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Deaths in Chasing the Golden Deer

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Twenty six Bangladeshis, aged between 17 to 30 years, tried to cross the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco to reach Spain and ended up in a disaster in which 11 perished in February 2005. The group left Bangladesh on 23 December 2004. It is believed that the tragedy occurred because of conflict between domestic and overseas brokers in sharing the profit.

Destination Spain

The aspirant migrants were lured into migration on the promise that their status would be regularised in Spain if they could reach the country before December, 2004. The families of the victims informed that Dohar Travel Agency prepared false and incomplete travel documents and facilitated their travel with the help of some officials of Zia International Airport. It is estimated that each of the youths paid about Bangladesh Taka (BDT) 600,000 to the brokers of the travel agency. It meant that the agency earned more than BDT 15 million from these youths. Subsequent press reports inform that the aspirants collected money by borrowing at high rates of interest, selling land and properties.

As promised the brokers took the youths to Dubai on their way to Spain. All of them were taken to Morocco via Mali. Two members of the group, Himel and Mossadek described their plight to their family over phone. The group left Morocco for Spain on February 19 on a tiny boat operated by an inexperienced boatman who presumably took a wrong direction. After 14 hours of journey the engine broke down and the group got stranded at high seas. They were without food, water and fuel and after four days some of them began to die. The survivors were compelled to throw

the decomposed bodies into the sea. One reported that hunger made them drink each other's vomit. Finally on February 28, 15 of them were rescued by an Algerian naval ship. The incident was first reported on March 3 by one of the survivors who contacted his parents over phone. Later the news was aired through Algerian television and ATN Bangla TV channel.

The Syndicate

It has been alleged that one Moshtak Ahmed who hails from Dohar, from where many of the aspirant migrants hailed from, had been the mastermind of this operation. He is believed to be in illegal manpower business for the last 20 years. It has been reported that Ahmed began his career as a juice vendor and eventually became a millionaire by engaging himself in this

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illegal trade. It is further alleged that he enjoys the confidence of a powerful minister. Reports further suggest that so far he had sent at least 500 persons illegally to various countries many of whom experienced immense sufferings. None however dared to register complaint against him for fear of retribution.

Another Abdus Salam, the owner of The Dohar Travel Agency and the founding president of Dohar Unit of one of the major political parties, has also been alleged to be involved in this illegal business. The third person of the syndicate is Reazul Islam Raju, who lived in Japan for 10 years. Three of his brothers are still living in Australia, Spain and Germany. Based on his experience and contacts, he started his illegal business of sending people overseas, especially to Europe. Thus within a short span of time, he also became a millionaire.

These three brokers have established a network for sending people illegally. Their responsibilities were clearly demarcated. Moshtaq was to collect the potential clients, Raju was responsible to find out various illegal routes to Europe; and Salam's role was to arrange visas and tickets. Local people of Dohar claimed that the trio operated through a network of sub-agents.

Legal Steps

Even though the incident was widely covered in the media, members of law enforcing agencies did not arrest anybody on the pretext that they could not do so unless someone filed a case. It was only after continued pressure of the media that police arrested Salam, the owner of Dohar Travel Agency. Later he

was shown arrested for murder after filing a case by the father of one of the deceased. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism subsequently canceled the license of Dohar Travel Agency. Raju and Moshtaq were left untouched by the authorities.

Initiatives of the Bangladesh Government

As Bangladesh did not have any embassy in Morocco and Algeria the Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked the Bangladesh ambassadors to Spain and Egypt to provide details of the incident. The Foreign Minister expressed his deep concern and informed that a Inter-Ministerial meeting of Foreign Ministry, Home Ministry, Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry and Civil Aviation Ministry would be held to develop an effective mechanism to stop such crimes being committed by greedy manpower agents. He also informed that a monitoring cell headed by the Home Secretary would be formed to apprehend those who were responsible for this tragedy. The State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment sought help of the International Organisation for Migration in bringing the survivors back. When IOM expressed its inability the Ministry took the initiative and subsequently brought back 13 survivors on May 10. Two of the survivors refused to come back to Bangladesh.

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The Government's Response

Benjamin Zeitlyn interviews Mr. Amir Hossain, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Government of Bangladesh.

Benjamin Zeitlyn (BZ): I would like to ask you about the boat tragedy. Please could you explain your role in making arrangements for the victims and the survivors, what had to be done, and how was it paid for?

Mr. Amir Hossain (AH): I received an e-mail from the Bangladeshi embassy in Cairo (the nearest mission) saying that 26 people had been affected by a boat tragedy in the Mediterranean. 10 or 11 died on the boat, and 16 were rescued, one of them subsequently died in hospital. The embassy requested us and IOM to repatriate them, we were then in communication with IOM who expressed their inability to repatriate them as they didn't have the funds. We secured money from the Migrant's Welfare Fund to pay for the repatriation. Although it was not strictly allowed under

the fund rules, the minister gave consent for this on humanitarian grounds.

The survivors were located around 800 kilometres from Algiers, the capital of Algeria. A Bangladeshi diplomat from Cairo had to go there; he dealt with the difficult situation very well. Arranging and sending tickets for all of them to come home was also very difficult, especially as we have no embassy in Algeria. We had to send the tickets by FedEx. We also had to arrange for the repatriation of the corpses, which was very complicated. The total cost of all this was 13 lac taka (about US\$ 20,000)

BZ : We understand that two tickets you arranged for the survivors were not used, do you know what happened to the two who did not return?

AH : Yes, two of the tickets were returned to us. The persons concerned left Algeria, they informed the authorities that they did not want to come back, and they left, perhaps to take their chances again, who knows where they are now.

BZ: What action was taken with the survivors? Were they penalised, or did they receive any help or compensation?

AH : We wrote to the police asking them to interrogate the survivors on their return. The 13 survivors did not disclose anything to the police. They would not even name the middlemen who had sent them. The police eventually released them, basically on humanitarian grounds and because their families were so distressed. Subsequently I learned that the travel agencies or middlemen had taken Tk. 5-6 lac (US\$ 7,600 - for each of these people, and they were all from the same area near Dhaka in Nawabganj.

BZ : Why do Bangladeshi migrants take this particular route?

AH : People think that this is the best route, it seems to be the cheapest and easiest way to get to Europe, especially Southern Europe. It appears that the Mediterranean has become the most common route to Europe.

BZ : Why do you think well educated people with reasonable jobs choose to take this high risk options?

AH : Well, the middlemen tell them that they can earn a lot of money in Europe, and certainly the wages are a lot higher than here or even in the Middle East. Also they are told that once they get in to the country in Europe they will be able to get work permits or even citizenship.

Here the salaries are relatively less, and the employment situation is not that bright. These people are ambitious, they have aspirations and they see the example of others who have, by luck, got through.

BZ : What action has the government taken against the *dalals* or middlemen responsible for this, what actions can the government take to regulate these people?

AH : Well, using electronic media and newspapers we issue warnings to people not to go without proper clearance, not to go through unauthorised travel agents and to contact BMET for information. But some choose not to come to the ministry or BMET or seek advice from trustworthy people, they don't follow our advice, they prefer to go to these middlemen, and nobody is willing to report the middlemen even in cases like this where things have gone terribly wrong.

BZ : Why do you think they trust the middlemen and prefer asking them for advice?

AH : They have personal relationships with the middlemen, they know them and trust them. They also hear reports of other people who have made it or been sent by that middleman. The middlemen also give them false hopes and are making a lot of money out of this.

BZ : What further measures do you think should be put into place to help prevent similar disasters taking place?

AH : Well, we are taking measures through the law with the Immigration Act, which is a very good law. We can prosecute agencies responsible for this kind of event or even ones that promise one thing and fail to deliver, but only if people denounce them.

BZ : What was the attitude of the Algerian authorities, were they cooperative?

AH : They were not pleased with the situation, but were cooperative. The Bangladeshis were there for more than a month and it was certainly a burden on the Algerians.

BZ : I am interested in which socio-economic groups choose to go to Southern Europe by these routes, I wonder if you have any thoughts on this?

AH : It's not the poor; it's the middle and upper middle classes. The poor wouldn't go to Europe because it is too expensive; it costs about Tk. 5-6 lac for this kind of migration.

These people not only nurture aspirations but also are desperate. They have some resources and often sell their property to finance the migration, with the hope that when they would earn a lot of money abroad. They also have examples in their peers, who are abroad, in the US and in Europe. They are inspired by them; they also see the vast sums of money that are remitted by these successful migrants and get inspired. They know they can earn a lot of money abroad, and they know that there is a chance of getting residency or citizenship in these countries.

BZ : The new Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment is responsible for looking for markets for Bangladeshi migrants and reducing irregular migration, what is your role in the ministry's work on irregular migration?

AH : We always prefer and encourage regular migration. Just five minutes before you came I had someone who needs 200 nurses in Italy, so there are opportunities. I think we need to do more training of nurses, welders, doctors and other forms of professional training that are in demand everywhere. We have also heard that there are vacancies in Fiji, and Azerbaijan, these are new areas.

BZ : Does the government have any information campaigns about irregular migration?

AH : We have three websites, through which we disseminate information: the Ministry website, BMET's website and BOESL's website, which is open for employers to search for staff and practically free for people to look for jobs. We also put regular adverts in papers, mainly Bangla ones, such as *Ittefaq*, *Jugantar* and *Prothom Alo*, advising people not to migrate through irregular channels.

BZ : What effect do you think this kind of migration has on Bangladesh?

AH : Well, this kind of migration is not on a large scale, when you compare it to migration from Bangladesh to other places. Through legal means about 300,000 people go every year, mainly to the Gulf. Though only a few thousands may migrate through irregular channels to Europe, it only gets attention when there is an accident like this one, or when

people are detained or repatriated. Usually only 2 to 3 people at a time get in to trouble, but this time, being so many, it got the attention of the whole nation.

BZ : Irregular migration has created communities that have become regularised and are now creating new flows through legal channels, do you see this increasing?

AH : Yes, in Italy Bangladeshis sponsor others to come and join them and work there or bring their friends over, I think this will increase in other places.

* This interview was conducted by Benjamin Zeitlyn, SAMReN Fellow of RMMRU, on the 4 October 2005.

How Irregularities are Committed?

C R Abrar*

Irregularities can be caused migrants as well as by the agents, the employers and the state.

Irregularities by migrants

Many migrants come without work permits

- a section obtain tourist visas to reach the country of destination and overstay their visas;
- some go to Saudi Arabia on Umrah visa to perform religious rites and overstay their visa. A section of them procure fake identities such as work permits issued to Muslim Burmese refugees and stay on as Burmese.
- some may destroy their original documents to impose the cost of return on the destination country.
- some may travel on forged documents to exit their own country and to enter another country. Although in most cases, migrants may not be aware of this fact and in other instances they may do so deliberately.
- migrants may travel with tampered passport with forged age, name, height, and photo.

While many migrants start off as regular workers with proper documents, a section of them may eventually become irregular. This may happen due to several factors

- When migrants are simultaneously engaged on two or more jobs, which their work permits do not support;
- When migrants procure multiple work permits using different identity.
- When migrants destroy their work permits if they decide to quit their original job, a decision that may be arrived at due to ill treatment or for not honouring the contract
- When migrants do not renew their work permit in due time.

Irregularities due to Actions of Agents

Agents play a major role in migration process. They work as facilitators. A large number of migrants seek help of the agents or *dalals*. The more a *dalal* is involved in the process of migration, the more are the chances that the migrant would end up being in irregular status. *Dalals* contribute to irregularities through a number of ways. These may include:

- providing travel documents that are not valid. They may sell forged documents to migrants that the latter may not be aware of.
- *Dalals* exaggerate benefits and facilities to lure aspirant migrants but in many cases having reached their destination the latter may find placement at jobs that do not match the conditions that were promised. This may prompt the migrant to hop jobs.
- In many instances *dalals* promise that migrants would be provided with work permits on arrival at the destination countries. In many instances such promises are not honoured or the migrants are forced to pay hefty sums to secure them. In latter case migrants may not have the resources to pay and may be unwilling to pay and decide to become irregular

Irregularities due to the employer:

An employer causes irregularities

- by seizing the migrant's travel or identity documents and therefore restricting his movements and freedom.
- by not providing migrants with the jobs that they promise, or where the conditions of employment do not meet the minimum standard (improper pay, long hours, overwork or unsafe working conditions);
- by moving the migrant from job to job therefore disrupting his life;

Irregularities due to the State:

The receiving states contribute to irregular movement by

- their failure to acknowledge the need for migrant labour and ensure movement through the formal channel. In order to meet the demand for labour, movement then takes place through irregular channels.
- Immigration officials and members of law enforcing agencies may contribute to irregularities by indulging in corruption.

* Based on an ongoing RMMRU study on Bangladeshis in Irregular Status under the Non Traditional Security Project

Irregular migration: the experience of a Sudanese asylum seeker

*Siobhán McPhee**

Often when irregular migration is discussed, it is with regard to people's search for better employment opportunities in other countries. With internal conflicts and persecutions by governments being brought more and more into the centre stage of the world's attention, more focus is needed on those people who flee these countries by what ever means possible; they simply need to get out! Once these people reach their 'destination' they may be offered asylum status, which may lead to full refugee status, but their journeys are often prime examples of irregular migration.

Ireland has recently experienced major economic growth; this has brought prosperity for the country and brought large numbers of migrant workers and immigrants in search of a better life. Recently there has also been an influx in the number of people seeking asylum. Unlike other Western European countries who have been receiving asylum seekers for decades, Ireland does not really have the experience of dealing with and controlling the entry of asylum seekers through irregular channels.

A recent interview with John Dongi¹, who arrived in Ireland in July 2005 and claimed asylum status, illustrates some of the channels which people use in order to escape their situations as well as the reception given them upon arrival in Ireland. Here is the story in John's own words:

Interview with 'John Dongi' conducted in Dublin in August 2005:

"I was born in Wau in Bahr Al Ghazal, in South Sudan and my early life was great and we were all very happy. My parents had nine children including me, five brothers and three sisters. We lived very close to each other and if there were any problems we sat down and discussed them. My early life was great. I went to a primary school that was run by the Catholic Church, St Mary's Church, and they organised lots and lots of activities for us including learning English and singing in the choir. We spoke Arabic and our own local language from our tribe the 'Fartibe'. My father had his own shop and mill in which he ground sorghum, known locally as 'durra'. My mother was well educated and had a good job.

The south of Sudan at that time in the 1980s had closer contact with Uganda and Kenya than with the North of Sudan. People were Muslim but tribal loyalties were very important. We belonged to a tribe called Belanda Fartibe and we had our own tribal language. The land around Wau was very fertile and people were able to grow all their own food. We also lived close to the river and had plenty of water.

When I went to primary school, I studied in Arabic. However, while I was still in primary school in the 4th grade, I think, in the early 1980s the war started between the SPLA (Sudanese People's Liberation Army) and the northern army and the school closed down. More and more members of the northern army came to Wau. The people who tried to help the village people were mainly the Italian nuns and priests. One day, I and four friends were with one Italian priest coming back to Wau from a visit to a village. We were stopped by the security forces of the northern army and all of us were arrested. The priest was accused of being a spy for the SPLA and was deported to Italy. The rest of us, all teenagers were kept in prison for 11 days and then released. During those days, we were beaten and forced to confess untrue things about our involvement with the SPLA. When we got out of prison, my friends fled to Kenya along with a lot of other young boys while I went to El Fasher and eventually on to Khartoum.

From El Fasher, I eventually made my way to Khartoum and found my relatives there. I lived with my uncle and our extended family. After some time I was able to continue my education and went to Comboni College for three years and finished my secondary school certificate. I was able to make money by trading – moving between El Fasher and Khartoum and selling fruit, cloth and curtains that came into Western Sudan through Libya from Dubai. I then had to join the Popular Defence which all young people had to do before they could go to university. This meant 18 months training in defence and the possibility of being sent to fight against the SPLA in the south.

After we finished the 18 months in the Popular Defence, the army wanted to send us to Juba to fight against the SPLA. I was afraid this would happen to me and decided that I would have to get out of Sudan. I heard of a Chadian guy who was in the International African University in Khartoum who could help me. I bought a Chadian passport and air ticket to Damascus in Syria for \$1000 from him and flew to Damascus. This was sometime last year. Syria is the only country that allows anyone from an Arab African country to enter without a visa. When I got to Damascus, I heard from people there that Ireland was a good country to go to because there was lots of work there. I had some relatives in Damascus and found them and stayed with them for awhile. I used to go around Martyr's Square in the centre of Damascus and tried to find out how I could get to Europe. I felt nervous in Syria because if you got into any kind of trouble you could be put in prison and nobody would ever know. I managed to get some money from my sister in Australia and brother in

¹ Not his real name for legal and safety reasons

the USA. They wanted to help me get to the USA but it was very uncertain. In the end I bought an Irish passport and a ticket to Ireland for \$2700. A relative had the money which had to be paid to a man when I arrived safely in Ireland. I travelled with a white man who spoke broken English from Damascus to Warsaw and then onto Dublin. I don't know the nationality of the man.

I arrived in Ireland in July 2005. I travelled to the city centre with the white guy and when we got there he took me to a restaurant, bought me a cup of coffee and then we called the people in Syria. My relative paid the money and was able to go home. The man then took the fake passport from me and told me to go to the police and look for asylum. He left and I found myself alone. I had 47 euro in my pocket. I went to the police station and they told me I had to go the asylum office but it was Saturday and everything was closed. The first night I slept in the place organised by the police and on Monday morning I went to the asylum office. They did not believe my story and said that I was lying and was a Nigerian from England. They checked my fingerprints and sent me to a hostel in St Margaret's Road. This was very crowded and eventually I was sent to a hostel in Camden Street which is a centre for deportation of illegal immigrants. I have been there ever since. The hostel provides all our meals and every Friday I get 19 euro and 10 cents.

I had an interview with the Ministry for Justice in September. The man who talked to me kept laughing at me and made rude signs. I complained to my legal adviser about his treatment. This man told me I would have to come back again and to write 10 – 15 pages about the peace process in the south of Sudan. This is very difficult for me as I am not a politician and do not know all the details. I had another interview after a month and saw the same man who this time was more polite to me. He asked me for the writing and I gave him the 5 pages I had written. I am still waiting for their decision.

I check about Sudan on a web site by using the computer in the library. It seems the Dinka now control the South. There is a new government in Bahr Al Ghazal but this may be cancelled. The new leader Sal Fakiir is more popular than John Garang I think.

The hardest thing right now is all the time I have to think and I think too much. I cannot work legally but sometimes there is security work with a Nigerian company that pays 6 euro an hour. I also go to the Church and am involved in the Legion of Mary. I go to the library and am working to prepare myself to take the ECDL. I last saw my mother in 1997 and talked to her last year. I talked to my brother in the States a couple of months ago.

Most of the time I just wait."

Siobhán McPhee is an Intern with RMMRU under the DRC project

Work in Progress Meeting Population Movements: Non -Traditional Issue in South Asian Security Discourse

Benjamin Zeitlyn

The two-day work-in-progress meeting under the project of *Population Movements: Non-Traditional Issue in South Asian Security Discourse* was held on 14 -15 July 2005 at the RMMRU office in Dhaka. The aim of the Workshop was to reflect on the first drafts of reports submitted by country researchers. It particularly attempted to bring the field findings under the securitisation frame work. Eleven scholars, Dr. Mahendra P Lama from India, Dr. Jagannath Adhikari of Nepal Institute of Development Studies from Nepal, Mr. Hussain Bux Mallah from Pakistan, four from the University of Dhaka and four from RMMRU participated in the workshop.

At the inaugural session Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Chair, RMMRU, welcomed the participants. During the first working session, two papers were presented; the first was by Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui on *Securitisation and Desecuritisation of Migration in South Asia*. She discussed the conceptual and theoretical issues that are emerging from the case studies. Dr. Mahendra P Lama

made the second presentation entitled *Irregular Migration from India and Neighbouring Countries: Nature, Dimensions and Policy Issues*.

On the second day, Dr. C. R. Abrar and Mr. Zahidul Arefin Chowdhury presented a paper on *Bangladeshi Workers in Irregular Status*, Hussain Bux Mallah presented the study, *Irregular Migration and Non-traditional threats to state security: the case of Karachi*, Dr. Siddiqui presented her study *Immigrants Domestic Workers in Delhi*, Dr. Jagannath Adhikari presented *Migration between India and Nepal*, and Dr. Sumaiya Khair, Md. Mahbubur Rahman and Afroja Khanam presented their study *Human Security Concerns of Trafficked Persons*. As further work was necessary two papers were not presented at the Workshop. Those were on *Cross border population movements for informal trade* and *Labour migration in North East India*.

The meeting decided to hold a wrap up seminar in Kathmandu before the drafts are finalized.

A rights-based approach to internal displacement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh

Jessica Skinner*

Background

Internal Displacement and refugee movements of minority communities have a long and complex history in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh (CHT). Since the creation of Pakistan and the subsequent liberation of Bangladesh forced population movements have occurred through a complex web of development-induced, conflict-related and environmental displacement. Actors implicated in these factors leading to forced migration include the state, military, paramilitary, insurgents, settlers, the indigenous populations and even multilateral donors. Even after the signing of a Peace Accord in 1997 the failure of even the returnee refugees, vociferous and politically represented as they are, to achieve full rehabilitation raised concern regarding the situation of those that do not have such vocal organisations or international attention – the internally displaced.

Years of encroachment, land grabbing, civil conflict, military operations, human rights abuses, steady process of ethnic marginalisation and two-decades of conflict have shaped the political, geographic and demographic landscape of the Hill Tracts. The rehabilitation of those affected is inextricably tied into the search for sustainable peace, economic development and international support for not only the CHT but Bangladesh as a whole. Despite this and despite the large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) there has been little to no support for the internally displaced indigenous persons in the Hill Tracts. Displacement is not confined to the history books in the CHTs, its legacy lives on in the lives of those still living in temporary accommodation, still waiting for the recognition and fulfilment of their basic and constitutional rights. This study commenced in April 2005 and set out to examine the situation of the IDPs in the Chittagong Hill Tracts swollen in numbers by the return of refugees from India, unable to return home and overlooked by government, non-government and international organisations.

Objectives

The main aim of the study was to provide an analytical assessment of the situation of IDPs, current assistance

and rehabilitation on the ground in the CHT and possibilities for introducing rights-based approaches targeting these communities. In the absence of nearly any targeted programmes the study set out to begin the process of addressing problems and complexities behind internal displacement and the return 'home'. This study set out to assess what is meant by a rights-based approach in the context of internal displacement and rehabilitation and how this could be implemented in the Bangladeshi context.

Methodology

The study took place between April and August 2005, and was comprised of an extensive review of literature, policies, reports and interviews with internally displaced persons, IDP community leaders, NGOs, and political leaders.² Through a combination of village focus group discussions and household interviews in 6 villages in Kagrachari and 2 in Rangamati district the views of approximately 55 IDP families were collected. During field visits qualitative data was collected and cross-checked with information gathered from key informants. Views were collected regarding displacement, current needs and the help received from various organisations including the Government, the army, international organisations and smaller NGOs.

Problems and Limitations

One of the main challenges was trying to disentangle insights from the complexity of the socio-political situation and continuing tension in the region. Unfortunately, as yet, the views of Government officials have been impossible to attain. Terminology and conceptual frameworks also offered challenges for this study as there are many problems with the definition of internal displacement many of which are not unique to this area or country. International frameworks have gone a long way to providing working definitions that can be used to monitor national and localised experiences of displacement, but in Bangladesh while refugee law has become more or

² Due to its location with two sides bordering India Kagrachari has experienced a large return of refugees and therefore the experiences of both institutional actors and the IDPs themselves is caught up in this context.

less accepted by the State the terminology of internal displacement doesn't exist. In the situation of the CHT the definition of an IDP has become highly politicised. For the purposes of this study IDPs refers only to the internally displaced indigenous persons.³ Primary data collection was largely restricted to Khagrachari district due to limitations on time.

Conceptual Background: Rights-based approaches to IDPs

The concept of rights-based approaches are little understood and under-theorised – even by those trying to implement them. This is due in some extent to the multiplicity and overlapping conceptualisations of 'rights'. The terminology of 'rights' is confusing and the question of whose rights are right remains a sticking point in this highly politicised climate and in a country where the majority fail to achieve even their minimum rights. A good starting point for understanding a rights-based approach to IDP rehabilitation and protection is to recognise the marginal position that the displaced inhabit. IDPs suffer from a loss or violation of civil, economic and social rights on an almost daily basis.

Rights-based is often conceptualised in opposition to the traditional needs-based approach to humanitarian assistance. Traditional approaches to rehabilitation of IDPs has focussed on the provision of basic (physical) needs and the bare minimum in compensation without considering the link between basic human needs and human rights. The relationship between humanitarian aid and sustainable development is slowly being realised, with the recognition that basic needs should and could be protected by strengthening structures that support basic human rights. Unlike human needs approaches, rights-based approaches to social and economic security believe that people's access to basic needs *is* a 'right'. IDPs should thus be encouraged to see the fulfilment of their basic needs as entitlements and not charity (Mehta and Gupte 2003: 25).

A rights-based approach should look at the way that basic human rights and human needs are protected and supported. There are several problems associated with implementing a rights-based regime, including among others the issues surrounding responsibility and accountability, universality and enforceability and a lack of formal legal rights. Significant strain may also

³ This is not to say that certain members of the Bengali settler communities have not experienced internal displacement, but that due to restricted time and resources there was no opportunity to explore such claims.

be placed on the institutions of receiving areas and the host country, in most situations of internal displacement there is a lack of means to provide what is demanded of the state, financial or otherwise, for example land and resources (Mehta and Gupte 2003: 31). In order to conceptualise a rights based approach to Internal displacement and rehabilitation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts this study drew on three sources – the UN's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, the World Bank's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction model and CARE's approach to rights based implementation.

Main Findings

Apart from some scattered provisions in law, Bangladesh and the South Asian region in general has no policy aimed at dealing with the issue of internal displacement. Internally displaced people are some of the most vulnerable migrants and suffer from what is known as the 'protection gap'; 'unable to avail themselves of the protection of the government, often denied access to international assistance, and unable to return home' (Haque and Vohra 2003: 199; Hasan 2003: 111). Although there is no international law covering the protection of IDPs various regional and national laws or policies are being created across the globe, but in this sense South Asia lags behind. In Bangladesh there is no national strategy to address the problems and specific needs of those internally displaced by conflict and persecution nor there are any comprehensive or effective IDP rehabilitation or re-settlement programmes. As citizens, IDPs vulnerabilities and needs are paid lip service to in the Constitution, but not only is displacement a violation of this protection the impoverishment risks that go hand in hand with such displacement also violate their constitutional and basic human rights as laid out in humanitarian law.

Despite the signing of the Peace Accord in 1997 and the various provisions that it made for rehabilitation of the internally displaced and the demilitarisation of the region, this has not yet begun to anywhere like the degree that was expected. In fact it is hard to ascertain what has actually taken place to benefit those internally displaced by conflict and militarisation. The IDP population continues to have restricted access to farming lands, homestead land and dwellings, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health care and education. There has also been little movement towards resolving issues of land ownership or towards creating an environment inductive to the peaceful co-

existence of Bengalis and indigenous communities in the region.

Protection and assistance from the state is hard to ascertain. Key informants stated that there was no Government assistance targeting the internally displaced. The Peace Accord made provisions for the rehabilitation of IDPs, but it appears that to date no internally displaced indigenous people have received such rehabilitation. None of the IDPs interviewed had ever received any assistance or compensation from the Government nor had they received any rations due to displacement.⁴ A Task Force created to determine and rehabilitate the internally displaced and the CHT Land Commission formed to settle land disputes and return rightful land are currently inactive due to disagreements over implementation of the Accord and definitions of the internally displaced. Establishing the identity of those internally displaced has been a key impediment to rehabilitation. The little progress that the previous Government began to make was brought to a halt with the change in Government in 2001.

The administrative system in the region is extremely complex, 'pluralistic' and inadequate and this is reflected in ad hoc governmental policies and continuing military control. The administration of the region has received some attention, but requires further consideration and an active government commitment to change. As in other areas of Bangladesh, socio-political life has been impeded by frequently changing governments and an unhealthy political climate. Administration of the hill tracts has been unusually uniform in successive government's blindness to the suffering of the indigenous communities and their failure to implement rehabilitation programmes agreed upon at the time of the Peace Accord.

Not only has there failed to be any form of rehabilitative support or compensation for IDPs but displacement still continues to take place in the Hill Tracts. A combination of Government development projects, reforestation through reserved forest schemes, military expansion, continuing support for Bengali settlement, land grabbing and internecine conflict between the two political parties representing the indigenous peoples has meant that displacement of indigenous people has not yet come to an end. The rising internal conflict has also created an insecure climate that deters intervention by the international community.

⁴ While rations continue to be provided to the government-settled Bengalis decades after settlement.

There are currently no IDP specific rehabilitation programmes being carried out by local, national or international NGOs in the Hill Tracts. In most part this is due to the political situation, the low profile of and poor access to IDPs, conflict over definitions and difficulties involved in being granted permission to work with such politically sensitive groups. The UN though has very recently set out to assess the magnitude of the problem and the World Food Programme has recently expanded to include IDPs, returnee refugees and ex-combatants among its recipients for food security programmes.

Recommendations

Definition of the internally displaced has caused conflict between the government and the PCJSS and has put paid to any sort of rehabilitation owed to these people. There is a desperate need in Bangladesh to establish a clear definition and to delineate IDP rights. Without an efficient implementation mechanism this may not bring about institutional change, but it will encourage greater awareness surrounding IDPs' needs and vulnerabilities, open doors for international and national non-governmental intervention, and encourage strong partnerships between government and civil society.

A stale mate has been reached between the political parties involved that has put a stop to affective action. It is here that the international community could intervene to at least make clear Bangladesh's legal obligations within international law and step in to assert IDPs' rights.

Internal displacement is not simply a problem that is confined to the CHT, but is rife throughout Bangladesh especially in the remoter areas where minority communities are the targets for human rights abuse. It is important to convince the Government of Bangladesh that 'socially responsible resettlement – that is, resettlement genuinely guided by an equity compass – can counteract lasting impoverishment and generate benefits for both the national and local economy' (Cernea 2000). International legal instruments, such as the UN's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and an appropriate implementation framework such as the World Bank's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction (IRR) model could be put to work in the CHT and Bangladesh as a whole to define some explicit, clear and working provisions for protection against internal displacement and suitable rehabilitation. In this way a model could be created that fits local and national

circumstances to guide rehabilitation for all forms of forced migration.

The reconstruction of communities and social cohesion is often overlooked in needs-based approaches, but community re-articulation can help to overcome material deprivation and precede economic wellbeing (Cernea 2000). Programmes to restore the livelihoods of the displaced need to focus on the displaced people as agents in their own rehabilitation and reconstruction. A rights-based approach should firstly explore the way that IDPs make the best of their adverse conditions and mobilise around their rights. It should be highlighted that breakdowns in communication tend to result in active opposition movements. Thus, the participation of affected people can actually benefit the state, especially a state with a weak institutional capacity for resettlement planning and implementation. Development cannot simply ignore the marginalised, displaced communities, and these populations must be encouraged to see the Guiding Principles as their tool to call the government to account.

Tension between Bengali settlers and indigenous communities in the CHT is high. An important first step towards sustainable rehabilitation and development in the region is the facilitation of cross-cultural dialogue and cross-community participation that addresses underlying fears, prejudices and misunderstandings. Long-term protection and rehabilitation depends upon the reconciliation of the conflicting communities and respect for human rights at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

IDPs are often very vulnerable because they have to remain within a system that is often responsible for their displacement and little interested in their

rehabilitation and because they are not supported by a definite international protection mechanism. The limitations of humanitarian actions undertaken by humanitarian and civil organisations is one factor that led this study to address what is being done and what could be done to address the specific problems of the IDPs in the CHT. The IDPs are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in the Hill Tracts and humanitarian responses are falling short of adequate protection and rehabilitation of these people most at need.

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* *Jessica Skinner has just finished a RMMRU-DRC Internship, this is a summary of a forthcoming paper.*

Regional Workshop Calls for Ratification of 1990 UN Convention on Migrant Workers

A training programme on *1990 UN Convention on Migrant Workers* was organised in Dhaka by Migrant Forum in Asia and The Diplomacy Training Programme (DTP) of the University of New South Wales, Australia. Welfare Association of the Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE) and RMMRU were the local host institutions. The programme was held at BIAM Centre, Dhaka on 15-19 August 2005. About 25 participants from Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, East Timor, Vietnam, Myanmar and Bangladesh attended the training. The issues that got priority in the discussion included migrant workers rights, undocumented migrants, migration and

exploitation, safe migration, health and migration, migration and exploitation, empowerment of women through migration, pre departure orientation, and relevance of the international conventions.

The first day began with an overview of Conditions of Migrant Workers in Asia Pacific by Mr. William Gois, the coordinator of MFA. Mr. Saiful Haque then presented the Bangladesh country report from WARBE. Mr. Patrick Earle from DTP made a presentation on Advocacy Campaign for Ratification. His presentation covered the principles, the strategies and techniques of campaigning.

The second day began with the Nepal country report. This was followed with a discussion on the International Human Rights Framework presented by Professor Garth Nettheim of DTP. Mr. Jane Stratton from DTP then discussed Women's Rights, CEDAW and Women Migrant Workers rights. This was followed by a session on Indonesian country report. Later Professor Tasneem Siddiqui of RMMRU, Dhaka University, made a presentation on the 1990 Convention on Migrant Workers. The final session of the day dealt with Status of Ratification of the ICRMW in the Asia Pacific region. Dr. C R Abrar made a presentation on the theme.

The third day began with country report from Malaysia and East Timor. An ILO representative from Bangkok Jajoon Coue then discussed the ILO standards and migrant workers rights. The next session was about Promoting Migrants Rights through National Legislation and Bilateral Agreements. The participants were involved in mock bilateral negotiations representing a sending and a receiving country. It ended with an agreement between Thailand and Cambodia. The last session of the day focused on the preparation for lobbying the government.

The first half of the fourth day included a visit to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), the responsible agency of the Bangladesh government and the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment, where participants met the senior government officials. In the subsequent session there was an analysis of these lobbying exercises. The last session focused on the Reporting Process Using the Treaty Body. Professor Garth discussed the issue of Shadow Report and the alternative ways to protect the rights of the migrants. The final day began with a report presentation by Vietnam and Myanmar, followed by a session on the role of the media in a successful campaign given by Mr. Anisur Rahman from Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), the national news agency of Bangladesh.

At the concluding session Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed gave the valedictory speech. He also distributed the certificates among the participants. In the evening a cultural programme was organised by WARBE to mark the end of the workshop.

Asian Women's Forum on Migration Held

Tasmia Persoob

Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) and Joint Committee for Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK) organised the Asia Women's Forum on Migration on 26-28 September 2005 in Seoul, Korea, to discuss the important issues that were affecting the women of this region. MFA has been working in this issue for a long time and this forum was a result of one of their Regional Conferences on migration. The central theme of this Forum was Feminization of Migration and Women Migrants' Human Rights under which four issues were discussed. These were trafficking, intercultural marriage, health issues and WTO GATS Mode IV. Fifty participants from 13 countries, Bangladesh, Burma, China, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand attended the Forum.

In this conference participants discussed various issues to improve the lives of migrant women. They also discussed vital trends and issues of women migrant workers in the region. This forum provided a platform for the participants to exchange their country experiences in trafficking, health, inter-cultural marriages and GATS-Mode 4, formulate strategies at the international/regional level; and form a network of women human rights defenders.

The participants were divided into groups and were taken to different human rights organisations that were working for the migrants' workers rights. The participants also had an opportunity to attend the Women Migrants' Festival on 25 September. Women migrants as well as the participants performed at the festival that marked the conclusion of the Conference.

Visit the SAMReN Website

www.samren.org

Worker Migration Experiences of Sri Lanka: Strategies for Trade Union Action

*G.D.G.P. Soysa**

Ever since Emma Lazarus wrote the following words inscribed in the Statue of Liberty 123 years ago;

“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she
with silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breath free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

International migration of labour has continued on a massive scale.

Millions of migrants and would be migrants have added to the cultural diversity and economic resources of many nations. Such migration involves “A complex mixture of hopes and fears, generosity and self interest from all involved”. Continuing rapid population growth and urbanization have added to the “Huddled Masses”. Poverty continues to characterize the “wretched refuse”. Today we ask the question is migration still the surest hope of a better life. Notwithstanding

Sep 11, 2001 incident and its aftermath do the keepers of the “Golden Door” still offer a welcome to the tired and poor?

New perspectives have emerged. Globalisation of the world economy has not made migration unnecessary. Millions of individuals seek a better life in more prosperous areas. Free movement of capital has not ensured that ‘huddled masses’ no longer need to abandon their homes and risk tempests. Migrant workers even risk death to secure work in developed countries.

They are willing to invest cash, time and energy to secure jobs even illegally in richer countries. Should government policy provide for free movement of labour as much as is done for free movement of capital? It is paradoxical that governments adopt tough measures to deter would be migrants while providing for recruitment of skilled labour from poor countries or unskilled workers to do dirty dangerous and demeaning jobs their nationals refuse to do.

Operations of external labour markets, provide barriers and restrictions to free labour markets. It is observed that desperate migrants struggle to enter “fortress Europe” or cross the River Grande. This resistance is explicable in terms of social and political pressures, yet fails to recognize massive contribution made by mobile labour to the process of social and economic development prevailing today in the developed world.

Sri Lanka Scenario

Sri Lanka ranks among the world’s twenty main exporters of labour services. As a percentage of total exports of goods and services it was as high as 20 percent in 2004. The registered number of departures stood at 213114 in that year. This movement commenced in the Seventies. Today a total stock of 1.5 million Sri Lankans are estimated to be working abroad. The Foreign Employment programme of Sri Lanka is mainly handled by the private sector and monitored by a State Bureau established under the Ministry of Labour and Foreign Employment.

Private sector employment agencies operate amidst excessive competition to secure jobs, and in the process some charge exorbitant fees, lower standards

of employment and sometimes expose migrant workers to unanticipated risks. The Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment regulates the overseas employment programme with strict system of licensing. Licensed Agencies supply 73% of overseas jobs and there are 605 licensed operators.

Foreign Employment - Profile of Migrants

TABLE – 1

Item	2001	2002	2003	2004(a)
Employment Placements by Source	184,007	203,773	208,808	213,114
%				
Licensed Agents	72	75	74	73
Other	28	25	26	27
By Gender %				
Male	33	35	36	38
Female	67	65	64	62
By Manpower Category %				
Housemaid	56	53	49	52
Skilled Labour	20	22	23	21
Unskilled Labour	18	18	21	20
Other	6	7	7	7
Number of Licensed Employment Agencies	528	538	524	605
Number of Training Centres	28	21	21	22
By SLBFE	08	08	08	11
By Private Agent				

Source Central Bank of Sri Lanka Annual Report 2004

Feminisation of migration has posed the greatest challenge for Sri Lanka's Overseas Employment programme. Women constitute 62% of total migrants in 2004 and a major category was housemaids who formed 52% of all manpower categories. Another disturbing trend is the presence of direct recruitment through friends, relations and other contacts which form 27% of annual total recruitments.

Sri Lankan Domestic Workers Abroad.

The majority of Sri Lankan workers abroad are domestic workers. They are not protected by any labour law while in employment and have no human rights while they are out of the country. The distinction between slavery and employment in this situation remains rather thin. The reality is that a woman who comes for employment to a house has to forego her passport, her identity and individuality. She loses her independence and her right to move. In spite of these restrictions, some women leave their employers and hide themselves.

However the strong arm of law intervenes and they are detained or placed in jail for loitering. Even if they run to the Sri Lanka Embassy for protection, after inquiry, the Embassy will normally send them back to their former employer or to the police. Incidents of women

who fall from buildings and die prematurely are often suspected by their relatives as incidents of murder or suicide caused by unbearable trauma. The Bureau has a compulsory Pre-departure Training Programme run from 12-21 days through a chain of 22 nation wide training centres in addition to 11 such centres run by the private sector. The Bureau registers migrant departures and offer free Insurance to cover Death, Accident, Illness or Loss of employment. (in some instances)

Nature of complaints received from Migrants (2003).

TABLE - 2

	Male	Female	Total
Non payment of wages	81	1042	1123
Lack of communication.	100	1608	1708
Harassment.	29	1164	1193
Non return after contract	96	1265	1361
Contract substitution	951	493	1444
Death – natural, other	25	17	42

(Source SLBFE 2003)

State Concerns and strategies

Concerns of state are mainly reactive, to regulate the process of recruitment or levy of fees and count only

on earnings from external remittances. No successful attempts have been made to improve quality or introduce professionalism in employment services provided to migrant workers. Sri Lanka is not on the search for alternative sources of employment for our workers. We make no attempt to encourage local employment as an alternative to overseas employment. We do not train our women workers who are now sent as unskilled workers overseas for domestic service adequately to face the hazards of unsafe migration. Recently Government set up a Ministry of Overseas Employment Development, under the newly elected Executive Presidency to undertake employment promotion.

New Vision

Overseas employment programme of Sri Lanka should be proactive, value based and very much a part of an overall national employment strategy to respond to labour market needs within the country and abroad. The time has now come to consider a long term overseas employment strategy which is *rights based and safe*.

The Multilateral Framework adopted by the ILO Conference on Migration in 2004 by 177 countries and social partners of such countries offers an opportunity for Social Partners to be active in the process of ensuring a mutually beneficial outcome in the operation of labour markets for migrants at Regional and International level that ensures a fair deal for migrant workers in a global economy.

The National Workers Congress through its service arm for migrants the Migrants Services Centre has taken on the task of organising migrant workers into a Social Movement, mobilised them into Migrant Workers Association and offered them membership of the NWC under a special dispensation

Recognize Women Domestic Workers.

Sri Lankan migrant workers who contribute immensely to our economy have been ignored for too long. These workers mainly constitute women who work as domestic workers in the Middle East, sometimes under difficult and tiring conditions and are locally branded as house maids. There is no domestic legislation to protect their rights. NWC is Campaigning for National Legislation on local Labour Rights for Domestic workers.

Migrant Services Centre undertakes several programmes. These include:

- a) Provide necessary training/skills, guidance for decision making prior to migration for the

prospective migrants and their family members.

- b) Provide social welfare to migrant workers and their families so that they do not return to disintegrated and broken families, which is posing a social cost in Sri Lanka.
- c) Create awareness and disseminate information on prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in mobile populations.
- d) Anti Trafficking programmes are conducted to ensure safe migration as trafficking of women and children has emerged as a new challenge to safe migration.
- e) Campaign for political rights of migrants in order to give them the opportunity to participate in the Political process through full compliance with UN Convention 1990 that Sri Lanka ratified.
- f) Under take advocacy for full implementation of the UN Convention 1990 by the government through new laws to ensure Rights and Protection to migrant workers.
- g) As Sri Lanka has not ratified the relevant ILO Conventions on migration like ILO 97,143,181 and UN 1990 remains the only available International Instrument to ensure Rights of migrant workers. NWC is engaged in raising awareness of Government and social Partners in Sri Lanka towards ratification of core ILO Conventions on migration.

The 1997 ILO Convention (181) on Private Recruitment Agencies concern us immensely as it provides Trade Unions a distinct role with other Social Partners to lay down a level playing field for Private Recruitment Agencies in the levy of fees and requires Labour Inspection procedures to be installed by the Labour Ministry in the administration of migrant workers programmes.

Recommendations.

To ensure Rights based approach the National Workers Congress recommends the following strategies and actions for the Trade Unions of South Asia;

- 1 Hold regular pre-departure orientation programmes for female migrant workers and members of their families on rights and duties of migrant workers.
- 2 Hold regular meetings of Migrant Worker Associations set up in high migration areas and provide social support and resettlement on return.
- 3 Train migrant activists in a rights based approach to intervene in settlement of

- problems of migrants with concerned Stakeholders.
- 4 Campaign for voting and pension rights and call for government intervention in enabling the exercise of political and economic rights of migrants.
 - 5 Hold regular HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and Anti Trafficking programmes on an Island wide basis.
 - 6 Manage a well designed net work of Trade Unions, National NGO's and International NGO concerned with issues of migration to provide an adequate safety net work and advocate policy intervention.
 - 7 Participate at experts group meetings and Regional Campaigns for migrant protection and care.
 - 8 Host visits from other labour sending countries like Bangladesh and labour receiving countries Nepal and receivers on a regular basis and undertake research and close links with Academia.
 - 9 Support efforts of ILO towards realizing the goals of the Multilateral Framework adopted at the ILO conference in 2004 more particularly in the ratification of ILO Convention 97,143 and 181.

* GDGP Soysa is the Director of Migrant Services Centre of Sri Lanka. He is also the core member of SAMReN.

ACTIVITIES OF THE UNIT

July – September, 2005

Workshops

A five-day workshop of *South Asian Journalists on Safe Migration* was held on 25-29 September, 2005 at the conference room of International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Dhaka. The British High Commission in Dhaka organised the workshop with the support of RMMRU and IOM. Twenty participants from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan took part in the workshop.

A workshop on *Migration from Char Areas and Livelihood* was held at the RMMRU Seminar Room on 22 September 2005. RMMRU-DRC intern Jessica Skinner presented the findings of the research carried out by her and Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui. It was commissioned by the Char Livelihood Programme, Bangladesh.

A workshop on *Safe Migration: Information Campaigns and Pre-departure Training* was held on 16 September, 2005 at BIAM auditorium in Dhaka, supported by the International Labour Organisation. Sheikh Md. Wahiduz-Zaman, Director General, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) spoke as the Chief Guest. Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, RMMRU; Dr. Md. Nurul Islam, Director, BMET; Mr. Mizanur Rahaman, IOM; Mr. Abdul Alim, BAIRA; Dr. Nazrul Haque, BCCP and Mr. Abdul Mannan, WARBE also spoke at the workshop.

A workshop on *Migrant Workers and the UN Convention on Migrants Rights in the Asia Pacific Region, Training Program for Advocates-2005* was held on 15-19 August, 2005 at BIAM, Dhaka, organised by Diplomacy Training Programme (DTP) of the University of New South Wales. RMMRU, WARBE and Migrant Forum in Asia were the local partners. Participants from five different countries shared their experiences on recent development of migration issues. The workshop was guided with the help of Justice Syed Reefat Ahmed was present as the Chief Guest at the closing ceremony.

Project Activities:

The third meeting of the Forum for Safe Migration was held at the Vintage Restaurant, Dhaka on 30 August 2005. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Ministry of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, senior journalists, lawyers and RMMRU officials.

Mr. Bishnu Mohapatra, Programme Officer, Ford Foundation was invited at RMMRU on 1 August, 2005. He briefed about the Ford Foundation, its current projects, selection criteria of projects and major areas of interest of the foundation. Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Project Coordinator, NTS project briefed him about the present status of the NTS project.

The two-day work-in-progress meeting under the project of Population Movements: Non-Traditional Issue in South Asian Security Discourse was held on 14-15 July, 2005 at the RMMRU project office. The meeting was

attended among others by Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Chair, RMMRU; Dr. Mahendra P Lama from India; Dr. Jagannath Adhikari of Nepal Institute of Development Studies, Kathmunda; Mr. Hussain Bux Mallah from Collective for Social Science Research Ltd, Karachi.

Professor Salauddin M. Aminuzzaman of Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka presented the RMMRU research findings on 'Migration of Nurses from Bangladesh' at a workshop, organised by Institute for Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana on 3 July, 2005.

Visits

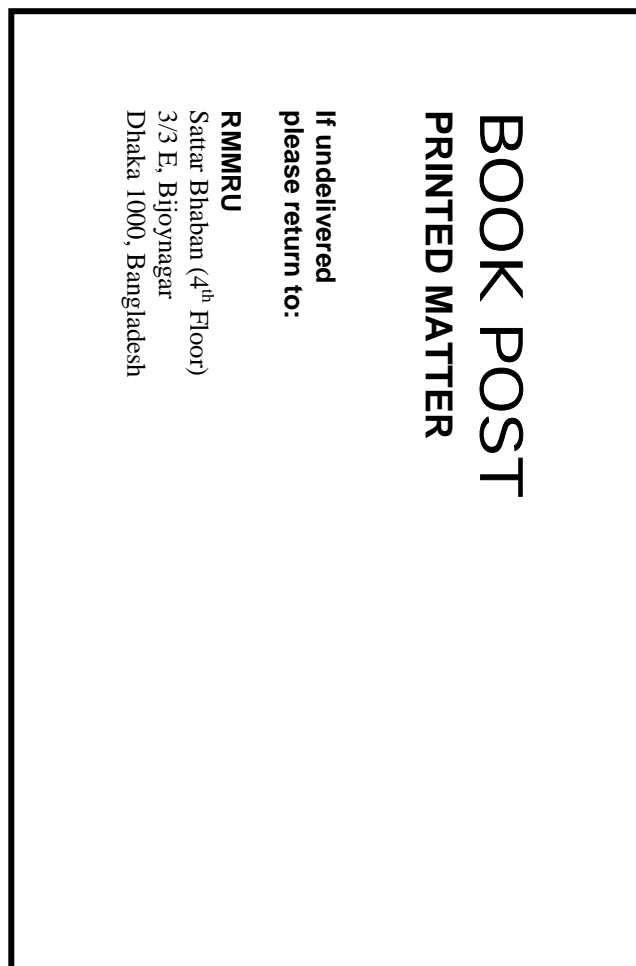
Ms. Tasmia Persoob, Programme Officer of RMMRU participated at the Women's Forum on Migration jointly organised by the Joint Committee for Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK) and Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) in Seoul, Korea, held on 24-29 September 2005.

Ms. Zohra Akther, Programme Assistant of RMMRU attended the Migrants Rights Violations Reporting System Training in Jakarta, Indonesia from 12-16 September 2005. The training programme was organised by the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) in collaboration with Centre for Indonesia Migrant Workers (CIMW), Indonesia.

Two field visits were conducted in India by two lead researchers to assess the progress of NTS. Dr. C R Abrar, RMMRU visited Delhi from 04 to 10 September, 2005 and Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Chair, RMMRU visited from 04 to 13 September 2005.

Ms. Rupal Mistry, former RMMRU-DRC intern attended the Regional Conference on WTO, Development and Migration organised by the Migrant Forum in Asia and held in Hong Kong from July 15-19 2005.

Dr. C R Abrar attended the DRC Partnership Meeting in Ghana from 4-8 July 2005.



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