

## Demographic Characteristics of Female Marriage Migrants: Study from Rural Rajshahi District in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to study the demographic characteristics of the female marriage migrants of selected rural area in Rajshahi District, Bangladesh. For this, data was procured under the project entitled “Strengthening the Department of Population Science and Human Resource Development” sponsored by UNFPA. Logistic regression model has been employed to identify the relative risk of the factors of female marriage migrants. From logistic analysis it is observed that female migrants are more involved in rural businesses and others than that of housewives at their near houses.

**Key words:** Demographic characteristics, female marriage migrants and logistic regression model

### INTRODUCTION

The population of the country is increasing with accelerated population growth over time. According to the population Census 2001 (BBS, 2003), the total enumerated population of the country stands at 123851120 of which 63874740 were males and 59956380 were females. Of the total population 28605200 live in the urban area and 95245920 live in the rural area, the percentage of urban and rural population being 23.1% and 76.9% respectively. Bangladesh is poverty-stricken and agrarian based country, which is deteriorating rapidly by increasing poverty and landless as well as under employment and unemployment. In such a situation, a large number of people are waiting for overseas employment in our country.

A number of personal demographic characteristics like age, sex, level of education and income level exert a strong influence on an individual's decision to migrate. It is widely known as a global basis that the majority of migrants tend to be young adults. People have a much greater propensity to move between their late teens to their thirties, for marriage, to look for a job and to set up their own families. Before and after this period, family ties restrict mobility and return migration is reduced by more than fifty percent. Another characteristic is that migrants tend to have higher educational level than non-migrants. Migrants from rural to urban areas may have higher educational level than those left behind in the place of origin but lower than those in their place of destination. Migration movements reflect the original background of the migrant. Education levels of urban population are usually higher those of rural areas. Poorly educated people are more involved in short distance movement while highly educated is much more likely to be involved in long distance movement. Globally,

migrants move from low to high-income regions. Economic factors are the most important factors cited as reasons for moving (Todaro, 1976). Generally migrants move from an area of poverty to an area of opportunity. Therefore, the main purposes of this study are addressed in the following:

- To study the demographic characteristics of the female migrants, and
- To apply logistic regression model to investigate the relative risk factors of the migrants for female.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data of this study was collected from Mohanpur Thana of Rajshahi district under the project of UNFPA entitled “Strengthening the Department of Population Science and Human Resource Development”. The pattern of data was collected in three broad sections namely, fertility, mortality and migration along with socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents using by purposive sampling method from three residential areas including rural, urban and sub-urban areas of Rajshahi district, Bangladesh. Data was collected of 1343 respondents of Mohanpur Thana in Rajshahi district by interview method using a set of questionnaires. Note that all respondents were female migrants due to marriage and belonging to the fertility age group 15 – 49 years listed in the voter list as a population frame. The voter list of Mohanpur thana constructed in the year 2004 has been used in this instance. It is noted that Mohanpur thana is a rural area.

The logistic regression analysis is employed to identify the risk factors. Cox (1958) is the pioneer of logistic regression model. More recently Lee (1980) and Fox (1984) have further developed the Cox's model. The

logistic regression model may be briefly described as follows:

$$Y = \frac{e^{(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_n X_n)}}{1 + e^{(\alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_n X_n)}}$$

The logistic regression model is concerned an appropriate tool to analyze such data considering the dependent variable is causes of migration that is dichotomized. The dependent variable used in this model is categorized in the following:

Model: Y= Causes of migration

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{Migration due to marriage} \\ 0, & \text{Otherwise} \end{cases}$$

Independent variables included in this logistic model are education, occupation, distance between place of origin & place of destination and place of work, which are categorical.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Migration and age:** Most migrants originally leave their villages at the lower end of their working age period. This is mostly because the longer the working time period of a migrants life, the greater the number of years from which they can earn additional income from work after migration. Table 1 shows that in the rural areas the prime age for migration is in the age range of 25-29. 23.50% area migrated at the age of 25-29. 21.7% are migrated at the age of 20–25. The percentage is lower for any age range above or below this age group. By analyzing the migration age and status of the wives it is seen that 0.18 percent of respondent wives migrated either with their parents or other members of their family, where they had or did not have any role in migration decision. This proves that children and the elderly are less interested in migration.

**Marital status of the migrants:** The system of classifying the population by marital status varies from country to country, religion to religion in accordance with prevailing marriage laws and customs. Table 2 shows that in rural area the maximum of migrants are married (97.8%). Few migrants are divorced (0.1%) and the remainder is widowhood (0.1%). Thus, it can be concluded that in the rural area the maximum of female migrants are married.

**Educational qualification:** There is lack of opportunity to acquire sufficient as well as better qualitative education in the rural sector in Bangladesh. Table 3 represents that in the rural area 35.4% of female respondent were found to be illiterate where the signatory level is 7.8% and the remaining is literate. In this area 29.1 and 16.2% of

Table 1: Age duration for female migrants

Age group	No. of migrants	Percentage (%)
<14	3	0.2
15 - 19	148	11.0
20 - 24	292	21.7
25 - 29	316	23.5
30 - 34	217	16.2
35 - 39	202	15.1
40 - 44	126	9.4
45 - 49	39	2.9
Total	1343	100.0

Table 2: Marital status of the female migrants

Marital status	No. of migrants	Percentage (%)
Unmarried	14	1.0
Married	1313	97.8
Divorced	2	0.1
Separated	13	1.0
Widowed	1	0.1
Total	1343	100.0

Table 3: Educational attributes for female migrants

Education level	No. of migrants	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	476	35.4
Signatory	105	7.8
Up to class v	391	29.1
Up to class x	218	16.2
SSC	111	8.3
HSC	28	2.1
Bachelor's degree	10	0.7
Master's degree	4	0.3
Total	1343	100.0

Table 4: Income distribution for female migrants

Range in taka	No. of migrants	Percentage (%)
<500	13	1.0
501-1000	55	4.1
1001-1500	198	14.7
1501-2000	240	17.9
2001-2500	211	15.7
2500+	626	46.6
Total	1343	100.0

housewives obtained education upto class v and x respectively. Only 8.3% had completed their school education. 2.1% had completed their college studies where as 0.7% was found to be graduates and a small percent of housewives were found to have a Master's degree. This category in the study area is very small.

**Migration income pattern:** Agriculture is the main sector for employment in rural households. Most of them can earn income from this sector. But this sector cannot provide full employment to all labor forces due to various reasons. Moreover, members of kin households are not interested in agriculture employment, as they prefer urban white-collar jobs. In this situation the rural unemployed laborers and the members of kin households migrate from their native villages to urban areas for seeking employment. Thus, the family members who become employed in the urban sector become the earning members of rural households and their incomes contribute to the total family income. Table 4 shows that housewives in rural areas with a very low income. But a high portion of housewives (46.6%) in the rural area earn only taka 2500 and above, i.e., \$35 (US) per month.

**Causes of migration:** Causes of migration are one of the most important factors in demography as it is directly related to migration in many societies. The conditions that propel people to migrate from one place to another within the same country are often quite similar to those, which bring about international migration. Migration from the villages to the towns and cities bears a close functional relationship with the progress of industrialization, technological advancement and other cultural changes, which characterize the evolution of modern society in almost all parts of the world. It is due not only to push the factor of the villages and the pull factors of the towns and cities but also to the interaction of several other factors. When an increasing population in rural areas starts spreading into the cities, the influx of this excess population occurs at a much larger scale than the town and city can absorb. Broadly speaking, migration of people is a very common phenomenon. It can result from many causes such as socio-economic, political, cultural, natural calamities, wars and so on. The following are the remarkable ones found in Table 5. From this table, it is seen that almost all migrants to rural area have migrated due to marriage recorded at 99.1%. Few migrants cited political, economical and other reasons for migration, recorded as 0.2, 0.5% and 0.1% respectively. It can thus be concluded that the entire respondent from the rural area migrated due to marriage.

**Determinants of migration using logistic regression analysis:** Migration is the effect of many phenomena. Various phenomena influence migration with different direction and magnitude. It is interested to find out which phenomena are more responsible for migration. For this purpose the data is analyzed through logistic regression analysis. The results of this analysis are given in Table 6. An increased risk of in-migration from a rural area has been observed with an increased level of education. The risk of migration was 1.0355, 1.5486 and 1.7136 times higher for the female migrants with educational level primary, secondary, S.S.C./H.S.C. respectively (secondary school certificate/higher secondary certificate) but 0.4152 times lower graduate education as compared to female migrants with no education.

It is found that female migrants occupied is non-agricultural labour, service and business have a greater chance of migration as compared to female migrants with an occupation of a housewife. The risk of migration has been found 0.2738, 1.3253, 0.4213 and 24.1067 times for service, business, labor and others respectively as compared to housewives. This may be because of the little chance of that female migrants have of being employed in non-agricultural occupation in the rural areas.

The distance of place of migration from the place of origin of the respondents recorded was dominantly short distance. Short distance migration is mainly rural to rural and female exogamy and consequently marriage migration is overwhelmingly the main component of rural to rural migration. The risk of migration is found 11.2704, 6.2970, 15.2456 and 31.9186 times for long distance

Table 5: Causes of female migrants

Causes of migration	No. of migrants	Percentage (%)
Political	3	0.2
Economic	7	0.5
Marriage	1331	99.1
Others	2	0.1
Total	1343	100.00

Table 6: Results of Logistic regression for the female migrants

Variable	$\beta$	SE $\beta$	Relative risk
<b>Education:</b>			
Illiterate	-	-	1.0000
Primary	0.0349	0.1485	1.0355
Secondary	0.4374	0.1971	1.5486*
S.S.C / H.S.C	0.5386	0.2772	1.7136*
<b>Occupation:</b>			
Housewife	-	-	1.0000
Service	-1.2953	1.4108	0.2738
Business	0.2816	1.1201	1.3253
Labor	-0.8643	1.5191	0.4213
<b>Distance between place of origin &amp; place of destination:</b>			
0-5	-	-	1.0000
6-20	2.4222	0.3121	11.2704**
21-50	1.8401	0.4230	6.2970**
51-100	2.7243	0.7165	15.2456**
<b>Place of work:</b>			
At home	-	-	1.0000
Near house	1.5930	1.4624	4.9185*
Outside of the area	1.1340	1.4375	78.4827

\* Significant at 5 percent level and \*\* Significant at 1 percent level

migration and is generally dependent on the ability of bearing migration cost, the extent of risk that migrants take to be successful and the opportunities available in the migration destination place compared with short distance migration. It can be generally said from the findings of this study that a certain minimum level of income and risk are necessary for an individual before leaving home, and possibly, the income of people who migrated with full risk to countries other than Bangladesh, had reached that level.

Migration of adult females from their family increased to some extent the responsibilities. They suggest their husband some agricultural work, took important decisions in crop cultivation and other domestic works, and implemented those decisions efficiently. So the risk of migration was found 4.9185 times belonging to work near at home as compared with at home.

## CONCLUSION

**The following information is obtained from this study:**

- The maximum number of migrants, that is, 23.5% migrates in the age range 25-29.
- All of the migrants migrate for married purposes.
- Most of the migrants of rural area, that is, 35.4% are illiterate.
- The maximum number of migrants do not earn money and they are totally dependent on their husbands.
- It is found from logistic analysis that female migrants are involved 1.3253 and 24.1067 times higher in rural

businesses and others respectively than that of housewives at their near houses.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In this paper the following recommendations are suggested:**

- The government should invest resources for the improvement of the rural economy through different rural development projects and by creating job opportunities especially for females in the rural areas that would be helped to women empowerment.
- The government should emphasize rural industrialization that would be an instrument of employment and income generation for the rural landless poor.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The authors are heartily indebted and grateful to The Country Representative of UNFPA, Bangladesh for

providing financial support to run jointly the project entitled “Strengthening the Department of Population Science and Human Resource Development” and The Chairman, Dept. of Population Science and Human Resource Development, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh.

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