

COMPLETION REPORT

[Research Summary]

Bangladeshi Transnational Community in Japan: Settlement and Transnational Practices

Bangladeshi migration to Japan first started in the late 1970s and picked in the mid 1980s before it dwindled in the early 1990s due to the implementation of strict immigration laws. This early Bangladeshi migration was mostly irregular in nature. Despite immigration barrier, a part of the early Bangladeshi immigrants was able to settle in the country with regular status on various humanitarian grounds. To live in a predominantly homogeneous society like Japan, Bangladeshi immigrants have learnt Japanese language and acquired socio-cultural understanding of the Japanese society to the extent that many are now more familiar with Japanese society and culture than even their own Bangladeshi culture, in some instances. The majority, nearly 70 percent, of Bangladeshis uses Japanese language at home, takes common Japanese food and celebrates Japanese socio-cultural festivals like their own one.

This pattern of assimilation found in Japan, which is directed towards the mainstream society rather than ethnic one (ethnic incorporation) represents Bangladeshi immigrants' ingenuity and readiness to be the part of Japanese society. One of the examples of the insertion of Bangladeshis into the Japanese society is their reactions to the Japan's triple disaster in 2011, as a case in point. Japan's triple disaster (earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown) in the early 2011 was seen by many foreigners 'dangerous' and they left the country to escape possible radiation. Unlike Western immigrants, Bangladeshi immigrants stayed in the country with fellow Japanese. Some Bangladeshi organization collected donation for disaster-affected people as well. I identified a Bangladeshi hotel businessman, namely, Akhter, who provided shelter to disaster victims at his hotel. In the post-disaster period, he was even interviewed by some Japanese television channels. This case has been a talk of the Bangladeshi society in Japan and other Bangladeshi immigrants took pride on his contribution to the society.

One of the components of the study was to identify the engagement of Bangladeshis in Japan with their home country in Bangladesh. Financial engagement in the form of remittances is seen here as a visible indicator of engagement. According to the Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of Bangladesh, the annual remittance inflows to Bangladesh is over one hundred million dollar. What is good about the remittances is that remittance money, unlike aid money, goes to the family members who are left behind directly. Bangladeshi immigrants use formal channel to remit back to Bangladesh. A few selected Bangladeshi migrants who were deported from Japan were interviewed for this research. Upon return, a few were found engaged in used car businesses in Dhaka. They employ their personal networks to buy used car/reconditioned car from Japan and sell it in local market in Dhaka at a margin ranging from 20 to 30 percent profit while other businessmen who are not connected through personal networks in Japan cannot make similar profits. Migration to Japan has reinforced a new social relation with members left behind and other non-migrant households in the communities of origin in Bangladesh. This study is expected to go further to configure the new web of relations that revolve around access to Japan labour market in Bangladesh.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

Not Applicable

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

Not Applicable

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

I am planning to work on the project further and publish the research as a book chapter. Once I publish as a book chapter, I will share information with the foundation.