



RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION AND REALIZATION OF EXPECTED BETTER LIFE IN BANGLADESH: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN RAJSHAHI CITY CORPORATION



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ABSTRACT

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Rural-urban migration is a natural process by which migrants migrate from less developed places of origin to more developed destinations in search of a better quality of life. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the realization of an expected better life and to recognize the determinants that are considered helpful in achieving a better life for migrants in Bangladesh that contribute significantly. A cross-sectional sample survey was conducted on the households of the migrants selected using a three-stage cluster sampling technique to obtain the information necessary for the study. The results suggest that it was the pull factors that motivated more than two-thirds of migrants to move from rural to urban areas. Nearly 95 per cent of migrants migrated to destination areas in search of a better life. Realizing a better quality of life was associated statistically significantly with income, occupation, educational qualification, accessibility to health care services, transportation system, and housing facilities in the places of destination. The logistic regression analysis showed that the realization of a better life was more in migrants engaged in service, who belonged to the higher-income groups (more than BDT 15000 per month), who had easy access to specialist health care physicians/hospitals, and who lived close to supportive, highly committed to social welfare, and disciplined neighbors. So, a desirable combination of these supporting components may help migrants achieve their better life goals.

Contribution/ Originality: This study contributes to existing literature by understanding the extent to which expected better lives of migrants due to migration are realized. The study findings will assist migrants to recognize the determinants that can lead to achieving the desired better life through migration.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is one of the three principal components of demography (birth, death, and migration). It is defined as the geographic movement of people across a defined boundary to set up a new permanent or semi-permanent residence. Migrants typically migrate from less developed places of origin to more developed destinations, with the hope of a better life (Akther & Bauer, 2014; Ma, Chen, Che, & Fang, 2019; Nahar, 2020). Rural-urban migration is an important indicator of regional disparity in terms of economy, housing, employment, living standards, and

opportunities for health and education (Hakim & Boz, 2019; Istiaque & Mahmud, 2011; Wang & Fu, 2019; Young, 2013). This inequality could be explained by the large observed productivity and wage gaps between rural and urban workers (Gollin, Lagkos, & Waugh, 2014; Young, 2013). In an economically developing country this type of inequality is a common feature. This inequality results from the overwhelming concentration of assets, wealth, economic activities, purchasing capacity, and variety of services in urban areas as well as continued abandonment and degradation of rural environments (Akther & Bauer, 2014; Ma et al., 2019). Thus, rural people migrate to urban areas to look for perceived or actual opportunities in urban centers created as a result of wealth disparity between rural and urban areas (Madu, 2006; Young, 2013).

A country's economic development can be realized as a process of shifting that country's economy from traditional agricultural society to an economy in which both production and employment share of agriculture is declining while industry and service sectors are rising (Mulubrhan, Lena, & Hermann, 2011). This process is driven by economic forces in the trail of decreasing income elasticity of agricultural goods as income per capita increases. The migration of rural people out of agriculture to find better jobs in urban areas has thus become a natural process in developing countries (Biswas, Kabir, & Khan, 2019; Rashid, 2013; Young, 2013). Microeconomic models of migration thus treated migration as an investment in human capital (Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro & Maruszko, 1987). Migration's economic gain aspect is the expected wage difference and migration's non-market benefits are greater access to health, education, and residential facilities.

Like many other developing countries, the rural-urban migration rate in Bangladesh is rising significantly (Biswas et al., 2019). The urban population as a percentage of the total population increased from about 8 percent to about 23 percent during the periods 1974-2001 (Rashid, 2013) and in 2018 to about 36.6 percent (World Bank, 2007). The most significant factor for urbanization in Bangladesh is rural-urban migration (Istiaque & Mahmud, 2011; Rashid, 2013; Uddin & Firoj, 2013). Rapid urbanization will render cities with high levels of congestion and pollution, slum development, crime, social problems, and the growth of a largely uncontrollable informal sector of employment, and these are the traditional externalities of immigration (Adams, Islam, & Ahmed, 2015; Biswas et al., 2019; Uddin & Firoj, 2013).

Globally, the relationship between migration and development has been a debatable issue (Adams, 2006; Hakim & Boz, 2019). Hence the process of moving people to other places in search of a better life is not a novel one. Rural-to-urban migrants expect better lives in terms of jobs, housing, education and health (Biswas et al., 2019; Hakim & Boz, 2019; Katewongsa, 2015). But not all decisions on migration are correct to meet the desired degree of better life. Many migrants end up in uncertain and dangerous occupations and often have to work in unsafe environments with terrible hygienic conditions. It is therefore important to understand what has been achieved by growing migration in the quest for a better quality of life by low-skilled and low-wage workers, as well as high-skill and high-wage workers from less developed areas of origin to more developed areas of destination. This study focused on understanding the realization of a better life expected as a result of rural-urban migration in search of perceived or real opportunities in the destination places.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out at Rajshahi City Corporation in Bangladesh. Rajshahi City Corporation, situated on the north bank of the Padma River, near the border between Bangladesh and India, with a population of over 3,88,811 people, is a metropolitan city, one of the Bangladesh's main urban, commercial and educational center. The target population for the study was the migrants who came to the city in search of a better life from Bangladesh's rural areas. At the first stage, one out of 12 city corporations was randomly selected with a three-stage cluster sampling technique. Rajshahi City Corporation, selected at first stage, has 35 administrative units called "Ward," three of which were randomly selected at second stage. Every Ward is divided again into the smallest unit called "Mohalla." At the third stage, one Mohalla was randomly selected from each selected Ward. With face-to-face

interviews and a structured questionnaire, all the households of migrants from the selected Wards were surveyed for data collection. In total, 480 migrants' households were identified using snowball sampling technique. The data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 23 software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Urban and Rural Population Growth Scenario in Bangladesh

Figure 1 represents the growth of urban and rural population in Bangladesh during the period 1960-2018. From the figure it is observed that Bangladesh's urban population growth was always higher than the rural population growth. The growth of the urban population during the period 1960-1990 was above 4 percent and during 1991-2018 was above 3 percent. On the other hand, rural population growth has been steadily declining and less than 2 percent in 1988-2018, reaching nearly 0 after 2008, and becoming negative since 2014. Urban population growth takes place through three interrelated processes: (1) rural to urban migration, (2) natural increase, and (3) reclassification. Rural-urban migration contributes directly to the change of the urban population in a country. A natural increase in rural populations indirectly changes urban growth by pushing rural people into urban areas as a means of reducing overpopulation compared to economic opportunities available in rural areas. Meanwhile, with the relatively young age structure that characterizes urban populations, the rate of natural increase has a direct effect on urban population growth. Reclassification is an administrative process through which, when the absolute population size or population density exceeds that threshold, urban status is granted on an earlier rural or peri-urban territory based on a certain threshold.

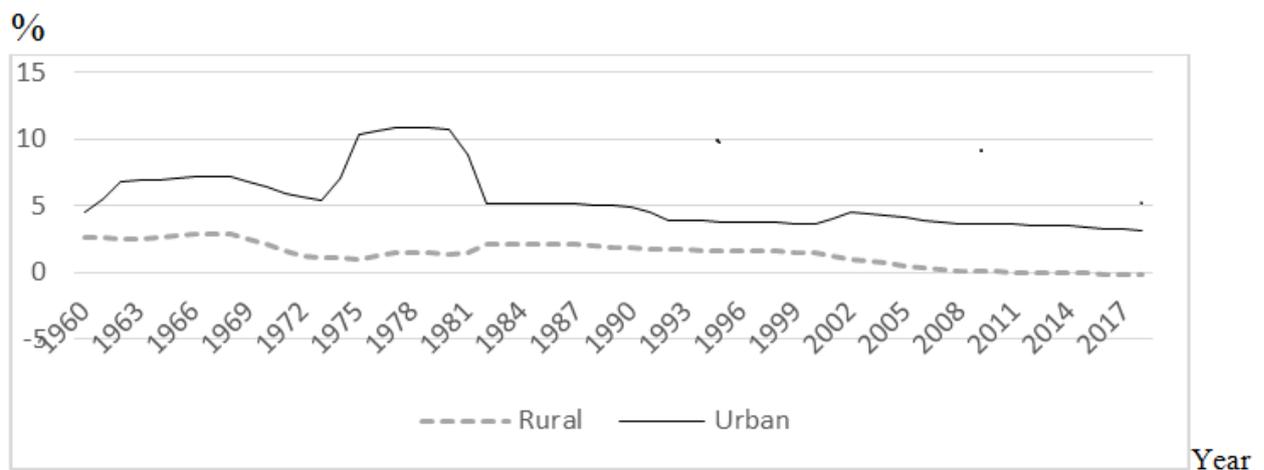


Figure-1. Urban and rural growth rate in Bangladesh.

3.2. Background Profiles of the Migrants

The descriptive statistics provide some detail about the migrants' reasons for migration and living and working conditions, both at the place of origin and at the place of destination. Demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, and personality traits make some people more likely to migrate than others (Guest, 2003; Nauman, Van Landingham, Anglewicz, Patthavanit, & Punpuing, 2015). Approximately 7 percent of migrants were under 30 years of age, about 31.5 percent were 40~49 years of age group, and about 16.3 percent were 60 years of age and older Table 1. The respondents' mean age was 45.2 years, with standard deviation (S.D.) 12.2 years. About 32.2 percent of migrants had less than 10 years of schooling, about 33.3 percent were Masters (17 + years of schooling), and about 20.2 percent were Bachelor's. The migrants' average schooling years was 12 school years with S.D. 5.7 years education. From the results it is evident that a significant proportion of migrants have been educated higher. In rural areas, there are no or few options for suitable employment for higher educated people. Agriculture and small business are the most common employment available in rural areas. Higher educated people are not interested

in taking up farming or small business as their profession. Equivalent work opportunities vary between rural and urban areas. Discrepancies in total productivity factor are responsible for differences across countries in equal work opportunities and per capita income. Studies have found that misallocation of production factors within an economy across regions can cause these differences in overall productivity (Hsieh & Klenow, 2009; Restuccia & Rogerson, 2008). An uneconomical distribution of workers across regions is the most significant cause of misallocation (Bryan & Morten, 2015; McMillan & Rodrik, 2011; Restuccia, Yang, & Zhu, 2008; Vollrath, 2009). Thus, people with higher education and skills have a greater tendency to move to urban areas to look for perceived or actual desirable job opportunities. Fortunately, moving rural people out of agriculture to find employment in urban areas is a major ingredient in the development process, particularly in developing market economies (Niva, Taka, & Varis, 2019; Young, 2013). This is illustrated by the broad productivity and wage differences identified among rural and urban workers (Gollin et al., 2014; Young, 2013). With regard to the type of occupation, about 52.9 percent of migrants were in service, about 22.9 percent were in business, about 11 percent were day laborers and the remaining 13 percent were in unclassified employment. The study results indicate that according to their expectations a significant proportion of migrants could be involved in the development process. About 96.5 percent of the migrants were married and about 91.7 percent were male. One measure of a migrant's general living conditions is the home or dwelling status of the migrant. Most migrants lived in rented dwellings (about 52.2 per cent), dwelled in their own apartments (about 26.9 per cent), and about 20.9 per cent inhabited in slums.

Table-1. Background profile of the respondents.

Characteristics	Percent
Age (in years)	
< 30	7.1
30-39	24.6
40~49	31.5
50~59	20.6
60+	16.3
Mean \pm SD	45.2 \pm 12.2
Education (in schooling years)	
<10	32.2
10-12	14.2
13-16	20.2
17+	33.3
Mean \pm SD	12.0 \pm 5.7
Present occupation	
Service	52.9
Business	22.9
Day labor	11.1
Others	13.1
Marital Status	
Married	96.5
Others	3.5
Sex	
Male	91.7
Female	8.3
Residence type in the place of destination	
Slum	20.9
Rented house	52.2
Own house	26.9

Source: Analysis of primary data collected from a sample survey.

3.3. Migration Characteristics

Table 2 details the key features of the migration process. The reasons for migration of people, some of whom are closely linked to the economic situations in their places of origin, affect their everyday lives. The reasons manifest themselves in the migrants' fears about income generation for everyday life in the places of origin and in their aspirations of a better life in the places of the destination. The realization of a better life expected is better understood if the expectation of a better life and the reasons for the migration has matched one another. Thus, to understand whether migrants' expectation of a better life is realized or not, it is important to identify the reasons for their migration. The dominant factors of migration (about 66.6 percent of cases) are obviously pull factors. Because of large job and wage gaps between rural and urban workers, urban centers are the right places for people who want to fulfill their expectations of a better life. Low adaptive capacity across the place of origin generally pushes people to migrate to the destination. On the other hand, factors such as perceived or real opportunities for suitable jobs, children's education facilities, improved health care facilities pull migrants into urban areas to settle in. According to the study results, about 62.7 percent of the migrants settled in the Rajshahi city permanently because they could realize their expectations. Approximately 39.4% of migrants migrated from neighboring areas (a distance of less than 50 km), approximately 21.7% came from a distance of 50~99 km from Rajshahi City, and 17.3% of migrants came from more than 200 km from their places of origin. The mean distance between place of origin and destination was 119 km. Approximately 28 percent of respondents migrated less than 5 years ago to Rajshahi City, about 20.4 percent migrated 5~9 years ago and 23.8 percent migrated 20 years ago or more. The average migrated life duration in the destination places was 14 years.

Table-2. Characteristics of migration process.

Characteristics of migration	Percent
Causes of migration	
Pull factors	66.6
Push factors	33.4
Nature of migration	
Permanent	62.7
Temporary	37.3
Distance (in km) from place of origin	
< 50	39.4
50~99	21.7
100~149	13.8
150~199	7.9
200+	17.3
Mean \pm SD	119 \pm 121
Duration of living in current place (in years)	
<5	28.1
5~9	20.4
10~14	15.0
15~19	12.7
20+	23.8
Mean \pm SD	14.0 \pm 10.5

3.4. Remittance

One of the outcomes of rural-to-urban migration is the migrants' income generation and transfer to their respective place of origin. Several authors have recently argued that migration is a typical process of the modern economy and has a significant impact on rural economic development, in particular in removing supply constraints to improve agricultural productivity (Rempel & Lobdell, 2007; Stratana & Chistrugaa, 2012). In the process of transformation, migration acts as a catalyst not only for the destiny of individual migrants but also for the conditions of the family members left behind, local communities and the broader sending regions (Nguyen, Grote, &

Nguyen, 2019; Phan & Coxhead, 2019). Migration has been identified as a strategy of survival mainly used by poor rural dwellers. Most people left by migrants are always awaiting remittances from the migrants. Households receiving these remittances tend to use earnings primarily for current consumption (food, clothing), as well as investments in education for children, health care, improvement in household food and security, and water and sanitation (Acharya & Leon-Gonzalez, 2014; Meyer & Shera, 2017; Nguyen, Grote, & Nguyen, 2017). The importance of transferring remittances is that it helps those left in rural areas to survive in hardships associated with a decrease and/or complete depletion of the environmental resources on which their livelihood depends. The results in Table 3 show that about 77.7 percent of migrants send less than BDT 1000 as remittances to rural households and only 7.9 percent of migrants send BDT 3000 or more to rural households as remittances. Despite the amount of remittance transfers appear to be too small, a steady supply of remittances is viewed with utmost importance in increasing their farm earnings and other livelihood sources.

Table-3. Remittance per month.

Amount of remittance per month	Percent
<BDT 1000	77.7
BDT 1000~1999	11.9
BDT 2000~2999	2.5
BDT 3000	7.9

3.5. Expectations of Better Life and Realization of Expectations

The aspirations of Migrant for a better life and his / her motivation to seek higher earnings along with other incentives have boosted rural people's movement to urban areas. But not all decisions on migration are capable of bringing expected success. Migrants sometimes end up in bad and dangerous jobs including prostitution and child labor. Policymakers tend to accept these negative externalities as an unavoidable by-product of development, believing that being "poor in the city" is still better than being "poor in the village" (Amare, Hohfeld, Jitsuchon, & Waibel, 2012). The intention of rural-urban migration in the study area was obviously dominated by expectations of a better life. Approximately 95.6 percent of the key aspiration of migrants was to have a better life. Table 4 shows that about 88.6 percent of migrants believed their expectations of a better life had been met through migration. Approximately 91.6 percent of migrants realized that their living standards had improved as a result of migration.

Table-4. Percent distribution of migrants regarding expectation of better life.

Regarding expectation of better life	Percent
Expected better life	95.6
Fulfilled expectation	88.6
Improved standard of living	91.6

3.6. Association of Improved Living Standards and Socioeconomic Conditions

Migrants left their place of origin in search of a better life at the destination places. The expectations of migrants originated mainly from the hope that migration might lead to an improved standard of living. Improving a standard of living may depend on certain socioeconomic factors. An association between the improvement status of a migrants' standard of living and their socioeconomic conditions has been empirically demonstrated in this study, and is presented in Table 5. Migrants whose incomes were higher could, quite naturally, significantly improve their living standards more than migrants whose incomes were lower. With respect to employment, migrants engaged in business and service could significantly improve their living standards more than migrants whose occupations were not business and service. As for the level of education, migrants whose education levels were higher could significantly improve their living standards against low-educated migrants. One of the key components for improving the standard of living is the availability of health facilities. Study results indicate that easy accessibility of health care facilities such as specialized physicians, specialized hospitals, reliable diagnostic

centers and trustworthy treatment are significantly associated with improving living standards. The transport system of the destination's place is also associated significantly with the improvement of living standards. Migrants felt that their standard of living had been significantly improved by the urban areas' transport system without traffic jams, environmentally friendly and safe. Housing was also associated significantly with the increase of living standards. Migrants who stayed in their own apartments and the rental apartment could raise their living conditions significantly.

Table-5. Influencing factors for realization of expectation of better life.

Factors	Standard of living		χ^2	p-value
	Improved	Did not improve		
Income (in BDT)			42.42	0.001
<5000	73.4	26.6		
5000~15000	93.0	7.0		
15001~30000	97.6	2.4		
30000+	97.0	3.0		
Occupation			35.21	0.001
Business	92.7	7.3		
Day labor	70.9	29.1		
Service	96.4	3.6		
Others	88.9	11.1		
Educational qualification			36.20	0.002
Illiterate	71.1	28.9		
Primary	85.7	14.3		
Secondary	87.5	12.5		
SSC	91.7	8.3		
HSC	92.6	13.1		
Undergraduate & above	96.8	3.2		
Attitude of law enforcing agencies			5.84	0.210
Neutral	92.8	7.2		
Honest	86.5	13.5		
Supportive	95.0	5.0		
Coordinated	90.4	9.6		
Availability of health facilities			8.87	0.05
Available specialized doctors	93.7	6.3		
Available specialized hospital	92.0	8.0		
Reliable diagnosis lab	100.0	0.0		
Trustworthy treatment	88.9	11.1		
Others	71.4	28.6		
Transport system			13.71	0.001
Without traffic jam	100.0	0.0		
Cheap	88.6	11.4		
Environmentally friendly	95.3	4.7		
Safe	90.9	9.1		
Housing			17.20	0.002
Own house	93.1	6.9		
Rented house	100.0	0.0		
Slum	81.0	19.0		
Others	83.3	17.7		

3.7. Logistic Model

Realization of an expected better life due to rural-urban migration is a random-choice problem. Two choices were designed for the problem in the questionnaire, namely, realized an expected better life = 1, did not realize a better life expected = 0. Thus, the stated variable was the realization of a better existence expected, which belongs to a variable of 0–1. For each subject reporting the realization of an anticipated better life due to rural-urban

migration ($Y=1$), the logistic model was fit to the dichotomous outcomes denoted by Y . This model is a discrete binary model of choice that uses logical distribution as the distribution of probability of random error terms. It is ideal for evaluating the realization of an anticipated better life based on the concept of realization of the maximization of a desired better life. The independent variables X in the model are the variables which could affect the realization of a better life expected of migrants. Suppose that $f(x) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$ is a linear function for variables influencing realization of migrants' expected better life, then the probability that migrants' realization of an expected better life due to rural-urban migration $P_i = e^{f(x)} / [1 + e^{f(x)}]$ and the probability that migrants did not realize an expected better life due to rural-urban migration is $1 - P_i$. By logarithmic conversion, we can obtain $\ln\left(\frac{P_i}{1-P_i}\right) = f(x)$. The specific model is as follows:

$$P_i = F(\alpha + P_i) = F(\alpha + \sum_{j=1}^m \beta_j x_{ij}) = \frac{1}{(-\alpha + \sum_{j=1}^m \beta_j x_{ij})}$$

where P_i is the probability that the i th migrant realized his expected better life due to rural-urban migration; β_j is the regression coefficient of the j th influencing factor; m is the number of influencing factors; x_{ij} is independent variable, indicating the j th influencing factor of i th migrant; α is regression intercept.

The primary outcome variable in the study is the realization of a better life desired by migrants because of rural-urban migration. In the logistic model, the independent variables include the occupation of respondents, income, access to health services, the urban environment to which they migrated, the destination's law and order situation, and the attitudes of neighbors towards migrants.

The dichotomous logistic regression model was conducted using SPSS 20.0 software to assess the significant factors responsible for achieving a better life predicted in the destination. With the study of logistic regression, the significantly contributing factors for realizing the anticipated better life of migrants were identified and are presented in Table 6. The findings suggested that, contrary to no fixed job, service as an occupation significantly contributed to achieving the expected better life of migrants (OR= 1.04), monthly income of BDT 15000 or more contributed significantly more to realizing the expected better life of migrants compared to monthly income of less than BDT 5000 (OR= 2.85 for BDT 15001~30000, and OR=4.90 for more than BDT 30000). In comparison to no access to reliable doctors or hospitals, easy access to reliable doctors (OR = 3.93) significantly contributed to the realization of the predicted better lives of migrants. Supportive neighbors (OR = 4.31), neighbors with good social responsibilities (OR = 5.11) and conscientious neighbors (OR = 4.69) have contributed significantly to the realization of the dream of a better life for migrants.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Equivalent work opportunities vary between rural and urban areas. Discrepancies in total-factor productivity are responsible for differences between countries in equal employment opportunities and per capita income. Rural-urban migration results from disparities between regions in equal employment opportunities and per capita income, thereby migrate people from less-developed rural areas to more developed urban areas. They move to look for

perceived or actual jobs, residential, health, and education opportunities. Each migrant leaves his or her place of origin in search of a better life in destination places.

Table-6. Ordinal logistic regression analysis of factors influencing realization of expectation of better life.

Factors	Coefficient	SE	OR
Occupation			
No fixed job (ref.)	-	-	1.0
Day labor	-0.32	0.89	0.72
Business	-0.44	0.81	0.64
Service	0.04*	0.35	1.04
Income			
< BDT 5000 (ref.)	-	-	1.0
BDT 5000~15000	-.21	0.50	0.81
BDT 15001~30000	1.05*	0.80	2.85
>BDT 30000	1.59*	0.80	4.90
Health facilities			
No reliable doctor/hospital (ref.)	-	-	1.0
Easy access to specialized doctors	1.36*	0.91	3.93
Easy access to specialized hospital	0.76	0.71	2.14
Attitude of neighbor			
Unpleasant neighbor(ref.)	-	-	1.0
Supportive neighbor	1.46*	0.84	4.31
Having strong social commitment	1.63*	0.81	5.11
Disciplined family	1.54*	0.78	4.69
Law and order situation			
Vulnerable (ref.)	-	-	1.0
Neutral	-0.13	0.73	0.87
Supportive	1.18	0.68	3.09
Environment of the urban			
Terrorism free (ref.)	-	-	1.00
Without traffic jam	0.36	0.98	1.43
Pollution free	-0.70	0.72	0.49
Neat and clean	0.41	0.78	1.51
Constant	2.69	1.22	14.78

Note: *Significant at 5% level of significance, SE=Standard Error, OR= Odds Ratio.

But for many reasons every migrant is unable to realize an anticipated better life. Results of the study showed that the dominant factors of migration were the pull factors which indicated that perceived or real income generation and other basic opportunities were more attractive in the destination places than in the origin places. Nearly all the migrants changed their places of living in search of a better life and nearly ninety percent could realize a better life expected. The realization of an expected better life was associated with some important factors such as income at the destination locations, profession, migrants' educational qualification, accessibility to health care facilities, transportation system and housing condition at the destination location. The statistical analysis showed that the sensing of an anticipated better life was more in migrants engaged in service, belonged to the high-income community (more than BDT 15000 per month), easy access to specialist physicians / hospitals, and lived with friendly, highly socially committed and disciplined neighbors. To grow a country more prosperously, it is important to develop rural areas alongside urban areas. Even in places of origin, a migrant can fulfill his / her expected better life if approximately equal opportunities in places of origin and destination can be assured. The government should therefore boost educational facilities, work prospects, easy access to better health care facilities in rural areas, and finally encourage measures for equivalence between urban and rural areas. Well-managed migration will help optimize the realization of a better life expectancy and reduce migration-related risks. Expected migrants from rural to urban areas should analyze current socio-economic conditions, social networks in place of destination prior to migration and their characteristics, in particular age, ability and education. A favorable combination of these supporting components may help migrants achieve their ultimate objective of a better life.

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