

GAMBLING ON LIFE

Context and Consequences of
Irregular Migration from Bangladesh to Italy

POLICY BRIEF

The scope of legal migration of workers to Europe is rare. However, the people's movement in search of better life has never been stopped. Italy was not an aspired destination for Bangladeshi migrants. Bangladeshi nationals started to move to Italy following the amnesties in 1986 and 1990. These groups of migrants started bringing relatives and friends to Italy mainly through irregular channels via multiple routes. In order to stop organized clandestine flows, Italy introduced legal entry from abroad with a quota visa known as 'seasonal visa' for a limited amount of months a year, to meet its labour demand mostly in agriculture and tourist sectors. Bangladesh was listed for the 'seasonal visa' until 2012. One of the main reasons of being ousted from the list is 'irregularities in recruitment' in Bangladesh and that costs high migration fees results in forcing migrants to remain stay end of contract months to recover money.

Numbers of Bangladeshi migrants rescued in the Italian shores grows alarmingly since 2013 when the massive waves of irregular arrivals taken place following the collapse or destabilization of authoritarian regimes in North Africa and the Middle East after the Arab Spring in 2011. The research found three major trends for migration of Bangladeshi workers to Italy- (i) escaping unavoidable situations in war-torn Libya; (ii) voluntarily to fulfill their economic dreams which are sold to them by the human traffickers and smugglers; and (iii) in an attempt to become regular from other European countries.

The whole migration process either from Libya or from Bangladesh was operated by the human traffickers and smugglers comprised of local militant groups, law enforcement agencies in Libya, and the agents of origin nationalities. Such irregular migration operated by the human traffickers and smugglers is termed as 'game' which is a 'gambling on life'. Migrants can succeed or not in the game depending on the luck.

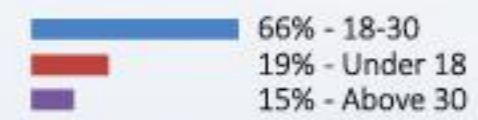
Both the migrants and the families left behind had to pay a lot for this irregular migration to Italy by crossing the Mediterranean. The migrants who have arrived Italy applied for asylum. Most of the migrants, who are indebted to pay the expenses and ransom incurred to, stay in the registered camps with worries and uncertainly having limited scope to get engaged in work to earn. Families of these migrants have negative impacts on income, education and health in addition to the pressure to pay loans.

This policy brief is based on the research entitled "Gambling on Life: Context and Consequences of Irregular migration from Bangladesh to Italy". The research was undertaken to understand behavioral directives, motivations, routes, chain of smugglers and human traffickers, as well as costs and consequences of the migrants and families left behind. The purpose of the research was to underpin policy recommendations to stop such irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling, programmatic interventions for awareness among potential migrants and economic reintegration for the returned migrants.

Demographic Profile of Irregular Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy between the year of 2013 - 2017

- 100% respondents were male
- 19% of migrants arrived Italian shores 2013-2017 were under 18; 66% of respondents were between the ages of 18-30; 15% above 30;
- 15% of migrants never goes to school; 42.6% completing primary; 7.2% secondary; and 3.4% bachelor and higher education
- 46.6% were married before migration
- The married migrants have two children on average
- 74.5% belongs to extended family having five depending members in family

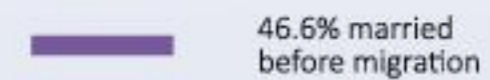
Age



Education



Marital status



Dependents

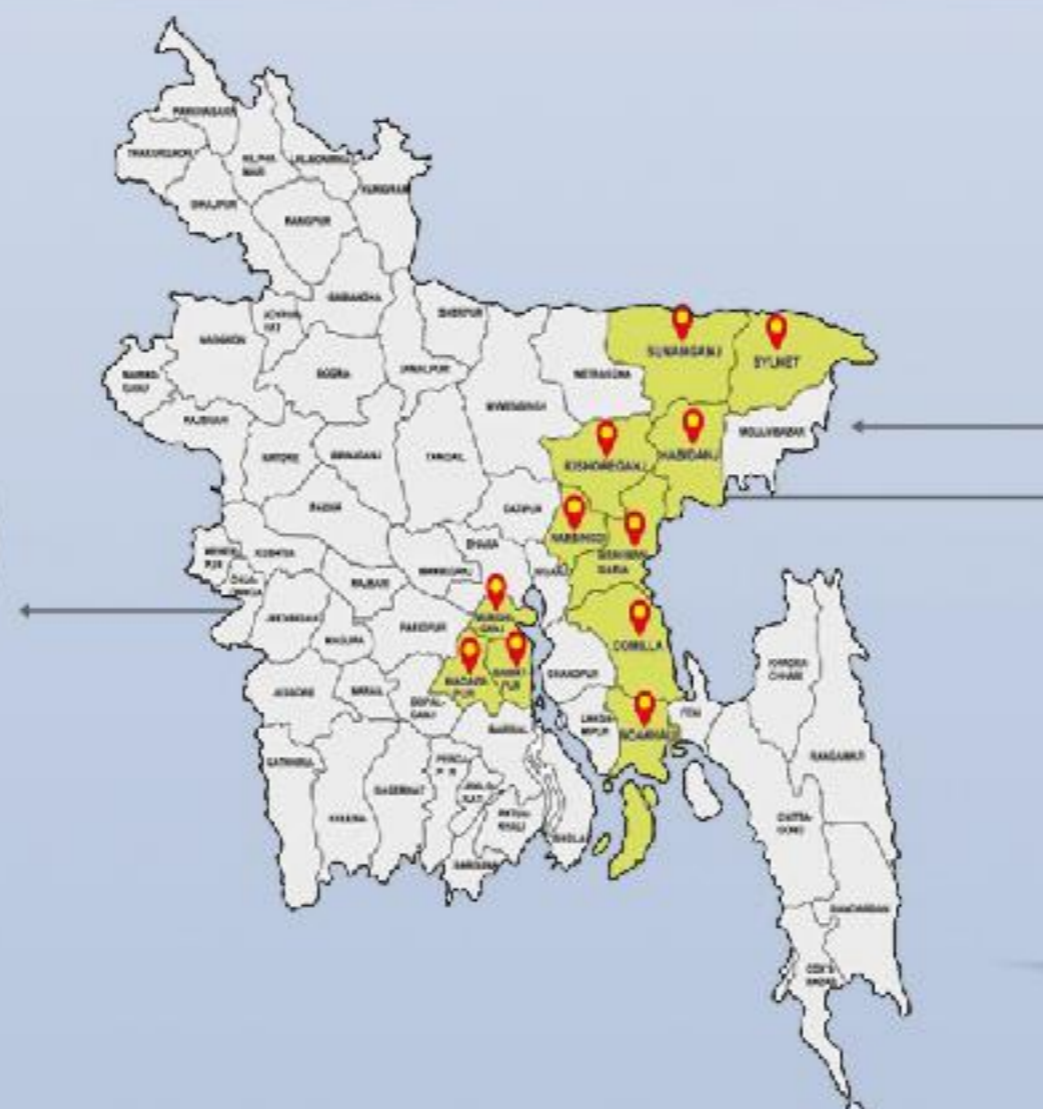


Economic Profile of Irregular Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy between the year of 2013 - 2017

- 33.6% were unemployed before first-time migration; 63.4% were self-employed or engaged in informal work
- 54% of respondents had around 62.5 US\$ to 187.5 US\$ per month income before migration to Libya
- 70.9% families of migrants traveled to Italy directly from Bangladesh had around 62.5 US\$ to 187.5 US\$ per month income
- 62% of respondents said the income was not enough. This could feed them two times but not adequate for education, treatment and other necessary expenses. They have rarely any savings before migration

Source districts of Irregular Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy between the year of 2013 - 2017

Madaripur, Sariatpur, Comilla and Noakhali represent 47.4% of migrants

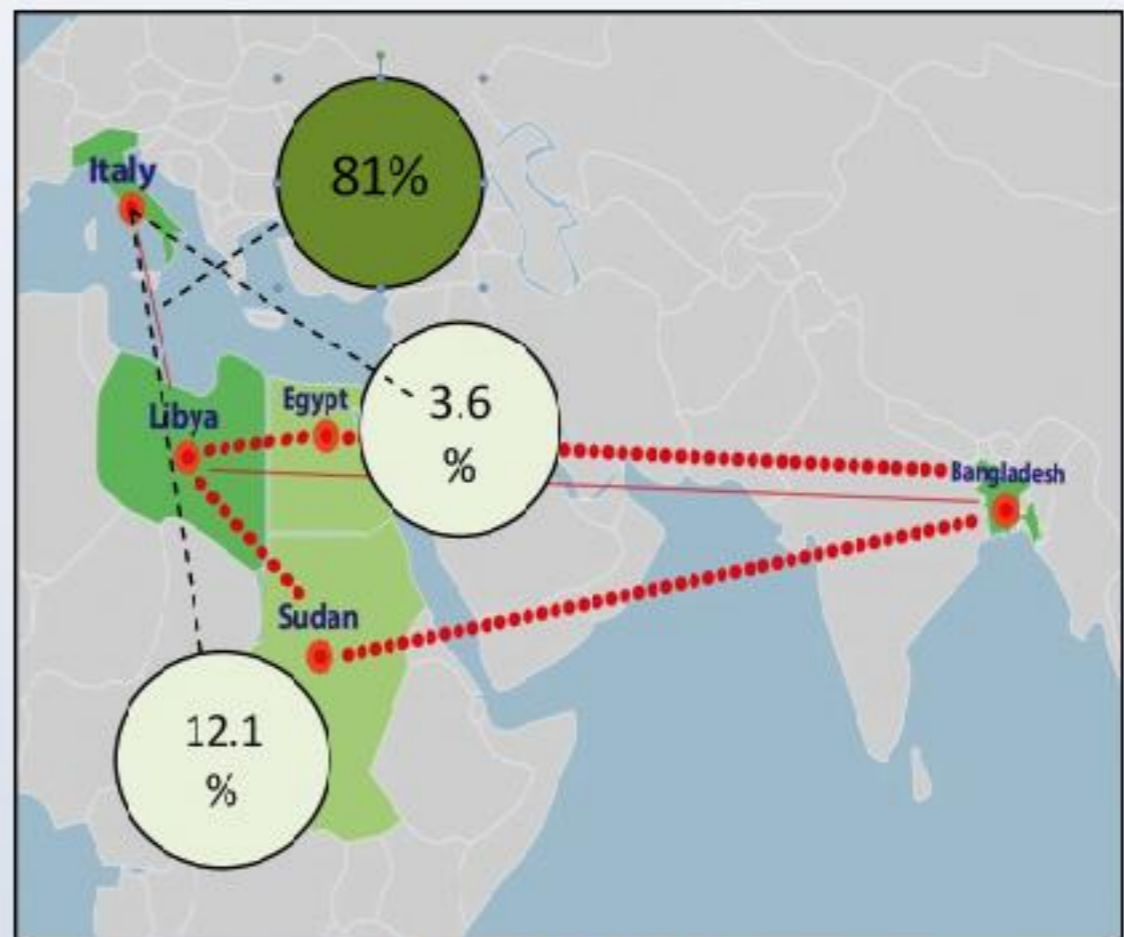
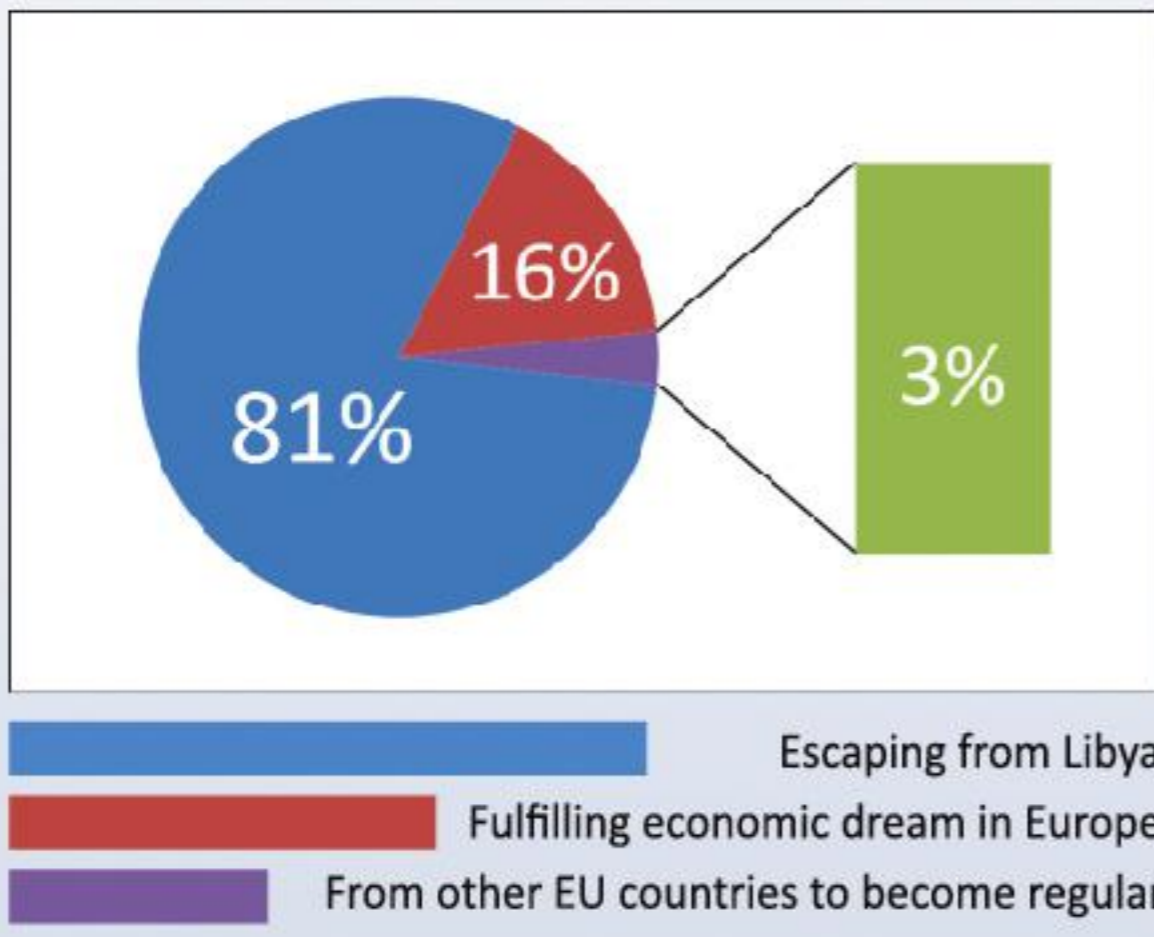


Other Major Source Districts

- Kishoreganj 12.5%
- Narsingdi 7.5%
- Brahmmanbaria 5.4%
- Munshiganj 3.9%
- Sunamganj 3.6%
- Sylhet 3.2%
- Habiganj 3.2%



Major trends and Routes of Irregular Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy



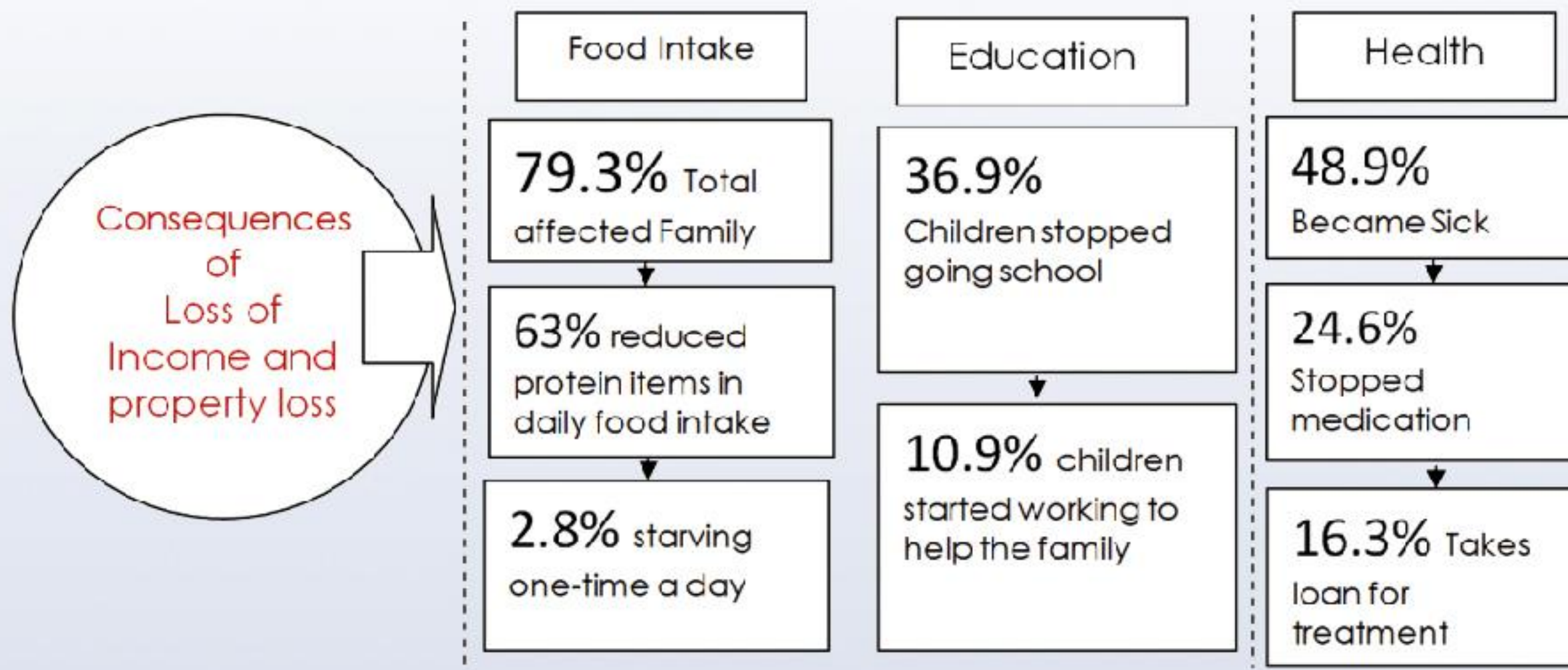
MAJOR ROUTES

Manage Migration Costs and Consequences in families of Irregular Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy

76%	14.1%	39.1% take further loan
24%		24% sell land
20.1%		20.1% families sold household assets
14%		14% personal savings
2.8%		2.8% bank loan
Families take loan/mortgage land for first time migration	Families managed further money to pay ransom enroute	

“The people from Bangladesh thought we lead wonderful life here. You see our life! How can we tell - we are just street hawkers. We sell tissue packet, flowers in the streets either in the rainy cold winter or in the hot sun in summer”

My son went to Libya in 2016. I gave him money selling land. He fell into a critical situation in Libya, and asked me to send some money to go to Italy. I did that selling other piece of land. He gets caught in the hands of the militant group, they asked for ransom. I took about 1,000 US\$ as loan from my son-in-law since I have no other piece of land except the homestead. My son called me before boarding on the boat. After that I have no news of him. People say he got died in the sea. I don't know what actually happened to him. I have lost all spirit of life, cannot do any work. My loan to the son-in-laws reached around 3,000 US\$. He is now pressuring me to make a will for him for my homestead. What is the future of my younger son?



The legislation reforms in Italy is centered on restricting illegal immigration. Different reasons act behind such a move. The stagnant labor market, marked by a high level of youth unemployment; lack of social mobility; and persistent regional social and economic disparities contribute to the move of Italians themselves internally and abroad. In such a context, the Italian public possesses an inflated perception and negative opinion about the migrants in Italy. They are against the reforms of the citizenship law. On the other hand, there is clear division among the political parties on the issues of migration.

Therefore, the future of migrants is really uncertain. The research has several specific recommendations:

- Reform respective Migration Laws and ensure effective implementation
- Allocate more budget for the welfare and protection of Bangladeshi migrants
- Create more employment opportunity in country
- Take exemplary legal actions against Human Traffickers
- Undertake mass awareness campaigns
- Undertake sustainable reintegration programme for the returned migrant workers



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