment. In 2017, the missions in Country of Destination hosted annual events such as international migration day, international mother language day, and posted useful information related to occupational safety and hazards on embassy websites.

Private sector

In the context of migration management in Bangladesh, the private sector mainly refers to various licensed private Recruitment Agencies and their agents and subagents. The Recruitment Agencies and their agents are registered entities, but the subagents are not legally registered. subagents include members of the aspirant migrants' social networks such as relatives, friends, and neighbours. These informal subagents often collaborate with the Recruitment Agencies to facilitate travel arrangements for migrant workers. Approximately 35 per cent of labour migration visas are procured by Recruitment Agencies, more than 60 per cent are procured through a migrant's social networks, and about 2 per cent are procured by BOESL.

There are many privately managed and government accredited private technical training facilities in Bangladesh offering a wide range of skills training programmes. However, there is no publicly available data on the use of these private training facilities by aspirant migrant workers.

Development partners

Several development partners and intergovernmental organizations work with the Bangladesh government to promote safe and regular migration. Among the bilateral partners, the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Switzerland have initiated several projects to strengthen labour migration governance in Bangladesh. As international organizations, the ILO, IOM and UN-Women have longstanding partnerships with the Government of Bangladesh to improve its labour standards and migration management system.

Civil society

Bangladesh has several CSOs comprising NGOs, community-based organizations, and think tanks each playing a distinct role in labour migration (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018). In 2017, CSOs continued to provide a range of services in pre-departure, post-arrival, and return and reintegration stage. In the pre-departure stage, these organizations disseminated information about safe and regular migration practices and discussed potential problems that migrants might face in Country of Destination. In the post-arrival stage, CSOs maintained hotlines where migrants in Country of Destination – particularly women – can call numbers answered by CSO personnel in Bangladesh that are trained to solve, report or refer complaints. In the return and reintegration stage, CSOs provided some counselling for successful reintegration and re-migration. These practical activities were complemented by migration focused think tanks providing research and advisory services to stakeholders.



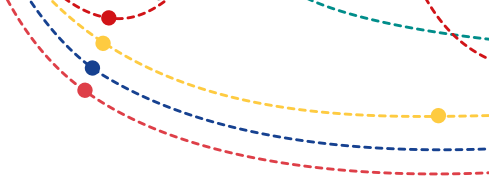
LEGAL FRAMEWORK: EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted a number of laws and policies to promote the rights of migrant workers. These laws and policies include specific provisions detailing the role of relevant ministries and agencies in facilitating safe migration practices at various stages of the migration cycle.

Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013

OEMA 2013 is the principal legislation on labour migration from Bangladesh (MoEWOE, 2013). It has 9 chapters and 49 articles. Chapter III (articles 9–18) specifies the roles of labour Recruitment Agencies and their licensing requirements. Chapter IV (articles 19–21) describes the registration process of migrant workers and the protection of their rights. Chapter V (article 22) details the responsibility of Recruitment Agencies for employment contracts. Chapter VI (articles 23–25) concerns the role of labour wings and agreements on migration governance. It calls for the labour wings of overseas diplomatic missions of Bangladesh to protect the rights of migrants and to provide periodic reports on the status of migrant workers. It also defines the roles of The Government of Bangladesh in signing MoU or bilateral agreements with Country of Destination to manage migration. The Act emphasizes the rights, safety, and human dignity of migrant workers, making it an obligation of the Government to ensure social protection of migrants both at home and in their





countries of destination. Chapter VII (articles 26–30) details the rights of migrant workers, such as the right to information, legal aid, right to file civil suit, right to return home, as well as financial and welfare programmes. Chapter VIII (articles 31–41) refers to the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 and the Mobile Court Act 2009 to prosecute any offences committed by a person or Recruitment Agency.

Prior to the enactment of OEMA 2013, the Emigration Ordinance 1982 was the principal legislation governing labour migration from Bangladesh. The passage of OEMA 2013 repealed the 1982 Ordinance and its subsequent amendment of 2002.


In 2017, MoEWOE continued to work on the implementation of the OEMA 2013. Accordingly, the Government of Bangladesh resolved 216 out of 588 complaints in the 2017 fiscal year. During this period, the Government of Bangladesh issued licenses to 15 new Recruitment Agencies, withheld 3 licenses, and suspended the license of 4 Recruitment Agencies. Additionally, legal actions were also taken against several Recruitment Agencies and visa consultancy firms for fraudulent and unethical recruitment practices. In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh negotiated MoU with several countries including Cambodia, the Russian Federation, and the United Arab Emirates.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016

EWOEP 2016 complements OEMA 2013 but offers a more comprehensive policy framework for safe labour migration (MoEWOE, 2016). It refers to modernizing the Overseas Employment Policy 2006 in light of ICRMW 1990 and SDGs. It emphasizes the promotion of safe, orderly, and regular migration, as well as adoption of gender-sensitive strategies for labour migration from Bangladesh. EWOEP 2016 identifies six priority areas for safe labour migration: protection of the rights of migrants and their families; welfare support for migrant workers; gender-specific labour migration; integrating labour migration with national development; and migration governance. It emphasizes skills promotion, a protection framework, service simplification for migrants, strengthening women's participation in the international workforce, engaging the diaspora and other stakeholders in national development. It also calls for the establishment of an interministerial steering committee and a multi-stakeholder national labour migration forum to strengthen and reorganize the labour migration governance system.

MoEWOE and its constituent agencies, BMET, BOESL, PKB, and WEWB, are primarily responsible for implementing EWOEP 2016. In Annex 2 of the policy, the roles of other concerned ministries are also detailed. The relevant ministries include MoCAT, MoC, MoE, MoF, MoFA, MoHFP, MoHA, MoLE, MoLGRD, MoP, MoSW, and MoWCA.

EWOEP 2016 mandates MoF to allocate an increased budget for the protection and development of migrant workers. This includes promoting financial inclusion for migrants, particularly returnee migrants, and encouraging diaspora investment



(Article 2a, Annex 2). In 2017 efforts to promote financial inclusion for migrants focused on facilitating remittance transfer procedures, and financial literacy for remittance utilization (Rahman et al, 2016). EWOEP 2016 also authorizes MoFA and labour wings at diplomatic missions to monitor compliance with MoU or bilateral agreements with Country of Destination and ensure the welfare of migrant workers (Article 3, Annex 2). EWOEP 2016 designates MoP responsible for developing a national database of skilled workers and for including the determinants of migration in the 7th Five Year Plan (Article 4, Annex 2). MoC, in collaboration with MoEWOE, is mandated by EWOEP 2016 to monitor the Recruitment Agencies (Article 5, Annex 2).

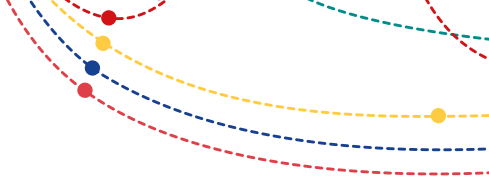
To monitor travel agencies EWOEP 2016 stipulates that MoCAT will take steps to ensure travel agencies do not operate as Recruitment Agencies (Article 6, Annex 2). MoCAT is also mandated to support the prevention of irregular migration, human trafficking. MoWCA is authorized to work with the DEMOs and CSOs to ensure that aspirant women migrants are informed of the costs and benefits of migration before they decide to migrate (Article 7, Annex 2). MoSW is mandated to support the MoEWOE in developing a social protection policy and collaborate with MoEWOE in making a framework for the welfare of returnee migrants (Article 8, Annex 2).

EWOEP 2016 requires MoLGRD to identify various migration issues, address them through local government development activities, and also encourage business investment from returnee migrants (Article 9, Annex 2). MoHA is the lead ministry for preventing irregular migration, human trafficking, and human smuggling (Article 10, Annex 20). MoHA works with MoCAT and other ministries to prevent unsafe migration and human trafficking. Technical schools, colleges and polytechnic institutes, which operate under the MoE, provide skills training and promote skills recognition (Article 11, Annex 2). MoLE is authorized to collaborate with the MoEWOE for the reintegration of returnee migrants through employment and rehabilitation programmes (Article 12, Annex 2). MoHFP is mandated to provide low-cost medical checkups for aspirant migrants, and ensure mandatory check-ups for the returnees, including women migrant workers (Article 13, Annex 2). The Policy also specifies the role of MoHFP to provide psychological support to women migrant workers. As the lead migration management ministry, MoEWOE collaborates with other peer ministries listed above to implement various aspects of EWOEP 2016.

As part of the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to implement EWOEP 2016, efforts were taken in 2017 to expand the labour market, to promote skills development of migrant workers, and to ensure the safe and dignified migration opportunities for women. The Government of Bangladesh also formed a multi-agency committee known as VTF to prevent fraudulence in the recruitment process (MoEWOE, 2017).

In 2017, the ILO and IOM worked with MoEWOE to implement the provisions of EWOEP 2016 described above. This included implementing an LMIS, an MWIMS, and developing a framework of welfare services for returnee migrant workers. These collaborative projects were supported by SDC (Rashid and Ashraf, 2018).





Other laws and policies

The Cabinet approved the draft WEWB Act 2018. The Act provides a legal framework for improved welfare services for migrant women and men workers. The Act is the legal basis for WEWB. The governing body of the proposed WEWB includes representatives from MoEWOE, BMET, relevant ministries, and two delegates from Recruitment Agencies. In addition, two members of the governing body are drawn from migrant workers including a women migrant worker.

WEWB evolved from the WEWF, which was originally formed under WEWF Rules 2002. The Rules still provide for the creation of a fund for welfare services to migrant workers and their families. Financing for this comes from a number of sources including interest earned on the security deposits of Recruitment Agencies, welfare fees and briefing fees deposited by outbound migrants, donations from individuals or institutions, welfare fees and document attestation fees charged by Bangladeshi missions. The Rules specify that the Government can allocate money for the creation of welfare and briefing centres in Dhaka and other districts, and for welfare desks at airports. The fund can also be used for the repatriation of the remains of deceased workers, financial support for the families of deceased workers, and the medical treatment of workers with sickness and disabilities resulting from injury.

In 2015, the Government of Bangladesh adopted DWPWP with advisory provisions for the state, private employers, and civil society (MoLE, 2015). The scope of the DWPWP 2015 is limited to Bangladeshi domestic workers employed in the country. the Government of Bangladesh has also adopted a number of initiatives such as skills training, mandatory pre-departure training, and zero-cost migration to facilitate labour migration for women. Since 2013, the Government of Bangladesh has sent women migrant workers to China, Hong Kong SAR. In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh explored the labour markets in Japan and the Russian Federation as potential new opportunities for labour migrants from Bangladesh. In March 2017, Bangladesh signed an MoU with Japan with further MoU are being considered with the Russian Federation and Cambodia.

The position of Bangladesh on major international migration laws

ICRMW 1990 is a global legal framework which promotes inter-governmental cooperation on migration. Bangladesh ratified ICRMW in 2011. However, since many destination countries are yet to ratify ICRMW 1990, the framework has remained largely ineffective. In 2017, Bangladesh served on the 14-member Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The committee worked with the ILO, IOM, UN-Women, and several United Nations agencies to promote a human rights-based approach and gender-responsive migration regime globally.

There are eight ILO fundamental labour conventions including Forced Labour Convention 1930 (C29), Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to

Organize Convention 1948 (C87), Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949 (C98), Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (C100), Abolition of Forced Labour Convention 1957 (C105), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (C111), Minimum Age Convention 1973 (C138), and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 (C182).

Bangladesh ratified all but the Minimum Age Convention 1973. These conventions are reflected in national laws and regulations including the Bangladesh Labour Act (2013), the Bangladesh Labour Act Implementing Rules (issued in 2015) and the current drafting of the laws on export processing zones.



BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR GOVERNING LABOUR MIGRATION

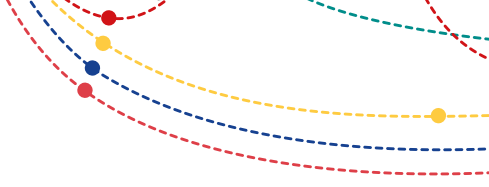
Bilateral cooperation

BLAs and MoU are two major instruments for the Government of Bangladesh to stipulate the terms and conditions under which Bangladeshi migrant workers are employed in Country of Destination. As of 2017, Bangladesh has signed two BLAs with Qatar and Kuwait, and several MoU with China, Hong Kong SAR, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Maldives, Malaysia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates. Article 25 of OEMA 2013 provides the legal basis for Bangladesh to sign BLAs and MoUs. From a gender perspective, the MoU with China, Hong Kong SAR and Jordan introduced new labour markets for women migrant workers with opportunities in caregiving and ready-made garments manufacturing respectively (see Tables 4 and 5). As Bangladesh strives to promote skilled migration, EPS with the Republic of Korea and TITP with Japan are useful steps in meeting the demand for skilled labour with trained labour migrants from Bangladesh. Both EPS and TITP are managed by BOESL.

Regional consultative processes on migration

Bangladesh is an active participant in various RCPs, namely Colombo Process (CP), Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), Bali Process (BaP), and Budapest Process (BuP) (MoEWOE, 2017). These RCPs offer channels for communication between the migrants' Country of Origin and Country of Destination. However, there are clear differences between the RCPs. Colombo Process (CP) is primarily a platform of Country of Origin, whereas Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) is a forum of both Country of Origin and Country of Destination. Unlike the Colombo Process (CP) and Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), both of which focus on labour migration, Bali Process (BaP) and Budapest Process (BuP) focus on irregular migration and human trafficking in the Asia Pacific region (Ashraf, 2017). Bangladesh is active in each RCP, especially Colombo Process (CP), it chairs the thematic area working group on fostering ethical recruitment. In other RCPs, Bangladesh focuses on good practices in migration management, public-private partnership on combating human trafficking, and facilitating the return and reintegration of irregular migrants.





Colombo Process (CP) has emerged as an important platform on ethical recruitment issues for Bangladesh. Several on-going efforts under Colombo Process (CP) to promote ethical recruitment include participation in the regional symposium on promoting regulatory harmonization of recruitment intermediaries, and collaboration on a position paper on global definitions for recruitment fees and costs.

International cooperation

At the international level, Bangladesh has played a proactive role in promoting safe and regular migration. This is evident in the active presence of Bangladesh in GFMD and the Global Compact for Migration.

GFMD is a government-led voluntary and informal mechanism for cooperation among states on migration issues.¹ Between July 2007 and June 2017, ten GFMD summits were held. At the ninth GFMD summit in 2016, held in Bangladesh, 130 countries and hundreds of CSO members focused on the linkages between migration and SDGs, addressing xenophobia, and effective border management. As the host of the ninth GFMD Summit, Bangladesh highlighted the need for safe, orderly, regular, and responsible migration processes (GFMD Bangladesh, 2016). Additionally, Bangladesh has successfully co-chaired with Benin, Mexico, and Sweden to launch Friends of Migration as an informal grouping of 35 countries. At the tenth GFMD summit in 2017, held in Berlin, the Bangladesh delegation reiterated the need for international cooperation under Global Compact for Migration.

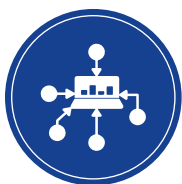
The idea of Global Compact for Migration was proposed by the Government of Bangladesh at the United Nations Secretary General's office. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted at the United Nations General Assembly on 19 September 2016 called for the adoption of Global Compact for Migration. The Global Compact for Migration-related negotiations cover six thematic issues including human rights of all migrants; drivers of migration; international cooperation and governance of migration; contributions of migrants and diasporas; and smuggling of migrants. Global Compact for Migration is an evolving process with its first phase running from April 2017 to November of 2017; the second from November 2017 to January 2018; and the third from February 2018 to July 2018. In 2017, various actors in Bangladesh organized three Global Compact for Migration-related national consultations: a civil society consultation, a parliamentary caucus consultation, and a joint consultation between the Government of Bangladesh, ILO and IOM, and Bangladeshi CSOs.

The Bangladesh National Multi-Stakeholder Consultation on the Global Compact for Migration was held in Dhaka on October 26th, 2017 with over 150 attendees (IOM, 2017). The national consultation was led by MoFA and organized in collaboration with IOM, and the ILO, with financial support from SDC. During the national

¹ GFMD originated from the 2006 UN General Assembly High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, and the 2007 GFMD operating modalities accepted in Brussels. It is a platform for states, international organizations, and civil society representatives.



consultation, participants provided concrete recommendations to develop a national position on managing migration. Emerging key points from the consultation with government and non-governmental stakeholders were summarized into an outcome document entitled, Bangladesh Perspective to the Global Compact for Migration, to inform the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact for Migration held in Bangkok in November 2017.



CUSTODIAN OF DATA ON MIGRATION

BMET and WEWB are responsible for data collection, analysis, production, and publication of statistics in the area of labour migration. BMET website provides current migration statistics on several categories such as yearly migration trends, destination countries, major districts of origin, trends in women migration, yearly remittance inflow, and migration by skills category. WEWB maintains a separate website that provides statistics on welfare programmes and services for migrants and their families. These include death compensation for deceased workers, financial support for the burial service of deceased migrants, and scholarship for migrants' children.



PROGRESS ON MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

According to the most recent report, MGI 2016,² Bangladesh demonstrated strong performance in two indicators: safe and orderly migration, and regional and international cooperation. The Government of Bangladesh offers a different perspective and suggests that MoEWOE has developed system of governance on all of the five indicators: institutional capacity, migrant rights, safe and orderly migration, labour migration management, and regional and international cooperation (Table 1). In 2017, MoEWOE took a number of initiatives such as digitization and decentralization of migration services at the district level, monitoring fraudulence within the recruitment agencies and irregularities by an inter-agency VTF, expanding welfare support for migrants, and developing an LMIS. With full scale implementation of these initiatives, Bangladesh will further improve its standing on MGI.

Table 1: Migration Governance Index for Bangladesh

Components of MGI Framework	Status of Bangladesh (Government of Bangladesh Assessment)
Institutional capacity	Developed
Migrant rights	Developed
Safe and orderly migration	Developed
Labour migration management	Developed
Regional and international cooperation	Developed

2 The MGI rates a country's performance into five categories based on a scale of 0-10, where 0-2.49 indicates nascent; 2.5-4.9 indicates emerging; 5-7.49: developed; 7.5-10: mature. The MGI is produced by IOM in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit. MGI 2016 made the following assessment for Bangladesh: Institution capacity – Emerging; Migrant rights – Emerging; Safe and orderly migration – Developed; Labour migration management – Emerging; Regional and international cooperation – Developed



TRENDS IN LABOUR MIGRATION

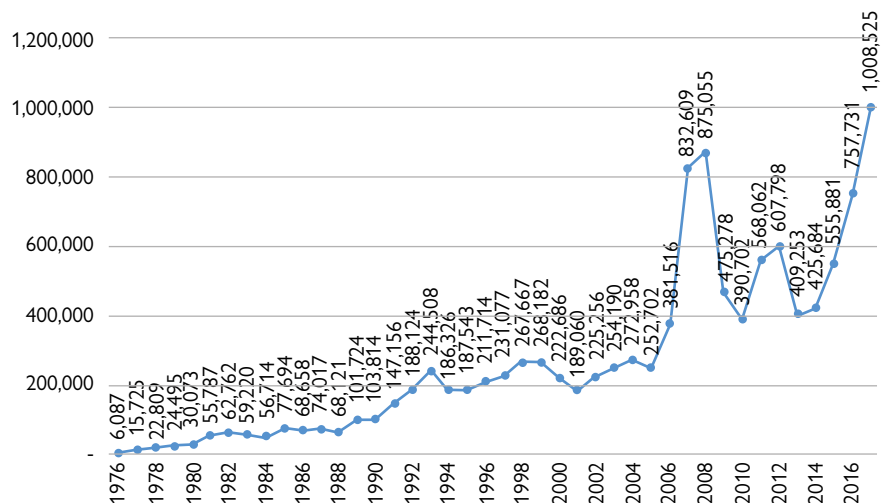


Bangladesh has long prioritized migration as a thrust sector. In recent years, the Government of Bangladesh has promoted a rights-friendly and gender-sensitive migration policy. Since its establishment in 1976, BMET has systematically recorded, analysed, and published data on annual outmigration for work from Bangladesh.

OVERALL MIGRATION TRENDS

In 2017, 1,008,525 Bangladeshi workers migrated through BMET's procedures of which 121,925 were women. This is 33 per cent more than the previous years' figure of 757,731. Each year, an estimated 2.2 million young people enter the job market in Bangladesh. However, the domestic labour market can only absorb about 1 million. Historical data indicates a consistent growth in international labour migration from Bangladesh. As Figure 1 shows, on average 41,136 Bangladeshis migrated for work during the first decade (1976–1985). This average annual migration rate increased to 137,000 and 239,550 during the second and third decades (1986–1995 and 1996–2005, respectively). The number of labour migrants further increased to 552,200 per year during the fourth decade (2006–2015). Between 2009 and 2013, Bangladesh experienced a sharp decline and fluctuation in annual outmigration. This was largely due to the global economic recession and the consequent reduced demand for labour in the Gulf countries. Countries in the Gulf are major destinations for migrant workers from Bangladesh. Following the recovery from the global recession, labour migration from Bangladesh has grown steadily since 2014 reaching a record high in 2017.

FIGURE 1: YEARLY TREND IN OUTMIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH (BMET, 2018)





SKILL ANALYSIS

Each year an estimated 50,000 Bangladeshis receive skills training at Technical Training Centres. However, BMET data shows that 48 per cent of migrant workers from Bangladesh are low-skilled, 15 per cent semi-skilled, 33 per cent skilled, and only 2 per cent are professionals. Therefore, the Government of Bangladesh has made skills training the main priority as evident in the adoption of the NSDP 2012 and the creation of NSDC (MoLE, 2014).

Currently, Technical Training Centres provide certificates to graduates upon completion of various skills training programmes such as automobile maintenance, welding and fabrication, machine tools, and plumbing. However, these courses are not internationally accredited. In 2017, the Government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with City & Guilds, United Kingdom a leader among global restaurants and apprenticeship programmes to provide internationally recognized certification of skills training. Currently, in addition to the BMET-controlled Technical Training Centres, 19 ministries and 18 organizations have various skills training, and technical and vocational education and training programmes providing certificates of course completion to graduates. In 2017, Technical Training Centres provided a mandatory 30-day housekeeping training to aspirant women migrant domestic workers. The Government of Bangladesh established NSDC with representatives from Government, industry, workers and civil society, to bring uniformity in migrants' skills and qualification.

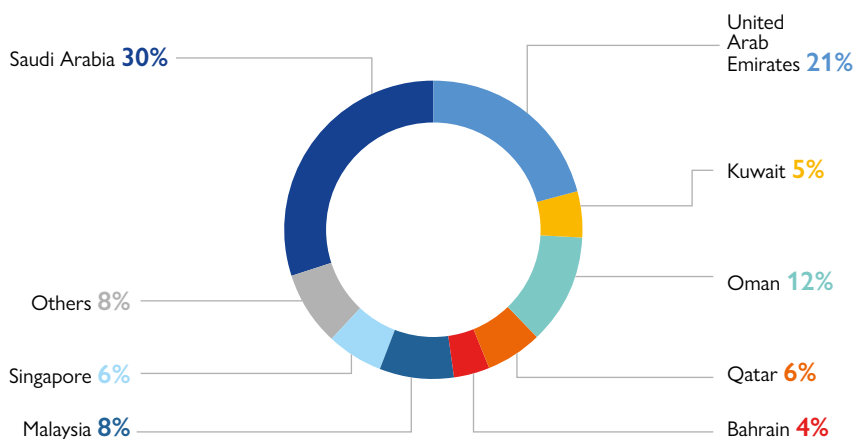


DESTINATION COUNTRIES

Countries in the Gulf and South-East Asia have been the traditional destinations for Bangladeshi migrant workers (Figure 2). Saudi Arabia accounted for 30 per cent of Bangladesh labour migrants for the years 1976–2017. More than half, 51 per cent, of Bangladeshi expatriates are concentrated in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and more than 25 per cent in four other countries, namely Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Malaysia and Singapore have also hosted 14 per cent of Bangladeshi migrant workers. However, Oman, Qatar, Malaysia, and Singapore have registered a consistent growth in receiving migrants from Bangladesh over the past decade. Such growth is driven by increased demand for semi-skilled and low-skilled workers.



FIGURE 2: CONCENTRATION OF LABOUR MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH 1976 -2017

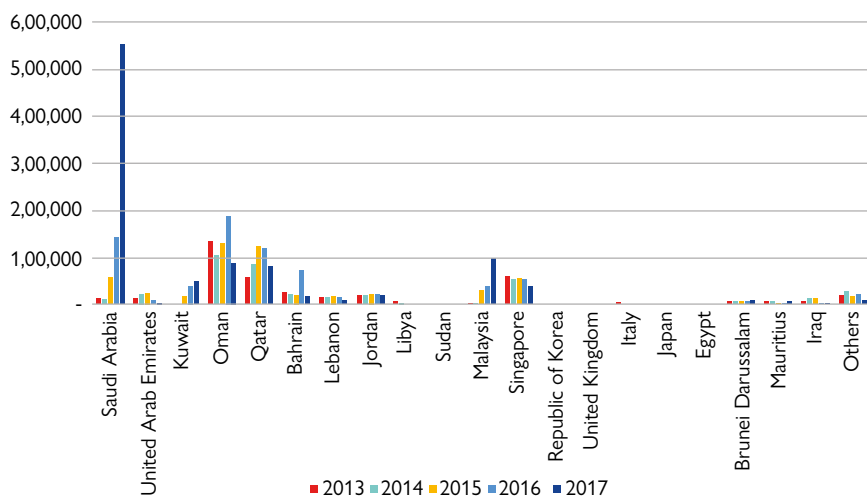


The Gulf and South-East Asian countries have a large and strong demand for short-term, semi-skilled and low-skilled workers particularly in the construction industry. Whereas, China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea have a small but strong demand for skilled workers in housekeeping and manufacturing industry, respectively. The Government of Bangladesh is currently conducting labour market surveys of more than 50 countries to assess the demand and supply by country and region. The Government has yet to publish the findings of these surveys.

Destination countries can be classified as traditional large markets and growing or specialized markets. Traditional destinations typically host large numbers of Bangladeshi labour migrants. These destinations (Tables 2 and 3) have a stable demand for labour migrants (such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and Singapore). Occasionally these countries impose temporary restrictions on new Bangladesh workers (such as the United Arab Emirates). In contrast, other destination countries typically have growing or specialized labour market for Bangladesh (Tables 4 and 5).

A review from 2013 to 2017 of destination labour markets (Figure 3) indicates that Saudi Arabia has remained the top destination for Bangladeshi workers; the market share of the United Arab Emirates has significantly declined; and recruitment in Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain has grown significantly. In South-East Asia, Malaysia and Singapore have remained the major destinations for Bangladeshi workers.

**FIGURE 3: DESTINATION OF LABOUR MIGRANTS FROM BANGLADESH
2013–2017 (BMET, 2018)**



TRADITIONAL LARGE MARKETS

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have traditionally been the largest destinations for Bangladeshi migrant workers. More than half of the Bangladeshis pursuing an overseas career went to these two countries and were mostly employed in the construction sector (Table 2). Since 2012, the United Arab Emirates has placed constraints on recruitment from Bangladesh possibly due to concerns about recruitment practices and the United Arab Emirates' policy to promote the employment of United Arab Emirates nationals. The scenario is different in Saudi Arabia, where outmigration from Bangladesh has grown since 2013, reaching a record high of 551,308 in 2017. This means in 2017, more than half of Bangladeshi labour migrants processed through BMET went to Saudi Arabia. More recently, there is a potential demand for skilled migrant workers such as doctors, engineers, nurses, and professionals in Saudi Arabia.

In South-East Asia, Malaysia and Singapore have been the top two destinations for Bangladeshi migrant workers. These two countries have hosted nearly 900,000 and 700,000 migrant workers respectively over the past four decades. Malaysia is the fourth largest destination for Bangladeshi workers, who are mostly employed in the construction sector (Table 3). Recently, Malaysia has signed G2G, G2G Plus, and B2B deals with Bangladesh to improve recruitment practices. Under G2G scheme, BMET works with the Malaysian Government to provide recruitment services. G2G Plus scheme allows Bangladeshi Recruitment Agencies to participate in the recruitment process. B2B deals facilitate migration through private business entities. The plantation sector in Malaysia is a potential growth market as an occupation for Bangladeshis.



TABLE 2: TRADITIONAL LABOUR MARKET FOR BANGLADESHI MIGRANT WORKERS IN GULF COUNTRIES

Country of Destination	Occupations filled by labour migrants from Bangladesh	Growth trends and labour market needs	Potential opportunities or bottlenecks for migrant workers
Saudi Arabia	Labour (unspecified), cleaning labour, domestic worker, general labour, agricultural worker, construction worker, window cleaning labour, loading and unloading labour, carpenter, mason, electrician, farmer, plumber, steel fixer, driver	Manufacturing, trade, and services; high demands for skilled workers	Demands for skilled technicians, higher skills for manufacturing and qualified professionals, demands for trained women caregiver
The United Arab Emirates	Labour (unspecified), private sector worker (unspecified), waiter, mason, carpenter, cook, domestic worker, fitter, cleaning labour, welding supervisor, farmer, electric technician, driver, salesman, tailor, QC engineer, electrician, welder, shepherd	Construction, real estate, tourism and hospitality, manufacturing and logistics, education and health care	Imposed ban in 2012

Source: BMET Country Specific Informational Guidelines for KSA and UAE; Asian Development Bank (2016).

Singapore is the fifth largest destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers, who are also largely concentrated in the country's construction sector. Its shipping industry offers a potential for Bangladeshi skilled workers trained at the marine and maritime institutes and academies of Bangladesh. However, the high cost of migration to Singapore remains a challenge for migrant workers. The number of Bangladeshi migrant workers going to Singapore declined in 2017 compared to the previous four years.

TABLE 3: TRADITIONAL LABOUR MARKET FOR BANGLADESHI MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Country of Destination	Occupations filled by labour migrants from Bangladesh	Growth trends and labour market needs	Potential opportunities or bottlenecks for migrant workers
Malaysia	Labour (unspecified), construction workers, security guards, shopkeepers, cleaners, palm oil plantation	Plantation sector, construction sites, service, agriculture and manufacturing sectors	Requires further research.
Singapore	Labour (unspecified), construction workers, shipping industry	Shipping industry	High costs

Sources: ILO; Immigration Department of Malaysia.





GROWING AND SPECIALIZED MARKETS

Oman is the third largest destination for Bangladeshi migrants. In the past five years, nearly 650,000 Bangladeshi workers migrated to Oman. This accounts for more than half of all Bangladeshis migrating to the country in the past four decades making Oman a growing market for labour migration from Bangladesh. Oman has several ongoing large infrastructure projects where demand for construction workers is likely to remain high in the coming years (Table 4).

Qatar is the sixth largest country of destination for Bangladeshi workers. Between 2013 and 2017, more than 471,000 Bangladeshis migrated to Qatar to pursue careers as general labourers, construction workers, cooks, drivers, fitters, foremen, and engineers. With Qatar hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup, demand will grow in the construction, hospitality and tourism sectors resulting in opportunities for low and semi-skilled Bangladeshi labourers.

Kuwait is the seventh largest destination with 600,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers. With its economic transformation and ambitious targets under the New Kuwait 2035 vision, Kuwait has the potential to hire more skilled workers in the oil and utility sectors as well as in education and health care.

Over the past four decades, Bahrain has hosted more than 400,000 Bangladeshi migrant workers, accounting for 40 per cent of labour migration from Bangladesh in the past five years. While many Bangladesh migrants have been employed in construction to date, further study would reveal other occupational opportunities.

Among the specialized markets, Jordan has a relatively small market share but a well-regulated migration regime. It appears to be a growing market for labour migrants from Bangladesh. For example, more than 150,000 Bangladeshis migrated to Jordan in the past decade, and more than 70 per cent of these 150,000 migrants arrived Jordan in the past five years. In 2017, 20,449 Bangladeshis departed for Jordan. Jordan needs trained workers in domestic care and in the ready-made garment industry.



TABLE 4: GROWING AND SPECIALIZED LABOUR MARKETS FOR BANGLADESHI MIGRANT WORKERS IN GULF COUNTRIES

Country of Destination	Occupations filled by labour migrants from Bangladesh	Growth trends and labour market needs	Potential opportunities or bottlenecks for migrant workers
Bahrain	Labour (unspecified), construction, day-labourer driver	Requires further research	Requires further research
Jordan	Garment worker, construction,	Construction (including skills in civil engineering, masonry and carpentry), domestic and care, housekeeping in hospitals	Demand for more garment and construction workers
Kuwait	Labour (unspecified), cook, driver, houseboy, salesperson, welder, technician (unspecified), cleaner	Oil capacities, utilities infrastructure (including residential, education and health care)	Imposed ban in March 2018
Oman	Labour (unspecified), Daily work, construction,	Construction of mega infrastructure projects	Requires further research
Qatar	Labour (unspecified), construction workers, cook, driver, fitter, foreman, private sector service, engineer	Construction, hotel and restaurant	Economic embargo on Qatar imposed by GCC countries

Sources: Asian Development Bank (2016).

Brunei Darussalam, China, Hong Kong SAR, and the Republic of Korea have smaller market shares in overseas labour migration from Bangladesh. However, labour migrants to these countries, including those from Bangladesh, are offered opportunities for skilled work and more likely to be safe and protected in these countries of destination. Accordingly, Brunei Darussalam, China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea are examples of good practice in safe and skilled labour migration from Bangladesh's point of view.

The tourism sector in Brunei Darussalam, domestic caregiving sector in China, Hong Kong SAR, and the manufacturing sector in the Republic of Korea all have the potential to hire skilled workers (Table 5).

TABLE 5: GROWING AND SPECIALIZED LABOUR MARKETS FOR BANGLADESHI WORKERS IN EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Country of Destination	Occupations filled by labour migrants from Bangladesh	Growth Trends and Labour Market Needs	Potential Opportunities or Bottlenecks for Migrant Workers
China, Hong Kong SAR	Domestic caregiving, salesperson, transport	Skilled and trained domestic caregiving	Declining Filipino domestic workers provide growing market
Republic of Korea	Manufacturing	Skilled work in civil engineering, construction, masonry and carpentry, domestic and care work in hospitals, housekeeping	Low cost; facilitation of return
Brunei Darussalam	Labour (unspecified), construction sector	Construction, tourism	Growing Bangladeshi community

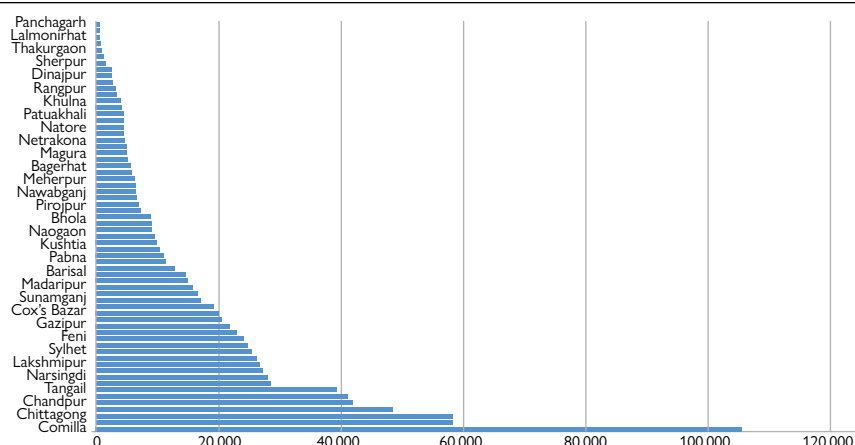
Source: BMET; BOESL.



MIGRATION INTENSIVE DISTRICTS

BMET data indicates a variation in the distribution of migrants by district of origin (Figure 4). The top five migration-intensive districts are Comilla, Chattogram, Brahmanbaria, Tangail and Dhaka. DEMOs and TTCs in these districts see higher numbers of migrant workers when delivering basic migration services such as online registration and fingerprinting, skills training, and pre-departure orientation to the aspirant and outbound migrants.

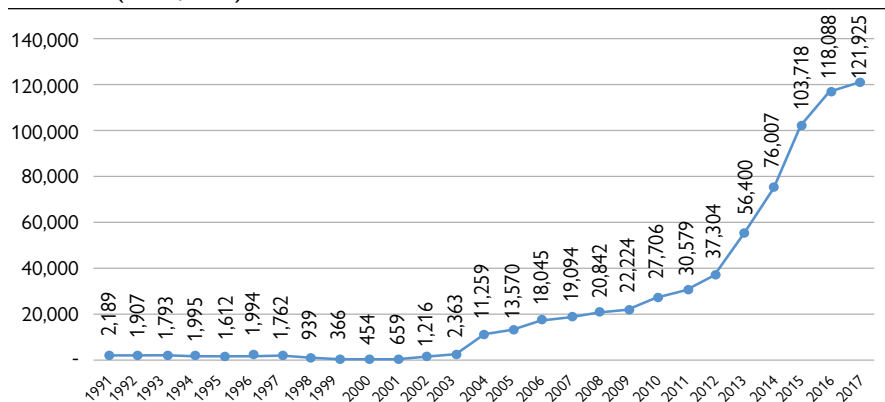
FIGURE 4: DISTRICT OF ORIGIN FOR MIGRANTS FROM BANGLADESH 2017 (BMET, 2018)



WOMEN AND LABOUR MIGRATION

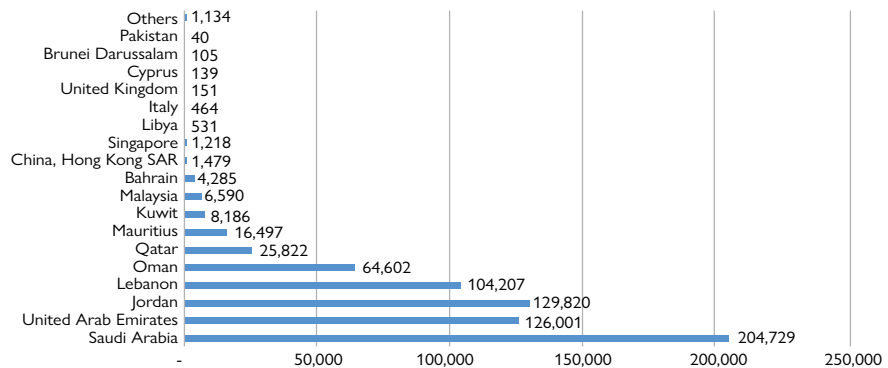
Globally there is an increasing share of women among migrant workers. In addition, the occupations of women migrant workers are changing. In 2007 the United Nations coined the term, feminization of migration, to recognize this trend. Following this trend, the number of women labour migrants from Bangladesh has increased in the last two decades. Between 1991 and 2000 women migrating from Bangladesh constituted only 1 per cent of all labour migration. In 2003 the Government of Bangladesh lifted the ban on migration by low-skilled women migrant workers. As a result, the number of women labour migrants from Bangladesh grew. By 2016, the proportion of women among all labour migrants had increased to 18 per cent. In 2017, a total of 121,925 women migrated abroad for work (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5: YEARLY TREND IN WOMEN MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH 1991–2017 (BMET, 2018)



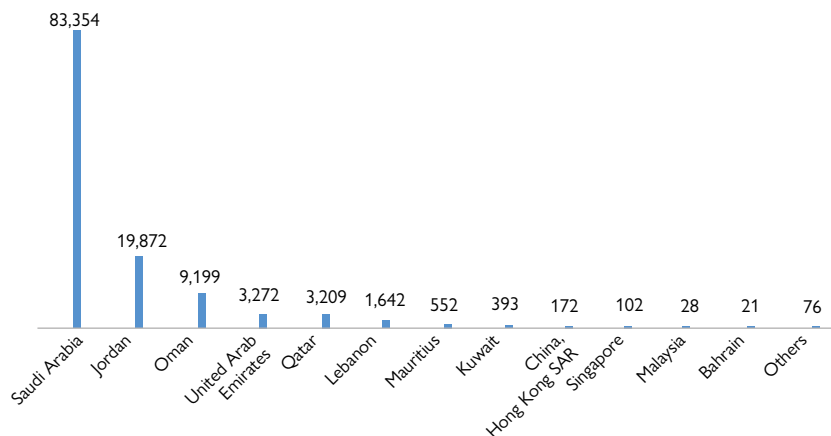
Historical outmigration data for the years 1991–2017 for women migrants indicate that Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Lebanon, and Oman are the top five countries of destination for Bangladeshi women migrant workers (Figure 6), where 99 per cent of women migrants are employed as domestic workers.

FIGURE 6: DESTINATIONS FOR WOMEN MIGRANTS FROM BANGLADESH 1991–2017 (BMET 2018)



Historically Saudi Arabia has been the largest market for Bangladeshi women labour migrants (Figure 6). In 2017, the highest number of women labour migrants 83,354 (68.4% of all women migrants) went to Saudi Arabia, followed by 19,872 (16.3%) to Jordan and 9,199 (7.54%) to Oman (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF WOMEN LABOUR MIGRANTS EMPLOYED OVERSEAS BY DESTINATION IN 2017 (BMET, 2018)



PREFERRED AND AVAILABLE OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN

Bangladeshi women labour migrants continue working in traditional roles as housekeepers in Gulf countries with a small proportion employed in ready-made garments manufacture in Jordan. Although most women migrant workers are employed as housekeepers, the Government believes that there is strong demand for women workers in professions such as nursing, care giving, cashier operation, catering, and electronics manufacturing in the major labour receiving countries in the Gulf as well as in Europe and East Asia (Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5).



In order to diversify the occupations beyond housekeeping for Bangladeshi women migrant workers, Government representatives explored the labour markets in a number of countries in 2017. There were two high level visits to Japan to explore employment opportunities for Bangladeshis, and in particular for Bangladeshi women in higher-skilled professions such as nursing, day care and rehabilitation. There have also been similar efforts to explore further markets in countries including Jordan, Singapore, Malaysia and China, Hong Kong SAR (BMET, 2017).

There are indications that demand for skilled domestic caregivers in China, Hong Kong SAR is growing. In addition to a diversified labour market, countries such as China, Hong Kong SAR have better safeguards for women migrant workers. The Government's requirement for mandatory skills training and pre-departure training also benefits women migrant workers.

In April 2018, the Government of Bangladesh signed an MoU with the Government of the United Arab Emirates to facilitate the recruitment of workers from Bangladesh. Under this agreement, United Arab Emirates has agreed to recruit Bangladeshi women and men in 19 employment categories. The Secretary of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, Ms Nomita Halder, stated that initial recruitment will be undertaken by the private sector, but ultimately followed by the public sector.



SPECIFIC TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR WOMEN

Training for aspirant women migrant workers is provided by both government and non-government agencies. BMET provides a residential 30-day residential training course on housekeeping, including courses on language and culture and how to use

household appliances for women migrants seeking work in China, Hong Kong SAR. This training course is funded by MoEWOE's Migrants Skills Development Fund.

There is a similar month-long housekeeping training programme on housekeeping for women migrants for the Saudi Arabia market. The cost of training is borne by Recruitment Agencies and provided free of charge for migrant workers. This training is provided in 36 TTCs, with a housekeeping manual developed to increase the skills of women migrant workers. Training can also be obtained through a mobile phone application (MoEWOE, 2017: 33–34).

BMET has also introduced e-learning courses on housekeeping for aspirant women migrant workers. This programme is being implemented through 36 TTCs across the country with support from the flagship Access to Information Program managed by the Prime Minister's Office.

Women can enroll in other technical skill trainings such as driving, tailoring, plumbing, and welding. BMET offers these six-month non-residential training programmes where classes are held three days in a week. With support from the World Bank these training courses are implemented by the Government of Bangladesh under the Skills and Training Enhancement Project. The training courses are offered free of charge, and trainees receive a stipend of BDT 700 per month during the course. BMET issues certificates to successful graduates. A total of 87,700 women workers were trained through TTCs during the fiscal year to June 2017 (MoEWOE, 2017: 33).

Training for occupations in ready-made garments manufacture has been introduced in collaboration with Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association in response to demand for ready-made garments workers in destination countries such as Jordan (MoEWOE, 2017: 34).



UTILIZATION OF REMITTANCES EARNED BY WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

Men remit more than women because they earn more, but women send back a greater portion of their earnings (Barakat et al. 2014). Women remitted 72 per cent of their income in comparison to men migrant workers, who remitted 54 per cent (UN-Women, 2015).

Remittances sent by women migrant workers elevate women's position in society. Women migrant workers also gain recognition in their families as earners and providers. Testimonies from returnee women and male migrant workers show that along with financial remittances, migrants also bring home social benefits such as new skills, attitudes, and knowledge. However, some evidence indicates that the new capabilities of returnee Bangladeshi women migrants are not always appreciated. For



example, some women reported resistance when they wanted to apply their newly learnt social and business skills (Barakat et al. 2014).

There should be larger scale and more frequent national surveys on the impact of remittances sent by women migrant workers. The surveys could also explore the differences between the intended and actual utilization of their remittances. The survey results would form the evidence base for the design of financial and other services to support returnee migrant workers and their families.




PROTECTION OF WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS

Bangladesh was the first country in South Asia to promulgate a law, known as the Immigration Ordinance Law 1982, to make the immigration process safer and easier for aspirant migrant workers. EWOEP 2016 (Section 2.4) protects women migrant workers. It states that women migrants are particularly vulnerable due to discrimination, violence and repression at home. Notably women are routinely victims of deception, rights violations, trafficking, and physical abuse during the recruitment, deployment and employment phases. EWOEP 2016 promotes sending women workers to countries where the protection of women is ensured by local laws. To address the issue of harassment and sexual exploitation, the Policy encourages the increase of women staff in the labour wings of embassies located in countries where there are higher numbers of women migrants. At present there are 29 labour wings in 27 Bangladesh embassies abroad (Economic Relations Division, MoF, July 2018). At present countries where Bangladesh embassies have labour wings are: Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, China, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Oman, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations and International Organizations in Geneva.

The attachés at these labor wings are trained to ensure the welfare of women migrants in their work environment, and provide legal, psychological, health and financial counselling. In addition, special support programmes are undertaken for repatriation of women workers that are victims of abuse.

Safe homes for refuge have been established in four destination countries: Saudi Arabia, Oman, the Republic of Korea and Jordan. The respective Bangladesh embassies and consulates in these countries oversee these safe homes, which are financially supported from WEWF. Women taking refuge in safe homes are provided with food and health care. When a women worker asks for support her name is registered, a case file is opened at the help desk of the labour wing of the embassy or consulate, and a lawyer is assigned to the case. The concerned Recruitment Agency is immediately contacted for the details of the employer. In some cases, the woman



migrant worker is repatriated. Based on discussions with the woman migrant worker, and if her safety can be ensured, she might return to work with her employer. The alleged victim undergoes a physical examination and if any abuse is evident, a criminal case is immediately filed.

After repatriation, the women victim is compensated with BDT 100,000 (MoEWOE, 2017: 16–17). Approximately BDT 1.5 million is kept as security from Recruitment Agencies dealing with women labour migration. Legal steps including cancellation of license and financial penalties are taken against any agency that is found guilty of exploiting women migrants (MoEWOE, 2017: 16–17).

BMET has also set up a complaint management cell for expatriate women workers to address the complaints of women migrants. In addition, the Probash Bondhu call centre has been set up to provide support to women migrants in Malaysia, Jordan and Saudi Arabia (MoEWOE, 2017: 16–17).

In 2017 MoEWOE continued to maintain welfare desks in the offices of Deputy Commissioners in all 64 districts of Bangladesh. At the same time the welfare desks at three international airports in Bangladesh continue to support outgoing migrant workers, particularly women, with on-the-spot and urgent airport services on a 24/7 basis.

To improve working conditions and facilities of women migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, the Joint Technical Committee of the Bangladesh mission in Saudi Arabia and the labour ministry of Saudi Arabia amended certain clauses in the standard labour contract in March 2018. The changed clauses now specify that a women migrant worker can only work in one household; that an Recruitment Agency is allowed to transfer a women migrant worker from Saudi Arabia to any other country; that salary payments of women migrant worker must be paid into a bank account; and that the contract must be written in three languages (Bengali, Arabic and English) with all three versions being of equal legal standing (BMET, 2018).

NGOs played a role in supporting women migrant workers. In 2017 RMMRU introduced a mobile application known as Obhijog BMET through which anyone can lodge a complaint. Bangladesh Obhibashi Odhikar Forum of WARBE Development Foundation supported the parliamentary caucus on migration and development, and a Grievance Receiving Centre at BMET. Bangladesh Mohila Sramik Association worked to strengthen monitoring of labour wings, while the Awaj Foundation collected information of aspirant migrants through 20 women workers' café centres. The Obhibashi Kormi Unnoyon Programme provided training on health of women migrants in Lebanon through the formation of groups and information dissemination (RMMRU, 2017).





SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN MIGRANTS

The growth in the number of women migrating from Bangladesh for work in recent years is encouraging. The Government of Bangladesh has sought to reduce the cost of migration, building on knowledge of migration procedures, safety and security abroad, and effective utilization of remittances. With the introduction of e-services and decentralized recruitment processes, the Government of Bangladesh has reduced the cost and time required by aspirant women migrant workers. In financial terms the total savings of all aspirant migrants amounts to over BDT 5 billion per year (BMET, 2018).

Despite significant efforts by the Government of Bangladesh in 2017 and in earlier years, women migrant workers continued to face challenges. For example, women migrant workers engaged in housekeeping suffered mental and physical harassment by employers, lower wages, irregular salary payments, lack of rest and recreation facilities, long working hours, being forced to work in multiple households, lack of medical treatment facilities, improper implementation of contract terms and conditions, and were victims of corruption (BMET, 2018).

Poor cultural awareness, language barriers, limited or no education, and skills gaps continued to be key challenges for women labour migrants in 2017. The mandatory pre-departure orientation programmes and, in certain cases, mandatory skills training courses during the pre-departure period alleviated these challenges to some extent.



RECRUITMENT

There are two broad mechanisms for recruitment: private and government managed. Recruitment of migrant workers through the public sector is undertaken by the government recruiting agency BOESL. Private sector recruitment is processed through private Recruitment Agencies. MoEWOE approves and issues licenses for these Recruitment Agencies.

A third mechanism is used for migration to specific countries. For example, labour migration to Malaysia is currently managed through a G2G agreement.



RECRUITMENT BY BOESL

BOESL was established in 1984 as a limited company, and as a stakeholder organization of MoEWOE. It is the only State-owned overseas employment company in Bangladesh. It serves as the recruiting agency for overseas employment and focuses more on the recruitment of skilled and professional migrant workers.

BOESL identifies demand for foreign employment and facilitates the recruitment process for Bangladeshi workers that go abroad directly under bilateral arrangements with certain Country of Destination. These specific countries are currently Japan, Jordan and the Republic of Korea. For example, based on a 2006 MoU between Bangladesh and the Republic of Korea, BOESL has continued to send migrant workers to the Republic of Korea under EPS through which Bangladeshi migrant workers receive full protection under the Republic of Korea labour law.



GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING OF RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Most labour migrants are recruited by private Recruitment Agencies. Recruitment Agencies recruit almost all of the lower-skilled outbound migrants to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman. MoEWOE, through BMET, regulates and issues recruitment licenses to these Recruitment Agencies while BAIRA is the main trade association for Recruitment Agencies for overseas employment.

BMET lists 1,174 licensed Recruitment Agencies on its website. BMET also lists 110 Recruitment Agencies whose licenses it has suspended and 2 Recruitment Agencies whose licenses it has cancelled (www.bmet.org.bd, accessed 14 October 2018). BMET issued 152 new licenses in 2017 and renewed 707 (BMET, 2017). This oversight of licensing indicates the degree to which MoEWOE regulates the recruitment of labour migrants. BAIRA lists 1,060 member-Recruitment Agencies on its website along with the recruitment license number of each Recruitment Agency (www.baira.org.bd, accessed 14 October 2018). The Recruitment Agencies are



centrally located. Nearly all of the Recruitment Agencies have offices listed in Dhaka and a few Recruitment Agencies have offices in Chittagong. The two listings suggest that there may be approximately 100 licensed Recruitment Agencies that are not members of BAIRA.



Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh which has 300 members is closely associated with BAIRA. Typically, large recruiting agencies also own a travel agency business and combine the processes of recruitment and subsequent travel bookings.

COST STRUCTURE OF MIGRATION

The real cost of labour migration from Bangladesh is the among the highest in the world resulting in loss of income among low-wage workers and possible reductions in remittances (Barkat et al. 2014:25). The cost components of labour migration includes fees for registration, visas, work permits, medicals, the costs of airfares, training and testing, contributions to welfare funds, insurance, recruitment service charges, and income taxes (Barkat et al. 2014:26).

The Government has continued to create fair and transparent cost structures for labour migrants to different countries. The Government can directly control costs imposed by BOESL for the countries and categories of workers that are recruited through BOESL as cited above. BOESL does not aim to make a profit nor to subsidize the costs of recruitment. BOESL does not impose service charges on labour migrants but levies commissions from employers. In this way, costs incurred by labour migrants are minimized (Barkat et al. 2014:27).

The Government, however, faces more difficulties in controlling the costs incurred by labour migrants recruited through private Recruitment Agencies. This is partly because costs are driven by market forces and partly because the process and requirements differ by countries of destination. Nevertheless, the Government through MoEWOE and BMET has continued intervene in cost structures for private sector labour migration. For example, in 2013 BMET announced a cost structure for women migrant workers to countries such as China, Hong Kong SAR, Singapore and Jordan that includes a cap on costs incurred by the migrant worker of BDT 20,000 (Barkat et al. 2014:27). In addition, women migrants are entitled to take a loan from PKB to cover the costs of necessary air fares and initial living expenses.

Similarly, the Government set out recruitment and migrations costs for the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Singapore that ranged from BDT 42,680 for Oman to BDT 45,480 for Singapore (Barkat et al. 2014:28). In 2017, the Government announced

the maximum labour migration costs for 14 countries (Table 6).

TABLE 6: MIGRATION COST CAPS FOR 14 COUNTRIES (MOEWOE, 2017)

Country of destination		Cost of migration
1	Malaysia	BDT160, 000 (construction workers) BDT 140,000 (agricultural labourers)
2	Libya	BDT 145,780
3	Bahrain	BDT 97,780
4	United Arab Emirates	BDT 107,780
5	Kuwait	BDT 103,780
6	Oman	BDT 100,780
7	Iraq	BDT 129,780
8	Qatar	BDT 100,780
9	Jordan	BDT 102,780
10	Egypt	BDT 120,080
11	Russian Federation	BDT 166,680
12	Maldives	BDT 115,780
13	Brunei Darussalam	BDT 120,780
14	Lebanon	BDT 117,780

However, surveys show that migrants recruited through the private sector pay substantially more than the guidelines set by the Government. The Bangladesh Household Remittance Survey of 2009 (IOM, 2010) showed that 75 per cent of the migrants surveyed spent between BDT 100,001 and BDT 300,000. In fact, another 13 per cent spent even more than BDT 300,000 and the mean cost of migration was BDT 220,834.

Most significantly, a breakdown of these costs showed that 60 per cent of the costs was paid to intermediaries and 18 per cent to other helpers. Government fees and Recruitment Agency fees were just 1 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. The most common sources of funds for migration costs were loans, family, selling land and other assets, and mortgaging land.

There were variations among destination countries. For example, labour migrants to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain incurred higher costs than those going to Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. The average migration cost under Recruitment Agencies amounts to BDT 309,259 as reported in a 2014 ILO study. Migration costs were found to be higher for men than women with an average cost of BDT 311,301 – almost double than that of the women migrant worker at BDT 188,273. However, the study did not reveal the reasons for these differences and this should be an area for further research or re-analysis of existing data. The study also found that the





average cost of migration for 42 per cent of migrants varied between BDT 281,921 and BDT 422,880.

IDEAL RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

As described above the most significant problem in recruiting potential labour migrants is the high costs imposed on migrants. The Government continues to intervene to control costs by providing cost guidelines and invoking caps to recruitment costs. However, many of the costs are hidden in the informal economy and the interventions to control labour migration costs have not yet succeeded. Recruitment in the private sector is far from ideal.

Where the Government has greater control over the recruitment process, there are clear examples of best practice in recruitment. The collaboration with the Republic of Korea through EPS operated by BOESL is an example of a desirable recruitment practice. Within the EPS system workers report satisfaction with their contract-based salaries, benefits, and low living expenses. Under this process, migration costs amount to BDT 80,000–85,000, and employees can earn more than BDT 120,000 including overtime per month. The employees are engaged in the manufacturing sector primarily in non-professional, lower-skilled roles. The employers provide free food and accommodation for migrants. Between 2008 and 2017, BOESL sent 16,721 migrants to the Republic of Korea (BOESL, 2017).

Similarly, since 2010, BOESL has also sent more than 40,000 women migrant workers to the Jordanian ready-made garment sector under a low-cost model. BOESL charges only BDT 12,000 in fees for each applicant. Each worker can earn up to BDT 18,000 per month and the employer also provides accommodation, food, and primary medical care. Potential migrants are selected by representatives of Jordanian ready-made garment companies during visits to Dhaka (BOESL, 2017).

The procedure adopted to recruit trainees from Bangladesh for Japan is an example of best practices. For example, International Manpower Development Japan recruits technical trainees for Japanese companies, providing monthly allowances to the trainees for five years, as part of their agreement with BMET (MoEWOE, 2017:34). This recruitment process is free of cost to the Bangladeshi trainee.

In the Japan, the Republic of Korea and Jordan examples, ideal recruitment practices include clear and transparent selection procedures and policies, participation of bona fide representatives of Country of Destination in recruitment, clearly defined remuneration and other benefits, and reasonable or no costs to the migrant worker.

MIGRATION MANAGEMENT ACROSS GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

MoEWOE is the focal ministry for labour migration policies and programme implementation around foreign labour market opportunities, skills development for migrant workers, and the welfare of expatriated workers and returning labour migrants. It carries out these functions in cooperation with related government institutions including MoFA, MoHA and MoL among others.

There are also some areas of labour migration that are not part of MoEWOE's remit such as the regulation of remittances, where MoEWOE is not the lead agency such as combatting trafficking in people, or where few initiatives have been taken to date such as an integrated approach to managing the reintegration of returnee migrants. Often the management of the wider set of migration issues requires the joint efforts of a number of government institutions.



REMITTANCE

Remittances are one the most important benefits of labour migration to individual families and to the wider economy of Bangladesh. Data on total annual remittances since 1976 are given to provide context for the amount for 2017 (Figure 8). Remittances for 2017 are disaggregated by country of origin (Figure 9) and the results of a recent study on remittance channels are also shown below (Figure 10).

BMET publishes data on remittances on its website but this information is collected by the Bangladesh Bank (the central bank of Bangladesh). In addition, the regulation of remittances lies with the Bangladesh Bank and other Government institutions responsible for fiscal and monetary policy including oversight of financial institutions such as banks and businesses specializing in foreign exchange.

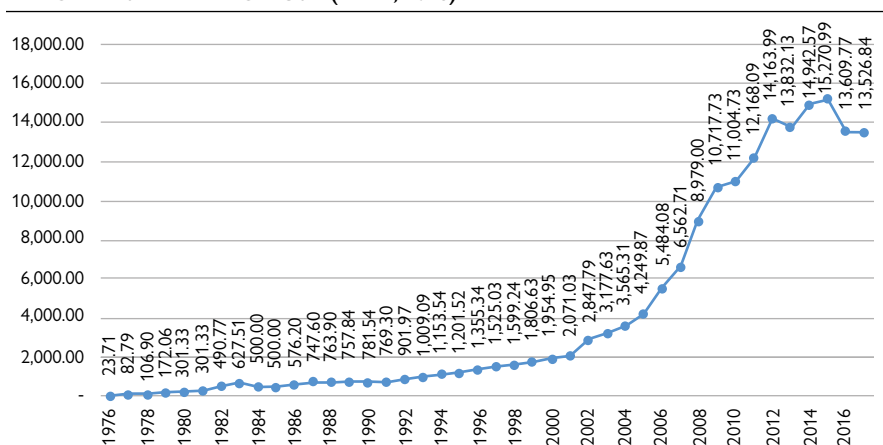
In Bangladesh, MoF and the Bangladesh Bank set fiscal and monetary policies respectively. These policies affect interest rates for borrowers and savers, foreign exchange regulations, taxation of overseas wage earners, surveillance of informal remittance channels, and legal measures against individuals and organizations conducting illicit money transactions. The details of fiscal and monetary policies and financial compliance regulations are complex issues beyond the scope of this Bangladesh Annual Migration Report.



Annual remittance inflow

Since 1976, remittance inflows to Bangladesh have grown steadily. In 2015, Bangladesh received USD 15.27 billion in remittances, which decreased to USD 13.61 billion in 2016 and USD 13.53 billion in 2017. Figure 8 shows yearly remittance inflows to Bangladesh through formal channels. Changes in currency exchange rates are the primary explanation for this downward trend in remittances through formal channels.

FIGURE 8: ANNUAL TREND IN REMITTANCE INFLOW TO BANGLADESH IN MILLION USD (BMET, 2018)



Disaggregation of remittances by host countries

The Bangladesh Bank maintains current information on remittance inflows. In fiscal years 2015–2016 and 2016–2017, the top five sources of remittances to Bangladesh were Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, Malaysia, and Kuwait. Although the United States of America is in the top five sources of remittances and the United Kingdom in the top 10, neither of them are among the top destination of labour migrants specifically from Bangladesh. However, the two countries host the largest Bangladeshi diaspora. The same holds for Italy, France, Spain, Germany, and Greece, which are among the top 30 sources of remittances (Figure 9).

FIGURE 9: REMITTANCE INFLOW TO BANGLADESH BY ORIGIN 2016–2017, MILLION USD (BANGLADESH BANK, 2018)

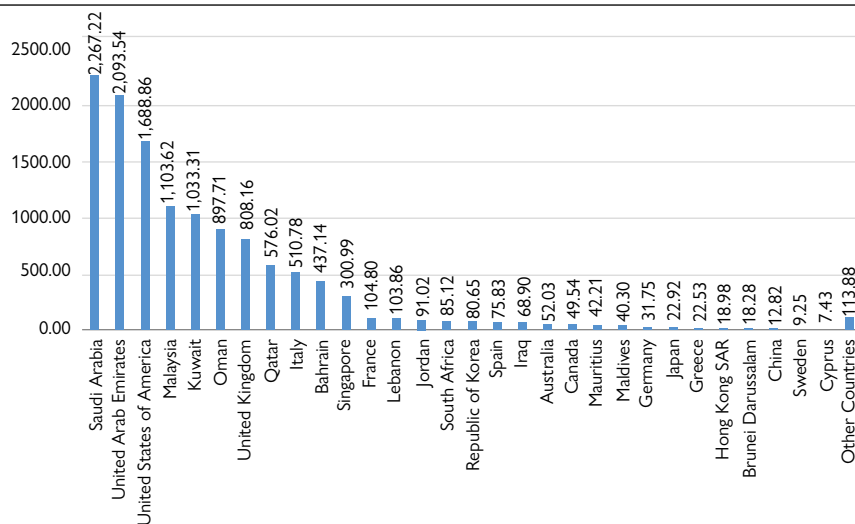
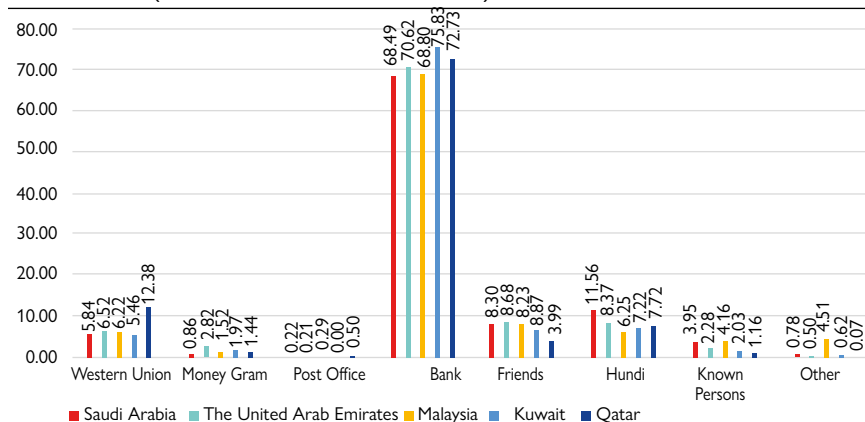


Figure 10 shows the channels through which Bangladeshi migrants send remittances. It indicates that an overwhelming majority of migrants (68%–72%) in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Kuwait, and Qatar use formal banking channels. This is followed by Western Union (6%–12%), Hundi (6%–11%), friends (4%–8%), and known persons (1%–4%).

FIGURE 10: CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH REMITTANCES ARE SENT BY PERCENTAGE (BBS DATA CITED IN ILO 2015: 39)



During the pre-departure orientations and training, the Government of Bangladesh encourages outbound migrants to send remittances through formal banking channels.



Anecdotally, migration experts and the Government of Bangladesh officials believe that such sensitization has played an important role in increasing remittance inflow through banking channels.

Trends in remittance utilization

An IOM study reveals that remittances are utilized in five major categories: food and clothing (20%); loan repayment (10%); purchase of land (3%); home construction and repair (2%); and savings (3%) (Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:40). Remittances have net positive impacts at both the macro, and micro levels. Remittances boost foreign currency and helps debt service payment. At the household and community level, remittances provide a supplementary source of income, contribute to improved living condition, allow migrants families to invest in education, afford health care, and service debt. It also provides social security for the elderly by allowing younger migrants to contribute to their parents' and elderly family members' health care (Bruyn and Kuddus, 2015:41–45).

A study shows that the major categories of remittances savings are (BBS, 2014): saving accounts with banks (66%), savings at home (9%), deposit pension scheme (7%), savings bond purchase (6%), and permanent deposit of one year and above (5%). Since most migrant workers tend to spend their remittances on household consumption and less on savings and long-term investment, the Government of Bangladesh supports migrant workers to expand their financial literacy during pre-departure orientation so that they can make prudent decisions on how better to invest their income and savings.



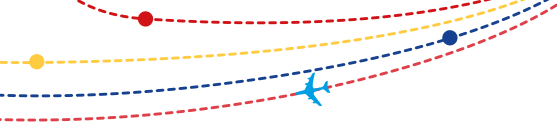
SAFE AND ORDERLY MIGRATION

In addition to formal labour migration, migration is a concept that encompasses a range of problematic issues involving people moving across international borders. These issues include forced migration, irregular migration, refugee movements, trafficking and smuggling. MoEWOE is involved in many of these issues as part of wider government effort to address these significant challenges but it is not the single lead ministry on any of these issues. These challenges illustrate the complexity of migration issues beyond formal labour migration and the way in which several government organizations, including MoEWOE, must coordinate to develop policy and practice to combat these challenges. Accordingly, this report, with its focus on formal labour migration, only briefly outlines a selection of these issues.

Border management and enforcement policies

The Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) is primarily responsible for managing the land borders with India and Myanmar. The Bangladesh Coast Guards (BCG), a maritime law enforcement agency, is responsible for managing the maritime border areas. Both BGB and BCG operate under MoHA. The Civil Aviation Authority under MoCAT is





the lead agency for managing the three international airports in Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet. Recently the government established a multi-agency AVSEC force to enhance the security of the airports. The Special Branch of Bangladesh Police is responsible for immigration control.

The Government of Bangladesh has introduced smart border management to strengthen its capacity to deal with cross-border smuggling of goods and commodities, and trafficking of people. Smart border initiatives in EU have relied on extensive use of information communication technology to monitor the entry and exit of travelers, and to scan cargo at the border crossing points. However, smart border initiatives in Bangladesh have initially focused on installing floodlights and surveillance cameras at several border outposts with India. As part of an initiative by the Government of Bangladesh to develop a coordinated border management plan with India, BGB and Indian Border Security Force have agreed on joint patrolling of border areas and holding regular meetings of senior and mid-ranking officials.

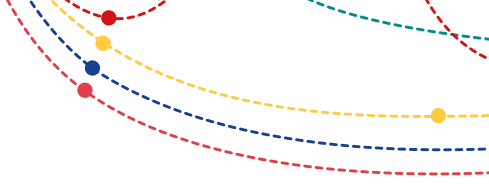
In 2017, a large influx of 700,000 Rohingyas from Myanmar put BGB on high alert. In November 2017, the Governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar signed an MoU for the repatriation of Rohingyas. The Government of Bangladesh decided to involve both IOM and UNHCR in the Rohingya repatriation process (Government of Bangladesh and GoM, 2017).

In addition, to the newly arriving Rohingyas, Bangladesh has been hosting 300,000–500,000 Rohingyas for several decades, most of whom are concentrated in the coastal Cox's Bazar district (Government of Bangladesh, 2014). Even though the Government of Bangladesh has not signed the United Nations Refugee Convention 1951, it has taken a humanitarian approach to address the basic needs of Rohingyas residing in Bangladesh since the late 1970s. BGB has also held regular meetings with the Border Guard Police of Myanmar to address issues of mutual concern.

Admission criteria for migrants to Bangladesh

From the perspective of a receiving country, Bangladesh has several laws defining the admission criteria for foreigners. These include the Registration of Foreigners Act 1939, the Bangladesh Control of Entry Act 1952, the Foreigners Act 1946, the Registration of Foreigners (Exemption) Act 1966, the Foreigners Order 1951, the Registration of Foreigners Rules 1966. The Special Branch of Bangladesh Police under the MoHA, controls the entry and exit of foreign nationals. MoEWOE has no specific role in the management of foreign nationals arriving through formal means





for employment, business, or tourism. Currently, citizens from 23 countries do not need visas for stays of up to 90 days.³ Citizens with diplomatic passports of 15 countries do not need visas for stays of up to 30 days.⁴

Efforts to address human trafficking

MoHA is the lead ministry for combating human trafficking and the Government of Bangladesh has implemented several initiatives to combat trafficking. These include the promulgation of PSHTA 2012, and adoption of the National Plan of Action for Combating Human Trafficking 2012–2014. The Secretary of MoHA chairs an interministerial task force, and district-level committees have been formed authorizing Deputy Commissioners to monitor compliance with PSHTA 2012. The Police Headquarters established a monitoring cell that works closely with Interpol to address the challenges associated with human trafficking. MoEWOE has formed a VTF that, in collaboration with the immigration police, rescues potential trafficking victims from international airports. Various government ministries including MoSW, MoWCA, MoPME run awareness programmes to prevent human trafficking. The Government has set up a task force for the rescue, recovery, repatriation, and reintegration of human trafficking victims.

PSHTA 2012 not only offers a legal instrument for combating human trafficking but also calls for the protection of trafficking victims and for the promotion of safe migration. The Act also provides legal footing for the creation of special judicial tribunal for prosecuting trials related to human trafficking offences. Article 33 of PSHTA 2012 authorizes the diplomatic missions of Bangladesh and MoEWOE to repatriate Bangladeshi nationals that have been victims of human trafficking. In 2017, MoEWOE continued to work with MoHA to implement various anti-trafficking initiatives.

PSHTA 2012 represents robust policy and practical measures to address trafficking in people. In 2011, Bangladesh had also ratified (by accession) the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime 2000 (known as the Palermo convention). However, Bangladesh is not a party to the three concurrent and supplementary protocols (Palermo protocols) including the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. Bangladesh is similarly not a party to the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air nor the third Palermo protocol relating to the control of firearms.

3 The list of countries includes Barbados, Bhutan, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Jamaica, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, St. Kitts and Nevis, United Republic of Tanzania Tonga, and Zambia for a maximum stay of 90 days.

4 The list of countries includes People's Republic of China, Estonia, Eswatini, Indonesia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam.



REINTEGRATION

To date the Government has not adopted any specific measures or a comprehensive policy to facilitate the return of irregular migrants. Similarly, there are limited measures in place to support migrants returning from formal employment overseas either unexpectedly or as planned. A successful reintegration strategy addresses three key elements: psychosocial counselling, economic integration, and social integration. Reintegration efforts can be implemented at three levels: individual, community, and societal. This means an individual migrant returnee should have opportunities for personal well-being with the support of his or her community. At the same time, many of the structural factors such as exploitation, discrimination, and protection under law need to be addressed to ensure returnees can contribute and successfully reintegrate into their communities. In 2017 IOM in partnership with MoEWOE began a project called Prottasha: Sustainable Reintegration and improved Migration Governance covering all 64 districts of Bangladesh. The nationwide project has provided capacity building to DEMO such as motivational videos and materials for DEMO staff on the importance of social reintegration of returnees.





CONCLUSION

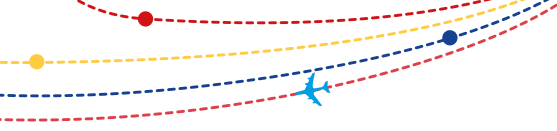
International demand for workers from Bangladesh remained strong in 2017. Existing markets in the Gulf were strong while new markets were explored. Throughout 2017 progress was made to address several challenges, and safe migration and decent work remained priorities.

First, on migration policy and governance, the Government has shown a strong commitment to develop a migration system that complies with global human rights norms and respects gender sensitivity. Efforts have been taken to regulate the formal and informal Recruitment Agencies to reduce the cost of migration and to promote ethical recruitment. MoEWOE has partnered with the private sector and civil society in delivering a wide range of services to men and women migrants. On various occasions, the MoEWOE engaged the delegates from private Recruitment Agencies and civil society representatives in multi-stakeholder dialogues on promoting migration from Bangladesh. In collaboration with MoFA, MoEWOE, continues to focus on a GCM that protects the rights of migrants at all stages of the migration process. MoEWOE has maintained its progress against MGI in collaboration with partners in the regional consultative processes such as Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), Bali Process (BaP), and Colombo Process (CP).

Second, the current trend in labour migration from Bangladesh is expected to continue, with increasing numbers of men and women joining the international labour market. In 2017, more than 1 million Bangladeshis, in various skill categories, left the country to accept jobs mostly in the Gulf countries and in South-East Asia. MoEWOE has prioritized creating a skilled workforce for deployment around the world. NSDP has provided an opportunity to promote technical and vocational education. TTCs introduced market-oriented curricula such as a 30-day mandatory housekeeping course for women labour migrants. MoEWOE is also developing a system of recognition of prior learning to benefit the returnee migrants. MoEWOE has continued to work with governments in the traditional large labour markets such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore, while seeking to expand work opportunities for Bangladeshis in other countries and occupations. Safe migration and decent work conditions are top policy priorities.

Third, promoting safe and dignified migration opportunities for women has been one of the major commitments of MoEWOE. The provision of zero cost for women migrant workers serving as domestic caregivers in Saudi Arabia is a major success. The introduction of a labour market for women migrant workers in China, Hong Kong SAR, even on a limited scale, was also an important achievement. MoEWOE is aware of women's risks and vulnerabilities in Country of Destination. Efforts have been taken to address those risks through pre-departure training, support of labour wings in Country of Destination, and continuous engagement with the stakeholders in the Country of Destination. MoEWOE is committed to expanding the opportunities for





women in their preferred job categories such as nursing, front desk receptionists, cashiers, catering, and electronics manufacturing. As part of the Government's long-term measures to ensure the protection of women migrants, MoEWOE will increase the number of safe home in Country of Destination, facilitate the repatriation women that have been exposed to abuse, exploitation, or are in vulnerable conditions. The parliamentary caucus on migration and the labour and welfare wings in Bangladeshi embassies have made positive contributions in that direction.

Fourth, on recruitment, BOESL has made progress in promoting a fair, low-cost, and ethical recruitment process. BOESL's success in establishing good recruitment practices for countries such as the Republic of Korea, Japan and Jordan need to be replicated with other Country of Destination. MoEWOE continues to work with private Recruitment Agencies to reduce the cost of migration and advocates for ethical recruitment practices with BAIRA.

Fifth, although MoEWOE is the lead ministry for managing labour migration from Bangladesh, there are several migration-related issues that require shared responsibilities and are thus managed across government institutions. For instance, BGB, under MoHA, is responsible for managing the land border whereas MoCAT is responsible for managing the international airports. MoEWOE works under the leadership of MoHA in preventing human trafficking. Remittances transfer constitutes an important source of foreign currency for Bangladesh, having positive effects on both household and national development. The migration laws of Bangladesh refer to provisions related to rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees. MoEWOE is collaborating with the ILO, IOM, and SDC to develop a reintegration framework. Such a reintegration framework would complete the cycle of labour migration management and governance, build on the successes of labour migration, and address an outstanding challenge.

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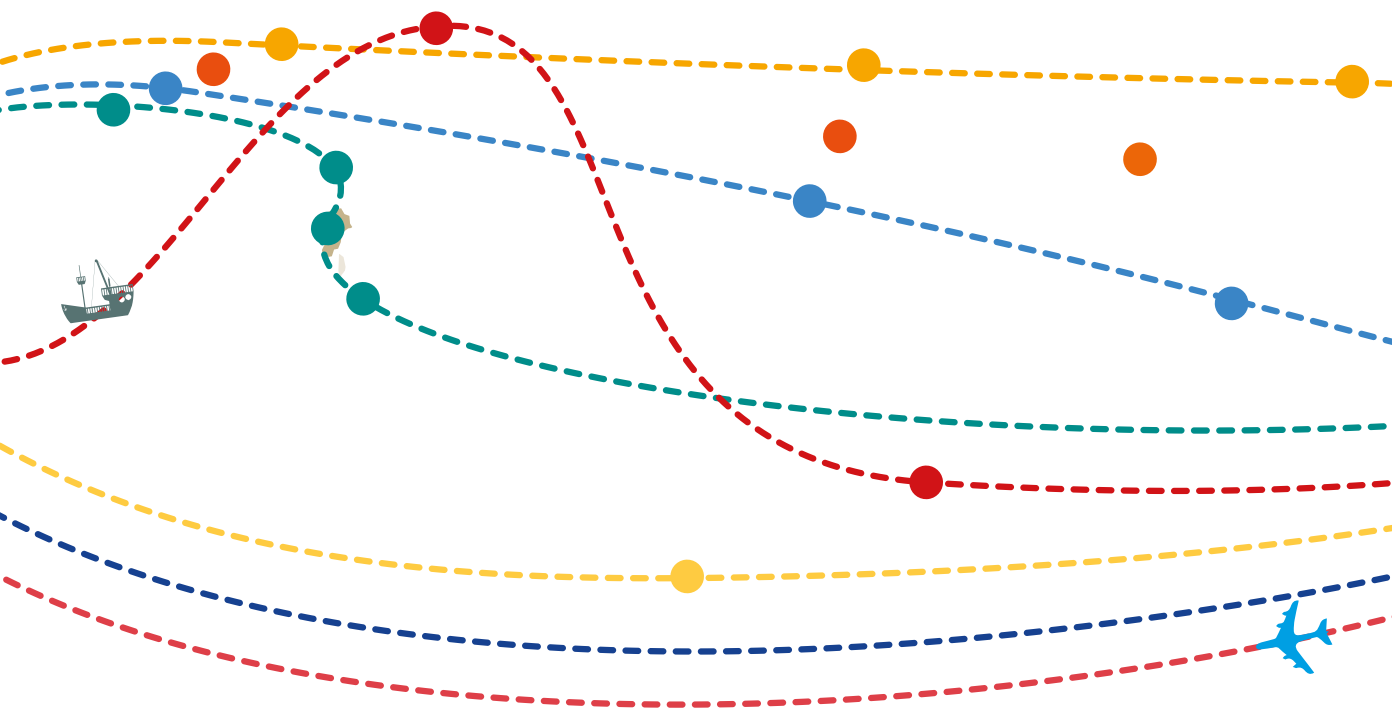
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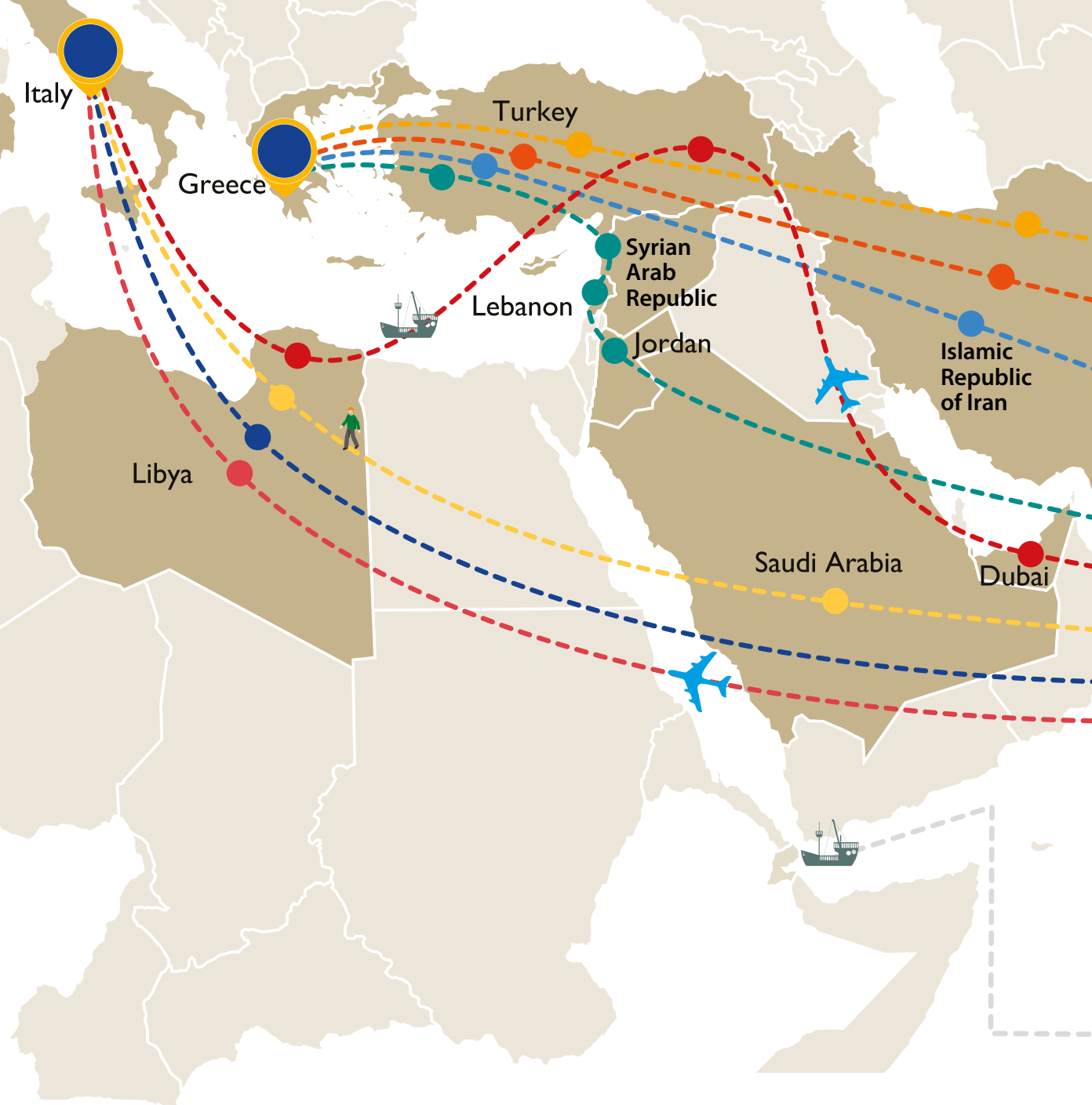
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