

## **Extended Abstract:**

### **Introduction:**

Trans-border migration is very much diversified and very complex in nature and it is governed by political, religious, economic and to some extent by natural calamities. The world have seen the greatest human movement in the history between India and Pakistan, which began with deep rooted scar of an arbitrary Radcliffe border that uprooted tens and millions of Hindu and Muslim populations from both sides of the border and killing many in the communal violence in 1947 when the subcontinent was divided.(Afsar, 2008). Again an exodus movement was observed along the fragile and fluid border of Indian, once Bangladesh was created in 1971. In between 1947 and 1971 and the aftermath, the cross border migration, both documented and undocumented, between India and Bangladesh did not stop but is continued unabated, in different intensities and magnitudes, both on temporary and on permanent basis, which is fuelled by major upheaval, be it communal, environmental or displacement due to massive construction of works or simply acute poverty in certain areas in Bangladesh. The eastern states of India, namely West Bengal, Assam and Tripura is serving as major conduits of this migration flow and among them West Bengal, which shares a 2,216.7 km long border and is bounded by Bangladesh in the eastern side with 9 border districts, constituted the largest share (about 40%) of Bangladeshi migrants.

There is no doubt that, the geographical proximity, cultural and linguistics similarity between Bangladesh and West Bengal have played a crucial role in this trans-border migration. But after crossing the border illegally, how do the migrants' settle down in the state of West Bengal, how do they manage land for settle down, from whom they seek help are some core issues of this paper. This paper would also address attitude of government of West Bengal towards these Bangladeshi migrants. How far religious identity of the migrants played a role in this trans-border migration both at the place of origin and place of destination is discussed in detail. The present economic condition of the migrants also highlighted through this paper.

**Objectives:** The main objectives of this paper are follows

- To highlight the magnitude of flow of the Bangladeshi migrants to state of West Bengal, India.
- To understand the process of settlement of migrants in the state of West Bengal and to examine the role of migrants' social network.

- To examine the role of the governments, both at the origin and destination in the trans-border migration.
- To assess the present economic condition of the Bangladeshi migrants in the present place of residence i.e. in state of West Bengal, India.

### **Database and Methodology:**

The present study is mainly based on the primary survey data. A survey of 200 migrants has been done in the district of Nadia, West Bengal which constitutes a considerable percentage of Bangladeshi migrants. The survey was done in the month of March-April, 2013. The snowball sampling technique has been done to gain access to the migrants in the survey area. The migrants who are coming after 1971 without any valid document are only included in the sample size. A detailed ground level survey was done with the help of structured, pre-coded schedule. Interviews of the migrants were also taken during the survey. Case studies are used to know their process of settlement in the destination area and to know how they helped by their social network. Both the push and pull factors behind their cross-border migration at the place of origin and place of destination respectively are listed down with through schedules and interviews. A detailed description of the household characteristics, number of earning members of the household, main occupation of the earning members and a detailed account of their present assets is obtained through pre-coded schedule. Statistical technique such as multiple correlations is also done to examine the relationship of household income and stay of duration in the destination area, total expenditure on food, health and education etc.

### **Discussion and Result:**

The study reveals some interesting facts about process of settlement of the Bangladeshi migrants in the state of West Bengal, India. Almost all the migrants, after crossing the border, stayed with the known persons (friends, relatives or neighbours at the place of origin) for a month or two. After that, they shifted to the vacant land owned by the state government of West Bengal (known as 'khas Jami' in local language) and slowly they build houses on that land. With the passage of time, a cluster of Bangladeshi migrants developed. That's why at the present time many such cluster of this Bangladeshi migrants are found throughout West Bengal especially in its nine bordering districts. Migrants also shifted from one locality to another locality depending upon their earning member and total income. If earning of the

family is high, then they shifted to a better place from the government land. They are mostly daily wagers and works as construction labourers, goldsmiths, shop keepers, rickshaw pullers etc. Though some of migrants also have big business but numbers are few. The women's also do some work to maximise the family income. It has been found that the standard of the family household i.e. income level, education, health is correlated with the duration of the stay of that household in the destination area. The factors that some migrants cite to cross the border are the religious atrocities and insecurity of life in the place of origin. Although some migrants are on the opinion that the less job opportunities in the origin left no option for them but to come over here. Side by side the strong social networks of the migrants and sympathetic attitude of host government acts as a strong pull factor for the migrants. The migrants who have crossed the boundary earlier time, say before the Bangladesh liberation war and well settled in the state of West Bengal, India, provide them shelter as well as important information regarding the job opportunities and some time they arrange job for the migrants also. On the other hand, Indian politicians have often encouraged Bangladeshi migration to garner their votes and almost all the migrants have voter identity card and ration card. Now they all became legal citizen of India. Other than 'social network' and sympathetic government, the religious identity played a big role. All the migrants, in the sample size our study, are Hindu by religion. Most of the migrants are of the opinion that they don't want to live with Muslims and they regarded India as 'Hindu' nation. They wish to live with their community people.

## **References:**

Afsar,R (2008), "Population movement in the fluid, fragile and contentious borderland between Bangladesh and India" Paper Prepared for Presentation at PANEL 24: Migration in South Asia: Causes, Patterns and Consequences At the 20<sup>th</sup> European Conference on the Modern South Asian Studies (ECMSAS).

**Migration Flow of Migrants from Bangladesh to the state of West Bengal, India and the survey district Nadia, West Bengal.**

