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AKM Ahsan Ullah and Md. Shahidul Haque (2020). *The Migration Myth in Policy and Practice: Dreams, Development and Despair*. Singapore, Springer Nature. (v + 221 pp. ISBN 978-981-15-1754-9).

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In today's world, migration has become one of the most crucial issues because of the ubiquity, upshot and the attendant impacts. Migration is about people, their aspirations and fears, triumphs and tragedies, which makes this topic not only interesting and relevant but also compelling and fascinating. AKM Ahsan Ullah and Md. Shahidul Haque, in their book, “The Migration Myth in Policy and Practice: Dreams, Development and Despair”, thus, offers unique insights into the growing significance of migration and its impact on individuals, societies, nations and the world. The book analyses the nexus between migration and development. The authors examined the core notion of the South-North-South migration and successfully identified both the positive and negative impacts of migration on the well-being of the communities in both origin and destination countries. Also, the authors have gone beyond the conventional belief that migration is inevitable for socio-economic development arguing that the opportunities for development coming from migration cannot be limited exclusively to remittances. There are myriad of other factors that need to be taken into consideration in analysing the migration and development nexus. The authors have appropriately addressed the migration governance diligently so that the analytical balance is not compromised.

The authors claim that their book is an expansion of the argument, made by William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which argues that “in calculating benefits of migration, there is no way we can ignore the invisible cost migrants’ pay in pursuing migration” (vii p.). In addition, this book also criticises the antagonistic relationship that the locals have towards the migrants in stealing their jobs, reducing their salary, displacing culture and values of the destination country with their own. Being critical, the authors hope that policy makers and policy takers come to a common ground for a greater cause of the world.

Chapter 2 grapples with methodology reflecting on some of the qualitative methods used to investigate migration by conducting interviews from 2014 to 2018 in a number of sending and receiving countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Netherlands. This chapter also highlights the major theoretical underpinnings of international migration and methodological aspects.

Chapter 3 argues whether migration could be a long-term strategy for development in developing countries. The authors explored the hypothesis about a country's diminishing capacity to use remittances for promoting long-run economic growth. In some cases, it was found that in general remittances have a positive impact on long-run economic growth by reducing absolute poverty, improve human capital indicators and reduce inequality. However, the impact differs based on the country's economic development level, governance, size of the economy, and the abundance of remittances in the economy. However, the inflow of remittances might also bring havoc to the macroeconomy of a country. This

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chapter has elaborated on the concept of ‘Dutch disease’ which says that remittances might lead to the overshooting of the exchange rate of a country and hurt its competitiveness. This situation, as argued by the authors, makes the exports relatively expensive while the imports get cheaper. Furthermore, it has been suggested to consider diversification of economy instead of depending on remittances and origin governments should consider migration as a temporary solution to unemployment and foreign currency deficit (50pp).

Chapter 4 explores the fact that migrants are considered as heroes, in some countries like the Philippines, because of their contribution to the economy. Migrants, in general, risking their lives, take an adventurous journey to get to their destinations. This chapter analyses, with relevant examples from aspiring migrants worldwide, how they justify their motivations of taking certain risks to migrate by negotiating risk information in relation to their life circumstances and considering the symbolic value of specific forms of migration. This chapter goes on to show the immense hardships, the uncertainty, the longing that the migrants face in their countries of destination. Their aloofness, the way they conceal the pain of dislocation, the pain of gross exploitation by employers, brokers and the receiving country citizens often go beyond words (78 pp). Despite all these experiences, they give their best to get their work done, make the employers satisfied, and keep their status in the receiving country legal and in order. The chapter, in addition, portrays the brain-drain phenomena and elaborates about skilled migration.

Chapter 5 advances with an approach to researching and analysing migration processes that combines a livelihood approach to exploring migration dynamics with a relational political economy perspective that deepens understanding of the broader social, economic and political processes and interests. The authors have categorised the migrants as good or bad on the basis of their backgrounds and how well they could integrate themselves with the prevailing conditions and the economic system (108 pp). This chapter engages in analysis on gender sensitivity of remittances. The on-going debate has been oscillated between accounts that portray remittances as empowering devices for receiving women and accounts highlighting their burdening effects. Some scholars have produced gendered perspectives on remittances that focus on the relationship between the senders and the receivers. This chapter, however, focuses on the fact that women constitute around half of the total international migration flow in today’s world; however, the amount of the remittance that they are exposed to is considerably lower than that of males. This chapter also Briefly, this chapter also speaks of the feminisation of migrant labour which outnumbers male counterparts and describes their migration experiences. Basic economic theory provides many predictions with regard to the costs and benefits of migrants to home and host countries. Migration affects production, employment and wages, assimilation and attitudes towards migration, the economic behaviour of the local population and migrants, international trade, etc. in both the host and home countries. Finally, this chapter deals with an important phenomenon of xenophobia, arising from a misconception about migration which is prevalent strongly in South Africa during 70s. This is again reported in Europe during the influx of Middle Eastern migrant into Europe.

The last chapter wraps up all the findings and synthesises all the chapters of the volume. The chapter touches upon contemporary debates about the negative and positive impact of migration. Migration has created a myriad of consequences socially, economically, environmentally, politically and demographically. Since migration studies became a significant academic area of research, most researches highlighted only positive impacts on both the origin and destination countries. This chapter highlights about ‘return migration’ which is not a new phenomenon and also discusses the important factor of cooperation between the origin countries with destination countries in implementing return migration policies (147 pp). The authors conclude by touching upon the concept of migration hump (163 pp), which refers to the short-term influx in migration driven by trade and economic policies as compared to the expected migration trend without such initiatives.



Therefore, this well-written book combines both empirical research and existing literature on migration, thus enhancing our understanding of migration policies globally. This book is both thought-provoking and a good read and an important source of knowledge for migration experts, social scientists, policymakers and researchers, with the potential to become an important text for various courses related to migration and development studies. Though the authors remained silent about how to improve the lives of the migrants with better policies and better governance, yet I am sure the book will appeal to academics, researchers, policy makers and stakeholders.

