

**Effects of Undocumented Migration from Bangladesh to West  
Bengal :A Perception Study**

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## **Introduction**

Man kind have witnessed migration from time immemorial. Migration is a universal phenomenon. Hunger, poverty, security threat recognize no border. Issue of illegal migration is a burning problem through out the world.

The endless flow of clandestine migration to India in general and West Bengal in particular began with partition of Bengal in 1947. It is tragic fact of history that partition of Bengal was the cruelest partition in the history of the world and brought in unimaginable miseries to millions of the countrymen who had been forced to leave their ancestral homes under compelling circumstances.

Ever since the partition of the Indian subcontinent and formation of East Pakistan and later Bangladesh, their nationals came to India with or without valid documents. Up to 1971, over 4.7 million Hindus had sought refuge in India, specially in West Bengal. The volume of opposite flow of Muslims to East Pakistan is not however known. The terror let loose by the Military Junta of Pakistan compelled about 10 million to cross over to India in 1971. Many went back after the Liberation War in 1971, but a sizable undocumented section stayed back and mingled with the mainstream of India's life(Guha Roy, 2003)

Bangladesh, the place of origin of Bangladeshis, is center of Bengali culture and heritage. She was liberated after a long and painful rule first by the English and then Pakistanis. Geographically, historically, and culturally, Bangladesh forms the larger and more populous part of Bengal, the remainder of which constitutes the neighboring Indian state of West Bengal. From 1947 to 1971 the region of Bangladesh was a province of Pakistan. As such, its official designation was changed from East Bengal to East Pakistan in 1955. On March 26, 1971, leaders of East Pakistan declared the region independent as Bangladesh (Bengali for "Bengal nation"), and its independence was assured on December 16, 1971, when Pakistani troops in the region surrendered to a joint force of Bangladeshi and Indian troops. Bangladesh is characterized as one of the poorest country in the world with an area of 144000 sq. kms having population of 120 million (12 Crores) with 90% Muslims. Its density per square km is 763 as per 1991 census (highest in the world) It is an Islamic country.

Since 1947, Hindu population in Bangladesh have been reduced from 30% to less than 10% because of the terrible religious persecutions and political terrorism.

West Bengal, an Indian state, place of destination of poor Bangladeshis, is bounded by Bangladesh in the eastern side with 9 border districts e.g Kolkata, 24 parganas (north and South), Nadia, Murshidabad, Maldah, West Dinajpur(North and south), Darjiling, Kooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

Just after partition in 1947 massive refugee migration took place and later all illegal migration was considered Indian citizen by Indian government.

India shares 4095 kilometer border with Bangladesh the longest among all its neighbours. Of this four North East states---- Tripura, Meghalaya, Mijoram and Assam-- account for 1879 km while West Bengal has a border running 2216 km along Bangladesh. An area of 6.5 km has not been demarcated yet, the para-military BSF(Border Security Force) deployed along the border is faced with a plethora of problems, including illegal migration from Bangladesh, transborder movement of armed separatist rebels belonging to a number of insurgent groups from India's northeastern states, and west Bengal (Hussain Wasbir, 2003).

Wire fencing is in progress along Indo-Bangladesh Border. Under Indo-Bangladesh treaty, neither country can erect a fence within 150 yards of the zero border line. About 3500 villagers reside in this no mans land and have farm land there. This means once the fence comes up villagers living in this zone will find their movements restricted. Gates on the fence will be closed between 6pm and 6am every day. (Ganguly,1999)

Our main objective is to study perceptions of professionals on demographic impact of undocumented migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal, a state in India. Some policy issues will also be discussed at the end of the paper.

## **Recent Studies**

In a recent study (Guha Roy, 2003) migration survey enquiring residence history of the migrants using network sampling was emphasized. In an another study census data have been used to evaluate migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. (Sen, 2003). Chattopadhyay and Gupta attempted to measure undocumented population in some areas of

24 parganas during intercensal period on the basis of census data using some imputation techniques (Chattopadhyay and Gupta,2003). Another study pointed that India's Farakka Barrage(Saikia, 2003) has become a disaster for Bangladesh and which ultimately forces people to migrate without any travel documents across the border towards Indian side. One journalist expressed on the border problem in Nadia district of West Bengal due to this undocumented migration. According to this journalist illegal migration changing geographic maps of Karimpur, Tehatta, Chapra and Krishnaganj of Nadia district (Banerjee,2003). Indian Border security force with their limited resources was unable to cope with this undocumented migration and this undocumented migration is posing security threat to nation(Nath,2003). These infiltrators have spread themselves over agriculture based border districts, including 24 Parganas, Nadia. Because of strict competition from local labour they are forced to work at low wages(Pramanik,2003). According to one sociologist the displaced persons were playing the role of an asset in the development of this state. Cottage and small scale industry, primary education, female education, urban development, roads etc are some of the spheres where the refugees have made a distinct mark(Kar, 2003).

This paper is prepared from a large report ( Datta, Bhattacharya, Sadhu, Majumdar, 2003) based on perception of individuals obtained from a qualitative survey done on the basis of purposive sampling in some districts of West Bengal, a state in India. Respondents were drawn from Political leaders, Administrators (At District Level - Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parishad / District Magistrate; at Sub Divisional Level - Sub Divisional Officer; at Block Level - Sabhapati , Panchayet Samiti / BDO; at Corporation Level - Mayor/ Mayor-in-Council/ Councilors; at Municipality Level - Chairman/ Commissioner; at Gram Panchayet Level - Panchayet Pradhan), Economists, Health Personnel, Demographers, Sociologists, Statisticians, Journalists and Teachers at different levels. The main districts covered under this survey are 24 Parganas(north and South), Kolkata, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda, Kooch Behar, Darjiling and Dinajpur.

**Methodology** : Despite our familiarity with quantitative statistical methods and analysis, we have followed qualitative approach. Using qualitative design we have tried to

focus on a holistic view of illegal Bangladeshi migrations (via interviews). Qualitative research being a vast and complex area of methodology seems to be adequate for subject oriented social research. Too often in applied social research qualitative research has special value for investigating complex and sensitive issues. Among different qualitative (Wolcott, 1990) techniques indepth interviews have been used to understand perception feeling, and attitudes of the respondents regarding this sensitive issue, illegal migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. Indepth interview guides are not as structured as quantitative questionnaires. Questions tend to be open-ended (Bailey, 1978) and allow flexibility in probing perceptions of individuals, as well as areas of particular interest and relevance. Perception study seems to be adequate for a subject oriented social science research and pooling (Annejilson, 2002) of individual observation brings much more valid understandings about social processes than technically sound questionnaires which are generally done in quantitative study. Perception study followed by in-depth interview which is a particular method used in qualitative research has special value for investigating complex and sensitive issues like illegal undocumented migration. It helps to generate very detail information.

Among the three non probability sampling i.e convenience sampling, quota sampling, and purposive sampling, we have followed purposive sampling (Merriam,1988; Patton,1990) which is mostly used by qualitative researchers with the intention to improve representativeness of the sample by subjective selection.

As is typical in most indepth interviews, the interview format used open-ended questions (Bailey, 1978). An instrument of 25 main questions served as a guide for the interview to be conducted by investigators. Time of interviews averaged about one and half hours. The guide consisted of questions designed to gather information on various issues relating to impact and motivating factors of this illegal migration.

Accessibility to these eminent professionals was very difficult since they were preoccupied with their busy schedule. They were informed by official letter seeking permission for access of investigators for interview. Then they were pre-informed by telephone and then date and time of interview were fixed. Investigators filled up the open ended interview guide. It took one and half hour or more. Some times tape recorder was used. Very often it required more than one visit by investigators to access the selected respondents. I, myself,

often accompanied the investigators, interviewed the selected professionals and investigator filled up the questionnaire. Most of the respondents cooperated and spent their valuable time to express their useful opinion on this hot and sensitive issue. Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their views.

Data from the guide questions along with other information were coded into categories of responses. This step involved frequent listening and re-listening to taped interviews, reading and re-reading transcripts from interviews. This process led to the construction of initial categories of data responses, modification of the coding scheme, adding and collapsing categories, and ultimately the refinement of the coding categories and then transcribed into key words and phrases to serve our purpose of analysis. Strict confidentiality was maintained while filling the schedule and transforming the descriptive information into main key words suitable for analysis.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The primary limitation of our study is that, unlike quantitative research,

- (1) this qualitative research is not based on statistically representative sample.
- (2) the findings are not statistically projectable to the population under study.
- 3) the very nature of qualitative research necessitates small sample sizes.

Although a small sample, the usefulness of the information gleaned should not be underestimated. However, that shortcoming should be weighted against the greater depth of understanding that is accessible through qualitative research strategies i.e thorough and in-depth probing.

### **Objectives**

This paper is devoted to focus attention on some key issues like Peak period of Bangladeshi Migration, Impact on demography of West Bengal and Policy prescription to cope with the problem of illegal Bangladeshi migration.

The key issues used in this paper capture certain explanatory phrases and description consistent with our present objective.

## Key Words

## Explanatory Phrases

1. Peak period of Migration : Peak period of movement of undocumented Bangladeshi migrants to West Bengal  
-----Year(s), Reason(s)
2. Impact on demography : Effects on a) age and sex composition, b) fertility, mortality (child and adult) c) population growth, d) proportion of working age male and female.
4. Policy Prescription : Fencing and BSF / Role of Central Government / Detection and deportation of illegal migrants/ Illegal migrants determination by tribunal / Regularization / Granting resident permit.

In our present Qualitative survey we have used the following definition of undocumented migration :

***The persons who have entered West Bengal from Bangladesh without valid documents in post 1971 period are undocumented migrants***

### Summary of the Main report

Before presenting the findings of this study on demographic effects of undocumented migration it would be worth while to have an over view of the main report. The main report (Datta, 2004) centers around some key words e.g peak period of migration, relation between migration and religion, push-pull factors, impact on primary, secondary, tertiary and informal sectors, public distribution of West Bengal, grabbing of natural resources, antisocial activities, housing and health problem and illegal vote bank due to this illegal migration. Lastly some policy issues as per opinion of the respondents have been highlighted. Though undocumented migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal is a continuous process (Datta, Bhattacharya, Sadhu, Majumdar, 2003) the peak period was during Bangladesh liberation war in 1971. Due to Lack of proper employment in the place of origin, working age males migrated for permanent settlement and for earnings. Since single income was not enough for the poor family, females tried to look for job in unorganized informal sector. Undocumented migration had positive impact on fertility and child population in West Bengal. The settlement of migrants mostly in unhygienic

conditions coupled with poor nutrition, 2)scarcity of food, 3)improper medical facilities, 4) insufficient facilities for hospitalization, 5)lack of care, safe drinking water and sanitation 6) inappropriate health care facilities 7) poverty, 8) illiteracy, 9)social unawareness,10) new environment, 11) unsettled condition indeed contributed to morbidity and child mortality. Economic depression, lack of industrialisation, social insecurity, demographic explosion , political instability, domination of religious fundamentalists in Bangladesh, cultural similarity, homo-ethnic climate(Datta, 2002) in West Bengal etc are the main push factors( Datta, 2000) behind this migration phenomenon. Primary sector including agriculture, forest was overcrowded by this inflow of low skilled labour. Agricultural sector was improved wherever migrants have settled. Being hardy and laborious they helped to improve farming and production of food crops. Household industry including Bidi, Pottery, Mat, Candle, Kantha Stitch, Ganjee factory, Shantipuri Tant(weaving) etc have been positively affected since illegal migrants provide cheapest labour. Besides, continuous inflow of migrants have aggravated the unemployment problem in the unorganised informal sector. Deforestation, land grab, trade grab, illegal occupancy of pavement and railway platform by undocumented migrants are creating pressure on natural resources. Continuous inflow of migrants enhanced the pre-existing slum, increased the density of occupants in certain areas which influenced the water supply, health facility, education with utter inefficiency. In border areas, disturbances are created so that security becomes at risk. Different political parties in different periods gave them safeguards for which local administration could not impose strict law and order. With the limited resources, fund and administrative officials this problem cannot be solved. Illegal migrants are illegally enrolled (Datta, Sadhu, Bhattacharya, Majumdar, 2004a) in voter list and used as vote banks. Indian politicians have often encouraged Bangladeshi migration to garner their votes. Due to lack of good will of political leaders it is not possible to separate them from original citizens of India. Policy (Datta, Sadhu, Bhattacharya, Majumdar, 2004 b) issues are concerned with role of (1) Fencing and Border Security Force ( BSF ), (2) Central Government, (3) Illegal Migration Determination by Tribunal Act, (4), Granting Resident Permit to illegal migrants.



## Findings :

Following table 1 shows distribution of respondents by different districts of West Bengal, a state in India. In Kolkata, capital of West Bengal, 36 respondents comprising of demographers, economists, sociologists, faculties of different colleges and universities, political leaders and administrative officials including District Magistrate, Subdivisional Officers, Block Development Officers etc were interviewed. In the border areas of other districts i.e 24 Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda, Darjiling and Cooch Behar, respondents mainly comprised of political leaders, administrative officials, and teachers at different levels.

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Districts**

Name of Districts	No of respondents
Kolkata	36
South 24 Parganas	5
North 24 Parganas	27
Nadia	11
Murshidabad	10
Malda	7
Dinajpur	4
Darjiling	5
Cooch Behar	10
Total	115

Characteristics of 115 respondents are presented in table 2. Respondents consist of 97 males and 18 females. 104 Hindus and 11 Muslims. Occupation group named professionals comprises 36 individuals including of doctors, economists, demographers, sociologists, faculties of different colleges and universities. Nine journalists of different newspapers, eighteen political leaders of different political parties, thirty seven administrative officials belonging to the rank of District Magistrate, Subdivisional Officers, Block Development Officers, Zilla Sabhadhipati, Panchayat Pradhan etc. were selected as respondents. The 'others' group consists of low profile section of our social strata e.g Tangawala, rickshawala, artisan, tantubay(weaver) etc.

**Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents**

Characteristics	No of Respondents
Sex :	
Male	97
Female	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>
Religion :	
Hindu	104
Muslim	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	
Professionals (Doctors, Professors, Economists etc )	36
Journalists	9
Political Leaders	18
Administrative Officials	37
Others	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>

### **Period of Migration by reasons**

General impression of the respondents about the period of migration was that

Before 1971, massive migration took place during 1948-52. Main reasons were

- a) Partition of India
- b) Hindu backlash

If the largest single stream of movement is considered the peak period was during and after Bangladesh liberation war in 1971. 1970s is the peak period.

Reasons of undocumented migration by time periods are presented in the following table 3. Multiple responses were obtained with respect to various reasons. Out of 115 respondents 84 respondents expressed that liberation war of Bangladesh was the most important reason that caused migrants to move illegally to West Bengal.

Immediately after Mujibar's assassination on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1975, migration took place extensively. The main reasons for this massive migration during the period of 1971-80, as evident from this multi- response table, are

- a) Liberation war in Bangladesh
- b) Mujibar's assassination in Bangladesh
- c) Political instability in Bangladesh
- d) Lack of safety and securities for Hindu families mainly, due to war
- e) Religious issue and communal tension affecting mainly Hindus during regime of Ziaur Rahman (1975-81).
- f) Economic and job opportunity in West Bengal

But it should be borne in mind that undocumented migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal is a continuous process.

During 1990s, the cause of migration was economic needs. Both Hindus and Muslims migrated but Hindus migrated most.

During the regime of Khaleda Zia (1991-96) , Muslim fundamentalism has become more powerful and threatened Hindus. So out of fear and insecurity mostly Hindus fled to West Bengal.

Thirteen responses supported economic and job opportunity in West Bengal as cause of migration during 1971. Out of 101, thirty three respondents believe that insecurity/ communal tension were another important cause of illegal migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal in 1971.

**Table 3 : Reasons of undocumented migration by time periods**

Periods	Reasons( multiple response)					No of Respondents
	Economic/ job opportunity in West Bengal	Mujibar's assassination	Insecurity/ Communal tention	Liberation war	Political instatibility in Bangladesh	
1971	13	N. A	33	84	6	101
1972-80	4	19	6	N. A	3	23
1981-90	3	N. A	1	N. A	N.A	4
1990+	12	N. A	6	N. A	3	24

Number of cases : 115

## Impact on demography of West Bengal

### Impact on working age Males and Females

Most of the respondents (92%) (Table 4 ) believe that undocumented migrants have contributed to increase in number of working age males of West Bengal. Eighty percent of professionals supported increase in working age females due to these illegal migrants since single income was not enough. Illegal migrants having poor academic background are mostly engaged in informal sectors of West Bengal. They work as daily labourer, wage earner. Some express that undocumented migration has no significant impact on working age male and female.

**Table 4: Impact on Working Age Male and Female**

Impact	Working age male		Working age female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Increased	106	92.17	92	80.00
Decreased	1	0.87	2	1.73
No significant change	5	4.35	9	7.83
Can not say	3	2.61	12	10.44
No. of cases	115	100.00	115	100.00

No. of cases : 115

Respondents were asked about the reasons of coming of economically active population from Bangladesh. Out of 106 respondents who expressed in favour of increased working age male, seventy seven respondents (Table 5) pointed that lack of job opportunity in Bangladesh and economic stability in West Bengal would be the main reason of crossing the border illegally by working age males. Due to lack of proper employment in the place of origin working age male migrated for permanent settlement and earning. Some (eighty eight responses) commented that no rights and no facilities and economic crisis in Bangladesh forced the economically active population to enter West Bengal without valid documents. Some people (twenty seven persons out of 106) believe that there was great influx due to migration by family. There are two interviewee who reported that working age males are not coming. Six respondents could say nothing.

**Table 5 : Impact on Working Age Male by reasons**

Views of the respondents	Multiple response
Reasons	
1. Lack of job opportunity in Bangladesh/economic stability in West Bengal	77
2. No rights, no facilities, economic crisis	88
3. Influx of migrants/migration by family	27
4. Permanent settlement	2
5. They do not come	2
0. Can not say	6

No. of cases : 106

While answering the reasons of coming of economically active female population,(Table6 ) about sixty one respondents pointed that since single income was not sufficient to maintain family and so the female member engaged themselves in domestic household work in West Bengal. Some respondents are of the opinion that since this illegal influx was strengthened by family migration hence a large proportion of female migration was the outcome. About six respondents could not state any reason for coming.

We can quote opinion of a faculty

"First working males enter in search of job, after they settle in a secured position, the whole family with working female migrates for permanent settlement" .

**Table 6: Impact on Working Age Female by reasons**

Views of the respondents	Multiple responses
Reasons	
1. Single income not enough/easy to get domestic household work/unorganised sector in W.B.	61
2. Social insecurity	8
3. Influx of migrants/migration by family	29
4. No rights, no facilities, economic crisis	9
5. Housewives	3
0. Can not say	6

No. of cases : 92

### Impact on Child and Adult Mortality

Mixed responses were obtained regarding impact of illegal migration on child mortality and adult mortality of West Bengal. Fifty one percent of the respondents (Table 7) supported that Child mortality of West Bengal has increased due to influx of Bangladeshi migrants. Twenty percent expressed that child mortality has decreased. Nineteen percent believe that there was no significant change on child mortality of West Bengal due to illegal Bangladeshi migrants.

**Table 7 : Impact on Child Mortality and Adult Mortality**

Impact	Child mortality		Adult mortality	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Increased	59	51.3	29	25.3
Decreased	23	20.0	23	20.0
No significant change	22	19.1	48	41.7
Can not say	11	9.6	15	13.0
No. of valid cases	115	100.00	115	100.00

No. of cases : 115

According to one sociologist

"The proportion of infant mortality has increased due to improper maternal and child health care system for these migrants"

There is opposite view also : "Child mortality is not so significant as it is supposed to be. They get adequate health care facility to survive". [Doctor]

Regarding adult mortality about 42 percent respondents pointed that there is no significant change in adult mortality of West Bengal due to these infiltration. Some (25%) responded that adult mortality has increased. Twenty percent are in favour of decreasing impact. Few could say nothing.

Regarding reasons of child and adult mortality multiple responses were obtained. Reasons for child mortality are categorized as a) Poverty/unsettled condition/scarcity, b) Illiteracy /unhygienic condition/unawareness, c) Lack of proper health care facilities. Thirty five respondents believe that child mortality decreased due to social services provided by health worker/ proper treatment

**Table : 8 Impact on Child Mortality by reasons**

Views of the respondents		Multiple response
Reasons for		
Increase in Child mortality	Decrease in child mortality	
Poverty/unsettled condition/scarcity	----	31
Illiteracy/unhygienic condition/unawareness	----	22
Lack of proper health care facilities	----	33
-----	Social services provided by health worker/proper treatment, prenatal and post natal care	35
Can not say		5

No. of cases : 82

The respondents who expressed their opinion in favour of increase or decrease in adult mortality, they were asked separately the reasons for decrease or increase in adult mortality. Their multiple responses are presented in table 9. Thirty seven respondents supported that social services provided by health worker / proper treatment may cause decrease in adult mortality.

**Table 9 : Impact on Adult Mortality by reasons**

Views of the respondents		Multiple response
Reasons for		
Increase in adult mortality	Decrease in adult mortality	
Poverty/unsettled condition/scarcity of food	----	22
Illiteracy/unhygienic condition/unawareness	----	4
Lack of proper health care facilities	----	15
----	More immunity and can stand for any struggle	17
	Social services provided by health worker/proper treatment	37
Can not say		9

No of cases : 52

## Population Growth

Response highlights on population growth of West Bengal due to these illegal migration are shown in the following table 10. Most of the respondents believe that population growth increased faster due to illegal migration from Bangladesh. Ten percent of the professionals hold the view that population increased slower. Few (only three) individuals pointed that undocumented migration has no significant impact on fertility and population growth of West Bengal.

According to one demographer of Kolkata 'Fertility did not rise alarmingly due to firstly unsettled conditions of the migrants and then adoption of fertility behaviour of the host population to some extent'.

**Table 10 : Population Growth**

Views of the respondents	Frequency	Percent
Increased faster	100	86.96
Increased slower	12	10.43
No significant change	3	2.61

No of cases : 115

According to one professor in Kolkata

" The high rate of growth is not detected in the census because when the census officials go to enumerate in the households they will not be present. Border Security Force(BSF) allows them to cross the border illegally in exchange of money or other means. People were safe during the regime of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001). But when Kheleda Zia came into power ( 1991-96, 2001 onwards ) people started migrating more" .

Those 100 informants whose opinions were in favour of increasing population growth faster due to these illegal migrants were asked the reasons of this increasing impact. Multiple responses were obtained and this has been shown in this following table11. These multiple responses were not mutually exclusive. About seventy two multiple responses



were obtained which pointed that high birth rate/fertility among incoming illegal migrants may be the probable cause of population increasing faster in West Bengal. Fourteen responses indicated religious taboos among the Muslim migrants as one of the cause of fast population growth in West Bengal since most Muslims do not accept family planning method for birth control due to religious taboos. Some of the respondents believe that migration by family and polygamy among Muslims may be other responsible factors for population increasing faster.

**Table 11 : Impact of Undocumented migration on fertility and population growth by reason**

Views of the respondents	Multiple response
Main reasons for population increasing faster	
High birth rate	72
Faster in the 1970s and slower later	6
Migration by family	36
Polygamy	8
Religious taboos	14

No of valid cases : 100

### **Migration Policy**

The migration policy thus stems from the two major causes of forced migration: political - those fleeing conflict or persecution; and economic - emigration to escape poverty, unemployment, starvation. In practice, the causes may be closely inter-twined.

Long term preventive measures such as the promotion of human rights protection, protection of the rights of minorities and the strengthening of democracy may be mentioned. Policies should be related to human rights humanitarian assistance, security of minority communities, demographic measures, bipartite agreement with respect to trade, development, cooperation, and exchange programmes for certain target groups from countries of origin, and destination.

Regarding policy issues respondents argue that the whole issue of illegal migrants should be judged with human face since they are forced and uprooted from their residence by some political, religious, social and economic forces prevailing in the center of origin.

Granting special work permit in some cases is also required. Repatriation may be a solution in other cases

The following table 12 represents views of the respondents regarding the role of fencing and Border Security Force (BSF) to stop infiltration, which relates to one of the major policy issues.

Fifty eight percent people believe that fencing and border security force cannot stop infiltration with limited resources. It requires economic development of Bangladesh.

One demographer points " The BSF keeps vigilance along the long porous border between India and Bangladesh. Besides patrolling they intercepts illegal migrants from across the border. I do not believe all infiltrations are intercepted".

.Sixteen percent hold the view that negative attitude of BSF often help the illegal migrants to cross the border.

According to opinion of one Faculty of a college

" Corrupted BSF can not stop infiltration. One can cross the border by paying Rs 70 which is divided between BSF and BDR".

Some of the respondents (25%) express that it requires proper implementation and proper monitoring of the fencing with efficiency and transparency, political commitment and strong will. Local support is also required. Few respondents also mentioned that it is also geographic problem since West Bengal is surrounded by long porous border.

According to one faculty " It seems that there is nothing like Indo Bangladesh border. Our maid servant goes to every two/four months apart. If asked she replies in a manner as if she went to any near by places. Free movement is going on across the border."

**Table 12 : Role of Fencing and BSF to stop infiltration**

Views of the respondents	No of respondents	Percentage
Fencing and BSF cannot stop infiltration with limited resource	67	58.26
Negative attitude of BSF	14	12.17
Needs implementation and monitoring with support of local people	29	25.22
Porous border , Geographic problem	5	4.35
No. of valid cases	115	100.0

No. of valid cases : 115

Respondents were interviewed about the current policy of the central government (table 13) regarding this sensitive issue of illegal Bangladeshi migration. Some (thirteen percent ) are certain that central government is just audience and doing nothing to solve the problem. Twenty percent declare that central government is trying for correction, modification and refinement of existing central government policy. There are professionals (thirty percent) who supports that central government has been capable of detaining or pushing back illegal migrants to Bangladesh with help of border security forces. Few (about 7%) hold the idea that central government considers the problem insignificant, remains indifferent and blames the state responsible for all the hazards. Some express that central government has given special attention by undertaking a programme of issuing Photo Identity Card for identification of illegal migrants. There are also a significant percent of respondents (about twenty three percent) who could say nothing about the current policy of the government regarding infiltration .

**Table 13 : Current Policy of the Central Government**

<b>Views of respondents regarding policy of Central Government</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Just audience	15	13.04
Correction, modification, refinement of existing Central Government policy	23	20.00
Detained / push back by BSF	35	30.44
Not significant / blaming State	8	6.96
Special photo identity card	8	6.96
cannot say	26	22.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

No of cases : 115

Percentage of respondents concerning the approach of detection and deportation of illegal migrants through Illegal Migration Determination by Tribunal Act (IMDT) are shown in the following Table 14 . About thirty five percent support IMDT, eleven percent think it to be temporary solution, twenty six percent infer it as no method of solution since it is a time consuming process. According to some professionals there is no method of solution as yet developed. Only a few recommended that increase in public awareness is required for the law to be effective. Nineteen percent of the interviewee could say nothing about this problem.

**Table 14 : Approach of detection and deportation of Illegal migrants through IMDT**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Support IMDT	40	34.78
Temporary solution	13	11.30
No solution by IMDT / Time consuming	30	26.09
No method of solution as yet developed	7	6.09
Increase of public awareness regarding the Law	3	2.61
Cannot say	22	19.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Here we are extracting some of the comments of different respondents relating to this IMDT Act.

"IMDT approach is the right and desirable one but is a very difficult process. The Government should try to involve the local population, especially the people's representatives in Panchayets, Legislative Assembly, etc, in this task. Illegal migrants should be detected and deported with transparency and humanitarian touch in the IMDT, otherwise it would be too cruel. ". [ One Doctor]

“The IMDT check points should be in the border, railway station and airports. The idea of IMDT is excellent but it should keep in focus that illegal migration not all for illegal purposes so that deportation should be done with human face. The IMDT should also be very much decentralised.” [Demographer].

“Sending back of illegal migrants to their country by Tribunal Act is not a permanent solution. The reason behind their migration needs to be identified and solved first. Economic co-operation for both the countries is essential.” [One Economist]

Following table 15 reflects opinion of the professionals with respect to regularisation of undocumented migrants by granting resident permit.

About 67% of the respondents do not support granting of resident permit to the illegal migrants since India is already overcrowded with existing population. They should be deported as quickly as possible. Providing support to migrated population is not a solution, though it is needed sometime. Bipartite agreement and policy prescription to improve economic backwardness of Bangladesh may be the solution.

Twenty one percent support resident permit to genuine uprooted people. Some comment that they should not be issued ration cards. Besides all these, change of citizenship law/second citizenship to identify them, political goodwill, bravery, removal of religious fanaticism etc were recommended by few individuals.

**Table 15 : Regularisation of Undocumented Migrants by granting resident permits**

Reason	Total	Percentage
1 No issue of new ration cards	9	7.82
2 Support resident permit to genuine uprooted people	24	20.87
3 Do not support since it will promote further influx	77	66.96
4 Change of citizenship law / second citizenship to identify them	1	.87
5 : Political goodwill , bravery , removal of religious fanaticism	2	1.74
9 Cannot say	2	1.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## **Credibility of the Study**

The present qualitative research can be judged from the view point of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of this study. Credibility is based on the validity and reliability of the instruments used and the internal validity of the study. The reliability and validity of this qualitative research is fundamental to its utility. Credibility is supported by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and appropriate selection of respondents. First the qualitative survey was performed over eight months period of time. A thorough observation and in-depth interview from right person also ensure the dependability of the results. Hopefully, the findings are based on the analysis of reliable and valid qualitative information obtained from a few appropriately selected professionals who are well acquainted with the subject and objective of the study on undocumented migration and hence results can be trusted to represent the real world situation.

Though triangulation (Lincon and Guba,1985; Bogdan & Biklen,1998) in true sense of the term was not possible but most of the results of the study converge to the information obtained from existing literature, news paper and magazine Hence confirmability is justified. Multiple listening of audio tape and multiple transcription from audio tape have been utilised to justify the validity of the results. Besides extensive quotations from field notes have been used to ensure validity of the results.

From a qualitative perspective transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. I have enhanced transferability by doing a thorough description of the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research.

## **Implication for further research**

So far there is no comprehensive study on undocumented migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. It is expected that this study will establish a baseline of the research from which incisive future might proceed. Illegal migration have disturbed demographic profile and economic harmony of West Bengal. Secondary data can not address the complex and dynamic nature of the undocumented migration. The duplication of this research in another infiltration affected parts of India and West Bengal would help to confirm the evidence

found in this study. In addition a duplication of this study might reveal evidence that was not obtained in this study. A well designed quantitative survey in conjunction with qualitative survey covering more border areas and other affected states of India e.g Assam, Tripura etc is essential to generate useful information for national policy makers. The suggested surveys should be comprehensive and prescriptive.

No single study, no matter how extensive, can exhaustively cover a typical, dynamic and complex migration phenomenon e.g undocumented migration from Bangladesh. The full study of migration process require professional competence in more than one discipline of social sciences, a requirement to meet except in a team. Undocumented migration, a complex and dynamic process should be studied as an interdisciplinary approach. It is hoped this study will represent a major contribution to advancing qualitative research in the field of undocumented migration.

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