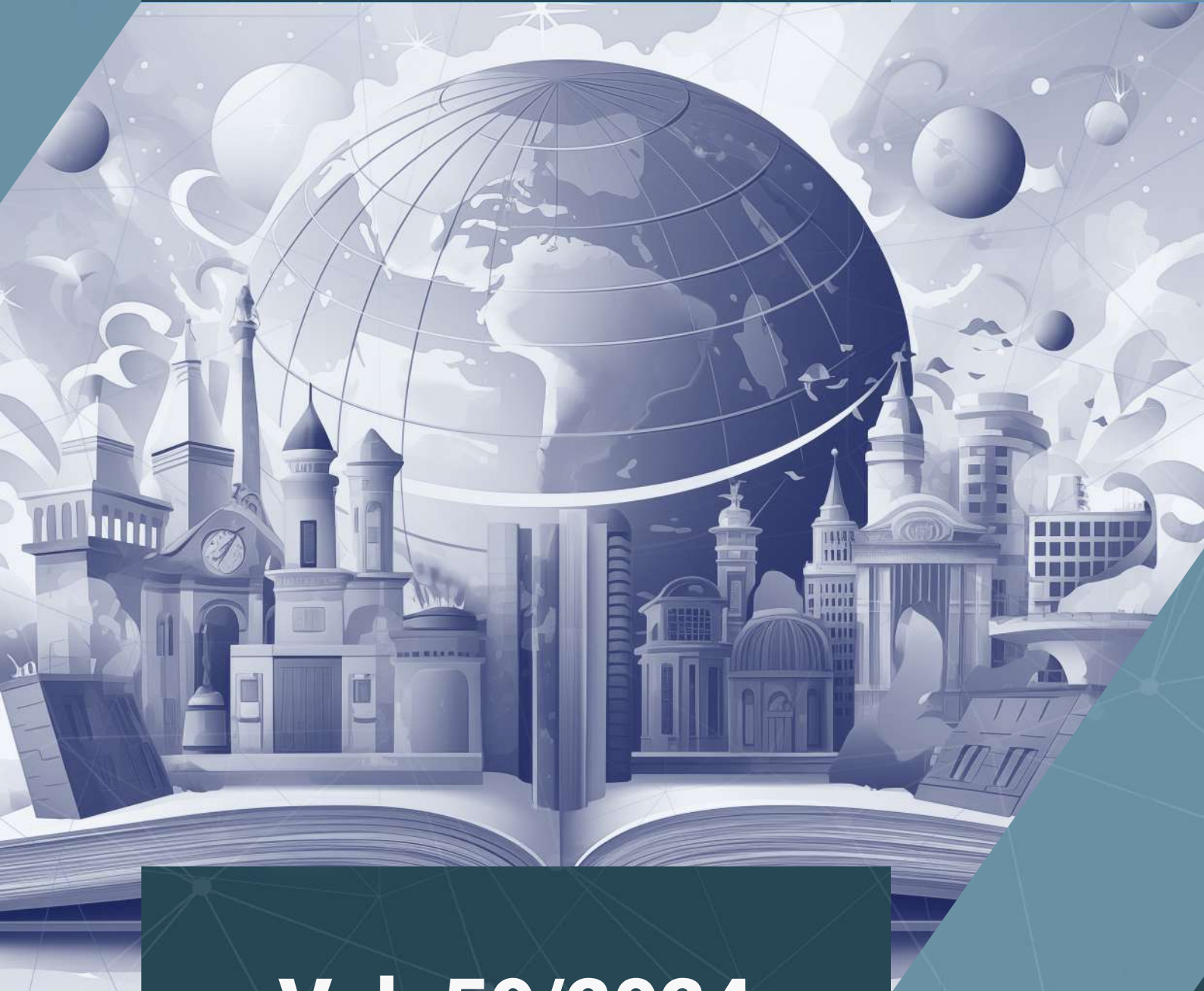




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Bangladesh Ship Breaking Industry: Is it an Opportunity or Obstacles for Out-Migrant Workers?

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Abstract. The ship breaking industry flourished in Bangladesh after the liberation war in 1971. Since then Bangladesh is leading in this ship breaking sector around the globe. The rapid growth of this industry is specially driven by national iron demands, income generation, and the easy opportunity of employment for the poor people. As most of the workers working here are poor and hail from underdeveloped regions of the country hence this study was designed to find out the obstacles and opportunities that need to encounter when they leave this industry after extensive working years. The instrument used for this research was semi close ended questionnaires, in depth interviews, ethnographic analysis and secondary research. The respondents are from southern and northern parts of Bangladesh, aged 18 years and above. This study revealed that a majority portion of the out migrant workers are sufferings from numerous challenges such as health issue, social stigma, psychological trauma, restricted employment opportunities, limited geographical mobility and so on. Conversely, only a minority of the out migrators are benefited from this industry, specifically those employed in technical or supervisory roles. Overall, this industry has proven detrimental, creating more obstacles rather than opportunities for out-migrant workers lives.

Keywords. Shipbreaking Industry, Out Migrant Workers, External Migration, Health Problem, Financial Instability

1.0 Introduction

Migration is a complex phenomenon and has different dimensions in regards to its duration; nature of origin, destination and characteristics of migrants (**Saikia, 2014**) and it has become “Buzzword” around the globe. There are broadly two types of migration: external migration (outside of the country) and internal migration (inside the country). Few other migration concepts like seasonal migration, rural-urban migration, return migration, step migration; chain migration and so on also prevails among the scholar (**World Migration Report, 2008**).

The distribution of population on the globe has always been fixed based on the opportunities that areas provide. The main motivation for migration can be primarily economic. The bigger the difference in economic opportunities between two regions, the greater is the flow of migrants between them (**Saikia, 2014**). Though distance is usually a major intervening

obstacle, its negative influence can be largely offset by sizable income differentials (**Saikia, 2014**). In addition to economic motive, people may migrate due to physical inability, skill development and so on.

However, there can be two hypothetical controversies among the scholars. **First one** is that individual who born in developed countries or “Global North” privileges to see half of the world without any kind of visa or administrative hustle. Then what’s the problem with developing countries or so called “Global South”. Don’t they have dream? They may have same inspiration to see the world. Is it true that individual regardless to “Global South” or “Global North” always make external migration for higher income opportunities or better standard of living or better social security? Again, who can ensure that this external migration always fulfills the migrants dream? But matter of fact is that migration is becoming cooked issue for political leaders now a days. They are spreading rumor about it. **Second one** is that can internal migration from one sector to another sector inside the country always serves the best result? This paper is going to explore the second scenario. More specifically, this paper aims to explore the impact of out-migration from Bangladesh ship breaking industry on its workers.

1.1 Background of the Study

Shipbreaking is a highly labor intensive activities and thousands of peoples are engaged in this industry. This industry in Bangladesh almost contributes 60%-70% raw material for national steel production. The low labour cost, flexibility in environmental rules, lower level of health and safety standards and weak law enforcement are of added advantage in this industry regarding south Asian countries (**Shameem, 2012**).

Lawrence Summers, chief economist of World Bank shared his opinion in 1991 that “the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable” (**Paul, 2004**). This indicates the actual inner picture of all ship yards. South Asian countries put higher value on economic development rather than on environmental protection or workers’ rights. One of the ways of disposing toxic substances has given rise to the ship breaking industry in South Asian countries (**Kutub et al., 2017**).

The emerging of ship breaking industry in Bangladesh has a long story. This industry basically emerged in this country as a result of an accident. A Greek ship ‘MD Alpine’ was stranded on the Chittagong shore near Sitakunda, Bangladesh for a severe cyclone. The ship was there for a long time. Following the incident the Chittagong steel house bought the vessel and scrapped it. That was the first ship scrapped in Bangladesh In 1971, a Pakistani ship ‘Al Abbas’ was damaged by bombing. It was later recovered and brought to the Fauzdarhat seashore. In the year of 1974, Karnafully Metal Works Ltd turned it to scrap, introducing commercial shipbreaking in Bangladesh (**Das & Shahin, 2019**).

Though ship breaking is considered as the most sustainable and efficient way of dismantling a ship at the end of her life span but matter of fact is that actually shipbreaking/dismantling is one of the most hazardous occupations (**ILO, 2004**) as well. Because of the complexity of the ship structure, inherent materials attached to the vessel during building, the work process and the locations do involve numerous environmental, health and safety issues (**Shameem, 2012**). The working conditions have been very difficult in these ship breaking industries because of limited or no use of personal protective equipment, lack in use of mechanized equipment, remote location of the industries to obtain adequate shore support as well as proper enforcement. Social conditions related with low education level, availability of information, lack of training and education has further aggravated the situation (**Shameem, 2012**).

The survey discovered that 59.59% workers are coming from different districts and 40.40% workers are permanently living in the study area, Chittagong (**Muhibullah, 2013**). Most of the labour (40.75%) are under age group 18-22 year and only 1.13% labour are under age group 46-50 year. The most interesting fact is that 10.94% labours are child. It proves that young labour force is dominant in this sector which also indicates that less experienced and this untrained labour force are forced to accept such jobs mainly for the poverty. Geographically most of the labours are coming from northern side of Bangladesh. Poverty, lack of employment and low education rate forces them to work in this sector. They bring their relatives also. But most sorrow fact is that still now it is not declared governmental sector. Due to unconsciousness and unpatronization of government, the industry is running with several internal and external problems (**YPSA Base Line Survey, 2005**).

The workers in the ship breaking industry have to work in the hostile environment keeping the tension of sudden death or injuries in mind. The problems they usually face are the risk of accidental injury and death, the lack of clean drinking water, the unbearable workload, low wage rate, the lack of well-maintained working and safety equipment etc (**Kutub, 2017**). Another study revealed that the workers of the ship breaking industries have to work with toxic substances like asbestos for which they suffered from overall cancer, esophagus cancer, trachea bronchus and lung cancer etc (**Wu et al., 2015; Muhibullah et al., 2014**). Most of the problems related to respiration, skin, and muscle as they must work too hard and work with fire (**Ahamed et al., 2021**). The survey showed that 23.53% of workers have eye redness, 27.45% have blurred vision, 19.61% had asthma, followed by 35.29% with chest pain Add to that, 13.73% having a lesion in their bodies. Most of the workers could not manage one proper meal in a day. In the survey, 56.86% of workers at ward no. 5 reported that they felt weakness during work (**Ahamed et al., 2021**). All these affected their life in afterwards and changing the whole life pattern drastically.

The ship breaking industry in Bangladesh has long been a vital sector for the growth of nation's economy, offering unmatched employment opportunities to thousands of workers, both local and migrant. Situated predominantly along the coast of Chittagong, this industry has raised attention due to its significant contribution to the global market for scrap metal and its employment of a large workforce. However, workers join this industry with a big dream for changing their life but due to accidental issues, physical deterioration most of them can't continue their journey the way they thought before joining. So at certain point of time, they need to quit. But after leaving this industry, majority of them bears the negative effect in their body as well as in mind which hinders their future life.

Therefore, this paper aims to reveal the opportunities or obstacles that arise in the future lives of individual's workers after they depart from this industry. By analyzing this issue, we aim to gain clarity on whether the ship breaking industry shapes the lives of thousands of workers positively or it hampers their future prospects. This will also provide insights into what steps the government should take to safeguard both the ship breaking industry and the livelihoods of its workers if it is found to hinder their future prospects.

1.2 Research Objectives

This study will focus to achieve following objectives:

- To specify the obstacles encountered by out-migrant workers due to Ship Breaking Industry.
- To identify the opportunities created by Ship Breaking Industry on out migrant workers lives.

1.3 Contribution of the Study

Although out-migrant workers from ship breaking industry have made significant contributions to the national economy over the years, understanding the challenges and opportunities they face after leaving industry remains a complex and underexplored issue. The existing literature primarily focuses on the industry's economic impact, health hazards, environmental hazards, law and policy, economic impact and occupational hazards associated with metal work. But these hazardous activities present both challenges and opportunities for out-migrant workers which are often overlooked or poorly understood by academics, NGOs, and social workers. This study will contribute to enhance understanding of the daily challenges and opportunities faced by out migrant workers from ship breaking industry.

2.0 Review of the Literature

Ship breaking industry plays a significant role in the national economy of Bangladesh by different ways. Because of having low labor cost, easy importation advantage, enthusiastic entrepreneurs and flexibility of implementing environmental policy, Bangladesh is having a steady expansion of this industry and hence the contribution is vast. The scrapping parts of the ships provides the country's main source of steel and in doing so saves substantial amount of money in foreign exchange by reducing the need to import steel materials (**Das and Shahin, 2019**). Many of the reports revealed that presently Bangladesh has a demand for 50,000 tons of metal / steels, but unfortunately Bangladesh has no iron ore sources or mines, which make ship scrapping is the inevitable and important source of raw materials for fulfilling huge amount of steels inside the country.

In fiscal year (FY) 2012, the total business revenue was the highest in Bangladesh. Ship breaking industries met around 51% of the demand for raw materials and 37% of the demand for finished steel products as a single industry (**Sujuddin et al., 2017**). Rolling industries output in FY 2010 was 1,451,000 ton; 23% of the input for this production was from this industry. Ship breaking industry was acted as lone wolf and found to be the sole source of scraps for small rerolling industries inside country and their contributions in 2008 was more than doubled as compared to 2005. In 2017, Bangladesh scrapped a total of 197 ships and which was 6.5 million GT (<https://shipbreakingplatform.org/>). We found a quick increase of importing raw materials of steel industry during the global ship breaking recession in 2003–2007 and when Bangladesh's SBI faced a temporary ban in 2010 (**Das and Shahin, 2019**).

But it's a matter of fact that the coastal environment of Bangladesh has been degraded as a result of the ship breaking industry that has expanded last two decades. The existing industry operational procedures are chaotic, sensitive, hazardous to human health and hostile towards the environment at the same time (**Abdullah et al., 2013**). The elevated chemical concentrations inside the aqua society around the coastal area happened due to ship-scrapping activities, antifouling sources and sewage disposal (**Kannan et al., 1995**). The physicochemical properties of seawater and soil in the ship breaking areas indicate contamination. Elevated turbidity, total suspended solids (TSS) and total dissolved solids (TDS) increase the physical disturbance in the work area (**Hossain and Islam, 2006**). Trace metals are generated and released in ship breaking activities, leading to elevated concentrations relative to standard safe values or regulatory limits (**Apeti et al., 2012**). Shipyard soil has been contaminated with different hazardous radioactive materials such as radium (^{226}Ra), thallium (^{232}Th) and potassium (^{40}K) due to beach breaking of ships (**Hossain et al., 2010**).

For this degradation of the coastal area lack of proper management and lack of appropriate regulations of ship-breaking activities are the main reasons (**Abdullah et al., 2013**).

As the demands of ship-recycling industries cannot be overlooked, the time has come to reconsider these industries in an environmentally sound which can be named as ‘Green ship recycling’ but the process of green recycling is tedious and requires proper planning and preparation (**Hossain et al., 2016**). One acceptable approach is ‘demolition’, which is the actual cutting up of ships into clusters of manageable size. ‘Precogning’ is a requirement prior to demolition in which all hazardous materials and wastes contained in scrapped ships can be safely removed from the ship. The overall procedures and guidelines of ship breaking in environmentally sound ways are proposed in the Basel Convention document named ‘Technical Guidelines on Environmentally Sound Management (ESM) of Full and Partial Dismantling of Ships’ which should be strictly followed (**Neşer et al., 2008**).

However, In Bangladesh, adequate institutional capacity is required to provide ground-level enforcement for the protection of both workers and the environment. Improvements of infrastructure are needed to improve the capacity and safety of the main roads for the transport of all waste and reusable materials produced in the ship-breaking yards from the city area. Significant improvement of infrastructure and capacity development in the hazardous waste management sector are also needed to attain proper storage/disposal levels in the long term, leading to compliance with the Hong Kong Convention (HKC) and other relevant international agreements (**Hossain et al., 2016**).

To make this industry environment friendly, three possible solutions to introduce in managerial system. Option A: Relocation to “Pollution Haven”; Option B: Relocation back to Europe or other industrialized region; Option C: Pre-cleaning in country of ownership(**Sarraf et al., 2010**). Few action which can be included in action plan are: training and train-the-trainers, better work pilot programme, development of a national strategy for the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, develop MARPOL reception facilities in Port of Chittagong, setting up Cargo hold and tank cleaning company (**Sarraf et al., 2010**).

The ship breaking sector directly or indirectly provides employment opportunities for around 2.8 million people, a significant figure reducing the unemployment problem in Bangladesh. The workers normally do not have any kind of formal training, and there is no workers’ welfare union also (**Hoque and Emran, 2016; Rahman, 2017**). 95% of the workers are migrants coming from underprivileged parts of Bangladesh, especially the northern portion of Bangladesh where employment is scarce, and lack of education and economic under-development prevails (**Sarraf et al., 2010**).

However, Working in shipbreaking industry is heavily damaging for health in several ways. Accidents are very common event in SBI. The injuries and deaths of the workers are also very common and regular event (**Das and Ali Shahin, 2019**) though it provides directly or indirectly employment opportunities for around 2.8 million people, a significant figure reducing the unemployment problem in Bangladesh(**Hoque and Emran, 2016; Rahman, 2017**). The accidents may be major or minor and may cause death and huge injuries. Because of the regular major accidents in the shipbreaking industries, the safety of the workers is a major challenges and questionable. Besides lots of major accidents, many minor accidents also occur in yards such as fire, gas explosion, toxic substance, hazardous materials, contamination and hazardous working conditions. These environmental pollution related health risks to the workers have long-term effects on human health even after leaving the industry. The workers are not properly treated or compensated by the owners of the industries even (**Rabbi and Rahman, 2017**) because 95% of the workers are migrants coming from underprivileged parts of Bangladesh, especially the northern portion of Bangladesh where employment is scarce, and lack of education and economic under-development prevails (**Sarraf et al., 2010**). Another reason for

the incident is that the workers normally do not have any kind of formal training, and there is no workers' welfare union also (**Hoque and Emran, 2016; Rahman, 2017**).

According to the Ship Breaking Trade Union Forum (**BDNEWS24.COM, 14 October 2015**), the total incidents that occurred in the shipbreaking yard from September 2010 to September 2015 were 64. The causes of these accidents are basically violating the rules and regulations on shipbreaking and ship recycling and labour act, avoiding labour rights, lacking the right to trade union and mismanagement, lacking training, not following the high court's verdict and creating a risky working environment and of course weak law forces(**Uddin et al., 2022**). As a signatory of ILO and IMO, Bangladesh is supposed to follow all the rules. But unfortunate is that most of the ships breaking yards owners do not comply with these regulations and government officials also turn a blind eye to these anomalies. The workers are not even properly compensated or treated for their injuries and health conditions caused by the unsafe and unhealthy conditions in the ship breaking yards (**Kutub et al., 2017**).

The literature reviewed exposed numerous studies addressing on the overall economic impact, environmental consequences, policy frameworks, workers' health and accidental issues within the shipbuilding industry. However, there is a remarkable gap of specific literature addressing challenges and opportunities encountered by the out-migrant workers from the ship breaking industry which has an overall impact on their quality of life.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study was fully designed based on the participant's semi close ended questionnaires, in depth interviews and ethnographic participant's observation in Chittagong, one of the biggest areas for ship breaking industries in Bangladesh. Questionnaires' were first made in English later on it was translated to Bengali. Questionnaires' were served to the participants but at the same time flexibility was also given to answer those questions and sharing more information beyond the questionnaires' form. The first author worked deliberately in the study area from May 2014 to June 2016 while he was in military training in that area and again September 2018 to December 2018 as a participants of his professional course in East Bengal Regimental Center and discovered how out migrant workers deals with their lives after leaving the industry. The second author worked in that study area from January 2016 to June 2022 while he was studying for his undergraduate and graduate degree in one of the local universities of the study area. Though the findings presented in this study based on interviews but for the best output of this study the information interpreted keeping ethnographic knowledge in mind. In this study, second author agreed with first author to use snowball and purposive sampling methods for choosing the participants.

For this study, no specific theory or model was followed by the authors rather we tried to find the exact information based on the observation, interviews and facial expression of the participants. All the interviews were taken in a suitable place suggested by the participants. Before taking the interviews, participants were notified by the key informants (Abu Bakar Siddique) at least a week ago. Verbal consent was taken for recording and using the information shared by the participants.

While doing the field work, we have visited number of ship breaking industries and social organization in Dhaka and Chittagong also. We have taken in total 120 semi close ended interviews, 13 in depth interviews of out migrants workers, both from southern (Chittagong, Barisal, Feni, Noakhali) and northern (Kurigram, Bogura) parts of Bangladesh. Additionally,

we had a long conversation with 5 officials from OSHE (occupational safety, health, and environmental foundations) foundation, YPSA (Young Power in Social Action) organization who actively work for the improvement of ship breaking industries in Bangladesh. However, during data analysis, no traditional software except Microsoft excel was used by the first author Findings were grabbed manually from participants’ interviews. Finally, the study field was again visited by the authors twice during the month of August 2023 to March 2024 to check the validity of the findings.

4.0 Findings

Obstacles created by Ship Breaking Industry on out migrant workers lives

Bangladesh ship breaking industry played a dual role, contributing significantly to national steel production while simultaneously executing a devastating toll on its workers. Due to lack of consciousness, flexible implementation of environmental rules and limited employment prospects in underdeveloped regions of the country, mostly poor people works in this industry. Working tirelessly day and night to uplift this sector, they unknowingly sacrifice their futures for a short-term benefit, consigning them to a lifetime hardship, physical and mental damage.

Health Issues: Long time exposure to hazardous materials in the ship breaking industry result in chronic health problem for out-migrant workers. The table below represents that most of the workers (47.5%) suffers from chronic health problem and next majority (26.67%) suffers from respiratory problems which clearly indicates most of the yard owners are completely unaware of workers safety and providing protective equipment’s during their work time.

Table 4.1: Health Problems of Out- Migrant Workers

Health Issue	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Chronic Health Problem	57	47.5
Skin Problem	17	14.16
Respiratory Problems	32	26.67
Musculoskeletal Problems	14	11.67

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Less Employment Options: The majority of the out migrant workers (42.5%) faces problem to find out their alternative employment. It indicates their physical inability to continue with the work. This study revealed 66% of the out migrant workers are self-employed like driving easy bike or occasional fishing or small shop business. However, 35% employed in low-paying jobs and 14.17% are in unstable employment which directly influences their overall quality of life.

Table 4.2: Employment Crisis of Out- Migrant Workers

Employment Pattern	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Struggle to Find Alternative Employment	51	42.5
Low-paying Jobs	42	35
Unstable Employment	17	14.17

Lack of Skills for Other Industries	10	8.34
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Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Social Stigma: Social stigma become another obstacles for out-migrant workers. 60% workers are affected by discrimination during post-employment due to their physical inability. As they can't earn standard amount of money, so this has a great impact on their social isolation. Almost 17.5% out-migrant workers are socially isolated, 22.5% are rejected from family members. They become the burden of their family due to numerous health problems.

Table 4.3: Social Stigma for Out- Migrant Workers

Social Stigma	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Discrimination	72	60
Social Isolation	21	17.5
Family Rejection	27	22.5

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Psychological Trauma: Enduring significant workload over extended periods of years, often witnessing fatal accident, big percentage (50%) of workers are suffering from anxiety, 40% are completely depressed about their life, 10% are always haunted by remembering flashbacks of traumatic accidents. These all becomes the major obstacles for out-migrant workers.

Table 4.4: Psychological Trauma for Out- Migrant Workers

Psychological Problem	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Anxiety	60	50
Depression	48	40
Flashbacks	12	10

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Financial Instability: The table below revealed that significant percentage (54.16%) of out-migrant workers are basically financially instable. 35% has debt problem, 10.84% are just carrying poverty in their life. As previously mentioned, a large portion of workers struggle to find suitable employment due to their physical limitations which basically leads to this ongoing financial instability. These interconnected challenges indicates the complexity of their circumstances.

Table 4.5 Financial Crisis for Out- Migrant Workers

Financial Problem	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Financial Instability	65	54.16
Debt problem	42	35
Poverty	13	10.84

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Limited Social Support: Limited social support becomes another obstacle for the out-migrant workers. After spending substantial time to their respective industries, it was found that

most of the out-migrant workers lacked communication with other communities. As they worked in specific industry for long period of time, it was found that they don't have any communication with other community. 45% workers admitted that they face difficulties in securing new employment due to this communication gap upon exiting the industry. Other obstacles are broken relationship (31.67%) and loss of community support (23.34%).

Table 4.6: Limited Social Support for Out- Migrant Workers

Limited Social Support	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Lack of Social Support Networks	54	45
Broken Relationships	38	31.67
Loss of Community Support	28	23.34

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Limited Geographical Mobility: Limited geographical mobility possesses significant challenges for out-migrant workers. Many out-migrant workers find it difficult to move because they don't have enough savings. About half of them (56.67%) struggle to relocate themselves, while nearly a third can't even afford for their housing. Some also have very limited access to social services because they can't ensure good jobs due to their physical limitations after leaving the industry.

Table 4.7: Challenges on Geographical Mobility for Out- Migrant Workers

Geographical Mobility	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Challenges in Relocating	68	56.67
Lack of Affordable Housing	38	31.67
Limited Access to Services	14	11.67

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

Opportunities created by Ship Breaking Industry on out migrant workers lives: The ship breaking industry, while burden with lots of challenges and risks, also presents few opportunities that largely impact the lives of few out-migrant workers. Rising from underdeveloped regions, these workers often engage themselves to ship breaking yards in search of employment, drawn by promises of sustainable job and the prospect of economic opportunities. Despite the challenging nature of their labor and the hazards activities involved, this industry provides avenues for income generation and livelihood advancement. |

Development of the skills: Ship breaking industry plays a marvelous role to development of the technical skills. Though only minority of the out-migrants (9%) workers reported that. They believe that it might improve their technical skills but its implication in their life is restricted due to their physical limitation. Moreover, they also shared that such skill development primarily benefits those in managerial positions, leaving many feelings that this opportunity is completely inaccessible to them due to their physical inability.

Entrepreneurship: Ship breaking industry encourages people to be entrepreneur. The table below shows that most of the out migrant workers(59.16%) are employed or have plan to be self-employed liking traditional farming, fishing business or driving personal easy bike. 30% of the out- migrants workers have intentions to start small shop businesses, while 10.84% are considering partnership ventures.

Table 4.7: Entrepreneurship Quality among Out-Migrant Workers

Entrepreneurship	Number of Respondents	% of the total
Small Shop Business	36	30
Self-Employment	71	59.16
Partnership Business	13	10.84

Source: Authors Analysis Based on Field work (2023-2024)

External Migration: Though external migration of the skilled workers is not healthy for national economy in some extent, but a good percentage (37%) of out-migrant workers believes that if opportunity comes they may do external migration in Dubai or Malaysia or Singapore. The study found that people with basic technical skills are hesitant to work in the local technical industry because it's not safe and wages are too low comparing to their hardship. Instead, they want to move abroad if window opens because they believe it's safer there and offers better wages to maintain their standard of living.

Supervisory Roles: The ship breaking industry increases supervisory skills among a minority of out-migrant workers (7%), particularly those who held managerial positions within the industry during their working tenure. Upon leaving, they can easily able find suitable employment in various sectors and securing better salaries. The acquired supervisory experience equips them with valuable leadership skills, human resources management which facilitates their transition to other industries. This skill contributes to their overall professional growth and advancement of their life style.

Access to Local Markets: The ship breaking industry also provides opportunities for its out-migrant workers to access in the local markets. Here, they can buy and sell spare parts and refurbished equipment from the broken ships as well as salvage materials with good liaison of the yard owners or manager. This study revealed that nearly 2% of the out-migrant workers are engaged in this business, earning a profitable margin for their livelihoods.

Discussions

This paper aimed to identify the challenges and opportunities encountered by out migrant workers and by weighing these factors, this study also seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of whether the ship breaking industry an opportunity maker or obstacle maker in their lives. Based on respondents' interviews and different officials, it was clearly discovered that this industry provides more obstacle than opportunity for out-migrant workers. Firstly, out-migrant workers are facing health problem in their life cycle. A majority portion suffer from chronic health issues (47.5%), respiratory problems (26.67%), and other ailments such as skin and musculoskeletal problems due to prolonged exposure to hazardous activities during their work tenure. These findings clearly revealed that these health challenges

not only undermine their physical well-being but also push them to a cycle of long-term hardship and medical expenses, which makes them more vulnerable.

Secondly, employment opportunities for out-migrant workers are tremendously limited. A significant portion struggles to get alternative employment (42.5%) upon leaving the ship breaking industry, often due to their physical limitations acquired over the period. Many end up in low-paying jobs (35%) or unstable employment (14.17%), which further hampers their financial stability and push them to a low quality of life.

Thirdly, social stigma and isolation compound the hardships faced by out-migrant workers in the ship breaking industry. A significant majority report experiencing of discrimination (60%) while they seek for employment which basically leads them to social isolation (17.5%) and familial rejection (22.5%). These factors also contribute to raise psychological distress, including anxiety (50%), depression (40%), and traumatic flashbacks (10%) among them.

Despite having number of challenges, this industry does offer some good opportunities to their workers. These include opportunity for skill development, entrepreneurial quality, learning supervisory roles, access to local markets, and the acquisition of technical knowledge for possible external migration in future. However, it's important to note that these opportunities are accessible to only a minority of individuals within the workforce.

So, while this industry provides few opportunities to their specific category of workers but its provides lots of obstacle for majority portion of out-migrant workers therefore it can be conclude that this ship breaking industry is more of obstacle maker rather than opportunity maker for his out-migrant workers.

5.0 Limitation of this Study

During field work, examining the obstacles and opportunities encountered by out-migrant workers from the ship breaking industry, several limitations arose. Firstly, accessing comprehensive data regarding out migrant workers' experiences in this sector was really challenging due to imposed restrictions by the yard owners. As most of the workers hail from underdeveloped regions of the country and their potential return to the industry due to poverty or unemployment in any stage of life complicated their willingness to share their actual lifestyle. Additionally, selecting participants for the study was a bit difficult, especially when workers were hesitant to share information due to various fears, potentially stemming from yard owners or they might not believe that this study is designed to find the gaps which should be filled to improve their life style. Language barriers also impede communication with migrant workers who speak different languages, potentially hindering data collection and interpretation in some of the aspects.

6.0 Conclusion

Bangladesh ship breaking industry has been significant contributor to grow the national economy since 1971. However, it has also become the reasons for considerable amount of sufferings on his workers throughout its history. Despite tremendous contribution to the industries operation, these out-migrant workers have endured different sorts of health issues for its hazardous activities. So it's time for government, social workers, NGOs, policy maker as well as media to look upon this issue and implementing special social welfare program which

directly benefits the out-migrant workers. The government should take full control of this industrial sector or rigorously enforce all policies related to this industry. Actually, the close relationships between yard owners and government inspectors who are hell responsible for evaluations of all the yards and ensure policy compliances need to be closely examined. Failure to proper supervision may lead to collapse of this industry in future.

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The author declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and publication.

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