

**CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION IN DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES:**

**A CASE OF BANGLADESHI MIGRATION TO INDIA**

*Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Philosophy in Applied Economics of the  
Jawaharlal Nehru University*

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M.Phil Programme in Applied Economics

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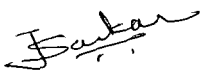
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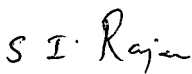
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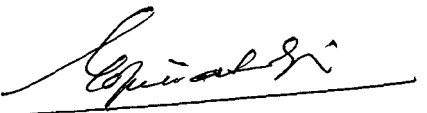
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Certified that this study is the bona fide work of Jyoti Parimal Sarkar, carried out under our supervision at the Centre for Development Studies.

  
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*Dedicated to My Parents*

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION  
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*Since the partition of Bengal in 1947, India has experienced a massive flow of Bangladeshi migrants. Similar geographical, socio-cultural, racial and linguistic linkages have actually induced the people from Bangladesh to move towards India, especially in the States bordering Bangladesh, such as, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura. About 30 per cent of the people in West Bengal are the people who have the origin in East Bengal (known as Bangal) and they are mainly concentrated in the ten bordering districts. Also, more than 15 million Bangladesh nationals are staying in India illegally. Though the movement of the population from Bangladesh to India is not unique as it has received refugees from other neighbouring countries, such as, Sri Lanka, China (Tibet region), Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan also; but in the recent past, the inflow from Bangladesh has received greater attention. This special attention is mainly because their inflow has become a one-way traffic and a continuous process. Besides, its intensity is varying with the changing of socio-economic, political or ecological conditions of Bangladesh. Hence, the present exercise is to look at problems of Bangladeshi migration not only from the political and social aspects but also from the economic aspects because it has created burden on the economic conditions in West Bengal. This exercise tries to identify the factors, such as riots, wars, religious oppression, etc. which have acted as push factors as well as pull factors, such as, govt. policy, ethnicity, kinship, etc. which have attracted migration from Bangladesh. Also an attempt is made to examine the impacts of Bangladeshi migration on the socio-economic and cultural conditions of West Bengal and the socio-political problems faced by the migrants. The role of the Government in the effort of their settlement of immigrants, and the prevailing political conditions and the kin-friendship linkage factors, which act as pull-factor agents for migration, are also examined. In details, the nature and the pattern of migration, the magnitude and the dimensions of migration have been examined in the light of the theories on international migration for this cross-border migration. The economic status of the migrants in their present place of residence (PPR) in comparison with that of their last place of residence (LPR) in Bangladesh (i.e. before migration) is analysed on the basis of data collected through field survey on sources of income and levels of income, wage levels, and discriminations, if any, in wage levels against immigrants. For this study primary data has been collected through a limited sample survey by canvassing an Interview*

*Schedule in four districts of West Bengal. The survey has covered 100 households scattered in four districts viz. Burdwan, Hooghly, Nadia and North 24-Parganas. A few case studies of the migrants have been also been carried out. It gives, in details, the main destination of the migrants, the activities they have undertaken in different phases of their lives and the process of entry into job market. Besides, an attempt has been made to find out why and how they have migrated, i.e. the en route process of migration has been discussed in details for these cases. Various hypotheses on migration like Social Network or Kin-Friendship Network, Economic Opportunities, Pull-Push factors; Cumulative Causation, etc. are verified on the basis of primary data. As most of the data collected are qualitative in nature, tabulations are the main statistical tools used for the analysis. However, in this case of cross-border migration "social network" theory has been proved to be an ideal one among all theories of migration. Partition, riots, war, famine and religious oppression are the main push factors for migration, while social network is the main determinant for pulling the Bangladeshi migrants into India and also in the settlement process at present place of residence (PPR).*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 International Migration

'Migration' is a form of geographic mobility involving a change of usual residence between clearly defined geographic units (Shryock, *et al.*, ed., 1976). The phenomenon of migration is experienced by the human race for ages. History has witnessed massive movements of people over great distances to hunt, fish, establish a livelihood, and to find a secure home. However, it became a cause of concern only since the beginning of the nineteenth century when the economic development processes, political alignments, socio-cultural aspirations and environmental conditions worked together to erect political and territorial borders around ethno-cultural communities for which global population flows became a hindrance. It is during this phase that the concept of nationality emerged to link all citizens to the State (Messina and Lahav, ed., 2006). There exist two types of migration-internal migration and international migration. Internal migration refers to movement of persons from one region to another region but within the same national (or State) boundary; whereas, international migration consist of movement (both emigration and immigration) of people across national borders.

Around 175 million persons currently reside in countries other than the countries of their birth, which comes to about 3 per cent of the world population (Messina and Lahav, ed., 2006; p.25). In the 1990s, the movements of people internationally intensified with the advent of the era of globalisation. The total number of refugees and 'other persons of concern', by a conservative estimate reached a figure of 274 million in 1995. Out of this number, refugees constitute 149 million; the number of returnee migrants is estimated to have been about 40 million and 'others of concern' including internally displaced persons were, 40 million. According to the continent-wise break-up of these migration figures, it is observed that Africa accounted for the greatest number with 112 million; next came Asia with 79 million; then followed Europe with 65 million. Latin America, North America and

Oceania contributed about 2 million, 9 million and 0.5 million, respectively (Samaddar, 1999; p. 33).

According to the data recently released by the United Nations Population Division, the USA is the country with the largest inflow of migrants, roughly 1.2 million persons a year. Surprisingly, the USA is followed by Afghanistan, which has a net average migration of about 4.3 lakh, more than a third of the US figure. Spain with an inflow almost twice as large as that of Germany comes next in the list. On the other hand, Mexico tops the list with the highest net outflow, followed by China and Pakistan. India is at a fair distance behind Pakistan and occupies the fourth position (Times of India, September 12, 2006). In 2000, India with its net migration being 6.3 million persons ranked sixth among the top ten countries in the world with largest international migrant population. India has much lower figure than Pakistan, which has barely 15-16 per cent of India's population; this apparent paradox could be explained by the influx of large numbers of persons into India from the neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bangladesh, thus significantly reducing its net migration figure. The stock of international migrants accounted for 71.4 per cent of the UAE's population in 2005. In Kuwait, migrants accounted for 62.1 per cent. The percentage is high in other Gulf countries also. However, the USA and Russia have the largest international stock of migrants having 12.9 per cent and 8.4 per cent of their populations, respectively. In general, international migration flows are found to be from poor to richer countries. In just five years from 1995 to 2000, the more developed regions of the world received nearly 12 million migrants from the less developed regions, at the rate of an estimated 2.3 million migrants per year (Messina and Lahav, ed., 2006; p.26).

According to the study of the Population Reference Bureau, most persons who cross national borders do not go far; most international migrants stay within the same geographic regions and migrate to neighbouring countries. One of the most prominent examples of such cross-border migration is the migration of the persons from Mexico across its northern border into the United States of America (USA). In certain instances, international migration also occurs over much longer distances: for example, from the Caribbean to countries such as Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, and, since the mid-1970s, from various countries in South and South-East Asia such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Thailand, Indonesia and South Korea to the oil-rich Middle East (Chant,

ed., 1992; p. 8). Since the 1960s migration flows to and within the less developed regions have declined, whereas those to the developed regions have increased. The increase in migration flows was more pronounced in North America, Western Europe and Australia, where it accelerated by 2.7 percentage points to 7.6 percentage points in 1990 from 4.9 percentage points in 1965 (Messina and Lahav, ed., 2006; p.17). Recently, the US Bureau of the Census also reported that the USA is home to 35 million immigrants accounting for nearly 12% of its population. On any given day, 11,000 babies are born and 3,000 immigrants arrive in the country, outnumbering the number of persons who die or emigrate. The largest proportion of immigrants comes from Latin America, from Mexico in particular. The share of Asia has also grown substantially – from 13% in the 1960s to 32% in the early 2000s (Times of India, October 17, 2006).

## **1.2 Migration in South Asia**

The volume of migration within the developing world that is from some developing countries to other developing countries has become increasingly significant among the patterns of Third World population mobility. Today's realities of South Asia remain laden with bitter memories of the past. There were 12 important types of flows of peoples in South Asia, in which process; violence was the chief characteristic of this process. These were: (i) the India-Pakistan refugee flows in 1947-48, involving nearly 15 million Hindus and Muslims; (ii) the exodus of Burmese Indians numbering about 1 million during 1948-65; (iii) the exodus of Sri Lankan Indians and Tamils to the tune of about 1 million since 1954 onwards; (iv) the flight of almost 10 million from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) to India during 1971 Indo-Pak War; (v) the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh numbering about 0.3 million; (vi) the flight of about 0.2 million Burmese Muslims to Bangladesh in 1978; (vii) the flight of about 0.1 million Chakmas from Bangladesh to India in 1981; (viii) the flight of nearly 3 million Afghans from Afghanistan to Pakistan during 1978-93; (ix) the flight of about 0.1 million Tibetans from 1958 to 1963; (x) the exodus of nearly 0.06 million Bhutanese of Nepali origin to Nepal in 1990-91; and the two controversial and unwanted population flows, (xi) from Bangladesh to Assam in India and (xii) the two-way flow between Nepal and India (Samaddar, 1999; p. 29). The study by Mahmood (1998) has shown that Bangladesh exports labour to over 59 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and North and South America.

The highest concentration of Bangladeshi migrants in 1994 was in Asian countries, which accounted for about 99 per cent of the total Bangladeshi emigrant flow. Within Asia, three broad sub-regions were identified — the Middle East, South and South-East Asia, and Far and Far-East Asia. Until 1990, the Middle East which includes Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE which together accounted for about 98 per cent of the Asia total. Thus, it is seen that the mobility of the people from the very poor nations in South Asia, such as Bangladesh, has intensified due to urge for better livelihood.

During the years immediately following the partition of India in 1947, India experienced a massive flow of migrants from Pakistan (East as well as West). The erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was formed by apportioning the Bengal Province of British India. But the movement of the population from Bangladesh to India is not unique, as India has been receiving migrants from other countries also. The Census of India 1981 Report on migration (D-Series) shows that about 79 lakh persons who live in India were born in other Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Bhutan and Myanmar, out of which more than 50 per cent (about 42 lakh) were from Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan (27 lakh) and Sri Lanka (2 lakh). At the end of 2001, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that nearly 345,000 refugees are living in India from the neighbouring countries of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China (Tibet region), Myanmar, Bhutan and Afghanistan (UNHCR, 2002). Thus, throughout South Asia, questions of 'illegal immigration' and 'national security' have acquired politically explosive dimensions in recent years.

### **1.3 Cross-Border Migration from Bangladesh to India**

The numbers of illegal migrants into West Bengal have created an alarming situation in India. This problem of illegal immigration has attracted serious political attention in West Bengal in the recent years, especially, during the time of election to the State Assembly held in 2006. The migrants were the *de facto* force in the decision-making of more than fifty per cent of the total 294 constituencies of West Bengal Assembly. Thus, the inflow of Bangladeshis into West Bengal assumed the dimensions of a burning issue during the election time. The 1981 Census of India showed that a total of 501,093 persons, whose last

residence had been Bangladesh, were residing in West Bengal with durations as long as nine years. Of these, 28,431 persons reported the duration of residence in the places of enumeration as less than one year, 221,974 reported the duration to be between 1-4 years; and the total number of persons who reported the duration to be 5-9 years was 250,688. In other words, even by a conservative estimate, about 0.5 million Bangladeshis had come to reside in West Bengal between 1971 and 1981. The same Census also indicated that another 0.8 million persons from Bangladesh had taken up shelter in West Bengal between 10 to 19 years ago. The Districts, which figured prominently as places of residence for the migrants, were Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, West Dinajpur, Nadia, the 24 Parganas, Calcutta (Kolkata) and Burdwan. According to official figures, nearly 4,50,000 illegal immigrants from Bangladesh had been apprehended and sent back by the Border Security Force (BSF), the State Police and the Mobile Task Force (MTF) during this period (Samaddar, 1999; p. 17).

The 1981 Census revealed that in the eight border districts of West Bengal, the population had grown by over 30 per cent between 1971 and 1981, whereas in the remaining districts, the reported growth rates were below 20 per cent. This higher growth rate was also observed during the next decade of the eighties (1981-1991). The district of Nadia was in the lead with 33.3 per cent increase followed by 24 Parganas (30.9 per cent), Malda (29.6 per cent) and Murshidabad (28.0 per cent). In southern border districts of West Bengal, the growth rate was even higher in the earlier decades of the fifties and the sixties. For the 24 Parganas, the rate was 40.3 per cent during 1951-61 and 33.4 per cent during 1961-71. Similarly, for Nadia the corresponding rates were 49.8 per cent and 29.9 per cent respectively. Murshidabad experienced 33.5 per cent increase during 1951-61 and 25.5 per cent during 1961-71, while Malda experienced a rate of 30.3 per cent and 32.0 per cent respectively during these two decades.

The modulus of cross-border migration between Bangladesh and India mainly takes place through informal channels. Two of the most common services required to cross the border relate to 'border crossing' and 'travelling between places of origin and destination'. Since there are border security forces on both sides of the border, their support is vital for cross-border migration. Normally, security forces do not render support at the individual level, but 'border crossing' works are aimed and abetted through agents or middlemen



(*Dalals*) who act as go-between the border security forces on both sides and arrange cross-border movement. The services of a middleman involve costs, which are shared by the three parties involved in this process: middleman and the border security forces on both sides.

As the composition of the border districts are changing fast, cross border migration has assumed political overtones due to creation of vote bank, as alleged by opposite parties who are not in favour of the presence of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. The anti-foreigner movement in Assam and also in some parts of North-East India, with consequent violence and massacres have cast a shadow over other parts of India. Unwittingly, through the controversy, the issue of refugees and migrants have led to controversies on the most vital question of immigrants' 'rights' to stay in India. In order to stop illegal migration, the Government of India thought about fencing of the entire Indo-Bangladesh border along the land boundaries of Bangladesh and not to depend on the Border Security Forces alone. Subsequently, the Government of India started the fencing work, though it was not always carried out in the right earnest. Sometimes, the Government of Bangladesh protested against fencing. Once the former President of Bangladesh, H.M. Ershad said forcefully, 'I do not accept this theory of infiltration. There is no reason either to have a wall or fencing'.

#### **1.4 Studies on Bangladeshi Migrants**

Not many studies have been carried out in India about the nature, dimensions and the magnitudes of Bangladeshi migrants living in India, even though it figures prominently during the times of communal violence, political disturbances (e.g. Assam movement) and election campaigns. A few notable studies, however, do exist on this issue, which are mainly done by the demographers as well as by social and political scientists/thinkers. In this section, some of these studies have been reviewed and their main observations/findings are mentioned below.

Professor Ranabir Samaddar in his book on 'The Marginal Nation' analyses the issues relating to 'Trans-border migration' from Bangladesh to West Bengal. He has raised questions on 'illegal migration' and 'national security' within a broad perspective which accommodates the historical, cultural and geographic dimensions along with the economic and demographic aspects of the phenomenon. He demystifies the constructs of 'borders'

and 'national territory' by bringing to the fore the viewpoints of the migrants themselves. He has questioned the practical value of these terms by showing how the flow of people across the Indo-Bangladesh border is prompted by historical and social affinities, geographical contiguity, and economic imperatives. Pitted against the natural urge for survival, 'nation' and 'border' are easily marginalized in the minds of the people who then find 'illegal' ways to tackle these man-made barriers obstacle in the path of their well-being. The net result is that the very future of transplanted concepts such as 'nation-state', 'national security' and 'national borders' has fallen in doubt in the present-day South Asia. Based on data, reports and travels along the Indo-Bangladesh borders and to the migrants and their hamlets, Professor Samaddar has analysed the problem of trans-border migration. According to him, depending on class, gender, time of departure and time of return, the concept of nation undergoes changes in meaning- *Desb* (nation) is the 'home'; *desb* is the village/ the district/ the country and often the family; so location of nationhood varies on both sides of the border.

The story of the massive exodus of people from Bangladesh and the process of their resettlement of these migrants in West Bengal in the late 1940s and the 1950s was carefully examined by Prafulla Chakrabarti (1990) in his 'Marginal Men'. But it remains unclear how the partition of India and the consequent population movements that followed were naturalised (thus also 'nationalised'). In spite of the trauma so vividly portrayed by Prafulla Chakrabarti, the immigrants were naturalised in various districts of West Bengal. He has pointed out one reason, that is, the predominantly urban milieu of the phenomenon. In this milieu, the exodus and resettlement both were cataclysmic events; the process of naturalisation in larger context escapes the eyes of the authorities. Peasant migration from Bangladesh to Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Dinajpur, 24 Parganas and Nadia in the 1940s and 1950s retained the peasant nature of earlier population movement. The study of Nanda in 2006 gives us an overview of the economic aspects, which leads to the movement of Bangladeshi to West Bengal.

Raisal Awal Mahmood in his study on "Bangladeshi Clandestine Foreign Worker" in 1998 aims at to understand the process through which illegal migration from Bangladesh to South Asian countries begins and is perpetuated. His study describes in details the main destination of these migrants, the activities they generally undertake, their type, the process

of entry into the job market, the mode of transport used and all other factors, which determines the supply side of the illegal migrants. He also discussed the rationale behind employing such people in the receiving country, which helped to sustain the process.

Pranati Datta in her article “Illegal Bangladesh Migration to West Bengal” (2004) has also spoken about illegal Bangladeshi migration but her study is confined to the State of West Bengal in India. She looked at the effects of the migration and the ways and means to check it. She extensively discussed factors like the Farakka Barrage, the Enemy/ Vested Property Rights, which was enacted in East Pakistan during 1965 and various other political and religious issues, which led to the inflow of these illegal migrants into West Bengal. She has pointed out that the political patronage of West Bengal acts as the main pull factor for these migrants.

The article “Population Movement from Bangladesh to India: What Do the Census Data of 1981 and 1991 Reveal?” (2006) by Aswini Kumar Nanda has also focussed on the major determinants of the out-migration from Bangladesh to India. He has made a detailed study of the ecological and economic factors, which were missing in the writings of Pranati Datta. However, the main attempt of this article was to measure the flow at the state level, to pattern the locational spread of Bangladeshi immigrants in India, to identify the specific geographic regions of concentration in terms of sex composition and rural and urban destination. His study was based on the data provided by the Censuses of India 1981 and 1991. The likelihood of undercount being substantial, the paper pleads for generation of alternative data sources through specialised surveys and argues in favour of strong regional ties in border management and statistical up-gradation among SAARC nations, particularly India.

Sangeeta Thapliyal in her article “Bangladeshi Migrants in India: A Cause of Concern” (2000) has also examined the various determinants of the inflow of the Bangladeshi migrants into India. But she has stressed more on the political problems and factors, which have led to the inflow. She has further highlighted the problems, which arose in the North-Eastern States of India as a consequence of immigration of Bangladeshi migrants.

Sanjoy Hazarika has also discussed the topic but his study was limited to the states in the northeast of Bangladesh. In one of his writings in “Rites of Passage” (2000), he identified land hunger, population pressure and environmental factors in Bangladesh as the primary push factors responsible for the efflux of people, apart from the attraction of greater economic security and linguistic and the pressure of ethnic diaspora in India. He has made a distinction between environmental and political refugees and provided valuable information about the paths of migration across *chars* (river islands), the numbers of entrants, and their destinations in India and beyond based on the extensive fieldwork conducted in Assam and Bangladesh, and data culled from decennial censuses, other statistical records, and interviews with knowledgeable persons in area. He has criticised the vision and the will of the Governments in both the countries and argued against the rights of citizenship given to Bangladeshi migrants, an action which has caused instability in the North-Eastern region of India as a whole.

Bimal Pramanik has looked into the various aspects of Eastern and North-Eastern region of India and Bangladesh, particularly, demographic changes due to infiltration/migration from Bangladesh into India and its impact on this sub-region. In his Book “Endangered Demography” (2005), he has shown that there has been a decline in Hindu population and an extra-ordinary upswing in Muslim population in all the districts of West Bengal. This has led to increase in *Madrassa* education and decrease in social security in West Bengal resulting in increase in dacoity, robbery, burglary, rioting, and theft.

## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

Many studies have focused on the political and social aspects in order to explain the conditions of this cross-border migration. But in the present study, along with the political and social aspects, the economic aspect also is taken into consideration because of the probable livelihood of the economic conditions in West Bengal acting as a push factor attracting migration of Bangladesh. The main objective of the study is to look into the nature, the magnitude and the dimensions of migration and to examine, in depth, the factors underlying this process. Besides, an attempt has also been made to assess the impacts of Bangladeshi migration on the socio-economic and cultural conditions of West Bengal. The

economic status of the migrants in the present place of their residence (PPR) in comparison with those of their last place of residence (LPR) in Bangladesh (i.e. before migration) is analysed on the basis of data on sources and levels of income, wage levels, and discriminations, if any, in wage levels against immigrants. The role of the Government in the effort of their settlement of immigrants, and the prevailing political conditions and the kin-friendship linkage factors, which act as pull-factor agents for migration, are also examined. Thus, the main objectives of the present study are:

1. To analyse the factors underlying the cross-border population movements from Bangladesh to West Bengal in India;
2. To determine the dimensions and the characteristics - socio-economic, political and cultural - of the immigrants into West Bengal;
3. To ascertain the problems faced by the immigrants in their efforts in settling down in West Bengal;
4. To determine their standard of living, main professions, and allegiance to India; and
5. To ascertain the role of the Government in settling down the immigrants in India.

In order to pursue the objectives, the following hypotheses are verified:

1. The partition of India in 1947 on religious ground is the main causative factor for cross-border migration from Bangladesh to India, particularly to West Bengal;
2. 'Kin and friend relationship' actually propels the migration and helps migrants in the choice of their places of settlement;
3. Feeling of insecurity of the minority community in Bangladesh due to rise of religious fundamentalism and frequent environmental/economic disasters have acted as major push factors for massive migrations in the wake of Partition;
4. Political support, ethnic affinity and sympathy of the government of West Bengal towards immigrants have encouraged the continuance of migration;
5. The fellow-feeling among the migrant community has helped the migrants to acquire citizenship rights through the acquisition of permanent documents

like ration card, voter's identity card, *patta* of the land, etc. and ultimately obtain naturalisation;

6. The Hindu immigrants consider India as their saviour as well as their ultimate asylum for settlement and consider India as their motherland; and
7. Economic opportunity has been the time mover of migration from Bangladesh.

## 1.6 Chapter Scheme

Keeping in view the objectives and the hypotheses, this report is organised into six Chapters. This Introductory Chapter 1 is followed by Chapter 2 which deals with the background of the problem of migration that takes place continuously from Bangladesh to India. The historical events and socio-political factors that triggered migration are examined in this Chapter. The analytical framework and the methodological issues involved are discussed in Chapter 3. It also gives a brief description of the secondary data sources used in this study. A survey was conducted for getting primary data on migrants to supplement information culled from secondary sources. The methods followed for collection of primary data are also discussed. Chapter 4 is completely devoted to the empirical analysis based on secondary data and primary data collected by canvassing Interview Schedule among the migrants. The secondary data, mainly from Census of India, is analysed in the first section of Chapter 4. The subsequent section of this Chapter contains an analysis of the data obtained from the field enquiry conducted in four districts of West Bengal. Simultaneously, the validity of the proposed hypotheses has been also verified on the basis of empirical evidence. Further, a few case studies of the migrants have been carried out in Chapter 5. It gives, in details, the main destination of the migrants, the activities they have undertaken in different phases of their lives and the process of entry into job market. Besides, an attempt has been made to find out — why and how they have migrated, i.e. the *en route* process of migration has been discussed in details for these cases. The main conclusions of the study and their implications for policy formulations are presented in the last Chapter 6.

# Chapter 2

## Background of Cross-Border Migrants: Bangladesh to India

### 2.1 Introduction

While leaving India, the British tactfully partitioned the country on communal lines. The victims of the partition were the people mainly of Bengal and the Punjab provinces of the British India. West Bengal, which was a part of then greater Bengal province, had to bear the pangs of partition and continued to suffer from that trauma. The inflow of migrants from her half-brother East Bengal (known as Bangladeshi in India) has become a continuous process and varying in its intensity with changes in the socio-economic, political and ecological conditions of Bangladesh over times.

The argument of neoclassical political economy based on its central arguments of “push” and “pull” factors, which suggests gainful movement of the people from areas of low productivity to areas of high productivity does not hold water in this case. It fails totally to explain the phenomenon of cross-border migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. The typical nature of this migration makes it a special case of migration. It is a very complex phenomenon and it defies the conventional explanation of pursuit for improvement in the living standard as its goal. In this migration, consideration of life security, cultural identity, ethnic network and other subtle forces are also at work. A number of reasons defying the conventional wisdom as reasons for migration necessitate a discussion on the causes of this migration. In the following sections, an attempt is made to examine the various causes of cross-border migration from Bangladesh to India, particularly to West Bengal.

### 2.2 Birth of the Problem: Partition of India in 1947

Decolonisation of South Asia led to massive migrations of minorities from newly born nations to other nations. The newly-created national borders came into existence following the creation of nation-states based on religion and territory. The independence

granted to India through the partitioning of British India into India and Pakistan on the basis of religion resulted in fratricide and bloodshed in the two mighty provinces of Punjab and Bengal. The consequence of this bloodshed was the massive movement of people between the two halves created out of these provinces. Thus, the migration following partition put the seal of permanence of religious intolerance on the reality of post-coloniality.

It is natural that migrants would prefer to settle themselves in the bordering areas until they find suitable alternatives. When the violence or trauma happens to be the main cause for migration, the border becomes the first station of safety, which offers them also security of the life. Immediately after partition, therefore, there were massive inflows of people from East Bengal (Bangladesh) to the bordering districts of West Bengal. West Bengal has nineteen districts, out of which ten are border districts along Bangladesh, covering a total international border of 4096 kms. long (Nanda, 2006). These districts are: Cooch Behar (561 km), Jalpaiguri (157 km), Darjeeling (27 km), North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur (combined 538 km), Malda (173 km), Murshidabad (125 km), Nadia (263 km), North 24 Parganas (280 km) and the South 24 Parganas (63 km).

As Pakistan was created on theological grounds and Islam was declared its State religion, Hindus felt unsafe to live there due to mounting religious intolerance. Though the Govt. of Pakistan declared that the minorities (both Hindus and Sikhs) could live happily in Pakistan, but in reality, the Islamic fundamentalists forced the minorities to leave Pakistan. The bloodshed in Punjab and the Sindh provinces of West Pakistan drove out almost the entire minority communities from Pakistan. Nearly 30 lakh persons were killed and several thousands were injured in the Western Front, which was the largest genocide in history of mankind, and that too happened within a short period of time. The trauma in the Western Front also affected the Eastern Front. The genocide in West Pakistan created a fear psychology of annihilation among the Hindus in East Pakistan. In the eastern front, East Bengal (East Pakistan) received 0.7 million Muslims, mainly from Bihar and West Bengal, while over 2.5 million Hindus left for India (Turner, ed., 2006). This psychology threw into oblivion the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact of 1950 which emphasised the duty of both the governments to protect the persons who moved between the two countries as a result of Partition (Samaddar, 1999; p.70).



Though Hindus were a minority in East Pakistan, they were better off in wealth and education. The Hindus controlled about 80 per cent of the total cultivable land and business establishments of East Pakistan. The Muslims thought, in general, that if the Hindus could be driven out of Pakistan, then they would become better off by capturing the wealth of the Hindus who left. Consequently, riots broke out in commercial areas like Narayanganj (Dhaka), Chandpur (Comilla), and Mulardi (Barisal) in different phases. Besides, in different phases, most of the zamindars, jotdars, businessmen and politicians belonging to the Hindu community were forced to leave Pakistan by the selfish and wily Muslim fundamentalists.

The rich and the middle class immigrants settled down mainly in the suburbs of Calcutta (Kolkata) city and engaged themselves in trading and other service sector occupations. But there were also poor among the immigrants for whom the government provided temporary shelter in different refugee camps at the initial stages. Some of them were later settled in various government camps of West Bengal like Ranaghat Kooper Camp, Ranaghat Mahila Camp and Bedi Bhawan (Gayeshpur) in Nadia district. Some migrants were also offered settlements outside West Bengal like Dandakaranya in Orissa, Mana Camp in Madhya Pradesh and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Some elite groups were given settlement in the EPDP Colony (Chittaranjan Park) in New Delhi. But the major sections of the immigrant population did not seek any help from the Government, but settled themselves on their own in the different districts of West Bengal depending on their occupational choices and opportunities available for survival. The Indian Government, under the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955, later recognised all these illegal migrants as legal. This Act provides that any person of Indian origin who stays for a minimum period of six months in India is eligible for registration and that if a person stays for five years continuously in India; he/she becomes an Indian citizen through naturalization. Thus, most of the immigrants have become Indian citizen under this Act.

### **2.3 Spurts to the Problem: The War of Independence of Bangladesh, 1971**

Violence has blurred the distinction between the various phases of migration and its horrific memory has continued to haunt the people. Though the two short conventional wars between India and Pakistan (1948 and 1965) did not produce a sizeable refugee flow, but

the outbreak of the third war (1971) led an enormous dimensions of refugee flow. The Indo-Pak War of 1971 is also known as the War of Independence of Bangladesh. During the 1971 War, about one crore people were driven out from East Pakistan or they fled to India to escape the bloody repression and took shelter in India as refugees (Turner, ed., 2006). This was again the single largest migration or displacement of human beings in history and the same dimension of people displacement did not occur even during the First and the Second World Wars. According to the records of UNHCR, about 9.8 million persons moved to India as refugees, when they were uprooted by military operations, internal conflicts and gross violation of human rights during the 1971 War. The majority of them were Hindus, Muslims having formed only 25 to 30 per cent (Shah, 2003).

After the 1971 War was over and Bangladesh was born, the Hindus felt that the new nation would be an abode of peace for them to stay on. Therefore, many war victims (specially Hindus) who had fled their homes returned to Bangladesh. But a sizeable undocumented section stayed back and mingled with the mainstream Indian life (Roy, 2003). The Bangladesh Government, under its Founding father “Sheikh Mujibur Rahman”, declared Bangladesh as a secular state like India. It was also believed then that after independence and the emergence of Bangladesh from erstwhile East Pakistan, the inflow of migrants to India would stop. But, in reality, the flow did not stop at all. The 1981 census of India showed that a total of 501,093 persons, who had their last residence in Bangladesh were residing in West Bengal with the duration of residence in place of enumeration going back to nine years. In other words, even by a conservative estimate, about 500,000 Bangladeshis had come to reside in West Bengal between 1971 and 1981 (Samaddar, 1999; pp. 17). Again, the same Census reported that 4,170,524 persons had their place of Birth in Bangladesh.

## **2.4 Deadly Famine in 1974-75**

Apart from the political problems, environmental factors like water management, cyclones and floods also left thousands homeless as a result of which migration flows took place to different destinations in South Asia. In Bangladesh, as a consequent on the floods of during 1973 to 1975, out-migration of its citizens increased manifold. The floods led to depletion of natural resources and resulted in crop failures, which ultimately led to deadly

and devastating famine conditions. About 30 lakhs of persons died during this famine. Thousands of persons arrived in West Bengal during 1974-75 when Bangladesh was struck by this deadly famine.

Thus in 1974-75, the main cause of migration was scarcity of basic necessities and absence of social security. The prices of basic necessary goods like rice, wheat, kerosene, salt, and milk sky-rocketed as a result of which common people could not afford to buy these goods. Black marketing and hoarding became the order of the day. Law and order deteriorated and political turmoil flared up. The efforts of Bangladesh under Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to control the situation ended without much success. The famine in 1974 and disorder led to Mujibur assuming the presidency with dictatorial powers (Turner, 2006). Thousands of people migrated to India among whom the majority belonged to the poorest classes including landless labourers, small peasants, cobblers, handloom weavers, scavengers and fishermen, who were the worst affected (Thapliyal, 2000). The military of Bangladesh took the opportunity to stage a coup which culminated in the killing of their Founding Father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

## **2.5 Death of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975**

After the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975, the migration of Hindus to India intensified due to rise of Islamic Fundamentalism. The military ruler who came to power was backed by the Islamic Fundamentalists and Pakistani diehard supporters, who were against the liberation of Bangladesh. Naturally, they were happy with the killing of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the bloody coup. Most of the members of his family including three sons, wife, brother, and daughters-in-laws were also killed along with him. The Government of Khondakar Muztak Ahmed was installed with the backing of the military ruler. Subsequently, another group of four prominent leaders of the ruling Awami League party including Tazuddin Ahmed (Prime Minister during Liberation period), were brutally murdered in the Dhaka Central Jail. But after sometime, sympathy for these murdered persons grew among the people and the Khondakar Government was ousted from power in a failed coup, within a period of three months. Later, Zia-ur-Rahman became the martial-law administrator and subsequently the President of Bangladesh. Unfortunately, he was also

killed in another failed coup in 1981 (Turner, ed., 2006). Hussain Mohammad Ershad became martial-law-administrator in 1982 and president in 1983, and won presidential election in 1986 which was boycotted by oppositions. Thus the political disturbances and instability of the Governments along with the deteriorating economic conditions pushed the people, specially the Hindus, off from the country, towards India. From 1975 to 1985, an estimated 44 lakh of 'illegal immigrants' crossed into India from Bangladesh and stayed on. Around 30,000 persons were apprehended and returned to Bangladesh in a single year, in 1984 (The Statesman, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1985, quoted in Samaddar, 1999; pp. 74). During the decade 1971 to 1981, an estimated 1.8 million Hindus migrated from Bangladesh to India (Thapliyal, 2000).

## **2.6 Economic Condition of Bangladesh**

The explosively high rates of population growth shook the economy of Bangladesh to its roots during the 1970s and mid-1980s. Being an agrarian economy, land is the majority source of livelihood in this country. The fate of the majority of its population is linked to the carrying capacity of its arable land and its produce, which suffered losses due to natural calamities and poor land management. Land reforms (of 1983) and the implementation of land-ceiling laws did little to improve the accessibility of the masses to land in Bangladesh, where small landholdings and sharecropping set serious constraints to the economic viability of the peasants (Osmani, 1999, p.307). These events marked a watershed in the history of underdevelopment of Bangladesh, (Kabeer, 2000) and led to worsening of the problem of landlessness, decline in the average size of landholdings, and increase in poverty.

Bangladesh is 'overpopulated' with 111.4 million people (2001 Census) living in an area of 147,570 sq. kms., with a density of population of 876 persons per sq. km. as against only 324 persons per sq. km. in India (Turner, ed., 2006). The per capita GDP (PPP) of Bangladesh in 2002 was US \$1,700 as against \$2,670 in India. In the past, the Bangladesh economy grew at a very low rate; but the present growth rates appear to be healthier. Bangladesh sustained an average rate of growth of 2.3 per cent in per capita terms during 1972-2004. However, the growth path shows a significant upturn from a low of 1.3 per cent from the 1970s to 3.7 per cent in the 2001-04. The decline in poverty, which is regarded as

the most important indicator of development, has been very haphazard. There was substantial deterioration in the poverty situation during the 1970s, followed by some rapid progress during 1978-86. Poverty levels again worsened during 1986-92. In 2002, Bangladesh is ranked 36<sup>th</sup> in World Poverty Ranking with 36.9 per cent living below the international US\$1 a day poverty line (Turner, ed., 2006). When this is compared with the corresponding performance of India during the period, the former, it pales in comparison. In India, poverty declined from 36 per cent in 1993-94 to 26 per cent in the early 2000s. Dismal economic conditions in Bangladesh accelerated the outflow of migrants who illegally entered India in search of better conditions of livelihood (Nanda, 2006). Most of the immigrants work in India as farm labourers, artisans, unskilled workers, domestic servants, rickshaw pullers, shop workers, hotel and restaurant staff, etc. (Mahmood, 1998; Thapliyal, 2000).

Uncertain changes in the rural labour market, including labour contracts, commercialisation of agriculture, wage labour, system in the place of traditional practice of personalised hiring, along with long-term decline in the real wage rate, added to the strains of living in rural areas of Bangladesh. According to Kabeer (2000), the combined effects of these changes in the rural economy of Bangladesh had many consequences; firstly the out-migration from more densely populated rural areas to less dense areas, and then out-migration to far-off urban locations inside the country. Poor industrialisation, low levels of urbanisation, and high levels of illiteracy seem to have created a situation congenial for driving people away from own settlements to locations elsewhere inside the country, or beyond the national boundaries in search of opportunities for sustenance and survival. Several studies have recognised the vitality of international migration in maintaining the economy of Bangladesh (Skeldon, 2000). While characterising emigration of the poor from Bangladesh, there is a need to examine whether migration constitutes flight for survival or a journey in search of opportunities for economic betterment, a distinction eloquently drawn by Skeldon (2000).

## **2.7 Other Push Factors: Environmental and Political**

The phenomenon of poor people getting affected first by the environmental degradation is a case argued out by environmental economists for long. Though the

migration of Bangladeshi nationals has been at its peak in some of the periods and slackened during other periods, as mentioned earlier, but the process has been continuous since it had its roots in some environmental and political factors also.

### **2.7.1 Impact of Farraka Barrage**

The Farraka Barrage had caused severe environmental destruction in Bangladesh due to water diversion and had a negative impact on agriculture, navigation, fisheries, forestry, and salinity of water in the South-Western part of Bangladesh (particularly the Kulna area). As there are only low levels and amount of water available in the rivers of Bangladesh, siltration grew fast in its river beds with decrease in the water flow in the rivers. This situation also led to frequent floods as rivers are able to accommodate only much less amounts of water now than earlier. So, in the rainy season the rivers overflow their banks causing floods and destroying crops, cattle and houses. The sources of livelihood in Bangladesh which were thus adversely affected constituted therefore one of the strong pressure factors for migration (Saika, 2003; Datta, 2004).

### **2.7.2 Other Political Problems**

Though the majority of the ten million refugees of the 1971 war (of whom about 85 per cent were Hindus) returned to Bangladesh in 1972, the process of Islamisation which intensified during the regimes of Zia-ur-Rahman and H.M. Ershad renewed the inflow of Bangladeshi minorities in India. Again, the violence which gripped Bangladesh in the wake of the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992 and the subsequent large-scale destruction of places of worship and properties of Hindus, forced many Hindus of Bangladesh to seek sanctuary in India.

Allegations of intimidation of Hindu voters and revenge attacks following elections were reported during the past two general elections in Bangladesh (in 1991 and 1996). These incidents also led to fresh streams of outflow of Hindus from Bangladesh. However, between 1996 and 2001, the period of Sheikh Hasina government, the outflows of people abated. The attack on the Twin-Towers in USA and USA-led occupation of Afghanistan and

Iraq, actually raised Islamic fundamentalism to new heights throughout the Islamic world, and also in Bangladesh. Besides, the Khaleda Zia government, which depends on the support of fundamentalist Islamic parties, failed to check the rising trend of Islamic fundamentalism. Hindus were the main victims of this rising fundamentalism and its atrocities. Thus, the flow of migration revived since 2002, more due to political reasons than any other insecurity to life and property for the minority community, namely Hindus.

## **2.8 Pull Factors**

Besides the above mentioned push factors motivating people to cross border, there are some pull factors operating as well. Two of the prominent pull factors are explained below.

### **2.8.1 Political Patronage**

Political circles in West Bengal saw this human misery as a great chance to build up a vote bank. Ranabir Samaddar, who has done intensive work on Bangladeshi migration, referred in one of his studies, “Cruelty of Inside/ Outside” the refugees as special animals, as distinct from aliens. The different parties in West Bengal support the causes of these migrants and helped them in settling down in various localities. This is one of the reasons why the inflow of migrants continues unabated. There is an estimated 15 million Bangladeshis living in India illegally according to Nath, 2003. The migrants have crossed over the border without proper visa or passport and many of them having even managed to enter India with fake passports, which can be obtained for mere Taka 200 (Thapliyal, 2000).

### **2.8.2 Social Network**

Migration takes place due to social network built over time. A set of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination through ties of kinship and friendship. In cases of short-distance and cross-border migration, the border of job search was greatly eased by earlier migrants. Thus, the social network of migrants, friends and relatives plays a crucial role in this respect, which is also the only source of job information for new arrivals (Mahmood, 1998). The social network

system passes the information to the prospective migrants about job markets as well as places of settlement, the political situation of the country and other relevant matters. After migration, the network together with the political patronage helps the migrants to acquire ration cards, voter identity cards, and other valid documents as a proof of Indian citizenship. Thus, this system leads to the continuous inflow of migrants in India due to expansion of network, which reduces the cost and risks of movement.

## 2.9 Conclusions

The foregoing discussion on the background of Bangladeshi migration into India has given a preliminary idea about the trends and volumes of migrants, and the factors that are responsible for migration. In this chapter, we have presented a profile of the characteristics of this immigrant population reside in West Bengal. It is not possible, for this researcher; however, to conduct a comprehensive survey on the whole chain of events and go through the entire literature on the subject. Still the major events which have created waves in the flow of migration from Bangladesh to India have been discussed in a nut shell. In the ensuing chapter, analytical framework and the methodology used for analysis are discussed in some detail.

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## Chapter 3

### Analytical Framework and Methodology Adopted

#### 3.1 Introduction

The flow of population across national borders has been a topic of serious discussion among social scientists for a long period. A few sociologists and anthropologists as well as economists have studied the problem of migration in the lights of demographic transition, ethnicity, racism and globalisation, and political characteristics of host countries. Even when the implications of trans-border flows became clear, in terms of territoriality, ethnicity, racism and globalisation, the subject did not use to be linked with the theory of the nation, nationality or nationalism. It is the nation which defines who its citizens are. The nation also fixes the limits to which participation can stretch. All persons who are willing to be participants to nationhood cannot become its citizens. Only those with whom the nation has the obligation to transactional relationship, both of nation and citizenship, become eligible categories. Citizenship becomes the passport to security within the national boundaries. Migrants demand citizenship to become able to transact, to lead, and to participate peacefully in the democratic process and in the building up of their new nation. Otherwise, the feeling of national insecurity in their new abode is exacerbated in them. Illegal migrants in any nation, therefore, have their own notion of 'rights': they negotiate for citizenship. They join a political party, which they think, could help them in the solution of the issue. They hope to escape their misery with the magic wand of citizenship.

According to the study by the Population Reference Bureau, most people who cross national borders do not go far; most international migrants stay within the same geographic region while migrating to neighbouring countries. One of the most prominent examples of such cross-border migration is the migration of the people from Mexico across its northern border into the United States. This chapter gives a brief account of the problem of migration in its varied aspects from a theoretical point of view. Various theories developed for internal migration as well as for international migration have been briefly reviewed in the next

section. Then the Chapter presents an analytical frame for this study in the light of the objectives set and the proposed hypotheses as mentioned in Chapter 1.

## **3.2 Theoretical Frame**

There have been many theories on migration. Many of them are developed in the context of internal migration, that is, migration within the same country. Some of them are also developed for international or cross-border migration. A few important theories on internal migration as well as international migration are being discussed here at first to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of cross-border migration.

### **3.2.1 Theories on Internal Migration**

The laws of migration first proposed by Ravenstein for giving theoretical explanations to rural-urban migration go back to the 1880s (Ravenstein, 1885, 1889). According to Ravenstein, migrants move from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity. The choice of destination is regulated by distance, migrants from rural areas often showing a tendency to move first towards nearby towns, and then towards large cities. He also pointed out that urban residents are less migratory in nature than their rural counterparts. Ravenstein's basic laws have since been discussed, systematized, and expanded by a number of researchers, but the economic motives of the decision-making to migrate and the negative influence of distance, form some of the important features suggested by him, which have not been validated.

Building on Ravenstein's laws of migration, Lee developed 'a general schema into which a variety of spatial movements can be placed' (Lee, 1966). He divided forces exerting influence on migrant's perception into 'pluses' and 'minuses'. The former pull individuals towards them and the latter tend to repel them. These forces are associated with the areas of origin and the areas of destination which are, in their own way, governed by personal factors 'which affect individual thresholds and facilitate or retard migration'. Lee's theory is reflected in a broad range of studies, particularly those dealing with migrant selectivity and push-pull factors.

The process of rural-urban labour transfer was the one developed by Lewis (1954), and later extended by Ranis and Fei (1961) firstly in a comprehensive model of development. This model considered migration as an equilibrating mechanism, which, through transfer of labour from the labour-surplus sector to the labour-deficit sector, brought about equality between the two sectors. The model is based on the concept of a dual economy comprising a subsistence agricultural sector characterized by unemployment and underemployment, and a modern industrial sector characterized by full employment, where “capitalists” reinvest their profits in full. In the modern sector, wages are maintained at levels much higher than the average agricultural wage. Since profits are fully reinvested in the industrial sector, the demand for labour from the subsistence sector keeps on growing. This process continues as long as the reserve army of disguised unemployed exists in the rural subsistence sector. Despite the simplicity of Lewis’ model, several observers have found it unsatisfactory from the viewpoint of analyzing the causes and the consequences of migration in developing countries (Dasgupta,1979). In the first place, migration is not induced solely by unemployment and underemployment in the rural areas; although there is no doubt that this is an important factor in the decision-making to migrate.

In 1962, Sajaastad presented a human investment theory of migration, which treated the decision to migrate as an investment decision involving costs and returns distributed over time (Sajaastad, 1962). The returns are divided into money and non-money components. Non-money returns include changes in “psychic benefits” as a result of locational preferences. Similarly, costs too include both money and non-money components such as costs of transport, and disposal of movable and immovable property necessitated by shift of residence. A model that takes care of cost-benefits explicitly is provided by Todaro. Todaro (1976) suggests that the decision to migrate includes perception by the potential migrant of an “expected” stream of income that is a function of both the prevailing urban wage structure and a subjective assessment of the probability of obtaining employment in the urban modern sector. The important features of this model which are relevant to the present study are:

(a) Migration is stimulated primarily by rational economic considerations of relative benefits and costs, mostly financial but also psychological; and

(b) The decision to migrate depends on “expected” rather than actual urban-rural real wage differentials and the probability of successfully obtaining employment in the modern sector.

In this context, Todaro portrays rural-urban migration as a two-stage process. In the first stage, the migrant arrives in the urban area and in many cases remains either unemployed or employed in the traditional sector, while hunting for a modern sector job. In the second stage, he often succeeds in obtaining a modern sector job, which usually carries higher earnings. Todaro’s formulation assumes that all potential migrants have equal information about the urban labour market as well as equal access to urban jobs.

### **3.2.2 Theories on International Migration**

There prevail some theories on international migration, which discuss the causes and patterns of migration. A fragmented set of theories have developed largely in isolation from one another. They differ in terms of their focus on migrants as individuals or groups; in their views of the processes generating international migration or those sustaining it. The three major theories of international migration are economic, sociological, and political. But some theories as discussed by Douglas Massey in their overview show that various theories exist even within each discipline.

Economic theories are the most developed ones and they deal with micro and macro aspects, neoclassical, dual labour markets, historical-structures, new economics, etc. The central assumption of economic theories is that international migration is a mechanism to redistribute “labour”. That is, international movement is the movement of labourers or economically active individuals.

Though economic factors are always important, they are not the only determining factors in the decision to migrate. These economic theories have conspicuously failed to consider psychological, social and political motivations for migration. Sociologists have introduced the notion of “chain migration” or sets of social relations that influence people’s movement. Migrant networks provide sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the countries of origin through kinship, friendship and shared community origin.

Political scientists view that international migration is the result of a change of jurisdiction of national or social boundaries in the contemporary world organized along mutually exclusive and legally sovereign States. Political paradigms of migration have attempted to explain not only why or not immigration occurs but from a variety of perspectives (neorealist, pluralist, international political economy).

As there is no single coherent theory of international migration, here we discuss some of the important theories which would be helpful to understand international migration vis-à-vis cross-border migration as proposed in this study.

### **1) Neoclassical Economics: Macro Theory**

This theory is probably the oldest and the best known theory in the area of international migration. This theory has tried to explain labour migration in the process of economic development (Lewis, 1954; Ranis and Fei, 1961; Harris and Todaro, 1970; Todaro, 1976). It states that countries with a large endowment of labour relative to capital have a low equilibrium market wage, while countries with a limited endowment of labour relative to capital are characterized by a high equilibrium market wage. The resulting differential in wages causes workers from the low-wage country to move to the high-wage country. As a result of this movement, the supply of labour increases and wages fall in the capital-rich country, leading to an equilibrium. This simple and compelling explanation of international migration offered by neo-classical macroeconomics has strongly shaped public thinking and has provided the intellectual basis for much immigration policy.

### **2) Neoclassical Economics: Micro Theory**

Corresponding to the macroeconomic model, there exists a microeconomic model of individual choice {Sjaastad, 1962; Todaro (1969, 1976, 1989); Todaro and Maruszko, 1987}. In this scheme, individual rational actors decide to migrate because a cost-benefit calculation leads them to expect a positive net return, usually monetary, from movement. People choose to move to where they can be the most productive, given their skills. Potential migrants estimate the costs and benefits of moving to alternative international locations and migrate to where the expected discounted net returns are the greatest over a time horizon (Borjas, 1990). Net returns in each future period are estimated by taking the observed earnings corresponding to individual's skills in the destination.

country. The expected earnings are then subtracted from those expected in the community of origin and the differences are summed over a time horizon from 0 to n. From this integrated difference, the estimated costs are subtracted to yield expected net return to migration. In theory, a potential migrant goes to where the expected net returns to migration are the highest.

### **3) New Economics of Migration**

To challenge many assumptions and conclusions of neoclassical theory, the “new economics of migration” has arisen (Stark and Bloom, 1985). According to this theory, migration decisions are not made by isolated individual actors but by larger units of related people - typically families or households - in which people act collectively not only to maximise expected income, but also to minimise risks and to loosen constraints associated with a variety of markets (Stark and Levhari, 1982; Strak, 1984; Katz and Strak, 1986; Lauby and Stark, 1988; Taylor, 1986; Stark, 1991).

Actually, households are in a better position to control risks than that of individuals. Households can control risks to their economic well-being by diversifying the allocation of household resources, such as family labour. While some family members can be assigned economic activities in local economy, others may be sent to work in foreign labour markets where wages and employment conditions are negatively correlated or weakly correlated.

### **4) Dual Labour Market Theory**

Both neoclassical theories and new economics theory are essentially micro-level decision models, whether decisions are taken by individuals or households, the entity being maximised or minimised (income or risk). The dual labour market theory sets its sights away from decisions made by individuals/ households, but states that international migration stems from the intrinsic labour demands of modern industrial societies.

Piore (1979) has been the most forceful and elegant proponent of this theoretical viewpoint. According to Piore, immigration is not caused by push factors but by pull factors in receiving countries (a chronic and unavoidable need for foreign workers). International labour migration is largely demand-based and is initiated by recruitment on the part of

employers in developed societies or by governments acting on their behalf. Since the demand for immigrant workers grows out of structural needs of the economy, it is expressed through recruitment practices rather than wage offers.

### **5) World System Theory**

According to world system theory, migration is a natural outgrowth of disruptions and dislocations that inevitably occur in the process of capitalist development. As capitalism has expanded outward from its core in Western Europe, North America, Oceania and Japan, ever-larger portions of the globe and growing shares of human population have been incorporated into the world market economy. As land, raw materials and labour within peripheral regions come under the influence and control of markets, migration flows are inevitably generated, some of which have always moved abroad (Massey, 1989). Thus, World System theory argues that international migration follows the political and economic organisation of an expanded global market. The penetration of the global economy into peripheral regions is the catalyst for international movement. International migration is specially likely between past colonial powers and their former colonies, because of cultural, linguistic, administrative, investment and communication links that were established between them early. It has little to do with wage rates or employment differentials between countries; it follows from the dynamics of market creation and the structure of the global economy.

### **6) Network Theory**

Immigration may begin with a variety of reasons - a desire for individual income gain, to diversify risk to household income, to satisfy employer's demands for low-wage workers, or some combination thereof. All these have created new conditions that arise in the course of migration and function independently through spreading migrant networks. Migration networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin. Network connections constitute a form of social capital that people can draw upon to gain access to foreign employment. Once the number of migrants reaches a critical threshold, the expansion of networks reduces the costs and risks of movement, which causes the probability of migration to rise, causes additional movement, further expands the networks and so on {Hugo, 1981; Taylor, 1986; Massey and Garcia Espana, 1987; Massey (1990a and 1990b); Gurak and Caces, 1992}.

## **7) Institutional Theory**

Once international migration has begun, private institutions and voluntary organisations arise to satisfy the demand created by an imbalance between the large number of people who seek entry into capital-rich countries and the limited number of immigrant visas these countries typically offer. This imbalance and the barriers that core countries erect to keep people out, actually create a lucrative economic niche for entrepreneurs and institutions dedicated to promoting international movement for profit, yielding a black market in migration.

The profit organisations and private entrepreneurs provide a range of services to migrants in exchange for fees set on the underground market surreptitious smuggling across borders; clandestine transport to internal destinations; and lodging, credit and other assistance in countries of destination. Humanitarian groups help migrants by providing counselling, social services, shelter, legal advice about how to obtain legal papers, etc. overtime, individuals, firms and organisations become well-known to immigrants and constitute another form of social capital that migrants can draw upon to gain access to foreign labour markets.

## **8) Cumulative Causation**

In addition to the growth of networks and development of migrant-supporting institutions, international migration sustains itself in other ways that make additional movement progressively overtime, which Myrdal (1957) called cumulative causation (Massey, 1990b). It is cumulative because each act of migration alters the social context, within which subsequent migration decisions are made. In other ways, additional movements are more likely to happen. Social scientists have identified six socio-economic factors that are potentially affected by migration in cumulative fashion: the distribution of income, the distribution of land, the organisation of agriculture, culture, regional distribution of human capital and social meaning of work. Some families vastly improve their income through migration which makes other families lower in the income distribution feel relatively deprived and induce some of them to migrate (Stark, Tylor and Yitzhaki, 1986; Stark, 1991; Taylor, 1992). Again, migration is selective, initially well-educated, skilled, and highly motivated people migrate. Overtime, the accumulation of human capital reinforces



economic growth in receiving countries while its simultaneous depletion in sending countries exacerbates their stagnation, thereby further enhancing the conditions for migration {Myrdal, 1957; Greenwood (1981 and 1985); Greenwood, Hunt and Mc Dowell, 1987}. Thus, international migration in dynamic terms is a cumulative social process.

Theories developed to understand the contemporary process of international migration posit causal mechanisms that operate at widely divergent levels of analysis. Although the propositions, assumptions, and hypotheses derived from each perspective are not inherently contradictory, they nonetheless carry very different implications for policy formulation. Depending on which model is supported and under what circumstances, a social scientist might recommend measures such that the policy-makers should attempt to regulate international migration. These may be done by changing wages and employment conditions in destination countries or by reducing income inequality in places of origin.

### **3.3 Analytical Frame and Methodology Used**

Among all population flows into India, the inflow from Bangladesh has specifically received great attention in the recent times. Similar geographical, socio-cultural, and racial-linguistic linkages coupled with easy accessibility of the border have induced the people of Bangladesh to move towards India, especially, to the States bordering Bangladesh. In fact, there are various ways in which one can look at the cross-border migration taking place between India and Bangladesh. There have been debates whether this cross-border migration problem should be left totally in the hands of the states or should the society take responsibility in deciding the status of such movement. There also arise questions whether these migrants should be regarded as refugees or as illegal migrants or as politically naturalised citizens. The problem is acute because Bangladesh is not interested to take back them and offer Bangladeshi citizenship. Once the Pakistani/Bangladeshi people cross the border of India, they have to give up their Pakistani/Bangladeshi citizenship and lose their property rights on land and other assets under the Enemy Property (Custody and Regulation) Act, 1965 in Pakistan, which continued to be operative under the new nomenclature called the Bangladesh Vesting of Property and Assets (VPA) Order, 1972 after the establishment of Bangladesh. Given this situation, their acceptance in the Indian society has become crucial to them for leading a tension-free and a good quality life. Also,

Bangladeshi migrants deserve special attention because their inflow has been a continuous process and the process has been increasing with the changing of socio-economic, political and ecological conditions of Bangladesh. And the complex but doleful picture of rapid population growth, poverty, floods, famines, cyclones, wars, riots and persecution helps, to keep the spectre alive and in perspective.

As was stated in Chapter 1, the first objective of the study is to identify the factors underlying the cross-border population movements from Bangladesh to West Bengal. Naturally, we have to examine first whether an influx of population in West Bengal has taken place at all. The Census of India gives information on population of West Bengal for the different Census years. The unnatural rates of growth in population will reflect the immigration of population, mostly from neighbouring places. If the high growth rates occurred in the bordering districts of West Bengal, then it is expected that the migrants are from Bangladesh. The cross-border migrants, normally after crossing the border, try to settle down in nearby villages or towns. Though kinship and friendly relationship determine the paces of migration, distance is a major inhibiting factor at the initial stages of migration episodes, specially, for cross-border migrants. Therefore, the growth rates in the populations of border districts have to be examined.

Data on population growth rates in various districts have been collected from the Census data as published by the Government of India as well as the Government of West Bengal in its various volumes of Statistical Abstract (Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics). If the growth rates were uniform, the relative ranking of districts would have remained unchanged. That means that the influx of refugees remains confined to the same districts. Thus, the districts of West Bengal have been ranked according to decennial growth rates in population for different time points (mainly Census years). The stability in ranking pattern has been judged by the rank correlation coefficient. Whether the coefficient of correlation is significant or not - is judged by Student's t-test.

On the basis of high growth rates since Independence, four districts viz. Burdwan, Hoogly, Nadia and North 24 Parganas have been identified for investigation. Then, detailed information about Bangladeshi migrants was collected through a limited field survey using an elaborate Interview Schedule. The field survey was carried out by the researcher in two

border districts viz. Nadia and the North 24 Parganas, two adjacent districts across the Hoogly river viz. Hoogly and Burdwan. The localities for conducting surveys were identified after getting informal information about the concentration of migrant settlements. Though it would have been better to visit some of the border villages, an attempt to do so was not made since border areas are known to have become more violent than ever before and exchange of fire takes place between BSF of India and BDR of Bangladesh quite frequently and the villages remain tension-ridden. However, the places where the survey was conducted are not too far away from the border. Nadia and the 24 Parganas are hardly 40 to 50 kms away from the Bangladesh Border. The Sub-Divisional town of Kalyani in the Nadia district and the Bijpur Thana in North 24 Parganas district have a high concentration of migrants. The other two places, Kuntighat area in Balagarh Sub-Division of Hoogly district and Krishnadebpur area under Kalna Sub-Division in Burdwan district are also having high concentrations of Bangladeshi migrants. These places are about 60 to 70 km. away from the border.

After selecting the localities, we have taken up the help of local people to identify persons who would like to give information about their migration. Without the help of these local people, the migrants might have refused to reveal the information and to face the interview. The interview was conducted in a cordial atmosphere. The purpose of the survey was narrated to them at first. In discussions with the migrants, we mainly focussed on the process of migration, the motives behind migration, their present and past occupational status, costs and benefits of migration, etc. The Interview Schedule, which was canvassed, had five sections: (a) Household information, (b) Economic particulars, (c) Migration particulars, (d) Employment particulars, and (e) Miscellaneous information of the migrant (Appendix-I). General information was collected for identification of the sample household (which includes household number, district, town/teshil, village, and name of the informant). Under 'household information', data on relation to the head, sex, age, marital status, educational qualification and occupational status of each member of the household were collected. Sources of income, amount of income, housing conditions, land, livestock, financial assets, vehicle, modes of communication, consumer durable goods, etc. were the items of information collected under the sub-category 'economic particulars of the migrant'. Migration particulars, viz., reasons for migration, last place of residence (LPR) in

Bangladesh, duration of stay at the present place of residence (PPR) and the presence of friends or relatives at PPR were gathered in the third section of the schedule. Data on employment at PPR as well as LPR, monthly wages at both PPR and LPR and their differences were gathered for each working migrant. Wage differentials were examined for those who had been employed while they had been in Bangladesh and were employed in India at the time of the survey.

As migration is not purely a quantitative phenomenon, techniques of regression analysis cannot be legitimately applied in this analysis to find out the determinants for migration. But through the tabulation of data on 'reasons for migration', as reported by the informants, it has been possible to identify the major causes for migration. Most of the data collected in the study are qualitative in nature, especially those in the category of 'miscellaneous information'; tabulations are the major analytical tool employed for drawing conclusions.

As reported in Samaddar (1999), the migrants are always downgraded in terms of job status in the post-migration phase. For instance, a college teacher may get employed as a school teacher. In other words, the relationship between 'educational qualification' and the present 'occupation status' of migrants is examined empirically. Similarly, the availability of power connection might influence the acquisition of electronic gadgets like TV or refrigerator. The related data on such items of information has also been analysed and the results are presented in two-way Tables. At the same time, the validity of different theories and the proposed hypotheses has also been examined. The validity of Ravenstein's assumption that migrants move from areas of low opportunity to areas of high opportunity is examined on the basis of these data. All these analyses carried out are discussed in Chapter 4.

After the first round survey was over, the data were examined to identify some migrants for case study – which has sketched the migrants' life history in detail, particularly from the employment and nature of migration points of view. Besides, the other socio-political factors and the government policies towards the migrants, which have influenced their lives, are also taken into account. Twelve persons from different professions, different

phases of migration waves and from different places have been interviewed in the second round. The case studies are discussed in Chapter 5.

### **3.4 Conclusions**

Identification of the nation and the nationality of migrants is difficult because the origins, race, culture and language of the migrants at the places of origin and of destination are the same. It is also difficult to distinguish legal migrants from illegal migrants. Naturalisation is a common process of Indianisation. The established hypotheses for migration are tested in the context of the Indo-Bangladesh migrants; newly proposed hypotheses are also verified empirically. The magnitude of migration is judged on the basis of the Census of India data, whereas the nature and pattern of migration including their economic dimensions at PPR are judged by empirical data collected through a limited in-depth field survey. Various hypotheses on migration like Social Network or Kin-Friendship Network, Economic Opportunities, Pull-Push factors; Cumulative Causation, etc. are verified on the basis of primary data. As most of the data collected are qualitative in nature, tabulations are the main statistical tools used for the analysis. A detailed discussion of the survey results is presented in the next two chapters.

# Chapter 4

## Empirical Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The flow of migration from Bangladesh to India has become a continuous process since partition of India in 1947. The intensity of influx of refugees has varied from decade to decade; the nature of migration has also undergone changes over time. This chapter is devoted to investigate empirically the nature and pattern of migration, the reasons for migration, the socio-economic status of migrants, their occupational patterns, etc. As discussed in Chapter 3, the empirical analysis is carried out, firstly, based on secondary data. The secondary data used are the district-wise decennial growth rates in the population of West Bengal, published under Census of India publications by the Registrar General of India, New Delhi and also in the Statistical Abstract published by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal. Since, The Census in India is conducted once in ten years. We have taken decennial growth rates from the 1951 Census (which was the first census conducted after independence of India) onwards. In the next part primary data been collected through a limited sample survey by canvassing an Interview Schedule in four districts of West Bengal as mentioned in Chapter 3 are analysed. The sample households of the migrants have been selected on the basis of informal information gathered about the localities of concentration of migrants from Bangladesh. Besides, care has been taken to capture the diversity in their settlement pattern so as to get variations in their lifestyles, specially in their occupational pattern, rural-urban diversity, and government settlement policy vis-à-vis their own settlement efforts, etc.

### 4.2 Analysis based on Secondary Data

Higher rates of population growth in the State of West Bengal than in the country as a whole the national have raised concern for policy makers and administrators. The higher growth rates in indicate that immigration from neighbouring areas has been a contributing

factor. But the higher increase in population in the border districts of West Bengal certainly reflects the magnitude of cross-border migration from the neighbouring Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan). The national growth rate of population was 21.6 per cent during the period 1951-61, whereas the corresponding rate was 32.8 per cent in West Bengal. The same trend was observed in the subsequent decades also. Among the decades, the highest growth rate was, to be sure, in the fifties immediately after the partition of India in 1947. However, the national growth rate of 22.7 per cent during the last decade of the Census i.e. 1991-2001 was higher than that of West Bengal (17.8 per cent), which may be interpreted as a sure indication of the reduction of inflows of refugees in the more recent times. If we look at the decennial growth rates in the border districts of West Bengal during the period of 1951-2001, the phenomenon of cross-border migration becomes clear (see, Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: District-wise Decennial Growth Rate of West Bengal (1951-2001)**

Districts	Decennial Growth Rate				
	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1991-81	1991-01
Bankura	26.17	22.02	16.93	18.12	13.79
Burdwan	40.65	27.06	23.46	25.13	14.36
Birbhum	35.55	22.80	18.01	21.94	17.88
Darjeeling	35.90	25.16	31.02	26.91	23.54
Howrah	26.51	18.58	22.74	25.71	14.60
Hoogly	39.02	28.72	23.86	22.43	15.72
Jalpaiguri	48.27	28.76	26.55	26.44	21.52
Cooch Behar	52.45	38.67	25.28	22.55	14.15
Kolkata	8.48	7.57	4.96	33.13	4.11
Malda	30.33	31.98	26.00	29.78	24.77
Medinipur	29.26	26.89	22.39	23.57	15.68
Murshidabad	33.46	28.57	25.49	28.20	23.70
Nadia	49.81	29.91	33.29	29.95	19.51
Puruliya	16.33	17.86	15.65	20.00	13.96
24 Parganas	40.84	34.53	27.10	21.02	21.87
West Dinajpur	35.51	40.50	29.31	30.05	26.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>32.80</b>	<b>26.87</b>	<b>23.17</b>	<b>24.73</b>	<b>17.84</b>

Source: 1) Volumes of Census of India, Registrar General of India, New Delhi.

2) Statistical Abstract, West Bengal 1994-95, BAES, Govt. of West Bengal.

It is observed from Table-4.1 that the population growth rates in the bordering districts are more than the overall population growth of the State as whole. In the first decade after partition, all the border districts had higher population growth than the overall growth rate of 32.8 per cent. The highest growth rate was observed in Cooch Behar (52.5

per cent) followed by Nadia (49.8 per cent), Jalpaiguri (48.3 per cent) and 24 Parganas (40.8 per cent). Among the interior districts, Burdwan (40.7 per cent) and Hooghly (39.0 per cent) had high growth rates. The intensity of growth rates has come down in the next two decades, the 'sixties and the 'seventies. However, there was slight increase in growth rates in the 'eighties. The border districts maintained higher growth rates except one or two cases such as Darjeeling during 1961-71. But Darjeeling maintained comparatively high growth rates during the next three decades. During the last decade i.e. 1991-2001, West Dinajpur (26.1 per cent), Malda (24.8 per cent), Murshidabad (23.7 per cent) and Darjeeling (23.5 per cent) were the leading growth districts in West Bengal. The data show that, in general, border districts were having higher growth rates in population than West Bengal taken as a whole. The higher growth rates are an indication of immigration of population from the neighbouring Bangladesh. In Darjeeling, it might be due to migration from Nepal and Bhutan as well.

The districts ranked according to the growth rates are presented in Table 4.2.

It is observed that the ranking pattern has changed over the decades, suggesting that the migration pattern has been undergoing changes over the decades. For example, Cooch Behar has the highest growth rate of 52.5 per cent during the fifties; the growth rates in the district subsequently climbed down to the thirteenth position during the decade of nineties with a meagre rate of 14.2 per cent. To test the significance of change in the ranking pattern of growth rates, we have calculated the rank correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between the decennial growth rates and calculated t-statistic for testing significance of the rank correlation coefficient. The procedure for testing the significance of correlation coefficient is as follows:

$H_0: \rho=0$  (i.e. The population rank correlation coefficient is zero)

$$t = \{r (n-2)^{1/2}\} / (1-r^2)^{1/2}, \text{ with } (n-2) \text{ degrees of freedom (d.f.),}$$

where  $n$  is the number of pairs involved in the test. This test is also known as paired t-test. The values of the rank correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) and t-statistic are given in Table 4.3.



**Table 4.2: Ranking of Districts according to Population Growth**

Districts	Rank				
	1951-61	1961-71	1971-81	1981-91	1991-2001
Bankura	14	13	14	16	15
Burdwan	5	9	10	9	12
Birbhum	8	12	13	13	8
Darjeeling	7	11	2	6	4
Howrah	13	14	11	8	11
Hoogly	6	7	9	12	9
Jalpaiguri	3	6	5	7	6
Cooch Behar	1	2	8	11	13
Kolkata	16	16	16	1	16
Malda	11	4	6	4	2
Medinipur	12	10	12	10	10
Murshidabad	10	8	7	5	3
Nadia	2	5	1	3	7
Puruliya	15	15	15	15	14
24 Parganas	4	3	4	14	5
West Dinajpur	9	1	3	2	1

Source: Derived from Table 1

**Table 4.3: Rank Correlation Coefficients between Decennial Growth Rates**

Year	1951-61 & 1961-71	1961-71 & 1971-81	1971-81 & 1981-91	1981-91 & 1991-2001	1951-61 & 1991-2001
<b>Rank Correlation Coefficient ( r )</b>	0.72	0.76	0.42	0.42	0.34
<b>t-statistic</b>	3.88	4.37	2.52	2.52	1.35

Source: Compiled from Table 2

There were significant correlation coefficients between 1951-61 and 1961-71 and also between 1961-71 and 1971-81, because the tabulated value of t-statistic with 14 d.f. is 2.14 at 5% level of significance (see, Fisher and Yates Table). It means the pattern of population growth rates vis-à-vis the pattern of migration in the first three decades were same. However, the pattern changed in the next two decades and the calculated value of correlation coefficient (r) was low, though it is statistically significant. As a result of the overall changing pattern during the past five decades, there was insignificant coefficient of correlation between the ranks of growth rates in the fifties and that in the nineties. That

means that the district-wise pattern of migration changed over the past five decades, significantly.

### **4.3 Analysis based on Primary Data**

As discussed in Chapter 3, a survey was conducted in four districts of West Bengal. The districts were selected based on the high growth rates observed during the first two decades after Independence of India. Though high growth rates were observed also in two other districts of West Bengal viz. Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri, these latter two districts are located far off from my native place. Besides, the data could not be collected without establishment of informal channels due to the fear psychology that prevailed among immigrants, to reveal truth; and it was therefore nearly impossible for me to establish contact in North Bengal where these two districts lie. Above all, the ongoing separatist movement among the people of North Bengal is another added problem. Thus, out of the four higher growth rate districts in the bordering areas, two districts viz. Nadia and the North 24 Parganas were surveyed. Two interior districts viz. Hooghly and Burdwan were also considered on the grounds of higher growth rates.

In this survey, a total of 100 households were interviewed. From the districts of Burdwan and Nadia, 30 households each were considered and from the districts of Hooghly and North 24 Parganas, 20 households (HHs) each were considered. Taking informal information about the location of concentration of migrants, I accompanied with some persons whom I knew intimately visited the localities. In the district of Burdwan, I visited the villages of Hariharpara and Dakshin Schoolpara under Krishnadebpur Anchal Panchayat and Chhotomitrapara (Ward No.13) under Kalna Municipality in the Kalna Sub-Division. In Nadia, I visited Taltala Colony and Simanta Colony (Ward No.1) under Kalyani Municipality in the Kalyani Sub-Division. Again, 20 HHs were surveyed from the two villages of Gopalpur and Nityanandapur in the Balagarh Sub-Division in the district of Hooghly. Though I have considered only one Sub-Division for Burdwan, Nadia and Hooghly, two Sub-Divisions were considered from the North 24 Parganas viz. Barrackpore and Barasat. Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony (a government set-up colony) under Halisahar Municipality in Barrackpore and Ram Krishna Pally (Madhyamgram) in Barasat were the localities in which

the survey was conducted. Actually, Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony is nearer to my native place, Kalyani and I could have surveyed there more HHs but all the HHs appears to have similar refugee backgrounds i.e. they were descendents of widows who were camped in Government Mahila Camp in Ranaghat and Bijpur and given settlements in this colony. To get the diversity, I have surveyed Ram Krishna Pally (Madhyamgram) in Barasat Sub-Division also. Obviously, the selection of the sampled HHs was purposive.

At the initial stages, the people were somehow reluctant to give information and they even questioned the purpose of this survey. I explained the purpose of this study, namely it was purely for my educational purpose; and then they expressed their willingness to help me by revealing facts. Once they were convinced of the purpose of the enquiry, they gave information without reservation. Some of them repented at having left their birthplace and felt that they were still being hunted or blackmailed by politicians and administration in their new destination. These colonies are inhabited by migrants alone; so they felt no disturbances from the natives, indigenous inhabitants of West Bengal. It is observed that the residents of the colonies hail from the same erstwhile districts of Bangladesh, and there is an attempt of immigrants from a locality in Bangladesh to try to settle down in the same locality in the destination places also.

The interview schedule was divided into five sub-sections and information has been collected on household members, their educational and occupational status, reasons for migration, last place of residence in Bangladesh, etc. The Interview Schedule is given in Appendix. A detailed analysis of the survey data is attempted in the following sections.

### **4.3.1 Nature and Pattern of Migration**

It has been already discussed that we have considered a sample of 100 Households (HHs) for this study and that these HHs are spread over four districts viz. Nadia (30), Burdwan (30), North 24 Parganas (20) and Hooghly (20). The addresses of the household at the village/colony level along with those of the Thana/Police Station (P.S.) and Sub-Division are given in Table 4.4. Looking at the places from where these 100 HHs have come and settled down at the Present Place of Residence (PPR), we observe that they have migrated from the erstwhile districts (bigger ones) of Bangladesh viz. Barisal, Comilla, Dhaka

**Table 4.4: Address of the Households at PPR (Present Place of Residence)**

District	Total	Thana/Tehsil / P.S.	Sub-Division	Village	Frequency
Nadia	30	Kalyani	Kalyani	Taltala	27
				Simanta	3
Burdwan	30	Kalna	Kalna	Hariharpara	10
				Dakshin Schoolpara	9
				Chotomitrapara	11
North 24 Parganas	20	Bijpur	Barrackpore	Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony	9
		Barasat	Barasat	Ramkrishna Pally	11
Hoogly	20	Balagarh	Balagarh	Gopalpur	12
				Nityanandapur	8

**Source: Field Survey, 2006.**

Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, Pabna and Rajshahi. But the majority have come down from Faridpur district, which is an industrially backward district. Its economy is agricultural and it has a large number of rivers and canals, which are provides copious irrigation facilities for cultivation. At the same time, this district is a flood-prone district too. Actually, it was one of the Hindu majority districts in Bangladesh and still one of its Sub-Divisions named Gopalganj (currently raised to the status of a district), has a Hindu majority place. The places from which the refugees have migrated (i.e. the migrants' Last Place of Residence (LPR)) are given in Table 4.5. The table shows that 67 migrants came from the district of Faridpur; next in the order is Barisal (12) and Pabna (9). Barisal was also another Hindu-dominated district.

Again if we look at the LPR and PPR at Thana/P.S. level, we find that 11 migrants in Kalyani Sub-Division of Nadia district came from Kalkini Thana in the district of Faridpur (Table 4.6). But Kalyani has received migrants from different Thanas and districts, such as Matlab in Comilla, Jhinaidah in Jessore, Gournadi in Barisal; and Bhanga, Gopalganj, Jajira and Kalkini in Faridpur district. As Kalyani is a planned city and is not far from Kolkata, it has attracted a large number of migrants from different parts of Bangladesh. Besides, Kalyani has become an educational hub, which had earlier been an industrial belt and well connected by railways and roads, – all important parameters of attraction.

**Table 4.5: Addresses of the Households at LPR in Bangladesh**

Zella	Thana	Frequency
Barisal	Gournadi	8
	Jhalokathi	3
	Swarupkathi	1
Comilla	Matlab	2
	Chandpur	2
Dhaka	Dhaka	1
	Narayanganj	2
Faridpur	Palang	10
	Kalkini	38
	Rajair	3
	Shipchar	3
	Gopalganj	1
	Bhanga	1
	Jajira	1
	Paanchpur	1
	Naria	2
	Madaripur	4
	Charmugaria	1
	Bholmari	1
	Goalmari	1
Jessore	Jhinaidah	1
Khulna	Boaterghata	1
	Khanjali Dighe	1
	Mulganj	1
Pabna	Baghbari	1
	Shirajganj	4
	Kajipur	1
	Ullapara	1
	Shoathpur	1
	Raiganj	1
Rajshahi	Nator	1

**Source: Field Survey, 2006.**

Similarly, Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony in Bijpur Thana is adjacent to Kanchrapara Township, which has a railway workshop and is a business centre. So, it has also attracted migrants from different parts of Bangladesh. Like Kalyani, it is also well connected with Kolkata and other towns of the 24 Parganas by roadways and railways. The migrants hailed from Jhalokathi and Swarupkathi in Barisal district, Chandpur in Comilla district, Goalmari in Faridpur district and Narayanganj in Dhaka district. However, migrants in Kalna

(Burdwan) and Balagarh (Hooghly) came mainly from different Thanas of Faridpur and Pabna districts.

**Table 4.6: Number of Households at PPR and LPR  
(at Thana / P.S. level)**

PPR	LPR	Frequency
Balagarh (Hooghly)	Kalkini	17
	Madaripur	2
	Palang	1
Barasat (North 24 Parganas)	Boalmari	1
	Boaterghata	1
	Dhaka	1
	Gournadi	4
	Khanjali Dighe	1
	Mulganj	1
	Nator	1
Bijpur (North 24 Parganas)	Chandpur	2
	Goalmari	1
	Jhalokathi	3
	Keraniganj	1
	Narayanganj	1
	Swarupkathi	1
Kalyani (Nadia)	Bhanga	1
	Charmugaria	1
	Gopalganj	1
	Gournadi	1
	Jajira	1
	Kalkini	11
	Matlab	2
	Paanchpur	1
	Palang	3
	Rajair	3
Shipchar	3	
	Jhinaidah	1
Kalna (Burdwan)	Baghbari	1
	Kalkini	10
	Kajipur	1
	Madaripur	2
	Naria	2
	Palang	6
	Raiganj	1
	Shirajganj	4
	Shoathpur	1
	Ullapara	1

Source: Field Survey, 2006

Most of these migrants who settled down in Kalna in the district of Burdwan are either self-employed (mainly in rice boiling and rice-trading) or working as farmers or agricultural labourers. Some are also engaged in fishing activities. Burdwan is very rich in agriculture, specially, in rice production. Boro-rice production is more than *Aus* and *Aman* rice. Wheat is produced in small quantities. Oilseeds (mustard and rapeseed), Pulses (gram, *mung* and *masur*) and fibres (jute, mesta and sunhemp) are also produced in large quantities. Nearly 71.5 per cent are cultivable land in Burdwan (GOWB; 1994-95). Though it is also an industrial belt in Asansol-Raniganj-Durgapur, which is not much arable but the Kalna-Katwa belt, which is adjacent to Hooghly River, it is an agriculture belt. Besides, Burdwan (Sadar) is also a highly irrigated area. So, except normal agricultural activities, rice-boiling, dehusking and trading are the common activities in this belt. Migrants, who like to be engaged in these agricultural-related activities, are able to take up them and become self-employed. Still, Rajbanshi community from Pabna district mainly choose fishing for a living.

Hooghly is another district which has also some industrial belt. In contrast to Burdwan, its industrial belt is confined to the areas near the river Hooghly. The industrial town like Hindmotor, Chinsura, Chandannagar and Bandel are important industrial towns, which have attracted thousands of migrants. Besides, many jute mills were established on the banks of the Hooghly River during the British rule. It has 74.6 per cent cultivable land and rice, pulses, oilseeds and jute are the main crops cultivated in this district. The density of population was 1383 per sq. km. in 1991 while it was only 787 for the State of West Bengal.

The district of Nadia has the highest proportion of cultivable land (78.2 per cent) among these four districts; it is therefore the most attractive place for migrant farmers. This district has more than 50 per cent of its total population comprising immigrants. Besides the traditional crops (rice, pulses, oilseeds, and fibres), different types of vegetables, sugarcane, potato and tobacco are also produced in this district. The State Agricultural University named Bidhan Chandra Krishi Viswavidyalaya and Haringhata Dairy Farm are situated in this district. The main means of livelihood of the people is agriculture.

The North 24-Parganas is actually an extension of the Calcutta metropolitan city. This district has many small and big towns like Naihati, Barrackpore, Sodhpur, Belgharia, Dum Dum, Bangaon, Barasat, etc. and has well connected road links and railways across its

length and breadth. Naturally, the highest concentration of refugees is in this district. Urban migrants from Bangladesh prefer this district as it near to Calcutta and they could easily find employment. Its density of population was 1779 as per 1991 Census which is the highest among all these four districts. Bangaon and Barasat sub-divisions are agriculture-based developed areas while the service-sector is prominent in the Barrackpore-Dum Dum belt.

This study reveals that the main preference of the migrants in choosing their PPR was the presence of relatives. Out of the 100 HHs, 74 HHs had come to PPR due to presence of relatives. The migrants' relatives' viz. uncles (from either side, paternal or maternal), sisters, brothers, grandparents, etc. who have migrated earlier, actually helped the migrants, first to join them; afterwards they separated themselves from relatives as and when opportunities emerged. Only 24 had come to PPR on their own. So, the presence of relatives at PPR has been the main attraction for the second generation and later migrants to their PPR. Therefore, it may be asserted that 'kin and friend relationship' plays a cardinal role in deciding the initial destinations of immigrants and those opportunities of employment decide their choice of PPR. Thus the network theory works more in the case of cross-border migration than economic theories of neoclassical (micro and macro) and new economics.

It is friends, relatives, neighbours, and agents, who helped them in emigration episode by giving them information about the land for purchase or place to settle, either on vacant plots or under government settlement schemes. Only 28 HHs were seen to have settled themselves on their own, independent of any outside help. The Government of West Bengal helped immigrants by giving them land and establishing colonies for their settlement. For example, the Taltala colony in Kalyani (Nadia) and the Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony in Bijpur (North 24 Parganas) are Government. settlement colonies where the migrants have settled on the basis of information about vacant lands and where the Government gave the settlers financial help and tin roofing for construction of houses in Bijpur; whereas *patta* for occupied lands were given in Kalyani.

The sympathy of the State Government towards migrants has encouraged further migration streams of migrants to arrive in successive decades. Actually, Myrdal's theory of cumulative causation works in the migration process. However, it is observed that some immigrants have later migrated to other places and settled down in the PPR due to the help



rendered by friends and relatives. The survey shows that 28 immigrants settled down at PPR on their own, whereas 33 of them were helped by relatives; 17 of them received help from their own family members. So, relatives and family members have acted not only as an initial impetus to migrate but also helped them (at least 50 per cent) to settle down at PPR. This evidence lends strong support to the social network theory of migration.

Though 74 out of the 100 HHs had relatives present in the PPR, it was only in 41 cases that they arrived at first to their relatives' places of residence. Out of the 100 HHs, only 29 HHs have come directly to their PPR. Most of the migrants initially stayed with relatives or friends and some also came in camp (12 HHs); it was later at convenient points of that they came to PPR, that too with proper information about the settlement.

After classifying the HHs according to the duration since migration, i.e., the period between the time when they left LPR in Bangladesh and the date of survey, it is observed that 57 per cent of migration took place 30 years ago and 33 per cent of migration between 20 to 30 years ago. In the first four decades after partition, the rate of migration was almost entirely uniform, a fact which actually corroborates the trend observed in the growth rates in population as was observed earlier. The flow of migrants has declined in the 1990s; only 9 out of the 100 surveyed HHs had migrated during 10 to 20 years ago. It shows that the effort of the government might have succeeded to reduce the flow of immigration. Actually, this observation is also consistent with the decline in the population growth rates observed during the nineties.

During the last 10 years, only one HH had migrated in our sample. It reflects that the fencing of the border and the increasing vigilance exercised by the West Bengal government has had some effect in reducing the rate of immigration from Bangladesh. As explained by the migrants it is now very difficult to secure ration cards, voter ID cards, purchase of land, and get children admitted to school, which serve as important documents to prove Indian citizenship. Even it is very difficult to open a bank account, which requires several documents to be produced before bank authorities. All these factors might have contributed to reducing migration inflows in the recent times.

Most of the heads of the HHs (85 out of 100) have migrated with families, only 14 having migrated alone and made families thereafter by marrying girls born and brought up in India; but interestingly enough most of such girls (brides) happened to be children born to immigrant families. Only one person has reported that he migrated with one of his closest friends in Bangladesh. The survey reveals that most of the decisions for migration had been taken by the heads of families. However, in 33 cases, the decision for migration has been taken by parents or grandparents. A joint decision of the family members was taken in 20 HHs. It is also revealed that about 84 per cent of the HHs is satisfied with the decision to immigrate. They claimed that they had taken a correct decision when they resolved to cross the border and settle in India. Still, all are not happy, especially those who had large property, particularly in land in LPR (in Bangladesh).

At the initial stage, some faced difficulties in adapting to the new environment. But 72 out of 100 HHs did not have any problem mainly due to help received from friends/relatives. It is interesting to note that earlier, 74 of them had cited the presence of relatives in West Bengal; it was therefore only natural that their relatives helped them out during the adaptation phase. There were 18 HHs which encountered problems of adaptation during the initial stage after migration and 10 HHs in the sample still continue to encounter the problem. Though some of them are not satisfied with the decision to migrate and some of them are still facing problem to adapt in the new environment, still leading a life of hardship in the refugee colony, all respondents have reported that they consider their PPR their home and India, their motherland. They identified their future and future of their kids with the future of India and not even dream of going back to Bangladesh. Thus, the hypothesis that "Hindu migrants feel India as their saviour as well as the ultimate place of settlement and consider India their motherland" is vindicated.

#### **4.3.2 Reasons for Migration and Citizen Status of Migrants**

When migrants were asked the reasons for migration, everyone first reacted with bitterness and reported that Bangladesh (East Pakistan) is not a place worth living in, especially for Hindus, because after partition of India it has become a haven of Muslims. The communal basis of partition is the main idea that lurked behind the thoughts of these

migrants to India. Thus, the first hypothesis (Chapters 1&3) that the “Partition of India in 1947 on religious lines is the main stimulant for cross-border migration from Bangladesh to India” seems valid at first sight. However, when they were asked to point out, specifically, the real reason for their migration, which does not form a part of the Hindu community as a whole, then they came out with different types of responses. The reasons for migration as reported by the respondents are given in Table 4.7.

Desire for security of life was the major reason for migration. Riots were the second major reason for migration. Seventeen HHs reported riots as the reason for migration, while sixteen HHs reported “religious oppression” as the cause. The availability of ‘Social Networks’ was the next in importance. While life security and religious oppressions dominant push factors, ‘social network’ served as pull factor for migration. Had the earlier migration not taken place immediately after partition, the subsequent flows of migration through ‘social network’ would not have occurred. Actually, the cumulative causation theory

**Table 4.7: Reasons for Migration**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>
Economic	11
Education	5
Life Security	23
Partition	9
Political Oppression	2
Religious Oppression	16
Riots	17
Social Network	13
War of 1971	4

**Source: Field Survey, 2006**

of Myrdal (1957) explains to a large extent the process of cross-border migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. Partition was reported as a reason by HHs which migrated during the early phase, that is, during 1950s and 1960s. During this period, riots occurred in different parts of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), such as Mulardi (Barisal) in 1953, Narayanganj (Dhaka) and Khulna/Chalna Port in 1962/1964. Though ‘religious oppression’ occurred in the 1971 War and also in 1992 after demolition of Babri Masjid in India, but migration

flows after 1992 oppression remained low. During the 1971 War of Independence of Bangladesh, about 1 crore people had migrated to India due to military oppression on Hindus and Bengali Muslims but many of them returned to Bangladesh in 1972, once the War was over. However, a good number of them stayed back in India. In our sample, 4 HHs belong to this category.

Surprisingly, many young persons who had migrated with relatives for 'study purpose' have not cared to go back after studies. In our sample, 5 HHs have reported such cases. Only 11 HHs out of the 100 HHs in the sample has reported 'economic reason', for leaving Bangladesh. So, Ravenstein's hypothesis that "migrants move from areas of low opportunities to areas of high opportunity" - is not found to be strong in the case of Bangladeshi migration to India.

Again, the contention that "the choice of destination is regulated by distance" is not true of Bangladeshi migrants. The migrants in Kalyani (Nadia) and Mallick Bagh Notun Colony (Bijpur, North 24 Parganas), have come from far off districts of Comilla, Dhaka, Faridpur or Barisal. Hardly anybody had reported in Kalyani that they have come from the Kustia district of Bangladesh (Kustia had been a part of Nadia district). Similarly nobody in our sample in Mallick Bagh Notun Colony (North 24 Parganas) had migrated from Jessore district (Bangaon Sub-Division of 24 Parganas had been a part of Jessore district). Economic opportunities and social network have actually determined the present place of settlement (PPR) in the case of most of them.

However, migration took place in different modes. Out of the 100 HHs, only 7 HHs had migrated legally, after taking migration certificates from Indian High Commission in Dhaka. This facility was available only during the 1960s. Immediately after partition, thousands migrated to India (during 1947-50). In this survey 14 HHs fell under this category. Similarly, during Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, migration to India assumed great proportions. Not everyone who came to India returned to Bangladesh, after the cessation of war. In our sample there are 7 such cases. Except these types all others are classified as "illegal" migration, which account for the majority of the HHs in the sample. They crossed the border in illegally even though BDR/BSF personnel were present at the border to

prevent illegal cross-border traffic. Most such migrants took the help of Agents (or *Dalals*) who had good relationship with personnels of the BSF/BDR.

Whether the migrants crossed the border legally or illegally, their chance of securing ration cards and voter identity cards were not affected at all. We found only 2 HHs of illegal migrants did not possess voter identity cards. Seventy HHs had acquired titles to land ownership (i.e. *patta*) also. Some of the migrants were given *patta* by the Government of West Bengal, such as, in the Taltala Colony in Kalyani. In some cases, lands were given by the government but *pattas* are yet to be given as is the case with the migrants at the Mallick Bagh Colony in Bijpur. Except in Kalyani and Bijpur, the migrants have purchased land on their own for dwelling purposes as well as for cultivation and they have got *pattas* for their lands. Till the time migrants became able to acquire lands, they stayed with friends or relatives or in government camps. Only 7 migrants were seen to have obtained both migration and citizenship certificates. Thus the possibility of obtaining ration cards, voter identity cards, *pattas* for land and shelter in camps has attracted increasing number of migrants from Bangladesh/ East Pakistan. So, the hypothesis that “political support, ethnic affinity and sympathy of the State government have acted as pull factors for migration” is validated by this study.

### 4.3.3 Employment Status of Migrants

In the total sample of 100 HHs, there were 545 members, on the average 5.45 members per household. The occupational status as given in Table-8 shows that 269 constitute the work force. There are 61 children in 82 HHs, studying in schools/ colleges. Again, 35 persons in 26 HHs are too old or too young. Out of 269 persons, who constituted the work force, 79 are employed as daily wage labourers, 46 as contract workers, 9 as seasonal labourers and 135 as permanent employees in business/ firm/ offices. It means that about 50 per cent of the workers have job-security. A total of 104 women reported themselves to be housewives. There exist 65 unemployed persons in 46 households, who are ready to offer themselves as workers to the labour market but have been unable to find any job (Table 4.8). In the sample population the proportion of workers employed as cultivators and agricultural labour are lower than the overall work force. While it is 3.33 and 4.46 per cent for the sample it is 19.18 and 24.97 per cent respectively for overall workforce in

cultivators and agricultural labour categories. Thus, it can be concluded that lower proportion of the migrant workforce is directly involved in agriculture compared to the overall workforce of West Bengal.

**Table 4.8: Occupational Status of Migrant Households**

Occupational Status (Code)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
No. of Persons	79	46	9	135	61	9	2	104	65	35
No. of Household	48	38	5	92	82	7	2	98	46	25

Note:	Code:	Category:	Code:	Category:
	1	Daily Wage Labour	6	Retired
	2	Contract Labour	7	Disabled/ Handicapped
	3	Seasonal Labour	8	Housewife
	4	Permanent Worker	9	Unemployed
	5	Student	10	Invalid (Too old/ young)

Looking at the source of income of these households (Table 4.9), we can see that 164 persons in 70 HHs are 'wage/salary' earners. 'Profit' is the second most important source of income; profit was reported as source of income in 54 HHs which had altogether 69 persons engaged in business/trading. Most of them were self-employed.

**Table 4.9: Sources of Income of Households**

Source of Income	Wage/ Salary	Cultivation Income	Pension	Other Income	Rent	Profit
No. of Persons	164	9	4	10	3	69
No. of Household	70	9	4	8	3	54

Source: Field Survey, 2006

There were 2 HHs with income less than Rs.1,000 per month. About 52 per cent of the HHs (52 out of 100 HHs) had incomes in the range of Rs.1,000 to 3,000 per month. There were 26 households with monthly income of more than Rs.5,000. Thus, 74 of HHs had monthly income less than Rs.5,000.

The comparison of Employment Status at the Last Place of Residence (LPR) in Bangladesh with that at Present Place of Residence (PPR) in West Bengal (India) shows that there was a significant change in the employment status (Table 4.10). For example, 30

persons who had cultivation as a profession were engaged in different types of employment. Only two persons continued to remain in cultivation, while 15 had turned into other occupations viz. 7 of them found to be turned agricultural labourers and the rest into carpentering, trading, services, masonry, and helpers in shops. Similarly, women who had been housewives while in Bangladesh have become workers in India and engaged in tailoring, agricultural labour and self-employment. Migrants who had been students in Bangladesh have reached adulthood and were found in different occupational positions.

As Ranabir Samaddar has pointed out in his book “Marginal Nation”, migrants are normally engaged in jobs inferior to those in which they had been before migration. Persons, who had worked as ‘teachers’ in Bangladesh were found to be engaged in business, self-employment and cultivation. There had been six persons who taught in schools in Bangladesh, could not find the same professions in India.

It is only natural that migrants would not get the job immediately following migration. After examining the spell of unemployment, it is observed that only 10 out of 100 heads of the HHs got jobs in the first week following their migration and 54 of them got employed within 6 months of their arrival in India. 26 of them had to wait for more than 6 months to get employed. Persons who have waited for more than 10 years are usually those who came to India as children and did not offer themselves to the labour market till after several years of arrival. Workers who have got job earlier (with in a month) were usually those who were helped by relatives in finding jobs. Some of them chose to become self-employed immediately on their arrival. Such cases were found in the Kuntighat area of Balagarh.

**Table 4.10: Comparison of Employment Status at LPR and PPR**

At LPR	At PPR	No. of Persons
Barber	Barber	1
Blacksmith	Blacksmith	1
Childhood	Agricultural Labour	1
	Cultivation	1
	Business	6
	Fisherman	2
	Salesman	1
	Self-employed	3
	Physician	1
	Service	6

Business	Business	4
	Cultivation	2
	Service	1
	Self-employed	1
Carpenter	Agricultural Labour	2
	Business	2
	Carpenter	4
Cultivation	Agricultural Labour	7
	Business	15
	Carpenter	2
	Cultivation	2
	Helper/Gardener/Mason Worker	3
	Service	2
Factory worker	Fishermen	1
Fisherman	Service	1
	Fisherman	3
Housewife	Agricultural Labour	2
	Self-employed	2
	Tailoring	1
	Housemaid	1
	Housewife	104
Physician	Physician	1
Rickshaw Puller	Van Rider	1
Student	Physician	1
	Business	2
	Contractor	1
	Daily Wage Labour	1
	Service	7
	Self-employed	1
	Student	2
	Teaching	3
Tailoring	Business/Trader(Supplier)	2
Teaching	Self-employed	2
	Business	3
	Cultivation	1
Unemployed	Business	3

**Source: Field Survey, 2006**

Some persons who were settled in the twin villages of Gopalpur and Nityanandapur started their self-employed business activities of rice boiling and trading within a few weeks of their arrival in India. Similar cases were also reported by the informants from Hariharpara village in Kalna (Burdwan). Some of the migrants also started their work as casual worker in agriculture fields, and as masons or fishermen.



Most of the fishermen (belonging to *Rajbanshi* community) who had migrated from Pabna district of Bangladesh and have settled down in Dakshin Schoolpara of Krishnadebpur Anchal in Kalna Sub-division, found job very early because of modern fishing activities prevailing in this area. Only those who migrated in their childhood or migrated while they were students faced long spells of unemployment. It is a matter of surprise that none of the workers faced any political discrimination. However, in 5 persons reported that they faced wage discrimination; actually, they faced wage discrimination only at the initial stage and the employers made adjustments in the wage rates within a short period.

#### 4.3.4 Standard of Living and Social Status of the Migrants

The migrants who were living in the colonies or villages were not found to be better off than the indigenous population. As shown in Table 21, there were only 15 households whose monthly income exceeded Rs. 10,000 and only 11 HHs had incomes within the range of Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 10,000. Thus, the majority of the HHs had incomes of less than Rs. 5,000 per month. These 100 households had a total of 136 houses buildings, out of which 25 had concrete roofs (Table 4.11). The remaining 111 houses had roofs made of thatch, tiles or tins/ asbestos. Most of the buildings had floor of cement concrete. Fifty five house buildings to 43 households had concrete flooring. Similarly, 63 houses had *pucca* or brick walls, and 55 houses had walls made of bamboo-thatch. Jute, mud, wood and tins are also used in making walls of some of the refugee houses.

**Table 4.11: Quality of House**

Types of Roof	Thatched		Tiles		Tin/Asbestos		Concrete
No. of Houses	2(2)		46(36)		63(48)		25(23)
Types of Wall	Tin	Bamboo/ Thatched	Jute Plants	Wooden	Mud	Pucca	
No. of Houses	81(57)	55(43)	4(4)	1(1)	7(4)	63(43)	
Types of Floor	Kutchra			Pucca			
No. of Houses	81(57)			55(43)			

Source: Field Survey, 2006

\* Number of Households is in the parenthesis.

All the HHs owned the lands on which their habitations stood; 11 HHs had lands for cultivation also. One HH leased out land for cultivation on rent. Lands used solely for dwelling purpose are extremely small; they do not permit other activities in them. Out of the 100 HHs, 73 HHs had less than or equal to 5 *kathas*. Only 10 households have more than 1 *Bigha* (20 *Kathas*) of land. Some portions of the big land holdings are used for cultivation. Though migrants have land but majority of them do not have any livestock. The colonies in the Kalyani municipality area and the Mallick Bagh colony in Halisahar municipality area are found to be similar character in this respect, as no household in our sample has any livestock. However, the villages in Krishnadebpur Anchal Panchayat and Gopalpur-Nityanandapur villages had livestock, mainly cattle. Thirty HHs had fifty-two heads of cattle. One single family had four goats.

About 50 per cent of the HHs did not have financial assets and they did not maintain any banking or non-banking accounts. However, the rest of the HHs had savings kept in banks or in other firms of saving including insurance. Almost all HHs had bicycles; on average, there were two bicycles per household. Some HHs has had motor-cycles or scooters. Some of those who were engaged in rice-boiling and trading had four-wheeled cycle also. One person had a Lorry for rice trading in Kuntighat locality. Out of the 100 HHs, 17 HHs did not have electricity connection. Among the consumer durables, more than 50 per cent Households had Television (TV) sets. Out of total 63 TV sets, 27 TV sets were coloured. However, the migrants had only low levels of telecommunication facilities. 59 HHs out of 100 HHs did not have any telecommunication facilities. Mobiles phones were found to be more popular than landline facilities in this respect.

Most of members of the migrants are in the age group of 18-59 years. Out of 545 members, 334 members are in this group. Only 7 are children below the age group less than one, while 71 persons are more than 60 years old. Again, about 45 per cent of the members are unmarried. Out of 545 members, 249 are unmarried and 30 are widows/widowers. Migrant families are male dominated. More than 55 per cent are male. It is observed that the immigrant population was more literate than the general population of West Bengal. Only about one-eighth of the sample immigrants were illiterate (literacy rate for

the sample HHs being 87.34 per cent), although they came from about one-half the number of households (Table 12). It is interesting to note that overall literacy rate of West Bengal is 58.87 per cent (Census, 2001). The literacy rates of the four districts we have surveyed is also found to be lower than literacy rate of sampled HHs; Burdwan (60.98 per cent), Hoogly (66.12 per cent), North 24 Parganas (68.85 per cent) and Nadia (57.43 per cent) (Economic Review 2005-06).

**Table 4.12: Educational Qualifications of Migrants**

Educational Qualification	Illiterate	Pre-Primary and Primary	Elementary (5 <sup>th</sup> to & 7 <sup>th</sup> Std.)	Secondary (8 <sup>th</sup> to 10 <sup>th</sup> Std.)	HSC (10 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> Std.)	B.A./ B.Sc./ B. Com	M.A./ M.Sc./ M.Com	M.Phil/ Ph.D.	Vocational	Professional
No. of Persons	69	83	111	153	41	35	7	2	1	2
No. of HHs	49	46	63	70	37	30	6	2	1	2

Source: Field Survey, 2006

It is likely that Hindus in Bangladesh are actually conscious about the importance of education and that could be one of the reasons why they took risk of migration and settled down in India. They seem to be highly politically alert, socially sensitive and culturally advanced. Many of them had become poorer after migration as they lost their properties held in Bangladesh; but they have brought with them rich 'human capital' which has helped them survive in the land of their destination.

#### 4.4 Conclusions

The following discussion has shown the real cause of migration is the Partition of India in 1947. Had the whole of Bengal remained a single entity and in India, the influx of Hindus from East Pakistan/ Bangladesh to West Bengal could not have arisen. As Pakistan was created based on religious consideration, Hindus felt insecure as a minority. When violence started immediately after Partition, refugees started pouring into India. Again, frequent riots, the 1971 War and the rise of fundamentalism gave further fillip to migration. The environmental disaster caused by frequent visitations of storms/ floods also added to the frenzy for migration. Therefore, the influx of migrants remains. However, the intensity of the inflow has abated in the recent years.

The sample survey shows that the migration flow continued unabated till the mid-eighties. Subsequently, the efforts made by the Government of India to reduce or to stop the inflow have had some positive result since, the nineties. In this respect, fencing of the border and the increasing vigilance at the border areas along with the restrictions on the issuance of ration cards, and voter ID cards and admission of students in schools/ colleges, have resulted in a decline in the of influx of migrants. During the last 10 years, only one household had come to India during the period since 1990.

The reason for migration is not economic alone. Social, religious and kinship networks had also played an important role. They felt that India was their saviour and their motherland. Though many of them are economically worse-off, they are happy and content. Those who have migrated and settled down could possess all necessary documents to prove their Indian Citizenship. They are already eligible for naturalization as most of them have stayed in India for more than 10 years the minimum period required (as per the latest amendment of the Citizenship Act in 1986).

Unlike the immigrants in Western Europe or the USA, most immigrants in West Bengal are not skilled workmen or professionals who earn high salaries. They are better educated than the indigenous populations, but are not employed in commensurate jobs. Not only incomes, their social and political status is also low in comparison to that of the local indigenous population in the nearby areas. No social or political difference exists between the post-1947 and the post-1971 migrants. All stay together irrespective of the period of their immigration or differences in the reasons for their immigration. Immigrants from the same area i.e. same bigger districts of Bangladesh tried to stay together in the same colony or in same part of a colony. Their staying together has created in them, fellow-feeling and camaraderie. They live in peace and harmony.

Economically they are not strong. Most of them have monthly incomes of lower than Rs. 5,000 and they have land only for dwelling purposes. Only a very few have well-furnished houses and large modern houses. Many of them do not have any communication facilities at all.

The hypotheses as stated in Chapter 1 have been vindicated empirically. It may be ascertained that 'Partition of India' in 1947, 'Kin and friend relationship' and 'insecurity of minorities in Bangladesh' and 'sympathy of the government of India' have resulted in a cumulative causation process which worked as a major determinant of migration. While 'riots/ violence' and 'economic disaster' in Bangladesh have worked as push-factors, the 'sympathy of State Government of West Bengal' and the 'fellow-feeling among the immigrant community' have worked as pull-factors. Only a few immigrants have crossed the border purely for economic considerations.

# Chapter 5

## Some Case Studies on Migrants

### 5.1 Introduction

During the field survey we came across migrants belonging to different occupational categories and different, socio-political and economic status. However, our survey was not able to capture all the nuances of their varied experiences and that a greater in-depth study of individual cases might reflect clearly about their struggles for existence and furnish greater details of their migration episodes. As there was a fear psychology in the minds of migrants which we saw writ large on their faces during the survey, we decided to visit some of the migrants for greater probing without any fixed agenda. We have put for ourselves a way of general agenda from the economic and social points of view and have given the migrant who was interviewed them the opportunity to tell about his/her life story, why and how he/she had migrated, the *en route* experiences of migration, the history of employment in PPR and LPR and their economic conditions in India and Bangladesh. We have also enquired into the details the main destinations of the interviewee, the activities he/she generally undertakes, and their nature, the process of entry into the job market, and other relevant factors. Emphasis has also been given to understand how he/she has struggled to become successful to earn a living or how he/she has been struggling or leading a miserable life. What are his/her feelings after migration and what are his/her expectations from the society as well as from the Government, were also questions that were probed into.

We have chosen twelve persons from different professions and belonging to the different periods of migration. All four districts were visited again. Three persons were selected from each district. In Burdwan, one each from Dakshin School Para, Hariharpara and Chhotomitrapara villages were considered. In the case of Hoogly, two persons from Nityanandapur village and one person from Gopalpur village were chosen. Similarly, from North 24 Parganas, two persons from Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony (Bijpur) and one person

from Ramkrishna Pally (Barasat) were selected; and all the three persons are from the same Taltala colony in case of Nadia.

From occupational status point of view at PPR, we have chosen one student, one casual worker and one gardener from the Nadia district. We have interviewed one hawker and one self-employed person without any fixed profession from Bijpur (Barrackpore) and one widow from Barasat in the case of the North 24 Parganas district. In the case of Hoogly district, though all three were mainly engaged in rice-boiling and trading but they had also developed secondary profession also. One became a successful politician; another became a successful businessman having a rice-mill and processing unit and owned large tracts of cultivable land, while the third one remains as a chronic shuttler between India and Bangladesh. From the district of Burdwan, one social worker-cum-politician, one fisherman and one self-employed (shopkeeper) were considered. Thus, we have tried to capture different patterns of occupational and social behaviour of immigrants. Further, they were persons who had migrated at different time points as part of different waves of migration from Bangladesh. Sahadeb Sarkar, social worker in Kalna migrated after the Mulardi Riot in 1950, while Dhiren Dey of Bijpur after 1965 Indo-Pak War and Suresh Chandra Mondal of Kuntighat during 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war. Hemlal Sarkar migrated after assassination of Mujibur Rahman and Kudiram Rajbanshi, after the Babri Masjid demolition.

These 12 persons had different economic backgrounds too in Bangladesh. They ranged from Hemlal Sarkar in Kalna, who hailed from a feudal family to Japani Mondal in Bijpur, was a son of a poor widow. Premananda Halder had been a daily wage earner. They belonged to the districts of Faridpur, Barisal, Dhaka and Pabna respectively. A description of the nature and pattern of migration along with the changes in their occupational and social behaviour, subsequent to migration are given in the sections that follow. The reasons for their migration are also discussed in the light of migration theories.

## **5.2 Sahadeb Sarkar: Social Worker–cum–Politician**

Sahadeb Sarkar is a social worker in a refugee area. As he himself is a refugee, he understands the problems of refugees, and he has helped them to settle down in India. He has been a politically motivated person right from his boyhood when he worked for the

1945 election (last election held in undivided India) for an independent candidate. His family had a grocery shop in a market (Tekerhat) near his village Kashipur under Palang Thana in the district of Faridpur. After independence of India and the partition that followed, communal riots broke out in 1950 in Mulardi, a business centre in Barisal district. That event sparked off looting and harassing spree against Hindus in several towns and market centres in Faridpur district also. Tekerhat was in Hindu dominated locality. There was a rich Hindu family, Bala Parivar. After the Mulardi riot, the Muslims looted the Bala Parivar family and all Hindu shops in the local market. Sahadeb Sarkar and one of his friends went to the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Madaripur Sub-Division to complain about the riot and seek protection of Hindus. The SDO sent forces and inflicted punishment on the assailants. But after that event, local Muslims targeted Sahadeb Sarkar and started threatening his life. Then, all his family members decided to migrate to India. At that time, he was already married and had one son. His parents, uncles, wife and son who were hiding in other localities for some days started moving towards the east and went to Sureshwar Ghat, opposite to Chandpur Town in Comilla district across the river Meghna.

In Sureshwar, they hid in a Hindu house. After three to four days they were able to get tickets for journey in a launch to Khulna. From Khulna they came to the Darshana border in Kushtia district, by train. Thousands of refugees were waiting there to cross the border. From Darshana they came to the Burnpur railway station in India. Many volunteers helped them on Indian-side of the border by giving them food and suggesting suitable locations; they could get some shelters without much of a problem. In the meantime, Sahadeb Sarkar's pocket was pilfered while boarding a train in India.

They spent three days in Burnpur Camp and then they were sent to Ranaghat Camp where they stayed for about a month. The Government of India gave shelter and food to all refugees at that time. Somebody gave him information that they could easily get settlement in Kalna in the district of Burdwan. Then about half a dozen families left the Ranaghat Camp and came to Chandan Babu's rice mill in Kalna, where many refugees were staying under the 'tops' (tin-shades meant for keeping paddy for dehusking) and godowns. Here he found four or five migrant families from the localities to which he belonged back in Bangladesh. He had education up to the 7<sup>th</sup> standard. He started providing social services towards his fellow refugees by filling up forms for loans and writing applications on behalf



of different illiterate refugees. He established contact with the SDO, Kalna by visits from time to time for different purposes mainly for rehabilitation of the refugees. Besides doles (food) for refugees, he also managed to get Rs. 500 for purchasing land and Rs.500 for construction of a house. He managed to secure the same for several other families also.

Meanwhile, he occupied a house at a very low rent and started a vegetable store with his father and uncle. Then he contracted a rich person whom he knew personally, had migrated immediately after partition and purchased a large area of land. This person named Sisir Bala (from the Bala Parivar of Tekerhat, referred to earlier) sold some of his land to refugees at low prices and settled them down in that land. Subsequently, he established a village and named it as Hariharpara, in 1951. Sahadeb Sarkar then began preparing documents for others, such as bonds, affidavits, petitions and applications in the premises of Kalna Court (known as law-clerk in *Seresta*) and started earning money for his family. He started social works among refugees and formed *Udbasti Samiti* (Forum for Refugees) which provided a variety of services to new arrivals of migrants.

When the first Panchayat election was held in 1964, Sahadeb Sarkar contested from Hariharpara, won the elections and became member in Krishnadebpur Anchal Panchayat. He had contested in the election not on political party lines. In the meantime CPI (M) party was formed and he joined the party. This party was becoming popular among refugees and provided them with various social services. He participated in several struggles and programmes of the party. Ultimately, he became a Comrade in the locality. When the Congress under Chief Minister Siddhartha Shankar Ray came into power and started cleansing West Bengal of the Communists, Sarkar had to leave the locality as he encountered attack several times including bombs blasts by the goons of Rashid Chowdhury, then the henchmen of Nurul Islam, an MLA and Youth Congress Leader of West Bengal. He left his family, went first to Durgapur and then to Mana Camp in Madhya Pradesh. There he worked as security guard in a businessman's house.

However, his family was protected, strangely enough, by a local Congress leader, Niranjana Pal. The family eked out a living from vegetable vending. When his mother fell sick, he came back to Hariharpara on receiving information from one of his acquaintances. His coming back was during the last phase of Emergency. After the defeat of the Congress

at the Centre in 1977, he started living in his own house in peace. From 1964 to 1978, no Panchayat election had been held in West Bengal. Nominated members were working in the Panchayats. In the first Party-based Panchayat election, he fought on CPI (M) ticket and won. He fought also in 1983, 1988 and 1993 elections. In 1988, he became Up-Pradhan (Vice- Chairman) of the Krishnadebpur Anchal Panchayat and in 1993 became Pradhan. However, he was not given party ticket to contest elections since 1998.

Though Sahadeb Sarkar was in position of power for many years, he has had an unblemished career. He lives a simple life. He owns a house having tin-sheets for roofing and muddy plaster for flooring; but the house has concrete plaster walls. His homestead is about 4 *Kathas* in area and is used solely for habitation purpose. The house is electrified and has one colour TV set at home. His son is engaged in vegetables vending in the local market, and the profit from trading constitutes the main source of income for the family. He also earns from law-clerk job in Kalna court. His family income is reportedly in the range of Rs.1,000 to Rs.3,000. His son owns a bicycle. They have no livestock. All adult members have voter ID cards and ration cards for all.

He still works for the communist party and champions the cause of the local people. His locality is full of refugees from the same Kashipur area of Faridpur district. One of his sons has passed away and surviving son is engaged in the family business of vegetable vending. At the age of 80, he still goes to Kalna Court and work as *Seresta* for an earning. His earning has gone down and has a hand-to-mouth existence. He wants to remain a social worker. Many refugees remember him for help rendered to them in getting ration card, voter ID cards, and government allocated land, and securing admission into Krishnadebpur High School. The local Nibhuji Bazar still remains as his *adda* (meeting place) and Krishnadebpur Anchal has become full of migrants. Here, the people speak the local language of his area of origin in Faridpur district, and he is happy that people from the same Kashipur-Khoazpur-Tekerhat are living in this locality in relative peace and comfort.

### **5.3 Khudiram Rajbanshi: Fisherman**

Khudiram Rajbanshi hails from Pabna district which has witnessed several turmoils in his life time before his migration to India, during the 1992 turmoil which followed the

aftermath of Babri Masjid demolition. He belongs to a fisherman community and from boyhood he began practicing. At the age of 20 years, he unexpectedly got an opportunity to work in a Mill in Khulna town, named Kishinji Jute Mill-2, far away from his home. He got his job through one of his acquaintances. After the outbreak of the 1965 Indo-Pak War, trouble started in Khulna and Chalna Port. Many Bihari Muslims had been working in working in Jute Mills of the then East Pakistan. Hindu workers lived under threat and it is in such circumstances that he fled back to his native village, Kalia- Haripur in Shirajganj sub-division. He resumed his fishery job. But after some time, he got information that a new jute mill had come up in Shirajganj (Raipur); and he got a job in that Mill in which he continued to work till 1992.

During the 1971 War, there was trouble in Shirajganj and in his village also. Many Hindus migrated to India but his family did not. Being a poor fisherman, he and his family were spared from torture by Pakistani military. Actually Pakistan authorities spared barbers, dhobis, jamadars and fishermen. They mainly targeted landlords and businessmen from Hindu community and influential Awami League leaders. At that time, as a Hindu, Khudiram felt sorry, when his fellowmen in town were getting driven out and hunted. He had to work in mills lest he would lose job. But his family did feel the threat from Muslim fundamentalists after the Babri Masjid demolition. Hundreds of Hindu temples were destroyed and women were assaulted and tortured. This time, threat came to him also as he being of the Hindu Community. Their community temple, Kali Mandir was destroyed which was the real hurt that made them flee the area. Seven or eight families from the village migrated together with the help of an agent. The agent (*dalal*) helped them to migrate. One rich Muslim purchased their homelands and they got some money for migration. They had no land for cultivation purpose in Bangladesh. The agent charged Rs. 500 per head for crossing the border. Khudiram had to pay Rs. 4,000 for border-crossing of all the eight members of his family. He has four sons and two daughters. He knew before migration that his family would be able to survive in India since a fishing job would be easily available there. One of his maternal uncles is living in Krishnadebpur Anchal area; so they first came directly to his house. His family stayed for 3 years with his uncle though they cooked separately. He along with his two sons began work as casual labours in fishing. They worked with rich fishermen, catching fish in big ponds as assistants to persons in fishing business.

Now, his three sons and he himself work in fishing activities, while one son works as a security guard. All of them have low levels of education and his daughters have been married off to persons known to him, settled in nearby areas.

All the immigrant families in his group purchased the land jointly in 1995 where they have settled down together. In this Dakshin Schoolpara of Krishnadebpur Anchal, all inhabitants are *Rajbansis* (fisher-folk), except one or two of *Sutradhar* (Carpenters) or Barbers. They live happily and in harmony. Though his family earnings have gone down and his family size has increased because sons are married and have children, he still feels secure and they face no political threat of repatriation. Now his married sons have established separate families units but are staying in the same plot of jointly held land. One of his neighbours happen to be his brother-in-law, who has started working with a political party {CPI (M)} and it is he who helped Khudiram in obtaining a ration card, a voter ID card, land, and other documents. All the immigrants receive help from the State Government under different schemes. He earns Rs. 50 per day, which is not sufficient to maintain his large family. So he is not economically well-off. He expects the government to grant them loan assistance to start some businesses. They have no banking/financial accounts. They have a mere hand-to-mouth existence. Khudiram is now 65 years old and hopes that his sons would live in better conditions. They will not, at any cost, go back to Bangladesh because nothing is left for them there.

He had cultivable land of 9 *Kathas* in Bangladesh; while now he has only 3 *Kathas* of land in India. He has three small huts, built in a plot of 3 *Kathas* of land. All the three huts have tin roofs; walls are made of bamboo thatch, and floors of mud-plaster. Their huts are not electrified, since electricity supply has not yet reached their area. However, they hold two saving accounts in the *Samiti* (non-banking saving scheme).

#### **5.4 Hemlal Sarkar: Grocery Vendor**

Hemlal Sarkar is a grocery shop-keeper in Chhotomitrapara of Kalna in the district of Burdwan. He has his shop in the front part of his homestead, by the side of a road. He is also engaged in rice-boiling and rice-trade conducted with active participation of his wife. He has a son and two daughters. The eldest daughter is married off in the same village. Though

Chhotomitrapara is a village, it has lately come under Kalna Municipality area and the Kalna government hospital is situated adjacent to the village.

Hemlal Sarkar hails from Rajarchar village in Kalkini Thana of Faridpur district. He belongs to the feudal family 'Sardar Bari' of Rajarchar. Theirs was a big joint family which entirely migrated to India in different phases since the partition of India. They had huge land property, big business and sugarcane crushing machinery. Hemlal is the youngest son of his parents. His eldest brother was lame-footed (handicapped) and was engaged in grocery trade. Hemlal used to help his brother from his boyhood. He along with his family members, except the lame brother, migrated to India during the 1971 War when their houses and business establishments got looted and one of his elder cousins was kidnapped by *Razakars*, the local agents for the Pak-military. Once the War was over, many of migrants went back to Bangladesh including Hemlal and his family.

Hemlal lost his father in 1966 when he was studying in Class V. After the 1971 War, their joint family broke up and he was studying in the 10<sup>th</sup> Standard at that time. He passed SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination in 1972 but did not pursue his study further. He tried to help his brothers to do farming. The famines and floods in subsequent years virtually ruined their economy, as their family income then depended mainly on agriculture. As they have no guardian (father), they were not able to maintain family properly. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the looting of their houses during the famine of 1974, a large number of the members of Sardar Bari family again fled to India. Hemlal also thought of migrating. But before migration, Hemlal got married and his wife lived with her parents. Hemlal migrated alone to India in 1977 through an agent and he paid the agent Rs.500. his wife joined him in India later.

His eldest sister with the members of her family migrated to India in 1962 and was settled in Patuli (near Katwa) in Burdwan district. Naturally, Hemlal first went to his sister's house. He spent about a year there. His niece's husband gave him information about the land and business opportunities available in Kalna. His eldest sister's family and Hemlal's family (including his brothers, their wives and kids who also had come to India by the time) came to Chhotomitrapara after having constructed two *Kutcha* houses on the land they had bought. All brothers jointly started the business of rice boiling and rice-trade. They had some

money left with them from the sale of their properties (land) in Bangladesh. Owing to hardships in India, a quarrel arose within a period of 8 to 9 years among brothers. So, the family broke-up for the second time.

Hemlal decided to start grocery business along with rice-boiling and rice-trade. Since he and his wife are sincere about work, they could prosper in life. He purchased land for constructing house and business establishment. He has more than 10 *Bighas* of land and his house has tiled roof the walls and floor are *pucca*. He maintains two heads of cattle, has two bicycles, a TV set (Black and White) and a refrigerator. His son is studying in the BA (Hons.) class and his youngest daughter has passed SSC. He has not received any help from Government and any relatives, to start business. He has a ration card, a voter ID card and *patta* for land. He does not want to go back to Bangladesh. At present, none of his family members live in Bangladesh; so he could never imagine of going back. He likes India and he along with children, who are born in India, and all of them wish to spend their lives in India.

Hemlal still remembers the glorious past. It sometimes rattles his memory. But nobody cares for his reminiscences; he therefore keeps busy with his own work. He hardly visits any relatives' house on any occasion. Though he has had a life of hardship, he does not spend his time in any activity other than his business. He hopes for a better time to come for his children and for himself.

### **5.5 Suresh Chandra Mondal: Successful Village Politician**

Suresh Chandra's house was looted by miscreants, for being a strong supporter of Mujibur Rahman. One of his relatives (his Father's sister) was staying at that time at Kuntighat in Balagarh Sub-division of the Hoogly district. So, he along with his family members (wife and brothers) migrated during this turbulent period, on foot walking the entire distance from Kalkini Thana in Faridpur district to Bangaon-Haridaspur border. Then they boarded an Indian railway train to reach Kuntighat station. As tens of thousands of refugees were crossing the border, they did not face any problem in crossing the border. As his relative, i.e. aunty, is childless, they decided to stay back in India even after Liberation of Bangladesh in December 1971.

Suresh Chandra had passed the Higher Secondary School (HSC) in 1970 and had started teaching in a secondary school in Bangladesh. After migration, they started business in rice-boiling and rice-trading across the river Hoogly. In those days, there was restriction on inter-district movement of food grains in West Bengal. Kuntighat is in Hoogly district and across the river there was Charsarati and Kalyani in Nadia district. So, they did not face much of a problem for being refugees of the 1971 War. They did not seek any Government of India's help at that time.

In 1973, he along with some of his friends started a village primary school. His village Nityanandapur and nearby village Gopalpur are inhabited mostly by refugees. Till 1981, he gave voluntary service in that school, ultimately the school was given recognition by the Government of West Bengal. But his appointment to the school was not sanctioned, as more needy persons had to be accommodated as teachers. His brothers were doing successful rice-trading business; he then turned to political activism and social service. He joined the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and became a member of the Panchayat *Samiti* (at Block level) and served the *Samiti* for three terms (15 years). Currently, he is not a member in *Samiti* but a strong supporter of CPI (M). He has now two sons and a daughter. The daughter has been married off.

His house has tiled roof and walls of brick. The floor of the house is muddy. He has separate kitchen with tiled roof. His main business is rice trading and earns about Rs.2000 per month from this business. The eldest son is working in a Company at Gurgaon in Haryana and sends about Rs.5, 000 per month. His second son is busy in rice-trading. So, he is comparatively well placed. He has about 8 *Kathas* of land and house constructed on 1 *Katha*. The rest of the land is used for drying paddy for dehusking purpose. He has three bank accounts, a bike, a bicycle, a mobile phone and a TV set (Black & White). He keeps also a milch cow.

He has secured his citizenship card and voter ID and ration cards for all the members of his family. He is happy that he is socially and politically much better off in India than he could have ever aspired for in Bangladesh. He brooks no ill-feelings against Muslims in India but hates fundamentalists. He is one of the successful politicians in his locality.

## 5.6 Jagadish Mondal: Rice-Trader

Jagadish Mondal was a farmer in Bangladesh with two sons. One day his father told him that he should go to India because all of them would have to migrate someday. As some of his relatives were ready to migrate and they had already got migration certificate issued from the Indian High Commission, he talked to them, one of whom happened to be his brother-in-law. He accompanied them and came upto the border with India. He crossed over to India through a lane in 1960. After crossing the border entire group reunited and first came to Charsarati village near Kalyani, where his brother-in-law's relative lived.

As he was the sole member of his family to migrate, he decided to take up whatever work that came first. He worked as a casual labourer in agriculture and earned small income. Subsequently, he took a plot of land on lease for annual payment of Rs. 300 only. He cultivated the land for 'son-pat' (sun hemp) and produced about 8 mounds (1 mound= 40 Kg.) of pat (fibre) which was sold at the rate of Rs. 1200 per mound. With that income he bought three Bighas of land. Since then, his fortune began looking up. He became rich through cultivation. Charsarati lies on the bank of the river Hoogly and has very fertile land. He has managed to purchase about seven *Bighas* of land with the profits he made from cultivation.

He cultivated paddy, moong and masur, jute and son-pats. Once flood in the autumn season (*Ashwin- Kartik* months) washed away all paddy crops. He then thought it unwise to put all eggs in one basket; whether cultivation on *char* ('char' means islands) alone was enough. So, he purchased about seven *Bighas* of land in Kuntighat across the river. Charsarati is on the East bank of the river, while Kuntighat is on the West bank. Besides, Kuntighat is an industrial area, where Bandel Thermal Plant, Rayon Tissue mills and a railway station are located. Besides a good communication system, a road-link and a railway link also exist. All these attracted him to cross the river. But he started cultivation of paddy only.

He remained in India as a lone member of his family for seven to eight years and used to visit Bangladesh/ Pakistan every year to meet his family. His father then sold their lands in Bangladesh and sent his wife, mother and two sons to India through an agent (*dalal*). He constructed a building (two-storeyed) and purchased a rice-mill. He also purchased a van (four-wheeled cycle) for easy vending of rice, in different localities. He owns a cow, a Black



and White TV set. He earns from his cultivation as well as from the rice-mill to the tune of about Rs.3,000 per month. However, he does not have institutional savings in banks or other financial institution.

His eldest son is a Science graduate and engaged in construction activities. He lives separately in another town. His youngest son is looking after the rice-mill and the cultivation. His two daughters born after migration have been married off. His sons are also married. He feels that after coming to India, he is in a better position socially and economically. He has the citizenship certificate, voter ID card, and ration card. He did not get any other help from the government. He does not want to go back to Bangladesh at all. After his family migrated to India, he has never visited Bangladesh. He is a happy person and considers India his motherland.

### **5.7 Purna Chandra Mondal: Repeat Migrant**

Purna Chandra Mondal has been a repeat migrant with little stability in life. Now, he has become a member (disciple) of *Sat Sangh* of Anukul Thakur. His original house had been in Rajarchar, a Hindu-dominated village in Kalkini Thana of Faridpur district. After passing Matriculation in 1964 he migrated to India and stayed with his sister at Kalyani, whose family had migrated in 1962 (during the Indo-China War). His brother-in-law got job as primary school teacher and subsequently became a local Congress leader. He secured a citizenship certificate and began applying for jobs. Ultimately he was selected for Railway Clerk and posted in Assam. He did not join the post and went back to East Pakistan in 1966. Then he got admission to the Intermediate (Arts) (i.e. HSC) course in Nazimuddin College, Madaripur in Bangladesh. He passed HSC in 1970 and started teaching in his village school. During the 1971 War, he migrated back to Kalyani in Nadia district and stayed with his sister, as was done earlier. But after the War was over, he went back again to his native place in Bangladesh in 1972. This time he spent about 10 years in Bangladesh and was engaged in teaching in the same School in which he studied. In the meantime, he tried to complete his graduation but could not succeed.

Once in 1982, he came to visit his sister in Kalyani when his brother-in-law encouraged him to stay back in India. As he is a strong Congress leader in Kalyani (now of

Trinamul Congress), he managed to obtain ownership of a petty trading shops in Purina in which he began business. Purna Chandra seems to be a lazy fellow unwilling to work hard; he gave up the business and left for Bangladesh after a period of two years this time even without informing his sister and brother-in-law. He took a job as a school teacher in a far off place from his native village in Bangladesh. Though he was married in 1970, he always came alone to India, may be the reason for his frequent returns to Bangladesh.

Again in 1990, he along with his family members, consisting of wife, two sons and two daughters, reached India and came to Kalyani where his sister was staying. In Kalna, one of his cousins helped him in opening a grocery-shop there. His elder brother had also migrated in the meantime to Kuntighat (Balagarh sub-division) in Hoogly district. So, his father advised him to settle down at Kuntighat so that his brothers could help mutually in times of need. His brother, though not highly educated became a successful businessman and possesses a tractor, two vans, and a rice-mill, while Purna Chandra remains penniless and in dire straits.

His sons have studied up to class VII and help him in rice-boiling and rice trading. One daughter has been married off. One of his sons looks after the business, where Purna Chandra normally sits. Recently, he has taken an agency in RCM multinational company selling consumer items. Besides, he has joined *Sat Sangh* and has become a practicing devotee. When we revisited his house for the second time for getting detailed information, we found him at *Sat Sangh* Ashram near Kuntighat Railway Station. He told us that he would never go to Bangladesh again. Already he has is 60 years of age and all his relatives are staying in India.

His house has tiled roof, mud-plastered floor and cement plastered walls. He owns about seven *Kathas* of land on which his house is situated. The homestead is used for rice-boiling and trading activities only. He earns about Rs.1,500 per month from trading and another Rs.1000 from the shop. His house has electricity connection. He has a TV set, a VCR and a mobile phone. He owns a motorcycle and a bicycle. He has three bank pass-books, one for him and other two for each of his two sons. Also he keeps a cow for milching. He may not be as rich as his brothers, but as a late comer of advanced age, he is

maintaining his family reasonably well, as all the three male members of his family are working.

## 5.8 Dhiren Dey: Struggling Life of a Hawker

With the outbreak of the Indo-Pak War in 1965, trouble started in East Pakistan. The riots were then mainly confined to Dhaka and Khulna districts but cases of looting and threatening of Hindus were visible in all parts of East Pakistan. Narayanganj was one of commercial and industrial centres in Dhaka district. Since, Hindus in this town were the main businessmen, the riot spread to Narayanganj town and the nearby Hindu villages. Dhiren Dey was then a boy of eight or nine years of age. He does not therefore, recollect all the things that happened, but he has distinct memories of the riots in Narayanganj and Dhaka. It is in 1965 that they had to leave East Pakistan. His father had been no more at that time. His mother with her three sons (including Dhiren Dey) had to leave Pakistan along with other members of the village.

His mother knew that one of his relatives was staying in the Ranaghat Camp. So, after crossing the Darshana border in Kushtia district, her mother went direct to the Ranaghat Camp directly with help from volunteers. The volunteers/ social workers helped them at the crossing point. As her mother was widow, the family was given shelter in Ranaghat Mahila Camp. There were three government established camps in Ranaghat. The government used to give them food (2kgs of rice, wheat and dal) and money (Rs. 15) per person per fortnight. It was sufficient for bare survival. Some clothes were also distributed among children during the *Puja* festival. There existed some primary schools within the camp boundary. He studied up to Class IV in one of these schools.

Dhiren Dey is a handicapped person. He does not have his right hand, by birth. As he grew up, he found it difficult to find a job. His brothers helped him with food and clothes. In 1976, they were given settlement by the government of West Bengal in Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony near Kanchrapara Township (famous for the railway workshop and as a business centre) in the North 24 Parganas district. They were allotted two *Kathas* of land where his family and his two brother's families are staying. Now they have separate houses and separate establishments. The government gave them Rs. 6,000 for construction of house

and provided Tins for roofing. But government has not yet provided patta for the lands they occupy, as happened in case of Kalyani settlement.

After coming to Mallick Bagh Colony, Dhiren Dey started hawkers' business. He started selling sundry articles in railway stations, on footpaths, on buses etc. When he found he could earn something, he thought of getting married. In the beginning of the 1980s, he got married. With the help of his wife he started better type of businesses. They are now preparing *Laddus* and *Pedas* (made of *khir*, rice and milk). His wife cooks and prepares the delicacies and he supplies them to shops and stores. His monthly income is about Rs.2,500. The floor and walls of his house is cement plastered, while tin for roofing, tins supplied by the government. The house has electricity connection and he has a radio, a TV set (Black & White). He also maintains a bank account and a bicycle.

He has a son and a daughter. He wants to give education to them. As he had been poor and fatherless, in his boyhood he was unable to study much. But, finances are a problem to him as his earning remains small. His daughter is about to appear for twelfth standard examination, but he is not unable to provide private tuitions for her. His son is studying in the 5<sup>th</sup> class. He expects that the government help since he is a poor, handicapped person.

## **5.9 Japani Mondal: Rudderless Boat**

His family members have named him Japani (named after Japan) as he had Mongoloid features. When he was barely three years of age, his father died and his mother started working as housemaid. He can not remember all events of migration but that there was trouble (riots) in Dhaka and Hindus were leaving his village. So, his mother along with him also crossed the border accompanying many others from his village. As she was a poor widow, she could travel without ticket in trains and buses in those days and that too during the period of disturbance. It appears to him that they migrated as a consequence of the 1965 War. He was about 7 years old at that time.

They somehow landed on the Sealdah railway platform in Calcutta. Thousands of refugees were on the platform. Volunteers were classifying them to decide the places and the

camps to which each group was to be sent. As his mother was a widow and nobody was there to help her, she was sent to the Ranaghat Mahila Camp. Since his mother was able to enlist her name, they could survive. He thanks his mother still for the wise decision she took to migrate to India.

Ranaghat Mahila Camp was a protected area. Small children were not allowed to go outside the camp premises. There were also security guards in the camp. Some primary schools in the camp area and he passed the 4<sup>th</sup> standard from one of those primary schools. His mother wanted to give him higher education. Infact, he got admitted to a school named Bidhan Chandra High School in Ranaghat (outside the camp). But owing to poor academic environment and insufficient resources, he could not pursue studies after completing the course in Class VI.

The government supplied 2 Kg. of rice, and some wheat and dal and also Rs. 15 per head for a period of 15 day, which they found insufficient. When he became 18 years old, the camp authority suggested to him to do some work. So, he started making paper-packets with the help of his mother and selling them in local stores. At that time, the government started a Ceramic factory near the camp and he joined the factory as casual worker. The local goons started pressure on the factory manager to absorb them as permanent workers. Then the trouble started and the factory was closed after a period of three years.

In 1976, the government allotted them land in the Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony. He got 2 1/2 *Kathas* land. He along, with his mother, came to this colony. The government also provided Rs.700 for construction of a house and some Tin sheets for making the roof. Now, he got his own house but the *patta* for the land is yet to be given by the government. As this colony is near the Kanchrapara Township, he started career as a rickshaw-puller. The Municipality authority does not encourage rickshaws in the thickly populated town and he was harassed on several occasions by the police. His health condition also deteriorated. He therefore, gave up that work. He worked sometime as casual labourer on sundry assignments, but nothing suited him. In the meantime, he got married in the late 1980s and tried to find some good job. Ultimately, he started a cycle-repairing workshop on the road-side and also acquired a pumping device for bicycles and rickshaw tubes. But Japan's problem of finances is worsening day-by-day. The number of rickshaws are decreasing due

to the flooding in of auto-rickshaws, cars and buses in the town. Similarly, the number of cycles are also dwindling because of the increase in the number of motor-bikes. So, he is thinking of switching over to an alternative vocation as a survival strategy.

As his source of income has kept on changing, he has not saved much. His housing condition is not good. His income is about Rs.1,500 per month. The amount of land is 2 1/2 *Kathas* out of which his house occupies hardly half a *Katha*. The house does not have necessary furnishing or adequate consumer durables. He has a bicycle but no bank account.

He has two daughters. One daughter is studying in class X and the other has been married off. His wife works as a part-time domestic servant. They have a ration card, and a voter ID card; the family lives below the poverty line (BPL). But they do not receive any help under the BPL scheme. His only worry is how to marry off his second daughter and also how to survive. He expects some help from the government.

### **5.10 Shobha Rani Adhikary: Unfortunate Woman**

Shobha Rani Adhikary is a migrant from Gournadi Thana of Barisal district. Her family migrated to India in phases. She is a widow and her husband was a school teacher. Her husband died of heart-attack at the age of 35 years. By that time, she had 3 children and the youngest one was 3 months old at the time of her husband's death. She had father-in-law, mother-in-law and two brothers-in-law who are married. She is worried about educating her children. The landed property she has is not sufficient to support the family and meet the education expenditure of her children. Her parents, 3 brothers and one unmarried sister have migrated to India and they are all well established. She sent her only son to India at the age of 12 years and the boy got admitted in a new school at Kalna in Burdwan district. At that time, her parents were staying at Kalna. She was looking after her father-in-law and mother-in-law. As they were old, she decided not to undertake any long travel with them. After two years of sending her son, she sent her elder daughter to India. By this time, her parents had shifted from Kalna to Kalyani in the district of Nadia. The daughter got admitted in a village school outside Kalyani Township.

After sending her son and daughter to India, Shobha Rani faced problems in her father-in-law's house. They harassed her and tried to drive her family out but she did not want to migrate. Already she had burdened to her parents with the task of looking after her daughter, who themselves were running the family with whatever meagre amounts her brothers were sending to her parents. She did not want to become a further burden to her parents. The villagers also helped her to stay on in Bangladesh. After sometime, her father died in India and her both children were ill treatment by her unmarried sister. She came several times in India through agent and met her children. She tried to pacify her sister in vein and her mother was too old to keep control over her youngest unmarried daughter. Finally, she migrated through an agent giving him Rs.1, 500.

Shobha Rani spent a terrible time living in misery and grief in the two parts of Bengal shuttling in between them for several years. After passing M.A., her first daughter thought of leaving her aunt's house. The daughter wanted to rid herself of her aunt's torture. But the real problem lay with her brother. Her brother passed only HSC and did not do well in studies. They shifted to Ramkrishna Pally, Madhyamgram in Barasat sub-division of the North 24 Parganas in 1999 since some of their acquaintances were living there. They lived in a rented single room house and live on money earned through tuitions. Both the daughter and the son tried for employment for several years. Shobha Rani sold her land in Bangladesh and purchased a plot of land of two *Kathas*. Recently, the daughter got a job as School teacher in a school located in Kolkata through the School Service Commission. So, after a long time Shobha Rani was able to get proper food and purchase essential household articles. They constructed a two-room house by taking loans from banks.

She has purchased one colour TV set and has two bank accounts in the names of her daughter and son. Now all of them have ration card, voter ID card and *patta* for the land. Her family has not received any other help from the government. Now, the daughter is more than 30 years old and she has to be given marriage. Her son is older than the daughter and remains unemployed. Her son has to settle down in life. Shobha Rani still feels that she is lost in an ocean of uncertainty. She is not able to see the brighter side of life and in this process and she has already crossed 60 years of age. Her husband died about 30 years ago, a stroke of misfortune which had made her life miserable and rudderless. Her youngest

daughter is married off in Bangladesh. She herself is struggling in India and misses her youngest daughter, whom she has been unable to meet in recent years.

She feels that migration and partition of Bengal have made her life miserable. At least, she could have settled her son's and daughter's marriage in Bangladesh, had she continued to stay there.

### **5.11 Ranjan Kumar Baidya: Student Migrant**

In Taltala village of Kalyani Municipality, was Ranjan Kumar Baidya who had migrated to India for study purpose. His father, Nirmal Kumar Baidya is a Headmaster in a school in Bangladesh. Ranjan Kumar migrated along with his uncle, Bimal Kumar Baidya who lives in Kalna, Burdwan and is practicing medicine, being a qualified pharmacist. Bimal Baidya died last year and is survived by his wife and two daughters. They migrated through an agent (*dala*) who belonged to the same village in Bangladesh. The agent took Rs. 500 per head. After migration Ranjan Kumar lived in Muratipur near Kalyani town with an uncle (a distant relation). His uncle was also a student like him. It was his uncle who helped him to get admission in a village school, Charsarati High School, and he donated Rs. 2,000 for admission to class IX. After passing *Madhyamik* (SSC) and Higher Secondary (Arts) examinations from that school, he is currently studying in the second year B.A. class in Kanchrapara College in the district of the North 24 Parganas.

His younger brother migrated to India in 2002 and got admitted to a well known school in Kalna town (Raj School) of Burdwan district. His brother was stayed with his uncle. After passing *Madhyamik* (SSC) examination in 2004 he returned to Kalyani and took admission in Pannalal High School, the oldest school in Kalyani, in the XI standard (Science stream). Since, he could not succeed in the HSC examination in 2006; he joined a three-year diploma course in Polytechnic in the Burdwan Township.

Ranjan Kumar's family has nearly 10 *Bighas* of land in Bangladesh and his father is still in service as Headmaster in a private school there. His father still has six more years of service to reach superannuation. His mother is shuttling quite frequently between Bangladesh and India. Their house is in Kalkini Thana of Faridpur district and the majority



of migrants in Taltala are from Faridpur district. Parents normally visit India from Bangladesh with valid passports and stay with children for a while, on the requests made by children. At present, the Government of West Bengal and the Government of India do not entertain Bangladeshi students for taking up jobs in India. Their parents are therefore sending their children for studies in India in the hope that they will be able to settle down in India after completion of their studies. Now, Ranjan Kumar and brother are on the look out for a plot of land in Kalyani Municipality area where they intend to build a good house. They would prefer some land in a refugee colony where they would feel safe and secure.

Ranjan Kumar already owns about one *Katha* of land which he purchased for Rs. 50,000 in Taltala Colony three years ago. His father has sent money for the purchase from Bangladesh via an agent (known as *Hoondy*). Now they have their own house in that plot of land which has tin sheet for roof and walls and cement plastered floor. They still have not taken any power connection and do not have rich furnishings or valuable consumer durables. All they have are two bicycles which they use for conveyance. Though Ranjan Kumar's monthly income mainly comes from Bangladesh from cultivation and his father's salary, it is just suffices for his study purpose.

At presently, Ranjan Kumar studies in Kanchrapara College as an undergraduate student and works part time in a Maruti Service Centre for Rs. 2,000 per month. He got this job as he has passed a course in auto-mechanics, as a private student. He now expects to get a better job. He is a handsome young man of 20 years of age. He hopes to settle down in the Kalyani Township with his entire family after his father's retirement. His family consists of parents and two brothers. The two brothers do not want to go back to Bangladesh after completion of their studies.

### **5.12 Bimal Bala: Farmer- turned- Casual Worker**

Bimal Bala is a casual worker, currently staying in the Taltala area of Kalyani Municipality. He migrated to India long ago, in 1965, with his wife and child. His house in Bangladesh (East Pakistan in 1965) was in Satpar village in Gopalganj Sub-division of Faridpur district. His migration was not the result of oppression from Muslims or fear of onslaughts from them. Gopalganj sub-division is a Hindu-majority area and all the villages

surrounding Satpar are Hindu villages. But he thought that Pakistan has been created for Muslims and that all Hindus would have to leave the country; so it was only prudent to leave the country as early as possible.

He had lands of about seven Bighas of land in Bangladesh and cultivated the land himself. He had two bullocks, a cow and a calf at the time he left East Pakistan (Bangladesh). He was leading a happy life but suddenly one of his cousins persuaded him to migrate to India. His cousin had migrated earlier and settled down at Chakdah. In the meantime one of his neighbours, who had also migrated earlier, offered him a place to stay in a vacant plot purchased by him at Chakdah. His neighbour was working in Kolkata. As he got this offer, he immediately decided to migrate as he got the place to live. After taking all information about the border and of the places through which he could infiltrate into India, he migrated illegally with wife and child. As already planned, he settled down in Chakdah where he built a thatched house on the vacant plot offered to him in Tengri village.

He lived in Chakdah for about five years before he migrated to Kalyani. He started work as a casual labourer then as a mason. As Chakdah is not far off from Kalyani (earlier Kalyani was under Chakdah sub-division), he frequently visited Kalyani as a mason. One day his brother-in-law (sister's husband) told him to come to Kalyani and gave information about a plot in Taltala. Taltala is a place where migrants from different places have occupied government land meant for the Kalyani University. Firstly, people from the Charsarati and Birpara villages, to escape from frequent floods. These villages are on the banks of the Hooghly River. Taltala, Ghoshpara, and Muratipur were barren lands lying adjacent to Kalyani University. Actually, the Taltala area was in Kalyani University campus. So, he thought it desirable to live in a better place and better earning. He got the plot with a thatched house in exchange for a mere Rs. 600 in 1970. Actually, the land could not be purchased as it belong to the Government of West Bengal. Kalyani Township is growing fast and new buildings are coming up in large numbers, Nirmal Bala has a hey day and gets employment as a mason on all working days. His life is happier in Kalyani than it was in Chakdah.

He has three sons and all of them are married. Two of them are carpenters and the third a worker in a *Bidi* factory. His brother-in-law is a rich man and the owner of the *Bidi*

factory. He spends time frolicking with his grandchildren, but also works as casual worker or mason at the age of 75 years. He is perfectly healthy, physically and mentally, and is in hot demand for work, from builders and contractors. He has two separate houses and a kitchen on the same plot. The kitchen has tiles for roof while the house has tin sheet for roof. One house has walls made of tin while the kitchen has walls made of bamboo-thatch (*darma*). All the floors are mud-plastered. Though he has electricity connection to kitchen and the houses, he owns no consumer durable goods. In his family, he has a bicycle. The total monthly earning of all the family members in the household comes to only about Rs.2000 per month.

He does not want to go back to Bangladesh for permanent settlement. He has visited Bangladesh several times to see his mother. After his mother's death, he has reduced his number of visits to Bangladesh. He manages to visit Bangladesh through an agent. One of his brothers is still living in Bangladesh. He expressed his desire to go to Bangladesh to meet his brother in future also. He got a ration card when he was in Chakdah. The card was transferred to Kalyani. His name is included in the voter's list and has received land settlement document (*patta*) too. The Government of West Bengal gave him *patta* in 1994 and he has now become the owner of the plot. He likes India for the liberty and freedom it provides. Now he has many relatives in India and considers India his motherland. He has spent the major portion of his life in India and also wishes to die in Indian soil.

### **5.13 Premananda Halder: New Gardener**

Premananda Halder hailed from the Ullabari village in Rajair Thana of the Madaripur Sub-division. He had visited India several times before he finally migrated twenty five years ago along with his wife. He had a land of three *Bighas* in Bangladesh which he found insufficient for his family to survive; he used to work in other's fields while in Bangladesh. The wages rates those times were very low in Bangladesh as compared to those prevailed in West Bengal. As he was a daily wage earner in Bangladesh, he thought it better to work as daily wage earner in India. He used to visit his friends and relatives in India and did work as casual wage labourer in agriculture in Burdwan district. Burdwan is a rice-belt and has strong communist influence; so wages are comparatively high there during harvesting as well as trans-planting season. He normally stayed in one of his brother's houses in Memari and

worked in nearby field. He used to visit India seasonally and to go back to Bangladesh as and when he so desired.

But his final decision to settle down in India was influenced by his marriage. His wife Shobha Rani Halder also has a similar background. She had migrated to India with her parents in 1964 when they were given settlement in the Kurup Camp (near Mana Camp) in Madhya Pradesh. There the Government of India used to give ration to all refugee families in the Camp. After six months, they were given settlement in Malkan Giri area, which was a forest land. Their family had migrated to India with migration certificates which was supposed to be issued by the Indian High Commissioner at Dhaka but was found to be a false document by the Malkan Giri settlement authority. In all, there were eighteen families in the same plight and who also did not know whether the immigration certificate they had were genuine or not. All of them decided to come to West Bengal and settle down in Katwa sub-division of Burdwan district where some of their acquaintances were already living. Shobha Rani has studied up to Class VI in Katwa High School.

After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, her family went back to Bangladesh in 1972 hoping better and more comfortable living conditions. But the famine in 1974-75, shattered their dreams and compelled them to go back to India again. As Shobha Rani was by then a grown-up girl, her maternal uncle in Bangladesh kept Shobha Rani with him hoping that she would get better groom in Bangladesh than in India.

Premananda Halder belonged to the same village of Shobha Rani's maternal uncle. As both Premananda and Shobha were repatriates from India, they formed an ideal match; and they hoped to be able to migrate to India some time later. Accordingly, after a year of marriage they migrated to India and stayed with Shobha's mother and brother in Daihat, near Katwa town. Actually, it was Shobha's mother who encouraged them to migrate. Besides, Premananda had a picked a quarrel with one of his brothers who is still staying in Bangladesh. As he had worked as labourer, he thought it better to work in India and earn a higher wage than in Bangladesh.

They have actually migrated with Bangladeshi passports and are overstaying the period permitted. As Shobha Rani was educated in India and had Migration Certificate, they

were able to get a ration card. Shobha Rani's brother has shifted residence to Taltala, Kalyani which has motivated Premananda's family also to come to Taltala. One of his maternal uncles is staying in this locality who was the person who helped them in the search for a plot of land in Taltala. Premananda purchased the plot along with a hut for Rs. 300 in 1982. He has two sons and two daughters born in India, and he did not have any problem in getting birth certificate, ration card, etc. One of his daughters is already married off. Premananda got *patta* for his land from the Government of West Bengal in 1994. Now he has got ration card, voter ID card and *Patta* which are necessary to prove Indian Citizen.

Premananda works as gardener on daily wages in Kalyani Township. His wife Shobha Rani also works as a housemaid in Kalyani Township. So, they have now a higher level of income than they had in Bangladesh. The family income is about Rs.2,500 per month. They consider Taltala their home and India as their motherland. At present his house has tin roofing, mud-plastered flooring and walls of bamboo-thatch. He does not own any livestock. He possesses no financial assets and no vehicles. The only asset he has is a Black and White TV set.

## 5.14 Conclusions

In this Chapter, we have tried to capture the nature of migration, the behavioural attitude of the migrants, their inner feelings about migration and their overall struggle for existence in real life situation through the case studies of a few migrants whom we have already interviewed in the first round of survey. Our experience in the first round has helped us to select persons from different walks of life. Selected persons of these case studies actually represent students, casual wage-labourers, petty shop-keepers, widows, political activist, social workers, fisherman and self-employed who have all migrated to India from Bangladesh since partition of India. They have migrated in different waves at various points of time. For example, Sahadeb Sarkar, a social worker in Kalna, migrated to India after Mulardi Riot of 1950 in Barisal district of Bangladesh, while Dhiren Dey in Bijpur migrated after the 1965 Indo-Pak War. Again, Suresh Chandra Mondal in Kuntighat came to India during the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war, whereas Hemlal Sarkar migrated after

assassination of Mujibur Rahman in 1975 and Khudiram Rajbanshi after the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992.

Besides, the migrants have come from different backgrounds too. But after migration, they have become a single undifferentiated entity even though their nature of jobs is different (from social worker to fisherman). Most of them have led, more precisely still leading, stressful lives. Some of them have succeeded in their lives through struggle. Jagadish Mandal and Suresh Chandra Mandal in Kuntighat (Balagarh, Hooghly) are the good examples in this regard. Some are still struggling for existence, such as the cases of Dhiren Dey and Japani Mandal in Mallick Bagh Natun Colony (Bijpur, North 24-Parganas). Some are in deep distress condition like Shobha Rani Adhikary, a widow, who still does not expect for peaceful settlement with her children and thinks partition as a curse to her life.

Though fencing of the border has reduced the flow of migration, still person like Ranjan Kumar Baidya is likely to arrive India in future also. He has migrated as a student and is struggling for survival with his family in India. He is studying as well as doing service. It is a fact that almost all migrants are happy to live in India even though all of them had to undergo difficult phases in the initial days of immigration. Many of them expect that the government should help them through more dependable rehabilitation programmes such as loans for starting business activities.

There is no single theory of migration that is applicable to them. Sahadeb Sarkar has migrated due to threat on his life, while Premananda Haldar migrated for economic reason. The network theory is applicable to the case of Shobha Rani Adhikary in Barasat, Purna Chandra Mandal in Kuntighat and Premananda Haldar in Kalyani. But most of them, like Dhiren Dey, Japani Mandal, Suresh Chandra Mandal and Hemlal Sarkar, have migrated due to riots and religious persecution. Social net-work theory is relevant also in the case of Hemlal Sarkar. All migration theories have some points of relevance in the case of migration from Bangladesh to India, but none of them taken alone, is capable of fully explaining the phenomenon of this cross-border migration.

We can conclude from these case studies that the very basis of division of India on religious line was the main cause for the migration from Bangladesh into India. It also means

that the Bangladeshi Hindus felt insecure in a Muslim dominated country of Bangladesh (or East Pakistan). Common Bengali language, culture and religion were stronger forces for migration to West Bengal which have worked smoothly through social network and government sympathy rather than artificially drawn border barrier. The presence of sympathetic State Government and relations of these immigrants in the positions of power (both in terms of wealth and political) further facilitated this influx. Therefore, the artificial border and its fencing are unable to keep the Hindus on either side of the border separated. In some cases we have seen that migrants are even worse off in India compared to Bangladesh economically but still the peace, security of life and presence of relatives have offset such disincentives of economic hardship and they are neither feeling sorry nor complaining about their decision of migration.

# Chapter 6

## Summary and Conclusions

### 6.1 Overview

The problem of cross-border migration began in South Asia with the Partition of the Indian sub-continent. The problem is so critical that it has not found a sustainable solution even after sixty years of partition. It is a multi-dimensional problem affecting social, political and economic conditions of the nations concerned. In the post-partition scenario, nation and nationality were defined to mean to be confined to the newly determined geographical entities; migration flows see to it that borders move inwards and borders begin emerging within national boundaries. Thus, an account of trans-border migration in South Asia becomes also an account of borders, spaces and nations, and the account of how one nation faces problems of population movements.

Protection of minorities has become a catchword in the liberal agenda in South Asia. Precisely because of its use as a slogan, there is a tendency to ignore its complexities. Protection of minorities is impossible given the way the states of South Asia are developing both politically and economically. Such states go on producing majorities and minorities on the basis of a continuing and permanent agenda for building an 'ethnic core' and thereby marginalizing the others. Riots, therefore, continue to appear seasonally and minorities become the targets of attack, insult, torture and killings. Migrants are the markers of the 'minority niche' in a country, and have become in this context, the victims of riots, torture, and killings.

In the context of migrants from Bangladesh to India, different terms are often used. Cross-border migrants may be defined as persons who cross the international border between the two neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and India. Migrants may be of the legal and illegal migrants. Legal migrants take the route of legal procedure for migration from the country of their origin to the host country. As the legal route has been virtually stopped among the South Asian nations, the problem of illegal migration or of flight of refugees has



come into existence. The term 'refugees' may be defined as those persons who flee their country of origin and are unwilling to return because their safety (or freedom) remains threatened by generalised violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which disturb public order (UNHCR Report, p.11). Now, there exist different citizenship rules in different countries and refugees may take the formal route to acquire citizenship in their destinations. But problems arise when the host country stops issuing citizenship as has happened in the case of Bangladeshi migrants or refugees to India. Then, the tendency is to resort to indirect ways of acquiring citizenship viz. through acquisition of ration cards, voter identity cards, bank accounts, acquisition of real estate, etc. Otherwise, the migrants simply overstay in India till they are thrown out by force by the government. This is the situation that has arisen over the past sixty years.

Cross-border migration is not a new phenomenon witnessed by India. India has received immigrants from almost all neighbouring countries since long ago. But the immigration from Bangladesh has raised concern as the flow has been mainly in unilateral and continuous, a flow which is believed to have put pressure on the growth and development, of States of India, particularly of those bordering with Bangladesh, i.e. West Bengal and the north-eastern States. Though the flow is continuous, the intensity has varied over time and the variations have been due to various reasons. The partition of India in 1947 had led to the division of the erstwhile Bengal Province of British India into two: the state of West Bengal in India and the Bengal part of Pakistan, which came then to be known as East Pakistan. The War of Independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the deadly famine which hit Bangladesh during 1974-75, the tragic death of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, and the demolition of Babri-Masjid in Ayodhya in India in December 1992 had spill-over its effects on Bangladesh, and the rising fundamentalism during the tenure of Khaleda Zia government in Bangladesh since 2002 have accentuated the desire to flee their places of origin. One might think that the post-1971 migration and the post-1947 migration are distinct phenomena; but they really constitute one and the same phenomenon. The post-1971 stragglers were similar to the ones who had been caught in the same process in the wake of the Partition and the years that immediately followed. The pre-1971 migrants may be termed 'refugees' while the post-1971 migrants were 'migrants', 'infiltrators' or 'trespassers'.

As Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan recognised that minorities had rights to be protected, and as Mujibur Rahman and Indira Gandhi recognised that citizenship had to be granted to migrants (to the ones who had entered before a specified period, i.e. March, 1971), the logic has assumed an inexorable character (Samaddar, 1999; p.42). The causes for migration from Bangladesh to India may be several but migration has created several socio-political problems in India, especially in the north-eastern States of India in Assam, Meghalaya and Tripura. However, the intensity of migration has gone down in recent years due to the fencing of the border and the increasing vigilance at the border areas along with the stringent policies adopted for issuance of ration card, and voter card and for admission of students in colleges and schools. Also, if we look at the decennial growth rates of West Bengal, we find that the migration flow was at a steady rate till the mid-eighties but that it has gone down during the last ten years.

## **6.2 Major Findings**

(1) The empirical analysis based on Census of India figures shows that West Bengal had higher population growth rates than all-India during the four decades since Partition of India. Certainly, the higher growth rate reflects the magnitude of cross-border migration from neighbouring Bangladesh (East Pakistan). Only during the decade of the 1990s, the population growth rate of West Bengal was lower (17.8 per cent) than that of all-India (22.7 per cent). Obviously, the inflow of refugees/ migrants has declined in recent years.

(2) The population growth rates in the bordering districts have been higher than the overall population growth of West Bengal indicating thereby that cross-border migrants settle down more in the border districts than elsewhere as has happened between the USA and Mexico. However, the pattern of population growth vis-à-vis the pattern of migration was not uniform over the decades. Among the past five decades, the pattern was the same in the first three decades, while it changed in the next two decades. The rates of population growth rates of districts have also undergone corresponding variations.

(3) Our investigation reveals that the Partition of India in 1947 on religious lines is the main stimulant for cross-border migration from Bangladesh to India. The Partition of India followed by riots and religious oppression has led to insecurity to property and life of

minorities in Bangladesh, especially of the Hindus. Insecurity was the first major cause of migration. Riots was the second major cause, followed by 'religious oppression'. So, life security, riots and religious oppression worked together as the major push factors for migration.

(4) In this case of cross-border migration, the 'social network' theory has proved itself to be the most relevant among all the theories of migration. Social network is the main determinant, the major pull factor that attracted Bangladeshi migrants into India. In the process of the settlement in India also, network theory is found to be relevant. Out of 100 households (HHs) which we surveyed 41 HHs were seen to have come first to the HHs of their relatives first and 18 households to the households of their acquaintances. Similarly, 76 households had their places of present residence in localities in which their relatives, friends, and acquaintances resided.

(5) Though the main reason for Bangladeshi migration into India may not be economic, economic considerations did play an important role. The presence of relatives or friends at PPR was an important facilitating factor during their preliminary periods of their job search. 58 HHs were assisted/ helped by friends/ relatives/ family members to get their first jobs.

(6) Till 1971, the government of West Bengal and many volunteer organisations helped the refugees from Bangladesh in different ways viz. by giving them money, food and shelter through establishment of camps. Further, the government helped them in their final settlement also. In our sample, the refugees from Ranaghat Mahila Camp were provided money and rations during the period they lived in camps and also provided money and tin sheets where they were given final settlement in Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony in Bijnur (North 24 Parganas). Similarly, *patta* for land was provided to migrants who had been occupying vacant plots of land in Kalyani Municipality area. The sympathy of the State government towards migrants encouraged further migration. So, the Government's sympathy works as a pull factor for migration. Thus, Myrdal's theory of cumulative causation is seen to have set in, in the migration process.

(7) It is observed that 57 per cent of the total immigration from Bangladesh to West Bengal took place more than 30 years ago. The flow of migration was lower in the past 20 years, a

finding which corroborates well with the finding of a lower rate of growth in population in the 'nineties. It reflects that the fencing of the border and the increasing vigilance at the border area have worked well to reduce the influx in recent years.

(8) Most of the heads of the HHs have migrated in family (85 out of 100), while 14 heads migrated alone. It shows that Bangladeshi migration is not an individual phenomenon, but a phenomenon that affects entire families. The new economic theory tries to explain this phenomenon as an attempt at maximising expected income and minimising risks collectively. Though the final decision to migrate is taken by the head, in majority of cases the migrants are found to be satisfied with the decision.

(9) The majority of the migrants did not face any problem in adapting themselves to the new environment. Only 18 HHs reported that they faced some problem at the initial stage. Ten families are still facing problems. However, with all odds, all HHs in our survey consider India as their motherland. They consider India their saviour and the place of ultimate settlement.

(10) Surprisingly, many young persons migrated accompanied by relatives for 'study purpose'; they continue to stay in India even long after completion of their studies.

(11) Only 11 HHs out of a total sample of 100 HHs reported their migration for 'economic reason' i.e. they left Bangladesh due to economic hardship there. So, Ravenstein's hypothesis that "migrants move from areas of low opportunities to areas of high opportunity" – does not seem to have been however, the major cause for Bangladeshi migration.

(12) Again, "the choice of destination is regulated by distance" is not valid for Bangladeshi migrants. The migrants in Kalyani (Nadia) and Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony (Bijpur, North 24 Parganas), have come from far off districts of Comilla, Dhaka, Faridpur and Barisal. Hardly anybody has reported in Kalyani that they have come from the adjacent Kushtia district of Bangladesh (Kushtia had been formerly a part of Nadia district). Similarly, nobody in our sample in Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony (North 24 Parganas) had migrated from the nearby Jessore district, (Bangaon Sub-Division of 24 Parganas was a part of Jessore district).

(13) It is observed that the majority of the migrants, especially of the weaker section of the society, came through illegal ways, i.e. they had no visas or passports. Yet they, who take help of agents (*dalals*) to cross the border, faced no problems. Seventy-two households were able to migrate thus “illegally”, while only seven had migrated in ‘legally’ with migration certificates issued by the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

(14) Whether the migrants crossed the border legally or illegally, it did not matter much or did not affect their chances of securing ration cards and voter identity cards. While all the migrants had ration cards, only two of them did not possess voter identity cards. Seventy HHs have acquired occupancy rights on their residential plots of land (i.e. *patta*). Only 7 migrants had migration and citizenship certificates. As most of the migrants had stayed more than 10 years in India continuously, they had become Indian citizen by naturalisation under the provisions of the latest Citizenship Act 1986.

(15) Migrants from the same area have tried to stay together in the same area or in the same part of a colony or village. Living together has imbibed in them strong fellow-feeling as a result of which the cost and the risk of migration have come down.

(16) On the average, there are 5.45 members per household. About 50 per cent of the members constitute the working population. out of 269 working persons belonging to 100 HHs, 79 are daily wage earners, 9 are seasonal labourers, 46 are contract workers and 135 are permanent workers in business firms. In 70 HHs, 164 persons have wage or salary as their main source of income. For 69 persons belonging to 54 HHs, ‘profit’ is the main source of income; profits earned from production or trade.

(17) There has taken place a significant change in the occupational status of the migrants. There are 30 persons who had cultivation (in their own farm) as the profession while in Bangladesh, but are now involved in carpentry, masonry and trade. Only two persons continue to be engaged in cultivation while seven are working as agricultural labourers. Six persons who had taught in schools in Bangladesh are now engaged in business, self-employment or cultivation. Thus, the observation of Ranabir Samaddar (1999) that migrants are normally engaged in inferior jobs in India is valid.

(18) However, if we look at the women immigrant population, we find that many women who had been engaged in household chores in Bangladesh have started going out of their households and taking up outside jobs. According to the feminist point of view this indicates the empowerment of women in society. But critiques may find this an evidence of the vulnerability of women in the society which has forced them into wage labour outside home.

(19) A few migrants got jobs immediately after migration, Only 10 persons in the first week of their migration and 54 persons within six months of their arrival in India. Persons who got the job without much delay were found to be, in general, persons who received help from relatives in finding job opportunities. Some started self-employment in business activities of rice boiling and rice trade within a few weeks of their arrival; such cases were found in Kuntighat (Balagarh) and Kalna areas.

(20) Most of the fishermen found in Kalna hailed from the Pabna district of Bangladesh. They belonged to a particular community, *Rajbanshi*. Actually, the refugees normally lead a peaceful living being socially united though not strong economically. But they found fishing opportunities very quickly because modern fishing activities prevailed in this locality.

(21) It is a matter of surprise that none of the workers faced any political discrimination in any of the four districts of our survey. However, there are five migrants who had faced wage discrimination at the initial stages of employment.

(22) About 74 per cent of HHs earned monthly income less than Rs. 5, 000. Out of them, two HHs had monthly income of less than Rs. 1,000. These 100 HHs have a total of 136 houses (including kitchen) in them out of which 25 houses had concrete roofs. The remaining houses have roofs made of thatch, tiles or sheets of tin or asbestos. However, 63 houses had brick walls or well finished and the rest are made of mud, wood, jute plants, tins or bamboo thatch.

(23) Most of them acquired land mainly for dwelling purpose. However, 11 HHs had land for cultivation also. A very few of them have well-furnished and cement plastered houses. Many of them did not have any communication facilities. Most of them did not possess any

kind of financial asset or property of any kind except land for dwelling. Similarly, the majority of HHs did not have livestock. Refugee families in Kalyani and Halisahar municipalities did not have any kind of livestock either. The Majority HHs have however, electricity connection to their houses.

(24) The majority were literate and had primary level of education and they are known to be hard working people. They are politically alert people and socially sensitive as well as culturally advanced. They actually bring themselves to India as potential 'human capital'.

(25) The case study show that the respondents have come from different socio-economic backgrounds. But after migration, the differences have disappeared even though their nature of jobs is still different (varying from social worker to fisherman). Most of them struggle for survival. Some have succeeded like Jagadish Mondal and Suresh Chandra Mondal in Kuntighat (Balagarh, Hooghly) area. Some are still struggling for existence, like Dhiren Dey and Japani Mondal in Mallick Bagh Nutan Colony (Bijpur, North 24-Parganas). But all migrants are happy to have come to India even though they are economically in distress. They expect the government to help them through better rehabilitation programmes such as loans for starting business activities.

(26) There is no single theory of migration that is applicable to all the migrants from Bangladesh. Sahadeb Sarkar has migrated due to threat on his life, while Premananda Haldar migrated for economic reasons. The Social net-work theory is applicable to the case of Shobha Rani Adhikary in Barasat, Purna Chandra Mondal in Kuntighat and Premananda Haldar in Kalyani. But most of the migrants like Dhiren Dey, Japani Mondal, Suresh Chandra Mondal and Hemlal Sarkar migrated due to riots and religious oppression. The Social net-work was also effective in Hemlal Sarkar's migration. So, the migration theories are not contradictory to each other but are complementary in nature.

### **6.3 Policy Implications**

Ever since the Partition of the subcontinent and the formation of East Pakistan (and subsequently Bangladesh), the Bangladeshi nationals have come over to India with or without valid travel documents. Meetings are held and policy decisions are taken, but the

influx continues. Up to 1971, over 4.7 million Hindus had sought refuge in India, mostly in West Bengal. The terror let loose by the military Junta of Pakistan compelled about 10 million more persons to cross over to India in 1971. However, many of the refugees returned to Bangladesh after the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan. Some of them remained in Indian soil and some who returned have again come back to India during later years. Associated with large-scale violence, these massive migrations got imprinted in collective memory, sometimes even in national memory. This was an ever-persistent shadow under which population movements revived in the 1970s and the 1980s.

As mentioned earlier, major population displacements in recent decades have occurred in the context of wars, ethnic strifes, partitions, minority persecutions, new state formations and environmental disasters. When people abandon their homes and lands, they do so because of modern forms of threats of perpetual violence. Therefore, guarantees of a minimum of human rights are guarantees of minimum stability, which discourage population movements. It is clear that today's human right violations cause tomorrow's refugee movements. Human rights abuse occurs when such fleeing people are denied shelter and the minimum sustenance for survival. This brings us to the question of the rights of refugees, particularly of women, old persons and children. Such rights are rarely, or almost never, recognized world-wide because it is generally assumed that refugees or displaced persons never return. This assertion is verified in this study by both survey and case study. Therefore, refugees have to be given citizenship and helped to get integrated legally and economically into the areas of their destination. This is known as the strategy of 'local settlement'. The Government of West Bengal and the Government of India took several policy measures in this direction. The people who had migrated from the Western border areas (i.e. mainly from Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan) were fully settled but the same did not occur in the case of the Eastern Front. Though some camps were established in places like Ranaghat and Bijpur, and some settlements were given outside of West Bengal such as in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, many refugees returned to West Bengal due to unfavourable economic conditions in those States. Though the maximum refugees settled down on their own or with the help of family members, relatives and friends, the Government of West Bengal, specially the Left Front government, has also shown sympathy towards the refugees and they have been given legal rights on land (*patta*) besides ration



cards and other legal documents. There is a department under the Government of West Bengal for rehabilitation of refugees. The State Minister, Binoy Krishna Biswas, said that soon, the remaining '*pattas*' for land will be distributed among refugees living in various colonies (Ganashakti, December 18, 2006). Another leader of the United Council for Rehabilitation Committees (U.C.R.C.), Prasanta Sur (Ex-Minister and Ex-Mayor of Calcutta) also told that since India was divided on the basis of the two-nations theory, the responsibility of rehabilitation of refugees lie with the Central Government and that the State government is would request the Central Government for disburse money amounting more than Rs.5,010 crore for the settlement of immigrants.

However, this strategy of rehabilitation has failed against a rising torrent of immigrants. A different strategy is also thought of, which recognises the right of refugees, impels the home state to encourage the refugees to return in conditions of safety, security and guarantees of proprietorial rights, ensures international human rights for the minorities, improves the conditions and security of refugee settlements and progressively ensures freedom of skills ensures displaced persons gainful employment. However, this strategy would not work with Bangladesh. During the rule of H.M. Ershad, he completely denied the problem of refugees and the question of taking them back. Bangladesh has been all through under the rule of powers which are anti-Indian in attitude for most of the time since 1971. So, the second alternative which was initiated by Indira-Mujib agreement did not materialise. The Government of India enacted the controversial IMDT Act {Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983} for appointing tribunals to identify illegal migrants in Assam, which was enacted to quell the Assam uprising against Bangladeshis. Recently, the Supreme Court of India has asked the government to file an affidavit giving details of the number of illegal Bangladeshi migrants identified and deported during the last three years (Times of India, January 6, 2007). Referring to the problems in deporting lakhs of Bangladeshis illegally residing in India, the Solicitor General of India said that Bangladesh had refused to accept them, leaving the Centre with no option but to fence the border. While the Court supported fencing along the border to stem the tide of illegal migrants, it asked the government to disclose the steps taken to push back the identified illegal migrants.

In India, a few political parties have called for fencing the country's borders to check immigration. Such a 'porous border' argument, while echoing the fears of the native

population, the Supreme Court was also afraid of. They opined that farmers of the country would be able to produce enough food grains to meet the demand of citizens and wondered whether the situation would remain the same if the influx of illegal migrants continued unabated. The Minister of State, S Raghupati, has recently said that after fencing is completed, infiltration (illegal immigration) will come down further. Identity Cards will be issued to persons living in the bordering areas; a pilot project has already been taken up by the Government of India (Ganashakti, August 30, 2006).

Fencing along the border is expected to be completed by March 2007 (Times of India, January 6, 2007 quoted in G.E. Vahnavati, Solicitor General). Out of total length of 2528 km. length of as border between West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh, fencing will be done for 2216.7 km. Already, fencing work has been completed for 2115 km. This will not include riverine and undulating sections, where fencing is not possible as reported by the Union Home secretary V.K. Duggal in Kolkata recently. This third policy of fencing also seems to be a less-than-ideal solution to stop the influx altogether. It remains impractical, costly, inhuman and contrary to the historically established patterns of migration in South Asia. An appropriate policy should be sought elsewhere. It is also a fact that unless the economic and political conditions improve in Bangladesh, it would be difficult to stop immigration. The rise of fundamentalist forces remains a threat to the Hindus in Bangladesh.

As the Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said, "In the increasing globalised and integrated world we live in, political borders are no longer a social barrier." (Times of India, January 9, 2007). Dr Singh said that the destiny of the people of South Asia was interlinked. It is not just our past that links us, but our future too. India can not be a prosperous, dynamic economy and a stable polity if our neighbourhood as a whole is not economically prosperous and politically stable. Our neighbours cannot prosper if India does not do well. So, influx of Bangladeshi migrants would not be stopped unless Bangladesh becomes politically stable and economically prosperous.

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**APPENDIX**  
**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Schedule Number:.....

**Descriptive identification of Sample Household (Place of Present Residence- PPR)**

Household number:
District:
Tehsil/Town:
Village name:
Name of the informant:

**A. Household Information:**

Sl. No.	Name of the Head	Relations to the Head	Sex	Age in years	Marital Status	Educational Qualification	Occupational Status
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)

**B. Economic Particulars of Household:**

Source of Income	Amount of Income	House Description				Land Particulars		Ownership of Livestock
		Plinth Area	Type of the Roof	Type of the Floor	Type of the Wall	Type of Land Owned	Amount of Land	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)

Cont'd.....

Financial Asset (10)	Power Connection (11)	Vehicle (12)	Consumer Durable Goods (13)	Telephone/ Mobile Phone (14)

**C. Migration Particulars:**

Last Place of Residence (LPR) in Bangladesh (1)	Reasons for Migration (2)	Presence of friends/relatives at Present Place of Residence (PPR) (3)	Distance between PPR and LPR (in Kms.) (4)	Cost of Migration (in Rupees) (5)	Duration of stay at PPR (in Years) (6)

**D. Employment Particulars:**

Employment at PPR (1)	Employment at LPR (2)	Monthly Wage/Income at PPR (in Rs.) (3)	Monthly Wage/Income at LPR (in Rs.) (4)	Wage Difference in Rs. (5)

**E. Miscellaneous Information:**

(1) Who had taken the decision to migrate?

.....

(2) Where did you migrate first?

.....

**(3) How was the migration - Alone/With Family/With Friends?**

.....

**(4) Are you satisfied with your decision of Migration?**

.....

**(5) Who has helped to settle at the PPR?**

.....

**(6) Are you facing any (political) discrimination at work place?**

.....

**(7) Is there any discrimination prevailing regarding wages paid to you and the people originally belong to West Bengal?**

.....

**(8) How easy it was to adapt to the new environment?**

.....

**(9) Do you consider the PPR as your motherland?**

.....

**(10) Do you possess necessary documents as a citizen of India?**

.....

**(11) How long was the spell of unemployment for you after migration?**

.....

**(12) What type of job did you get at first?.....**

**(13) Who had assisted you in securing a job?**

.....

**(14) What is the role of State Govt. in settling down at the PPR?**

.....

**(15) Did the Government help to build toilets?.....**

## **APPENDIX FOR THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

### **A. Household Information:**

**(3) Relations to the Head: Code:**

Husband/ Wife	1
Son/ Daughter	2
Son-in-law/ Daughter-in-law	3
Mother/Father	4
Grandchild	5
Others	6

**(4) Sex: Code:**

Male	1
Female	2

**(5) Age: Code:**

Infant (<1years)	1
Small Child (1 to 5 years)	2
Older Child (6 to 14 years)	3
Adolescent (15 to 17 years)	4
Adult (18 to 59 years)	5
Old (60+ years)	6

<b>(6) Martial Status:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Never Married	1
Married	2
Divorced	3
Widow/Widower	4
Separated	5

<b>(7) Educational Qualification:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Illiterate	0
Pre-Primary & Primary	1
Elementary	2
Secondary	3
Higher Secondary	4
Graduation	5
Post graduation	6
M.Phil/ Ph.D.	7
Professional (Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Artist)	8
Vocational (Diploma Courses)	9

<b>(8) Occupational Status:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Daily wage Labour	1
Contract Labour	2
Seasonal Labour	3
Permanent Worker	4
Student	5
Retired	6
Disabled/Handicapped	7
Housewife	8
Unemployed	9
Invalid (Too Old/ Young)	10

## B. Economic Particulars of Household:

<b>(1) Source of Income:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Wage/ Salary	1
Cultivation Income	2
Rent	3
Other Income	4
Profits	5
<b>(2) Amount of Income (Monthly):</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Less than 1,000	1
1,000 to 3,000	2
3,000 to 5,000	3
5,000 to 10,000	4
Above 10,000	5
<b>(3) Plinth Area:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Less than 200 sq.ft.	1
200-500 sq.ft.	2
500-1000 sq.ft.	3
More than 1000 sq.ft.	4
<b>(4) Type of the Roof:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Thatched	1
Tiles	2
Tin/Asbestos	3
Concrete	4
<b>(5) Type of the Floor:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Kutchha	1
Pucca	2

<b>(6) Type of the Walls:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Tin	1
Bamboo thatched	2
Jute Plant	3
Muddy	4
Pucca	5
Wooden	6

<b>(7) Type of Land Owned:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Dwelling	1
Cultivation	2
Business Establishment	3
Lease Holding	4
Others	5

<b>(8) Amount of Land:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Less than 1 Katha	1
1 Katha to 3 Kathas	2
3 Kathas to 5 Kathas	3
5 Kathas to 10 Kathas	4
10 Kathas to 20 Kathas (1 Bigha)	5
1 Bigha to 5 Bighas	6
5 Bighas to 10 Bighas	7
Above 10 Bighas	8

<b>(9) Livestock:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Cattle	1
Goat	2
Poultry	3
Others	4
None	5

<b>(10) Financial Assets:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Bank Deposits	1
Non-Bank Saving	2
Cash	3
Insurance	4
Others	5
None	6

<b>(11) Power Connections:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Yes	1
No	2

<b>(12) Vehicles:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Car	1
Bike/Scooter	2
Bicycle	3
Auto Rickshaw	4
Rickshaw Puller/ 4 Wheeled	
Van Puller	5
Bullock cart	6
None	7

<b>(13) Consumer Durable Goods:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Television	1
Refrigerator	2
Others	3
None	4

<b>(14) Communication:</b>	<b>Code:</b>
Telephone	1
Mobile	2
None	3



**C. Migration Particulars:**

**(3) Presence of friends/ relatives at PPR: Code:**

Yes	1
No	2

**(6) Duration of Staying at PPR Code:**

**(in years):**

0-10	1
10-20	2
20-30	3
30-40	4
40-50	5
50-60	6

**E. Miscellaneous Information:**

**(11) Spell of Unemployment: Code:**

Less than a Week	1
Less than a Month	2
1 Month to 6 Months	3
6 Months to 1 Year	4
1 Year to 3 Years	5
3 Years to 5 Years	6
5 Years to 10 Years	7
Above 10 Years	8