

## MIGRATION PATTERN AND EVERYDAY LIFE OF SLUM PEOPLE: A STUDY ON CHITTAGONG CITY

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### ABSTRACT

*Migration on a permanent or temporary basis has always been one of the most important survival strategies adopted by people confronted by natural or human-caused disasters. Every year huge number of people in Bangladesh migrates from rural to urban areas in search of livelihoods, education and economic opportunities. Chittagong as the second largest urban area and commercial city is one of the main destinations for rural displaced poor people. Growing industries, city port, massive urbanization 'attracts' poor people for the possibility of work and better living. The aim of the present paper is to know the migration pattern and everyday life of the slum people in Chittagong city. Study shows poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, loss of homestead and agricultural lands, search for better livelihoods and economic activities are the main causes of migration. After migration they discover themselves in the most abandoned corner of the city with having minimum standard of living. Though they are part of the urban center, they do not have access most common city services like housing, food, education, water, sanitation, health care service and recreation. The social study results also highlight the basic needs of the migrants within urban areas and their interest to return in the village or origin places.*

**Keywords:** Migration, Livelihoods, Everyday life, Slum people, Chittagong City

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## 1. Introduction

Rural-urban migration is a response to the high demand of labour by an industrial sector, which assures for workers greater levels of productivity and, for investors, profits superior to the opportunities found in the traditional agricultural sector (Lewis, 1954; Ranis and Fei 1961 and 1996). For Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970), rural-urban migration in less developed countries depends on the difference in expected wage from migration (urban wage) versus an agricultural wage. Beyond the wages differential, migration is considered as a way to diversify income sources (Stark, 1991) to deal with bad political institutions, natural disasters, large social disparities, conflicts, and the lack of good infrastructure. Many theoretical models and studies provide explanation for migration flows due to individuals' expectation of higher income, obtaining employment, better living. The rapid growth of rural-urban migration has been a common feature of developing countries. In China, for instance, Wang et al (2000) identified the magnitude of the floating population in cities caused by rural-urban migration and the consequences of the tidal wave of migrants. Bangladesh has been facing rapid urban growth due to migration by the rural poor, particularly to large metropolitan areas. On arrival, these poor migrants routinely turn to slums and squatter settlements for shelter. All major urban centers in Bangladesh have slums and squatter settlements, the largest concentrations being in Dhaka, followed by Chittagong. Much of the literature focuses on movements of people as a result of environmental, economic or demographic crises. The migrants originate largely from the economically depressed areas of the country (Sarwar and Rahman, 2004). Moreover, Bangladesh is one of the most disaster affected country, poor communities take migration as common adaptation strategy for lives and livelihoods. Every year, thousands of destitute victims of natural disasters pour into the cities from rural areas. Rural-urban migration flows increased dramatically during the famine of 1974 (BBS, 1996). Based on the current rate of growth of population, the country's population (currently at 158 million) is expected to reach 206 million in 2025 (ESCAP, 2007). Many people of urban areas are in search of jobs and continue to live in a very unhealthy environment without proper shelter, drinking water and sewerage facilities. Some of the slums are located near the waste dumping sites and many of them are near the railway lines. The poor economic condition is also due to the unavailability of job opportunities in the urban areas. Urban poverty in fact emerges as a complex phenomenon than rural poverty,

with aspects of environmental degradation, inadequate planning and management of urban resources, unemployment, mismanaged investments in technology as well as insufficient mobilization of communities (Alamgir, Jabbar and Islam, 2009). Although urbanization is often associated with increasing national production and high per capita GDP, poverty remains a persistent feature of the urban life, both in terms of income and living conditions. Most of the migrants who come from rural areas are poor, and hence the urban areas remain numerically dominated by the poor. Though poor migrants have contributed significantly to the economic growth and gained from higher wages in higher productivity areas, they remain socially and economically excluded from the wider benefits of economic growth such as access to food and education, housing, sanitation and freedom (Farhana et al, 2012). Rapid unplanned urbanization is a challenge for policy-makers. But very little recent information is available about household-level impacts of these moves in rural sending areas and urban receiving areas (Abrar and Seely, 2009, Afsar 2003 and 2004, Hossain, 2001). The present paper aimed to know the migration causes and pattern of poor people, their everyday sufferings, needs and how they are surviving in the 'new place' like city slums.

## 2. Objectives and Methodology

The present research paper is based on the two broad categories which are mentioned below:

- To know the causes and pattern of migration of slum dwellers
- To assess the standard of their everyday living focusing on most basic needs.

Both primary and secondary data has been used to complete the study. Primary data has been collected through semi-structured questionnaire by following simple random sampling from four slums namely Dewanhat, Tigerpass, Lalkhan Bazar and Sholoshahar of Chittagong city. Figure 1 shows the location of surveyed slum area. 120 household heads were interviewed from poor clusters of these slums. The respondents were all migrants from other slums or different part of the country.

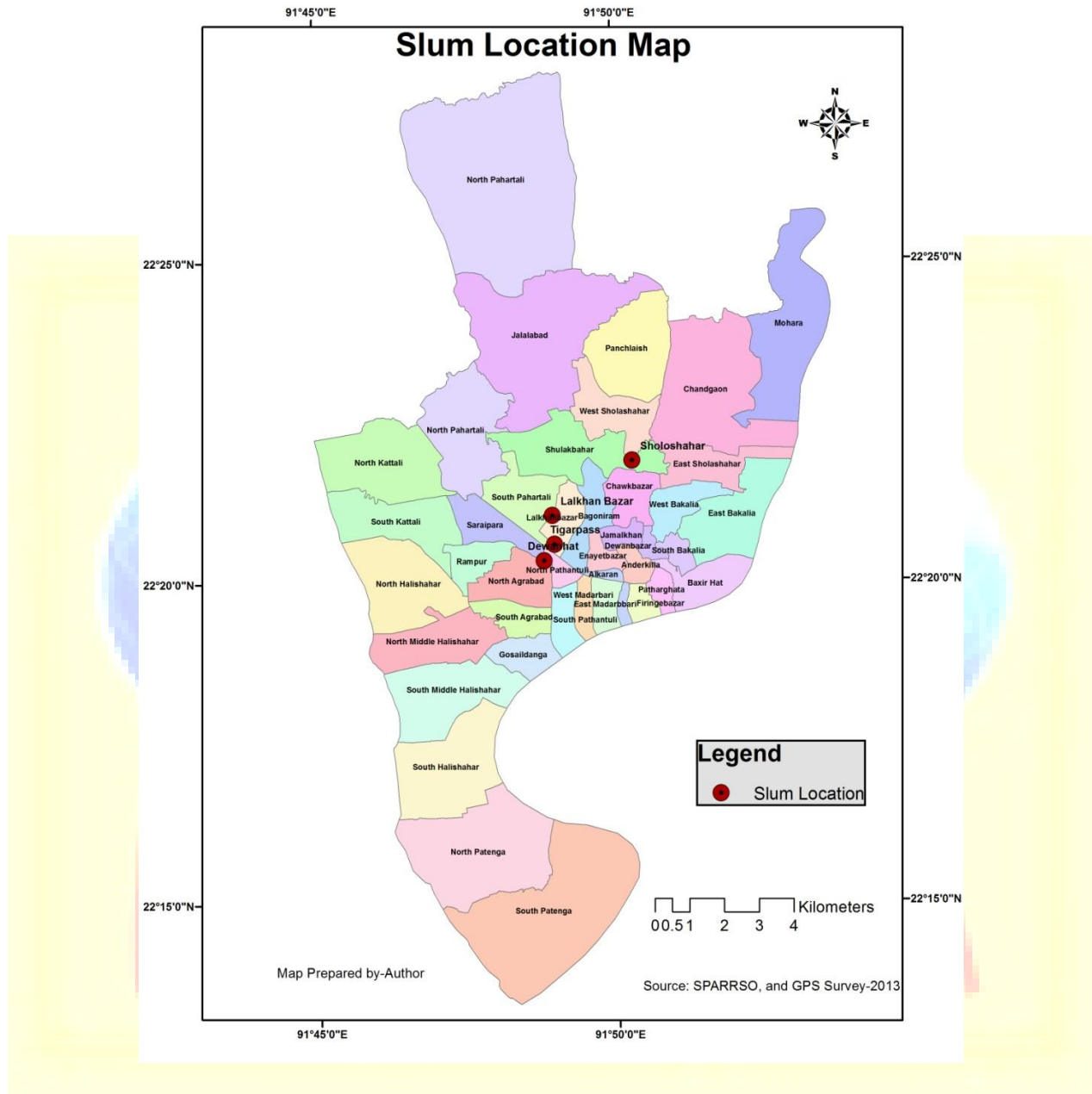


Figure 1: Slum Location Map of Study Area

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Causes and Pattern of Migration of the Slum Dwellers

Since Chittagong is the port city and the commercial capital, people from the surrounding regions and other districts are migrating into the city areas for better income opportunities as well as attractive urban facilities. As a result, unplanned and haphazard urban growth and slums are forming at different location of the city.

Survey data shows people are migrating to the city from sixties or seventeen decades. Majority respondents (32 persons) have found living here by born. Their forefathers came in the city long time ago and some of them even do not know their original districts. 29 persons are living for 20-30 years, 21 people for 10-20 years, 28 persons for last 10 years and remaining 10 are residing for 30-40 years in Chittagong city. Generally, people who come once in the city do not back again to their village. Moreover, single migrants who moved for working purpose temporarily gradually shifted with family permanently. So, the numbers of floating people are increasing every year.

### 3.1.1 Factors responsible behind migration

Various literatures support different types of economic, social and demographic factors act as driving forces behind temporary or permanent migration process. Poverty, unemployment, natural disaster (flood, cyclone, riverbank erosion, climate change risk and vulnerabilities), violence, tension continue to feed population flow from rural to urban areas in Bangladesh. All negative forces that bound poor people to quit their village are commonly known as ‘push factors’ (Figure 1 and Figure 2). Survey data reveals, about one third people (32 percent) left their village due to natural disaster like flood, cyclone, riverbank erosion, salinity intrusion etc. 20 percent people opined due to loss of their homestead and agricultural land moved to the city. 18 percent mentioned meager income, 14 percent for unemployment, 10 percent for social insecurity and religion causes and 6 percent respondents shifted to the city for political reasons. On the other hand, they chose Chittagong as their destination place for some reasons which are termed as ‘pull factors’ (Figure 1 and Figure 2)). Chittagong as the port city or commercial capital ‘attracts’ migrants mainly in search of livelihoods, employment opportunities, better living standards, education and urban facilities. Majority migrants (38 percent) of the slum opined they moved to Chittagong city in search of livelihoods. In the slum area house rent is comparatively cheap than other residential areas which is one of the main ‘attractions’ of the poor. 23 percent poor mentioned cheap house rent inspired them to live in the slum while a significant portion (15



percent) started living there for having relatives and neighbor's support.

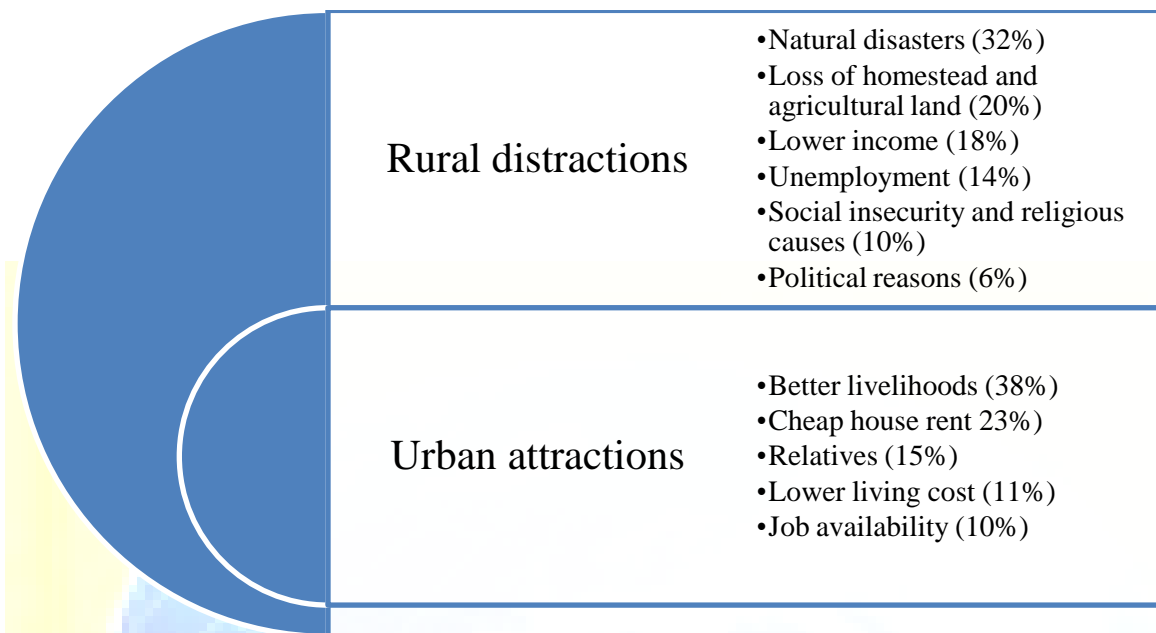


Figure 1: Responsible factors of migration

Table 1: Persons migrated in the city in different periods with associated causes

Frequency of migrants (N)	0-10 years	10-20 years	20-30 years	30-40 years	By born	Total
Push factors (Disasters, Meager income, Social insecurity, Landlessness and homelessness, Unemployment)	12	13	17	4	18	64
Pull factors (Employment opportunity, Better earning, Business purposes, Urban facilities, education, Relatives)	16	8	12	6	14	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: Social survey, 2013

Good numbers of dwellers (11 percent) think living cost is lower than other part of the city while 10 percent people said job availability or working opportunity encouraged them to reside in the slum. Survey data reveals that push factors dominate peoples' migration than pull factors (Table

1). But last decade pull factors attract poor in the city. In the last twenty years city growth, so called urban facilities like water, gas, electricity supply, transport, medical facilities and job availability increase than before which motivated people. At the same time, natural disaster lower income, social insecurity and marginalization push them from their origin places.

### 3.1.2 Migration within the city

Slum dwellers change their living places every now and then. Majority of the migrants shifted within the city area for better but cheap housing rent, working facility or other causes. Most of them are living here by born. Some of them shifted twice in the last two year. The frequency of migration within the city is larger than from the outside. The people migrated from various slum of the city such as Cola bagan bosti, Railway station bosti, I.W colony, Pharatali, Jamtala colony, Barisal colony, Sher shah colony, Madarbari rail crossing, Ambagan, Matijharna colony (Table 2).

**Table 2: Migration pattern of the respondents**

	Migration within the city	Frequency (N)	Migration from outside	Frequency (N)
Area/ Districts	Cola Bagan Bosti	5	Rangpur	5
	Railway station Bosti	7	Gaibandha	6
	I.W colony Bosti	6	Kurigram	8
	Pahartali Bosti	5	Barisal	3
	Jamtula Bosti	5	Faridpur	2
	Barisal colony Bosti	10	Patuakhali	2
	Sher shah colony Bosti	10	Bhola	6
	Dewanhat Bosti	6	Comilla	5
	Madarbari rail crossing Bosti	2	Chandpur	4

	Bou bazaar Bosti	3	Noakhali	3
	Ambagan Bosti	5	Lakshmipur	4
	Matijharna colony	4	Hatia	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>68</b>		<b>52</b>

Source: Social survey, 2013

### 3.1.3 Migration from the outside

People migrated from the different parts of the country due to disaster, poor economic income, homestead loss etc. (Figure 1). Survey depicts from the northern part of the country like Rangpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Faridpur; southern part like Barisal, Patuakhali, Bhola, eastern and south-eastern part like Comilla, Chandpur, Noakhali, Lakshmipur, Hatia people moved to the city. They mentioned various disasters such as cyclone, coastal flood, river bank erosion resulted landlessness, joblessness and economic disabilities bound them to migrate in the Chittagong city. City growth, expansion of industries, facilities of commercial center and sometimes motivation of relatives pull them here.

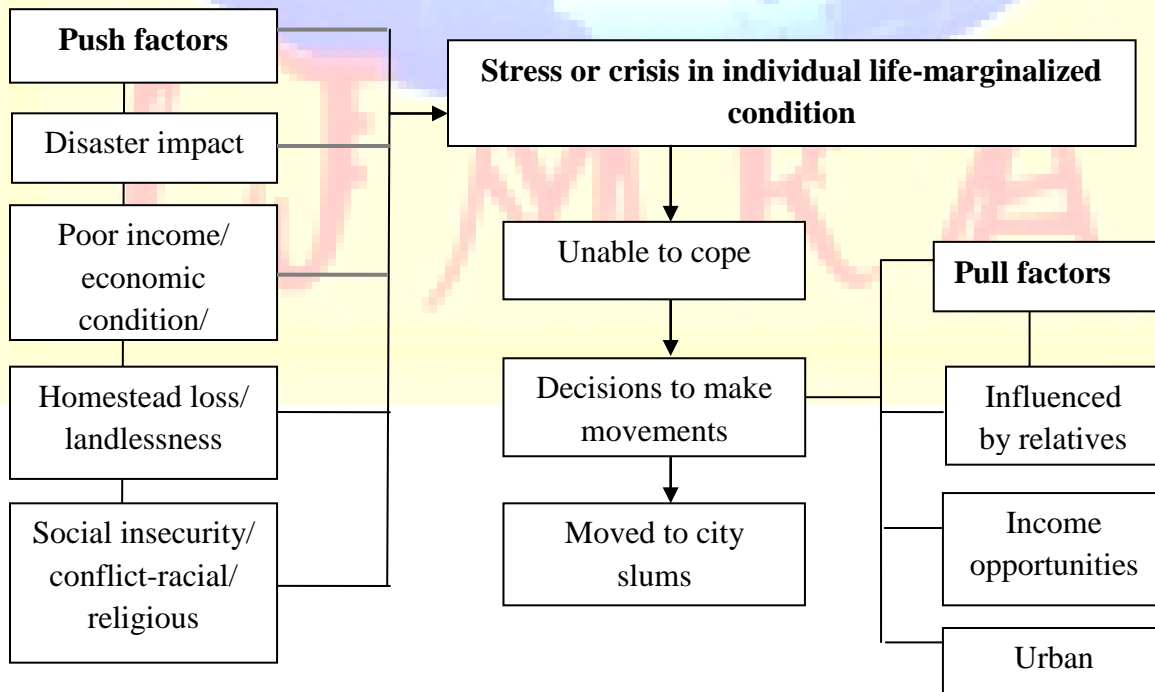


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of migration of marginal people



### 3.2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Mostly, male persons migrate to the city for various purposes such as for better earning, occupational opportunities or other purposes. Among the respondents male persons (67 percent) are twice than female (33 percent) or the ratio is almost 2:1. Survey data reveals that, most of the migrants are of working ages while a significant portion migrated long ago are above 60 years. The majority (30 percent) respondents belong to 30-40 age groups, 18% are in 20-30 years, 15% are in 40-50 years. Dependency rate of the respondents (above 60 years) are 21 percent and below 20 years are 10 percent. But, commonly in the slum areas people below twenty and above sixty are also involved in minor earning process to support family including child labor and begging among old people. Very few migrants touched the primary level education while most of them are (87 percent) illiterate. Literacy rate among is almost zero. From their everyday life it is clear that they are unaware about their food habit, nutrient contents and hygiene, rights and responsibilities. Thus parent's educational attainment has important implications for children's diet, sanitation and health status. Lack of education and awareness also make their family size larger. Nearly 42 percent family consists of 4 to 6 members while one third migrant family consists of 7 to 9 members. Some families also have more than 9 members which push them more vulnerable condition to meet daily needs.

### 3.3 Everyday Life of the Slum People

In the slum areas of Bangladesh low-income settlements look primarily like residential areas, row upon row of corrugated iron shacks squeezed tightly together on top of poorly-serviced land without having minimum standard of living. Among the urban poor of the slum the number and variety of businesses and enterprises through which people lead their livelihoods and struggle to improve their households. In most cases, slums lack even the most basic amenities associated with urban life, such as running water, sewage systems, latrines, waste disposal services and electricity. Slum dwellers also have restricted access to basic social services, such as health clinics and schools.

#### 3.3.1 Tenure status of the people

The residents living in slums have been long neglected by the state or city authority. The absence of regulated housing structures resulting in informal structures. Survey data reveals over two third dwellers (62 percent) live in rent house 38% slum dweller stay in government place (squatters) either by own responsibility or securing by any powerful elite and political leader. Nearly half of the houses (48 percent) are temporary weak hut made of polythene, straw and bamboo and most of them are situated on government land. About 39 percent dwellers live in houses made of tin (corrugated iron sheet) for constructing roof and bamboo for making wall, pole and beam. Only 13 percent migrants were found to live in semi-pucca structure.

People living in private slums pay higher rent than squatters and rent generally depends on housing structure, floor space, availability of facilities and location. Only 12 percent tenants were paying 300 taka for temporary weak hut made of polythene and straw, 37 percent paying between 300-600 taka (house made of tin and bamboo), 29 percent between 600-900 taka (house made of tin/wood/other) and remaining 15 percent were found paying 900-1200 taka. Very few tenants (7 percent) were found to pay even more than 1200 taka monthly. The slum house characterized by over-crowding and congestion because the tenants usually rent small size single room (nearly 100 sq feet) living minimum 4 members to maximum 9 members or over.

### 3.3.2 Occupational Pattern and Income level

Marginal rural people migrate to city in search of living and livelihood. As most of them are illiterate they involve in unproductive informal labor intensive sectors. About 20 percent migrants were involved in small job like worker of factories or market places, 17 percent slum dweller are day labor, 26 percent work on transport like Rickshaw puller, push carter, contractor, CNG/ tempo driver, 10 percent engaged in business like vendor, sell cloths, vegetables, fruits or seasonal products, 16 percent are house maid. Remaining portion of the migrants (10 percent) is beggar. Table 2 shows the comparative participation of male and female respondents in different sectors. In day labor category male participation is almost twice than female while in house maid job women are mostly involved. In transport related job women participation was found zero (Table 2). It is clear from their occupational status that most of the earning sources are temporary, insecure, insufficient and minimum income basis to run their family needs. Survey denotes 40 percent dwellers daily income is 300-400 taka, one third people (33 percent) earn between 200-300 taka. Less than one fourth of the migrants (20 percent) got more than 400 taka.

The most marginal people like beggar gain less than 200 taka in a day. The picture of earning range reveals the hard practices they lead to survive.

**Table 2: Occupational categories of male and female respondents**

Working sectors	Male (%)	Female (%)
•Small job holder (factory/market)	•12	•8
•Day labour	•11	•6
•Transport worker (Driver, helper, rickshaw/ push carter)	•26	•-
•Seasonal Business (vendor, fruits, cloths, vegetables)	•6	•4
•House maid	•3	•13

**Source:** Social survey, 2013

### 3.3.3 Daily food intake

The majority percent slum dwellers lives in a poverty line and most of them cannot take meals three times daily. Only 25 percent dwellers take meals three times but all members of the family cannot afford. More than two third (74 percent) people take meals two times daily. According to respondents, children are provided with three meals in a day. But inadequate quality and lack of diversity of food are matter of concern in food habit. Consumption pattern of slum dwellers depict that rice, potato and edible oil are consumed on daily basis. Food composition sometimes is only rice with potato or peas or fish which are cheap to them. But access to protein rich animal product (milk and milk product, meat or poultry, eggs) is very low among the poor. They can consume them once in three or four months or sometimes on special occasion like Eid festival. According to households these are expensive food item and most of them cannot afford it. Though, a few households can manage fish in monthly basis, but the quantity and quality of fish is relatively low. In the morning, 81 percent slum dwellers take rice and remaining part of the

people intake bread and tea in the morning. At noon, 34 percent take rice and vegetables, 31 percent rice and potato, 24 percent rice and pulse/small fish. A significant portion (11 percent) dweller said that they take only rice. At night, 44 percent eat rice and vegetables, 29 percent only rice and water and 27 percent dwellers take rice and potato. Survey also depicts more than half of the slum people (52 percent) spent 100-200 taka, 39 percent expense 200-300 taka and 9 percent spent 100 taka for daily food. It is clear from the data that slum people spent most of the money on their food and housing. In fact they live hand to mouth. They remain nothing for education, health, cloths, transports, recreation or savings.

### 3.3.4 Water, Sanitation and Health issues

Water source are not available in slum area. In most of the areas there is no water supply system by WASA. The availability of water bodies like pond, canals are also rare. Existing water bodies get polluted by dumping domestic waste, multipurpose use. Their open sanitation system is also situated by the side of water bodies resulting scarcity of water availability. For this reason majority slum dwellers expense money on water. Half (54 percent) of the slum dweller use bottle water, 26 percent use deep well of remote areas, 8 percent use tube well and 10 percent use other sources including dirty or polluted water for drinking and domestic use. Most of them who use polluted or dirty water do not use any water treatment process for lack of fuel or money to buy treatment amenities. On average more than two third people (68 percent) spent 10-20 taka and 32 percent expense more than 20 taka per day. Surprisingly, monthly total cost on water is 600 taka or more which is higher than some city residential area.

In most of the slums of Dewanhat, Tigarpass do not have any specific place for cooking, washing and cleaning which are done under the open sky. Along with water scarcity these issues result common diseases like diarrhoea, stomach ache, skin problem for using dirty water for bath. More than half 52 percent people are affected by diarrhoea especially the children regularly. Besides, cooking generates a lot of hit and smoke for which they suffer from respiratory problem, hardness in inhale-exhale, coughing, and catching cold for long time including winter season. Slums near the rail tracks like Sholoshahor station mostly are not permanent and do not have an access to a sanitation system. About 42 percent respondents use common community latrine, 28 percent use open spaces or unhygienic toilet and remaining portion use others' latrines. Most of the open latrines are situated by the side of and get polluted or filled up for regular dumping.

Majority people (82 percent) suffer from waste disposal management. Daily domestic waste are dumped surrounding areas or nearby water bodies, over the roads, railway tracks which create serious environmental pollution, odor, increase flees, mosquito and other disease causing microbes, agents resulting regular health problem. Those who have ability to spent money can join community waste management program. A few people (18 percent) are engaged to community waste disposal program costing 15-20 taka monthly which is also high from some residential areas. In case of emergency situation like child delivery, burning or accidental cases they try to go Chittagong government hospitals. But in other cases like fever, cold, stomach ache, skin problem, diarrhoea etc. most of them (89 percent) take medicine prescribed by local compounder or drug house and the remaining percentage of people intake medicine according to local doctor's suggestion.

### 3.3.5 Education, Clothing and Recreation

Most of the respondents (92 percent) do not have any interest to educate their children due to poverty, ignorance and awareness. Those who have comparatively better economic condition, small family size try to send their children to school. They only show interest to complete primary level. It is quite impossible for the slum people to buy new cloths every year for all members of the family. They pass year after year by using same torn, faded clothes. But, the worst sufferings start in the winter season without having warm clothes. More than two third (78 percent) respondents said they have to depend on help of the others, relief from the voluntary group or make themselves warm by firing. Those who have no choices just suffer from cold and cold diseases. Mostly children and old people attacked by cold, coughing, fever, asthma etc.

There is no means of recreation for most of the slum dwellers. Majority respondents (94 percent) opined that they do not have access in any kind of recreational facilities like watching television, listening music, going out with family or children, not even in the festival or occasions. A few people said they watch television in the local shops, tea stall of the area which is the only means of their refreshment.



### 3.4 Perception about changed life

People expressed their perception about present life in comparison to previous status. For economic status they opined on the basis of income level, food intake every day, education, urban facilities accessed, health condition and access in medical care. On the other hand for assessing social status housing condition, clothing, social relationship or identity status and living environment were considered. Survey depicts in both cases most of them ‘constant’ or same vulnerable condition while significant portion reported declined condition than previous life (Table 3 and Table 4). Besides, police harassment, dirty environment, disturbance from terrorist, local leader, crime, threats from land lord or being uprooted from government land push them ‘bottom line’ of marginalization. As a result, majority people want to back in their village again. 97 percent people mentioned if they are facilitated or rehabilitated by home and job they are ready to return in their origin places.

**Table 3: Changing Condition of Economic status**

	<b>Changing condition (upward)</b>	<b>Respondent's perception (%)</b>	<b>Changing condition (downward)</b>	<b>Respondent's perception (%)</b>
<b>Economic status</b>	No change	41		
	Little improved	22	Little declined	15
	Moderately improved	12	Moderately declined	7
	Highly improved	0	Highly declined	3
	Very highly improved	0	Very highly declined	
<b>Total</b>		<b>75</b>		<b>25</b>

Source: Social survey, 2013

**Table 4: Changing Condition of Social status**

	<b>Changing condition (upward)</b>	<b>Respondents' perception</b>	<b>Changing condition</b>	<b>Respondents' perception</b>



		(%)	(downward)	(%)
<b>Social status</b>	No change	33		
	Little improved	21	Little declined	16
	Moderately improved	18	Moderately declined	8
	Highly improved	0	Highly declined	4
	Very highly improved	0	Very highly declined	
	<b>Total</b>		<b>72</b>	

**Source:** Social survey. 2013

#### 4. Conclusion

The migration of people from rural to urban areas is one of the main reasons of the growing slum population in Chittagong city. ‘Urban attractions’ and ‘rural distractions’ has gradually persuaded people to migrate throughout the last few decades. The upward trend of the rural population contributes to the downward land-man ratio. As a result, landless and jobless people on the breadline are increasing day by day. In addition natural calamities like flood, river erosion, cyclone etc. have forced people of affected areas to migrate to the city. Besides, Some social events like village politics, conflicts over land, racial and religious issues etc. also act as ‘rural distractions’ and encourage people to migrate. After migration in the city the people pays double penalties without having economic security and social identities. Survey reveals slum dwellers suffers from most basic needs like lack of home and privacy, secure and permanent job, lower income range, high cost of living and food, fuel crisis, pure water and sanitation hygiene, health care, child education and recreational facilities. Though they moved in the city for the hope of better life but in the most of the cases they deprived from city facilities and lead lower living than previous rural life. But, by proper job facility and rehabilitation program can bring them back in their root places where they come from.

### Further Research Scope

Further research can be made to know the contribution of various factors to increase peoples' marginalization and ratio of migration. Moreover, how recent climate change issues are influencing physical or push factors and migration flow in the risk prone areas might be sector of interest.

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