

**ISSN: 2706-8471 (Online)**

**ISSN: 2706-8463 (Print)**



## **Problem and Prospect of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh: A review**

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**To cite the article:** *Monira Khanam\*(2024). Problem and Prospect of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh: A review, South Asian Journal of Development Research, 4(1): 24-31.*

**Link to this article:** <http://aiipub.com/journals/sajdr-240709-10016/>

**Article QR**



**Journal QR**



## Problem and Prospect of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh: A review

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article Type:** Review

**Received:** 08, July. 2024.

**Accepted:** 10, July. 2024.

**Published:** 13, July. 2024.

### Keywords:

Agricultural Extension,  
Bangladesh, Rural  
development, Rural-urban  
Migration.

### ABSTRACT

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is a significant issue with both challenges and opportunities for rural and urban areas. This review article explores the reasons behind this migration, the problems migrants face, and the potential benefits for the country. Many people move from rural areas to cities seeking better jobs, education, healthcare, and due to environmental changes like floods and erosion. However, once they arrive in cities, they often encounter problems such as poor housing conditions, lack of access to basic services, and discrimination. This migration also affects rural areas, leading to labor shortages and changes in community demographics. At the same time, urban areas struggle with overcrowding, pressure on infrastructure, and insufficient public services. Despite these challenges, rural-urban migration can bring positive changes. It can boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve living standards for many people. By reviewing various studies, government reports, and policy documents, this article provides a comprehensive understanding of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh. It highlights the need for effective policies to manage migration, support migrants, and address the challenges in both rural and urban areas. The goal is to maximize the benefits of migration for sustainable development in Bangladesh.

### 1. Introduction

Rural-urban migration stands as a significant demographic phenomenon in Bangladesh, shaping the socio-economic landscape of the nation (Sarker, 2015). With its origins rooted in multifaceted socio-economic disparities, environmental challenges, and evolving opportunities, this migration trend warrants thorough investigation.

Bangladesh, a densely populated South Asian nation, has experienced rapid urbanization in recent decades, primarily fueled by rural-urban migration. The urban population has been increasing at an annual growth rate of around 3.5% in Bangladesh, outpacing the growth rate of the rural population. This demographic shift has profound implications for various sectors, including urban infrastructure, employment patterns, social services, and environmental sustainability.

The drivers of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh are multifaceted, encompassing economic, social, and environmental factors (Rabbani et al., 2022). Economic disparities between rural and urban areas and limited livelihood opportunities in rural settings often push individuals and families towards urban centers in search of better prospects. Moreover, rapid industrialization and urbanization have led to new employment opportunities in urban areas, attracting migrants from rural regions.

Environmental factors also play a crucial role in driving rural-urban migration, particularly in Bangladesh, a country prone to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, and riverbank erosion. Climate change-induced environmental degradation further exacerbates vulnerabilities in rural areas, prompting migration as a coping strategy.

However, rural-urban migration is not without its challenges and consequences. While it can potentially alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods for migrants, it also poses strains on urban infrastructure and services, exacerbates housing shortages, and contributes to social tensions. Moreover, the phenomenon often leads to the depopulation of rural areas, affecting agricultural productivity and rural development efforts.

In addressing the complexities of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh, this paper draws upon various scholarly literature, empirical studies, and official reports. By critically analyzing existing research and synthesizing key findings, this review aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the drivers, dynamics, and impacts of rural-urban migration in the context of Bangladesh.

## 2. Importance of Migration in Bangladesh

Migration, particularly rural-urban migration, is a cornerstone of Bangladesh's demographic change and socio-economic development. As the nation undergoes rapid urbanization and demographic transitions, internal migration serves as a primary transformation engine, reshaping settlement patterns, labor markets, and social interactions.

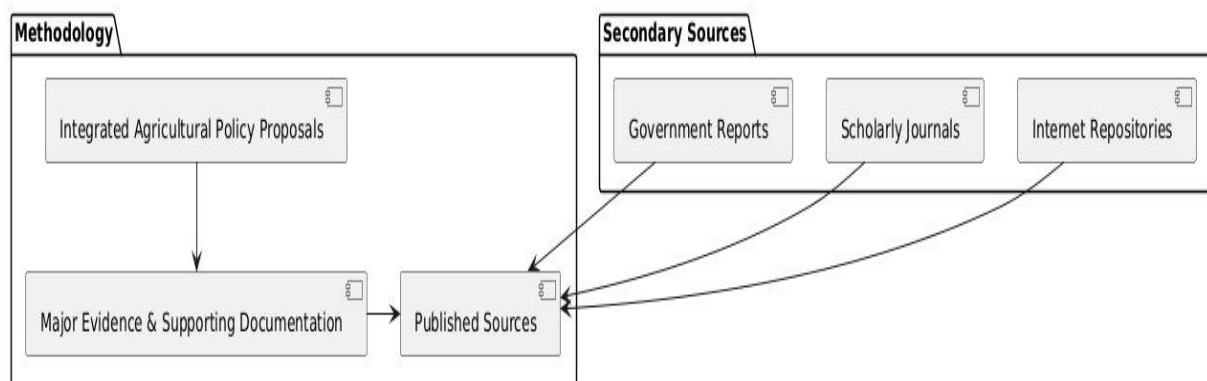
1. **Urbanization and Economic Growth:** Rural-urban migration plays a central role in driving urbanization and stimulating economic growth in Bangladesh. The influx of migrants into urban areas creates demand for goods and services, fuels investment in infrastructure, and fosters entrepreneurship and innovation (Okoro et al., 2019). Consequently, urban centers emerge as hubs of economic activity, generating employment opportunities and contributing significantly to national prosperity.
2. **Labour Market Dynamics:** Migration is a critical driver of labor market dynamics, facilitating workers' movement from agriculture-based occupations to non-agricultural sectors in urban areas. This structural shift enhances labor productivity, promotes skill diversification, and drives technological progress (Matthess & Kunkel, 2020). Moreover, migration contributes to the flexibility and adaptability of the labor force, enabling industries to respond effectively to changing market demands.
3. **Poverty Alleviation and Remittances:** Rural-urban migration plays a vital role in poverty alleviation efforts in Bangladesh, primarily through the generation of remittances. Migrant workers remit substantial financial inflows to their families in rural areas, which contributes to improving household welfare access to education and healthcare (Simpson, 2022). Remittance income is a lifeline for many households, reducing vulnerability to economic shocks and enhancing resilience.
4. **Social and Cultural Dynamics:** Rural-urban migration fosters social and cultural exchange, promoting community diversity and mutual understanding. Migrants bring diverse perspectives, traditions, and practices, enriching the cultural fabric of both rural and urban societies (Ono et al., 2023). This exchange strengthens social cohesion and fosters tolerance and inclusivity in a multicultural context.
5. **Economic Opportunities:** One of the primary objectives of rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is the pursuit of better economic opportunities. Many migrants from rural areas

migrate to urban centers for employment in manufacturing, construction, services, and informal sectors (Khanam et al., 2023). The promise of higher wages, job security, and income diversification motivates individuals and families to relocate to urban areas, hoping to improve their living standards and achieve financial stability.

6. **Access to Education and Healthcare:** Another essential objective of rural-urban migration is to access better education and healthcare facilities available in urban areas. Migrants often seek to provide their children with quality education and healthcare services, which may be lacking or inadequate in rural communities (Alam et al., 2023). The desire to secure a brighter future for their families drives many rural residents to migrate to urban centers with more developed educational and healthcare infrastructure.
7. **Social Mobility and Improved Living Standards:** Rural-urban migration offers social mobility and improved living standards for migrants and their families. Moving to urban areas provides opportunities for personal and professional growth, social networking, and exposure to diverse cultures and lifestyles (Kutor et al., 2021). Migrants aspire to enhance their social status, expand their horizons, and achieve a better quality of life for themselves and future generations.
8. **Escape from Environmental Degradation and Climate Change:** Environmental degradation, natural disasters, and climate change-induced vulnerabilities in rural areas often compel people to migrate to urban centers as a coping strategy (Ahsan & Afrin, 2019). Migrants seek refuge from environmental hazards such as floods, cyclones, and riverbank erosion, which threaten their livelihoods and well-being in rural settings. Migration represents adaptation and resilience-building in the face of environmental challenges.

### 3. Methodology

Secondary sources such as government papers, scholarly journals, and internet repositories were employed in the study. The major evidence and supporting documentation for the integrated agricultural policy proposals came from published sources.



**Fig: Methodology of Problem and Prospect of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh.**

### 4. Problem of Rural-Urban Migration in Bangladesh

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh poses significant challenges for the migrants and the urban areas they move to. The conditions in rural areas, including political and socio-economic difficulties, often drive populations to migrate to urban settings (Cattaneo et al., 2022). However, this migration was not without problems. Urban slum dwellers face insecure living conditions and limited access to resources,

highlighting the challenges faced by those who move from rural to urban areas (Vilar-Compte et al., 2021). Research on rural-urban migration in developing countries, including Bangladesh, has been ongoing for decades. Despite this, key policy questions remain unanswered, such as how migration impacts population size and distribution (Jia et al., 2023). Natural hazards, such as floods, further complicate the issue of migration in Bangladesh, leading to internal displacement and protests (Kabir & Kamruzzaman, 2022). The rapid growth of urban populations in Bangladesh is expected to be predominantly driven by rural-urban migration in the coming decades (Biswas et al., 2019). This migration, combined with the impacts of climate change, presents significant challenges for urbanization and the alleviation of rural poverty (Rana & Ilina, 2021). In conclusion, rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is a complex issue with far-reaching implications for both rural and urban populations. Addressing the challenges posed by this migration will require comprehensive policies that take into account the socio-economic, environmental, and political factors driving individuals to move from rural to urban areas.

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh presents a multitude of challenges that significantly impact both rural and urban areas. The influx of migrants into cities like Dhaka and Chittagong exacerbates overpopulation, straining urban infrastructure and leading to the proliferation of slums and informal settlements with substandard living conditions (Gakpey, 2022). The urban job market often cannot absorb the growing migrant population, pushing many into low-paying, insecure jobs in the informal sector, thus perpetuating poverty and social inequality. Concurrently, the rural economy suffers from labor shortages as the working-age population migrates, reducing agricultural productivity and potentially leading to food insecurity. Social and cultural disruptions also occur as migrants face challenges adapting to urban life, experiencing social isolation and the erosion of rural cultural identities. Additionally, rapid urbanization driven by migration contributes to environmental degradation, including increased pollution and loss of green spaces. The government struggles with policy and governance issues, often lacking coherent strategies to manage migration effectively and integrate migrants into the urban fabric. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive policy responses that improve rural livelihoods, enhance urban infrastructure, and promote inclusive development strategies to bridge the rural-urban divide.

## **5. Prospect of Rural-urban Migration in Bangladesh**

Urbanization is a global trend that is expected to continue to increase in the coming years. The United Nations projects that by 2050, 68% of the world's population will live in urban areas (Huang et al., 2019). This mass migration from rural to urban areas has significant implications for both rural and urban communities. In Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Pakistan, migration to cities from rural areas or from abroad is a common phenomenon. Rural-urban migration has been shown to have various effects on rural communities. Factors contributing to migration include changes in rural employment and underemployment. This migration can lead to challenges for both the rich and the poor, as populations continue to migrate to urban settings in search of better opportunities. Efforts to alleviate rural-urban migration have been explored through various policies. Two effective policies identified include those that reduce rural unemployment and alleviate migration. It is clear that as urbanization continues to rise, the prospect of rural-urban migration in countries like Bangladesh will remain a significant issue that requires attention and intervention.

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh, despite its challenges, presents several prospects that could contribute positively to the country's socio-economic development. One significant prospect is the

potential for economic growth and development in urban areas. As rural migrants move to cities in search of better employment opportunities, they contribute to the urban labor force, often filling gaps in both skilled and unskilled labor markets. This can drive economic activity, enhance productivity, and stimulate growth in various sectors, particularly in manufacturing and services.

Moreover, migration can lead to the diversification of income sources for rural households. Remittances sent by urban migrants to their families in rural areas can improve living standards, reduce poverty, and provide funds for education and healthcare. These financial inflows can also be invested in agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises, fostering rural economic development.

Additionally, rural-urban migration can facilitate human capital development. Migrants often acquire new skills and knowledge in urban areas, which can be transferred back to rural communities if they return or maintain connections with their place of origin. This exchange of skills and ideas can improve agricultural practices, entrepreneurship, and innovation in rural areas (Cofré-Bravo et al., 2019).

Urbanization driven by migration also offers opportunities for better access to education and healthcare services. Cities typically provide better-quality educational institutions and healthcare facilities than rural areas. As migrants and their families settle in urban areas, they gain access to these essential services, leading to improved overall well-being and human capital development.

Furthermore, rural-urban migration can contribute to the socio-cultural dynamism of cities. The influx of diverse populations brings together different cultural practices and perspectives, fostering a multicultural urban environment. This cultural diversity can enhance social cohesion and innovation, enriching the urban social fabric.

Lastly, the government and policymakers can leverage rural-urban migration to promote balanced regional development. The pressure on major urban centers can be alleviated by developing infrastructure, creating job opportunities in secondary cities, and improving rural-urban linkages. This strategic approach can lead to more equitable and sustainable urbanization.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Rural-urban migration in Bangladesh is a complex phenomenon with profound implications for both rural and urban areas. The migration driven by economic, social, and environmental factors has led to significant challenges, including urban overpopulation, the strain on infrastructure, the growth of the informal economy, and rural labor shortages. However, it also presents opportunities for economic growth, poverty alleviation through remittances, human capital development, and cultural enrichment in urban settings. Effective migration management requires comprehensive policies that address the root causes in rural areas and enhance urban infrastructure and services to better integrate migrants into urban life. Balancing the pressures and potentials of rural-urban migration is crucial for sustainable development in Bangladesh.

### Recommendations

1. **Enhance Rural Development Programs:** Strengthening rural economies through better agricultural practices, infrastructure development, and non-farm employment opportunities can reduce the push factors driving migration. Investment in rural education, healthcare, and social services is essential to improve living standards and reduce migration pressure.
2. **Improve Urban Planning and Infrastructure:** To accommodate the growing urban population, cities need better planning and investment in infrastructure. This includes expanding affordable housing, improving transportation systems, and enhancing water and



sanitation services. Smart urban planning can help manage population density and reduce the growth of informal settlements.

3. **Promote Balanced Regional Development:** Developing secondary cities and towns can help distribute the population more evenly across the country. Policies that create economic opportunities in these areas can attract migrants away from overburdened major cities like Dhaka and Chittagong.
4. **Support Informal Sector Workers:** Given the significant number of migrants working in the informal sector, there should be initiatives to improve their working conditions and provide social protection. This could include access to healthcare, education for their children, and financial services such as microcredit.
5. **Facilitate Skill Development and Education:** Providing vocational training and education tailored to the demands of urban labor markets can help migrants secure better jobs. Skills development programs should be accessible to both current and potential migrants to enhance their employment prospects.
6. **Strengthen Policy and Governance Frameworks:** Developing coherent policies that address migration comprehensively is crucial. This includes coordination between rural and urban development strategies, enforcement of urban planning regulations, and effective governance to ensure that migration benefits both migrants and host communities.
7. **Encourage Community Integration and Social Cohesion:** Programs aimed at integrating migrants into urban communities can reduce social isolation and cultural dissonance. Promoting multicultural understanding and social cohesion can enhance the social fabric of urban areas, making them more inclusive and resilient.

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