Notion of Belonging in the Nation-State: Gendered Construction of International Migration Aspirations among University Students in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Migration is not a new phenomenon, yet migration aspirations need to be studied carefully. This research looks into the gendered constructions of migration aspirations among university students. Bangladesh as a nation-state plays a pivotal role to construct gender specific migration propensities. Prevailing gender relations influence migration dynamics at macro, meso and micro-level. Consequently, girls have often different reasons for migration aspirations than their counterparts. This study finds that young men aspire to go abroad for better employment opportunities and standard livelihood, while young women tend to do so for personal security and secured life. Mostly, informants are found dissatisfied and frustrated about the state and fellow citizens.

Keywords: *Migration; migration aspiration; nation-state; gender; Bangladesh*

Introduction

Migration is nothing new, but it appears at the forefront of development discourse with recent global transformation, and relates to different development concerns with huge debate and theoretical underpinnings. Now-a-days, for different purposes, people across the world are more dynamic than what they were in the past. Therefore, in general, migration can be defined as movement of people from one place to new area or country for various job purposes or achieving a standard life style, be it temporary or permanent. When people are moving between countries with a specific goal, this can be defined as international migration. Siddiqui (2001:8) posits that 'international migration involves movement of people beyond their own national boundaries'. Mahmood (1994:2) defines international migration as 'an act of people's going to a foreign country for a particular period of time and with a definite goal in mind'. Whatever the nature of definitions given by the migration theorists or experts, migration of people can be defined as a functioning for a better and secured lifestyle-availability of income generation activities, standard education, health facilities for migrants and mostly for their future generation, and free from all types of socio-political or systematized state violence. Although, dynamics behind migration aspirations vary based on country, region and level of human development (Bal & Willems, 2014), to some Bangladeshis, it is just a commonsense that for a better lifestyle, people dream for migration. Hence, the question arises about what constitutes the migration dream to leave for abroad. Is the nation-state, somehow, unable to meet the needs and desires of its citizens? What factors compel young girls to think differently than what their male counterparts think?

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Background of the Study

Worldwide, 1 billion people-comprising a seventh of humanity- are on the move today which is more than at any other time in recorded migration history, and migrant women today account for almost 50 percent of all migrants. In Bangladesh, 5.4 percent (documented) of the total migrants were women in 2013 (IOM, 2015). As of December 2014, a total of 352,269 women migrated overseas for work (BMET, 2015), and Bangladesh earned USD 14,942.57 million in that year as remittance. However, available recent data show that the country received USD 18.35 billion as remittance in 2019 (BMET, 2020). Percentage of women migrants in Bangladesh is poorer than that of the world scenario. While female migrants are 48 percent worldwide in 2019 (IOM, 2020:3), it is only 12 percent for Bangladeshi women of total international labor migration in 2017 (IOM, 2017:11). Why the figure of international migration for women is meager is the query of this research. What are the underlying factors that trigger women not to migrate as much as men do? Henceforth, how their migration dream is constructed is a major concern of this research.

Historically, the issues of gender and women have long been neglected in migration studies (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). Bangladeshi women workers first entered international labour market in 1991 and the number increased just after 2004 (IOM, 2017). It is apparent that emigration is the desire of evermore Bangladeshis, and the estimation could be a wild guess due to emigration through illegal channels (Islam, 1995). While there are different dimensions and perspectives in migration studies, this study approaches the construction of migration aspirations. Few studies done on migration dreams so far, have merely addressed gendered construction of migration aspirations in Bangladesh, so this research is quite timely and significant in the context of a globalized developing world, where everything is in transformation. The broader aim of the study is to look into the range of belongingness of the young folk of Bangladesh in the nation-state. The specific objectives are to examine the construction processes of migration aspirations, and how the construction processes are gendered. And the research questions of the study are what motivates aspirant migrants to construct their migration dreams, and how the construction of migration aspirations is gendered.

Research methodology

The study used both primary and secondary data which are qualitative. Primary data were generated from three months' extensive field work conducted in both Rangpur and Dhaka city to get the diversity of thoughts among university students regarding migration aspirations. For the research, a purposive sample of 30 (15 male and 15 female) public and private university students from Rangpur and Dhaka city was selected to collect required primary data. The interviewees were accessed using the snowball method. The interviewees' names are fictitious. Most of the female respondents (8) were from Dhaka city with an upper middleclass status, while the rest (7) were from Rangpur area with lower middle class background. It should be mentioned here that being a divisional city Rangpur is more socio-economically backward than any other divisional cities in Bangladesh. In most cases, respondents from Rangpur were from lower socioeconomic class. However, only about 0.6 percent of total households of Rangpur division have family members working abroad (BBS, 2015a), and it is the lowest in Bangladesh. Secondary data were collected from different books, journals, working papers, research work of national and international NGOs and newspaper articles to

get a broader picture of migration issues. What motivates this research is the researcher's earlier working experience in a Dhaka based research project on 'construction of migration aspirations', where my responsibility was to collect data using ethnographic interviews. Collected data answered the questions of how migration aspirations occur, or what were the respondents' aspirations and the factors that contributed to construct their aspirations. This research is different from the earlier one from the context of gender especially. This study tries to find out the answer to the question of why young university students, from Dhaka-the capital of Bangladesh, and Rangpur-a divisional city of the same around 350 kilometers away from Dhaka city, want to go abroad if they have any opportunity. Which factors have played specific roles in the gendered construction of their aspirations to leave for abroad?

The study used different research techniques. Being a course teacher of migration studies and having the experience of earlier research, I have the opportunity to be in touch with the respondents. Therefore, observation method was used in order to capture the life style and thoughts of the familiar research respondents through watching their everyday life and posts on social media. As semi-structured interview helps to get both necessary qualitative information which is easier to analyze, so the method was used in the research. The interview covered the queries of the research objectives and research questions mediated through the theoretical overview. Besides, as life history is an 'entry point' to understand the socio-economic structures which shape the life (Watson, 1993) as a source of analyzing 'patterns of socio-structural relations' (Bertaux, 1981) and individual experiences, to know more about gendered construction of migration dreams, life history method was used in the study to collect 10 life histories from both the study areas. We know that focus group discussion generates very rich data for the research collecting diversified in-depth thoughts. Hence, two FGDs-one in Dhaka and another in Rangpur- with male and female university students in the study settings were conducted with a view to taking collective views on the thematic areas as mentioned. In this research, I tried to gather gender specific data both from female and male university students of the different economic regions-Dhaka as the richest and Rangpur as the poorest area. It was a particular 'methodological and theoretical choice' (Della Puppa, 2019a). I collected data regarding why young university students want to go abroad, and what were the gender dynamics for their migration aspirations.

Theoretical overview

Migration is not a new thing and has never been the special realm of one of the social sciences (Castles, 2008, de Haas, 2008). Hence, a variety of migration theories have developed over the years. Nevertheless, migration aspiration processes among the young folk in Bangladesh have been understudied. Anthropological migration studies frequently deal with cultural adaptation processes in receiving countries leaving out the experiences of those who remain at home (Jonsson, 2008). We should not forget that people's thoughts over migration abroad are, somehow, socially and culturally entrenched. The central part of the culture of migration is that non-migrants observe migrants with whom they are connected and imitate their behavior (Kandel & Massey, 2002). Different studies reveal that migration contributes to local imaginings of different places which, in turn, structure peoples' aspirations (Gardner, 2008). Migration aspirations may result in shaping a new society at the receiving end or a new transformed world order in the long run.

The status and gender roles of women and men within families and states trigger gender specific propensities to migrate. Capabilities of migration decision-making and the ability to access migratory resources are often determined by an individual's gender (Tienda & Booth, 1991). Henceforth, these approaches to migration may also result in gender specific migration aspirations.

Migration aspirations

Aspiration is defined as "conviction that migration is desirable" (Carling, 2014:2). It is all about something, determined by the social life choices that one wants to achieve in one's life span. Again, thinking of aspiration derives from the overall situation of both country of origin and country of destination. Aspirations are crucial step towards actual migratory behavior (Van Mol et al., 2017), and "aspirations express goals or goal-orientations that are relevant to well-being broadly defined" (Bernard et al., 2014:5).

Migration aspiration is treated as a measure of migration potential rather than that of the actual future migration (Bjarnason & Thorlindsson, 2006). Although external migration factors-natural disasters, political oppression, poverty, wage differentials-play a role, there is much evidence that migration aspirations also largely depend on information, perceptions, and value systems (Carling, 2013, 2014; de Hass, 2011, 2014). According to Timmerman et al. (2014:497), perceptions become increasingly important today; specifically three types of perceptions-related to macrocontext, mesocontext, and microcontext-may affect migration aspirations. Macrolevel factors include national migration policies, the overall economic and political situation like human rights situation, and images shaped and spread by the media. Microlevel factors involve individual's gender, age, educational attainment, and labour market situation. Mesolevel factors that affect migration perceptions are international social networks between potential migrants with family and friends living in other countries. Specific location also matters here for potential migrants. Mesolevel factors usually refer to the role of migration networks, informed as "set 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" (Massey et al., 2005:42). Garip and Asad (2013) categorize two types of social support like social facilitation that makes migration easier and less costly, and normative influence that previous migrants keep on migration aspirations of prospective migrants. Large number of out-migration may cause "culture of migration" which may affect migration aspirations both positively and negatively depending on the views of the migrants.

Yet again, migration aspirations are also conceptualized as a form of attitude (Carling, 2014). According to Carling and Schewel (2018), there are several conceptualizations as to migration aspirations: migration aspirations as a comparison of places-appropriate places of the aspirants based on needs and preferences meaning push-pull model, migration aspirations as a comparison of culturally defined projects- social expectations, and the object of migration aspirations as a matter of personhood or identity - not ultimately about where you are, but who you are. Regarding the first conceptualization, comparative deprivation of human rights in the nation state is a cause for conflict and according to the conflict model of migration (by Sirkeci, 2006 & Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011), conflicts are drivers of migration (Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013) leading to migration aspirant's place preferences. Second conceptualization regarding personhood or identity relates to personal aspirations of self-realization and freedom that have a place in the desire to move outside the country (Belloni, 2019).

However, nature of migration is diverse. Even migration is characterized by the term and concept of "super-diversity" offered by the British sociologist Vertovec to capture the multifaceted constituents of contemporary migration flows (Vertovec, 2007), and it is a useful heuristic metaphor to highlight the dynamic variations in population conformations predominantly arising from migration flows (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). To explain super-diversity, Vertovec drew the example of London's population with multifarious origin and heritage, living conditions and lifestyle. Meanwhile the term was applied to other urban areas around the world, in order to understand contemporary features of migration-induced diversity and its historical analysis (Gogolin & Duarte, 2017). Super-diversity not only reveals the diversified situations of emigrant people in the country of destination, rather it may also show migrant people's important differentiations in the country of origin regarding "ethnicity, religious affiliation and practice, regional and local identities in places of origin, kinship, clan or tribal affiliation, political parties and movements, and other criteria of collective belonging" (Vertovec, 2007:1031).

International migration is a gender-specific phenomenon. In the past, primarily, men used to participate in migration activities. Migration studies addressing gender have mainly studied female migration (Anthias & Lazardis, 2009; Morokvasic, 1984; Della Puppa, 2019a); their gender identity has hardly been investigated. Albeit recent research shows an increasing "feminization of migration" (Castles et al., 2014), women often have different reasons than men in case of migration, and henceforth, migration aspirations also. Gender contributes to the degree of choice in migration decision. Where there is a choice, gender impacts the aspiration to migrate. Gender relations influence both migration and people's ways of thinking about migration (Carling, 2005). However, this research offers two innovative aspects in studying migration aspirations in Bangladesh. Firstly, I chose two different areas of Bangladesh with different socio-economic background, where Dhaka is the capital city of the country as the richest and Rangpur is the divisional city as the poorest. Secondly, I have tried to look into dynamics of migration aspiration from class, ethnicity, religion and especially from gender context.

Whatever the nature of migration aspiration is, it has a relation to nationalism. Meaning of the term 'nationalism' frequently seems ambiguous and vague (Erikson, 2002). Generally, nationalism is the passion, based on basically cultural homogeneity, which attaches people to their nations, but not in the same way. Its effects are mediated through social class, religiosity, age, gender, cohort, economic insecurity and racial aversions (Nowicka, 2020). Likewise, nationalism is its relationship to the state. However, state plays a great role to make this relationship good or bad. Whenever, the relationship is worse off, members of the nation-state may try to detach themselves both physically and mentally off it, or sometimes, physically but not mentally and vice versa. Again, nationalism is a nation-building project where gender matters. Nations and nationalisms are filtered through the so called traditional ideologies of gender. Henceforth, being deprived of the inclusion into the project, one may try to think or act of including himself/herself to other nations.

Findings and discussions

Belongingness to the nation-state

Gallup's survey states that taking birth in a place does not mean a natural engagement of any person with that place (Esipova et al*.,* 2010), rather patriotic feelings need to be produced,

reproduced and nurtured as nation or nation-building is continuously under construction (Anderson, 1991). States along with their political elites are always engaged in a process to shape the nation according to their own language, education and ideologies. Nation state forms nationalism on the one hand and on the other hand, becomes the site for conflict based on different interest groups (Ferguson, 1994). In this regard, most often, ethnic conflict colours the map of migration impetus (Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013). Like many other states of the world, the process of nation-making in Bangladesh has been complex based on ethnicity, language, culture, gender and religion, which causes the feelings of insecurity for some people who think themselves, somehow, excluded.

The research exposed a clear and close connection between notions of security, insecurity, disengagement and belonging to the nation-state. Informants were found dissatisfied and frustrated about the state and fellow citizens and it was a common issue in most of the interviews conducted in both areas-Dhaka and Rangpur. Various thoughts, insights, feelings, emotions and imaginations regarding home and abroad were revealed from the interviews with the informants. Some were enthusiastic to go abroad for securing knowledge and skills essential for better job, better economic and social status for themselves in homeland, and others wanted to leave and settle somewhere in foreign land, feeling dissatisfied with the state functioning. A university student of Dhaka city expressed his desire to go abroad for higher study which he thought would be conducive for his white collar job in the home country. Rafa, a private university student from an upper middle class family, of Dhaka said:

I want to go to England to take my post graduate degree; it will help me get a prestigious job in my hometown. My own uncle, a corporate job holder, has a UK degree, from whom I am inspired of.

England is preferable to so many Bangladeshi students for its language. "[B]ecause of the symbolic value conveyed by the former capital of the empire, a university degree obtained in the UK has greater value for many Bangladeshis" (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019:481). However, quality of public university education in Bangladesh is degrading day by day due to insufficient budget allocation for the universities, governmental faulty job recruitment system and internal teacher-student politics stemmed from the national one. Therefore, candidates with foreign degrees are preferred in the job market, especially private job sector.

Contrarily, Tamal a student from an indigenous community namely *Oraon* of Rangpur was determined to leave his motherland. According to Bastianon (2019), realisations of residential and life satisfaction form migration aspirations. This is the reason of Tamal's onward-migration. His narratives below also negate the perception of migration as a simple bipolar event (Della Puppa, 2019b:474), rather migration could be considered a *polyphasic* shift between multiple destinations (Della Puppa & King 2018; Della Puppa, 2019b). It also denotes diversified mobilities based on ethnicity, unequal economic and social capital. He expressed:

First, I will go to Dhaka to prepare myself, and then I wish to go to the USA to settle there. I am upset with the behavior of the Bengali people here. They sometime demean me for my indigenous identity. I have to hear racist hate speech. Even I am not sure whether I will get a good job in my country because getting a good job is very competitive here, and sometimes, corruption and nepotism also work in case of recruitment.

It's worth noting that 2.6 million people were unemployed in 2015 in Bangladesh (BBS, 2015b), and this time the actual number is higher-almost 3 million. Therefore, young generation is upset with the capability of the state as to the creation of new employment

opportunities. They almost all are dubious about getting a suitable job-the job that has a symbolic value in society and permanency with handsome amount of salary, especially the government one.

Functioning of the state is the major issue of criticisms by almost all of the informants, and their discontent stems from it. They are critics of public university session jam[2], and activities of public offices. Shihab, a young student from Rangpur where absolute and multidimensional poverty is highest in the country, was found depressed on the issues of public university education in Bangladesh, which expresses his lower socio-economic status with the future responsibility of a male earner of the family. He said:

I am from a poor family. My father is a farmer. He cannot afford my educational cost. He pays my educational expenditure partly, and I manage the rest through working as a private tutor. When I think that it will take 7 years instead of 5 years to complete my university education, I get quite nervous. What is our state doing for our education? I have good academic results, and if I have the opportunity to go abroad, I would go to London. I would like to settle there mainly for the economic betterment of my family.

It is a common question of the students that why session-jam exists in our country, whereas few students are optimistic that in near future there will be no problem in academic institutions or in the state. One thing should be mentioned here that economic, administrative and political elites hold the old style dominating role of the British. They have some contribution to creating a class system in almost all spheres including education system of the country. Whatever, the answer of the question to Shihab 'why London' is the British colonial legacy. It has imparted such an administrative, legal educational, political and social system that shapes the aspirations and the imaginary of Bangladeshi generations, for which London is a "migration dream" (Della Puppa & Morad, 2019:485). Still now, to many Bangladeshis, England is a dream country, whether the dream comes true or not.

Informants are anxious about the political and administrative leadership of the country. Political leaders tend to be busy with trifling issues other than any other important problems of the state. To Sejan, a young private university student from Dhaka stated:

Political leaders of our country are mostly busy with their political ideologies and culture of blame game, albeit they are the main drivers of our country. This situation makes me think of my future; most probably I will be living in Switzerland in future, where my other relatives live. My relatives always motivate me to go there. They say, what will you do there? Your future must be bright here in Switzerland. Even some of my friends are also motivated to go abroad knowing my plans.

From the above statement, desire for migration aspiration could be realized depending on the characteristics of individual's personality, resources, networks and labor market opportunity of the country of origin (Carling, 2014). Sejan is from a socio-economically privileged family of Dhaka city, whereas respondents from Rangpur are from backward area in terms of income, education, employment and so on.

Respondents are also worried about the corruption situation in Bangladesh. According to their statements, without corruption state apparatus is almost at stalemate. This is apparent through the speech of Orna, a university girl from Dhaka:

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[2] Session jam denotes the failure of public universities in Bangladesh to ensure the completion of graduation in time due to political unrest or violence on campus.

Who does not know about the corruption of the public and private offices in our country? Except some, most offices are absorbed in corruption. When asked about her future plan regarding migration, she replied: *In future, I dream of living in a corruption free country like The Netherlands; you know they are closing their prisons not to get any perpetrators.*

Statement of the respondent above reflects the 'perceived environment of human security' in the form of job prospects and other social development, which determines the destination (Sirkeci, 2005, 2009; Sirkeci & Esipova, 2013). Corruption like many other factors instigates people to aspire for foreign countries other than thinking of living in one's own country.

Gendered constructions of migration aspirations

Migration is not gender-neutral. Earlier scholars of international migration have often overlooked the role that gender plays in international migratory flows (Timmerman et al., 2014). It is evident that gender relations influence migration dynamics at macro, meso and micro-level and they play a vital role while studying migration dynamics (Grieco & Boyd, 1998). Gender determines reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where. Power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl drastically affects all aspects of the migration process. In this study, more men than women are found with strong aspirations to go abroad for a better life.

Gallup World Poll surveys find the increase in people's desire to migrate permanently to another country between 2015 and 2017. Gallup's surveys throughout this period found that more than 750 million people would like to move to another country if they had the opportunity (Esipova et al., 2018). Gallup in 2012 also reported that 8 million Bangladeshis expressed a desire to migrate to the United States compared to 10 million Indians and 5 million Mexicans (Bal, 2013). Furthermore, Gallup World Poll survey data of 140 countries show that despite the low levels of interpersonal contact with the migrants, Bangladesh is one of the most-accepting countries (18th) for migrants (Fleming et al., 2018). One of the reasons behind this acceptance is that migrants contribute a lot to much-needed financial resource building. Henceforth, it is apparent that emigration is the goal of ever more Bangladeshis from all parts of society.

Migration flow in Bangladesh is highly gendered. Each stage of migration, pre-migration, act of migrating and post-migration, is intervened through stereotypical gender norms and values, which influences men and women's migration differently. Gender variances in migration arise firstly from the secondary status of women in the familial, societal and cultural structures of the source countries. In almost all cases, migration was introduced here by a male first-migrant (Della Puppa, 2016, 2019b). According to BMET, from 1976 to 2018, a total of 12.2 million Bangladeshis migrated overseas for employment. Female migrants constituted 12 percent of the total migration flow in 2017, and in 2018 it slightly increased to 13.85 percent (RMMRU, 2019).

Migration aspirations are formed through perceptions related to macro level factors like human rights condition of the nation-state. When human rights situation is worse off, it affects young men and women differently. Young generation becomes pessimist with the performance of the state. Farhad, a young boy from Rangpur city, expressed his depression:

I am from a backward town, although it is a City Corporation and Divisional City. Here poverty rate is the higher and literacy rate is also poorer than any other parts of the country. After completing my study, I'll not

get any job here in this city because here there is no employment opportunity. I have to fight for a suitable job going to Dhaka city. As I have to go to other city for my livelihood, I would better like to move abroad. I want to better my position, family and my society as well.

In Bangladesh, family as well as society is patriarchal, and earning the livelihood is the prime responsibility of men. Therefore, in most cases, migration chain in Bangladesh starts with a man (Della Puppa, 2019b). And a man with middle class background longs for a suitable job which indicates a desk job in the country of destination. It is also same for women, although they are satisfied with the caring jobs due to their socialization process across the gender relations and existing class systems in the country of origin. In Bangladeshi context, suitable job generally denotes the first class governmental job with job permanency, handsome salary and future pension scheme for both the middle class men and women. Yet again, in Rangpur area both men and women are satisfied with second class and third class job, as it is a socio-economically backward area. Contrarily, in Dhaka city, both women and men prefer white collar corporate job as the salary here is much higher than that of the governmental one. This indicates the class variations between the study areas. Again, intention to leave one's own country could be for many other reasons. Reza from Dhaka city said:

Ours is an overpopulated country. We have already almost 170 million people. What would happen to the population after 10 years makes me aspirant of leaving my country, thinking over the betterment of my future generation.

'Future of the future generation' is a major concern that shapes migration aspirations. Kelly (2017) in her study regarding Iranian diaspora found that both genders weighted values on children's future while men strongly desired to move for class ambitions and to ensure a 'good life' for their future families, women put a higher value on achieving independence and freedom. And regarding liberty, so is the case for Trina, a university girl of Dhaka city. She voiced:

Being a girl, it's really tough for me to lead a free life here. Every day, I face eve-teasing on the way to my university or whenever I go shopping I feel insecured. Rape in the public vehicles is a common occurrence in the cities. When asked about future plan, she told: I have friends and relatives in England, so after completing my MBA, I wish to go there and settle.

From Trina's latter statement above, it is clear that perceptions related to meso-context play a pivotal role in case of migration aspiration of the young folk of Bangladesh. These days, boys and girls highly maintain networks with others living abroad using different social media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and so on. It is noteworthy that until June 2019, around 94,445,000 Bangladeshi used internet, whereas 28,000,000 people used Facebook until 31 December 2018 (Internet World Stats, 2019).

Further, it is not always the case that young generation wishes to leave this country being deprived of basic needs or securities, some have other reasons. Tarin, a young girl from the capital city Dhaka dreams to settle in an island country:

I want to leave from this city of bricks and over crowd. I would like a secured natural place full of heavenly beauty, and of course, the place would be a developed country like New Zealand where I would be able to move freely and develop myself according to my own freedom.

The above statement is uttered by other respondents of the study also, which definitely reveals the micro-level perceptions of aspirations. Settling down in a developed country brings

enhanced self-esteem and social stature for the migrants. However, bringing honor for the family and community is context specific. Bangladeshi society does not always look upon the migration of women as something good; rather it could be demeaning for some family as societal people are sometimes conservative thinking over the issue that if any girl/woman migrates she might lose her own culture. Women are considered the marker of culture and religion. Based on specific culture, factors for migration aspiration may be different. Sarina, an *Oraon* girl from socio-economically backward outskirts of Rangpur revealed her aspiration from different viewpoints:

I am a girl from an indigenous community-Oraon. We were the follower of Sanaton Hindu religion. Now we follow Christianity. Majority Bengali people consider us as minority. Even, sometimes, we are not treated as indigenous people not only by the Bengali but also by some other major indigenous communities of the hilly areas of Bangladesh as we are from plain land. Therefore, we are deprived of different civil rights. As it happens, when any international assistance like scholarship for higher studies is offered for us, it is enjoyed by the majority indigenous communities. Apart from that being a girl I have to face some other mistreatments from men while I am on the way outside for various purposes. Hence, I would like to go to any European country to take my higher studies, and then I want to go to Canada to settle there and work for my community from there.

Sarina's narrative is different from those of the other respondents both from "super-diversity" (Vertovec, 2007) and "intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1991) perspectives. As a woman with ethnic minority, a member of *Oraon* community of plain land, she had to face diversified sense of insecurities, be it economic, social or political. She is the minor of the minors. Having multiple identities, her class, religious and cultural identity, gender, age, place of birth and civic stratum intersect with each other and results in multi-tiered inequalities and deprivation, and instilled her aspiration for multiple mobilities. However, it is not always that only the minority girls face different problems based on gender, ethnicity or age, Bengali Muslim girl from solvent family also face various problems. Rubina, a Muslim university girl from Rangpur area described her aspiration for abroad in the following way:

I am from a middle class educated family, and we are practicing Muslim. I wear decent Muslim dress, but I am not free from any eve-teasing on my way. These days, violence against women, especially rape, is increasing so rapidly that I am quite upset and scared of it as well. If I get any opportunity only for once, I must leave this country. I want to go to a religion-tolerant country like New Zealand or Canada. But I am afraid whether my family would allow me or not. Maybe I have to insist on them.

From the narrative of Rubina, it is evident that gender is a crucial matter in all aspects of family. Gender indicates continuous social construction of identities, behavior and power relationships between women and men (Scott, 1986). Socio-cultural ideologies and practices of masculinity and feminity create the meaning of gender and its embodiment in gender roles, relations and hierarchies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994), which in turn, influence the migratory probabilities of women and men during each stages of migration process (Grieco & Monica, 1998).

When asked, the respondents opined that the causes for migration aspiration were unemployment, insecurity of women's mobility, economic and social inequality, and differences in social well-being of the state. Again, when asked about how they got to know as to foreign developed countries, they answered that they were informed through different social media and networks with friends and relatives living abroad.

People usually migrate out of desire for a better life, or to escape poverty, political repression or social or family pressures. There are often a combination of factors, which may play out differently for women and men. Gender roles, relations and inequalities affect who migrates and why, how the decision is made, the impacts on migrants themselves, on sending areas and on receiving areas. Experience shows that migration can provide new opportunities to improve women's lives and change oppressive gender relations – even displacement as a result of conflict can lead to shifts in gendered roles and responsibilities to women's benefit. However, migration can also entrench traditional roles and inequalities and expose women to new vulnerabilities as the result of precarious legal status, exclusion and isolation.

Conclusion

Migration was regarded as a male phenomenon until 1980s, but today women account for half the migrant population worldwide. It is often seen as gender-neutral, albeit it is in fact gender-sensitive, because migration impacts differently on men and women. Henceforth, gender also matters in case of migration aspirations of both men and women. Aspirations for going abroad arise out of the nature of belongingness to the state. Belonging may happen if there is a genuine equal status or citizenship right that recognizes the minorities or women as equal. According to Hage (2003), feelings of belonging to the nation can befall only if fear politics can be overcome and we can stop being the "worrying nation". Anxiety as to violence based on gender, politics, minority issue, race, ethnicity, regionalism and so on creates migration aspirations among young university students in Bangladesh. Desire for better lifestyle also causes migration dreams. While young men aspire to go abroad mostly for standard livelihood, young women tend to do so for personal security and secured life. Although the terms - standard livelihood, personal security and secured life – seem quite similar, for women, security indicates here freedom from gender based deprivation, violence or offence against them.

Acknowledgement

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