



IMPACTS OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON MIGRANTS AT THE ORIGIN: LESSONS FOR MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Considering the crucial role played by the migrants in the country's macroeconomic stability, it is very important to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the migrant community of Bangladesh both at the destination and origin. Though the condition of the migrants at their destination is well discussed in the literature, there is little focus on their condition at the origin. In this context, the present study aims to analyze the impacts of the pandemic on the economic, social and psychosocial well-being of Bangladeshi migrants and their families at the origin to identify the weaknesses of the existing migration governance of the country which have contributed to perpetuating their sufferings. The study found that the returnee migrants and their households faced multifaceted negative impacts of the pandemic. Involuntary return of their migrant members and their stranded conditions, lack of employment and reduced remittance flow severely curtailed the income of migrant households, added to their debt burden and led to the curtailment of necessary expenditures. Migrants faced stigmatization and discrimination at both their destination and origin. Social stigma and involuntary repatriation had psychosocial impacts on them. The Government of Bangladesh took various initiatives to assist the migrants in coping with the challenges though they were not adequate. The present study suggests focusing on undocumented migration, "failed migration," and reintegration to make the existing migration governance more prepared for similar future challenges.

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