

A Research Report on

STRENGTHENING WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS' SUPPORT SERVICES

At Country Of Origin and
Country of Destination



OVERVIEW

Bangladesh is one of the top ten migrant sending nations and among the migrant sending nations, one of the top ten remittance earners of the globe. Bangladesh received nearly USD 19 billion as remittances in 2018. According to the World Migration Report 2020, the number of international migrants in 2019 was 272 million, equivalent to 3.5% of the world's population. Bangladesh Bank data released on Wednesday 1st January 2020 showed that remittance inflow in 2019 grew by 17.89 per cent against \$15.54 billion in 2018. Thus, contribution of the unsung heroes (migrant workers) has become the lifeline of Bangladesh National Economy. Half of the population of the country is women, their participation in labor force is essential to achieve the targeted growth and development. In that consideration, migration of women in overseas countries is equally important for the country.

Although labor migration is very important source of remittance for Bangladesh, it comes at a great cost. Female migrants, especially domestic workers, frequently remain vulnerable to various kinds of exploitation and abuse in the home country and in the destination country at every stage of migration. During 1st Apr to 13th Oct 2020 altogether 195,698 migrants where women were 20,768 have been compelled to return due to economic lockdown. Repetitive calls from women migrants and the above stated problems being faced by migrants especially women migrants require support services with extra care for this new normal. Therefore it is important to analyze the root causes of the service delivery systems and the symptoms of the enrooted problems in Bangladesh's female migration, especially after destination migration.

Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra (BNSK), a women migrant rights organization has been receiving repetitive phone calls from migrant women (working in destination countries and the returnees) to ease their problems as women and migrant. BNSK has been assisting women migrants overseas as well as upon their return in Bangladesh with supports and services to make her migration worthy psychologically, socially and economically.



OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

To understand the reality in the ground, BNSK conducted a research among the returnee women migrant workers with the following objectives:

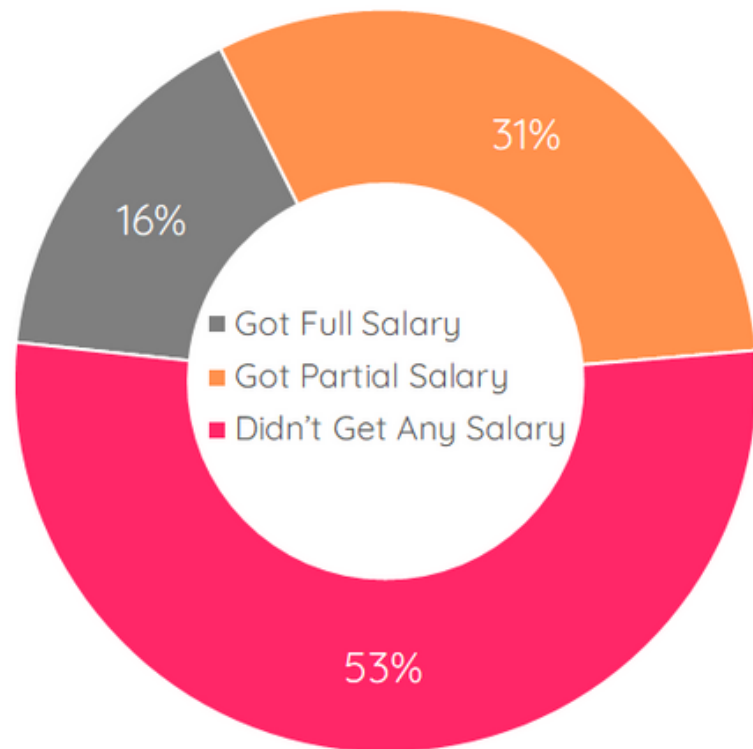
- To identify the challenges that women migrants face at their destination and after their return to Bangladesh;
- To identify the women migrant workers livelihoods and healthcare situation during COVID-19 pandemic;
- To identify the situation of violence against women migrant workers;
- Ensuring gender-sensitive support services for migrants with creating migrant friendly service delivery and capacity of the officials;
- To put forward some recommendations for the support service of women migrant worker.



PROBLEMS WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS ARE FACING DURING THE PANDEMIC

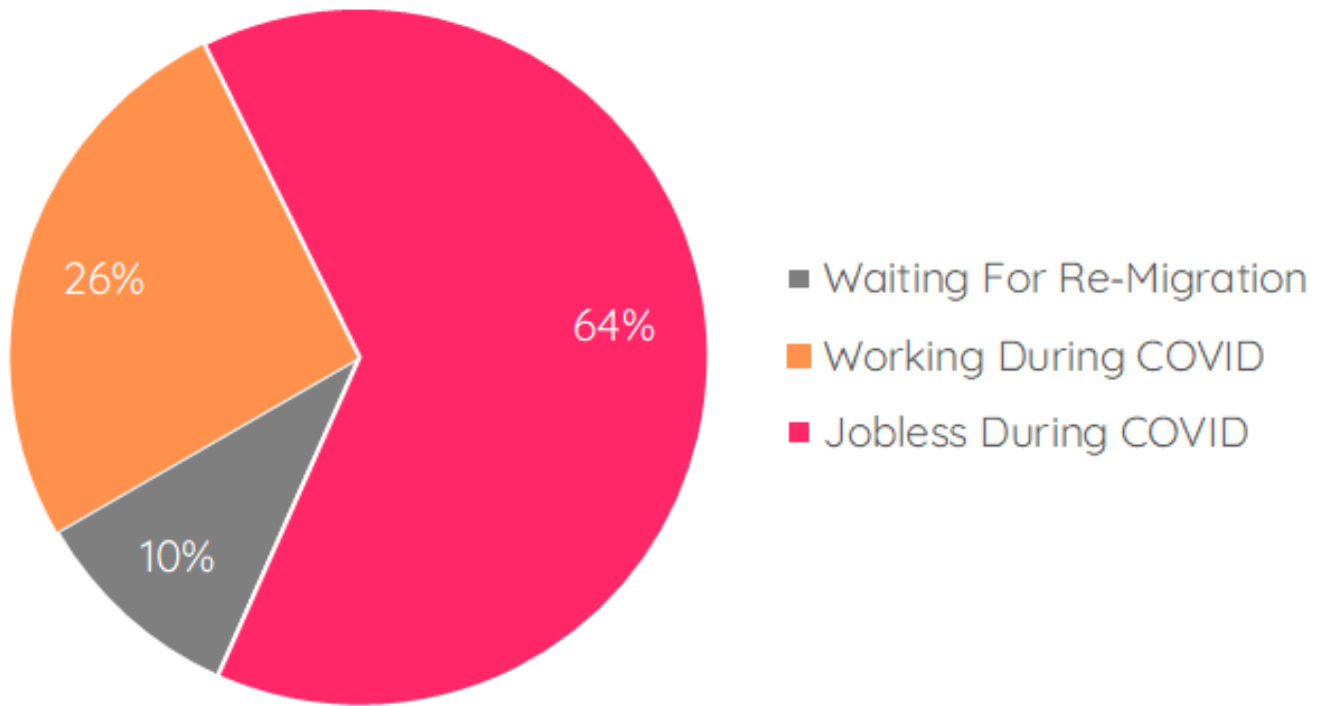
WAGE THEFT

Wage theft, the practice of employers not paying employees full salaries to which they are legally entitled, is a pervasive and profound issue that directly harms millions of Bangladeshi migrant workers every year. The study found that 53% of the women migrant workers did not get wage from their employers and 31% of the respondent reported that they get partial wages and only 16% get full wages.



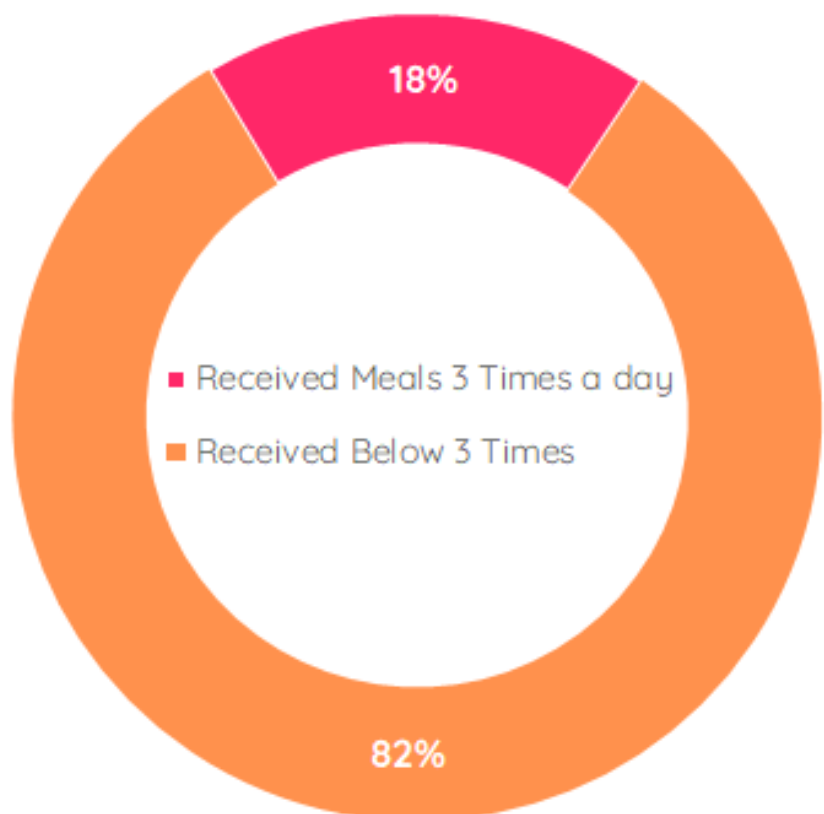
EMPLOYMENT LOSS

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Bangladeshi women migrants face forced returns after losing jobs. After return 64% of the returnee migrant women are jobless during Covid-19. Only 10% are engage in work and 26% of returnee migrant women are waiting for re-migration



FOOD DEPRIVATION

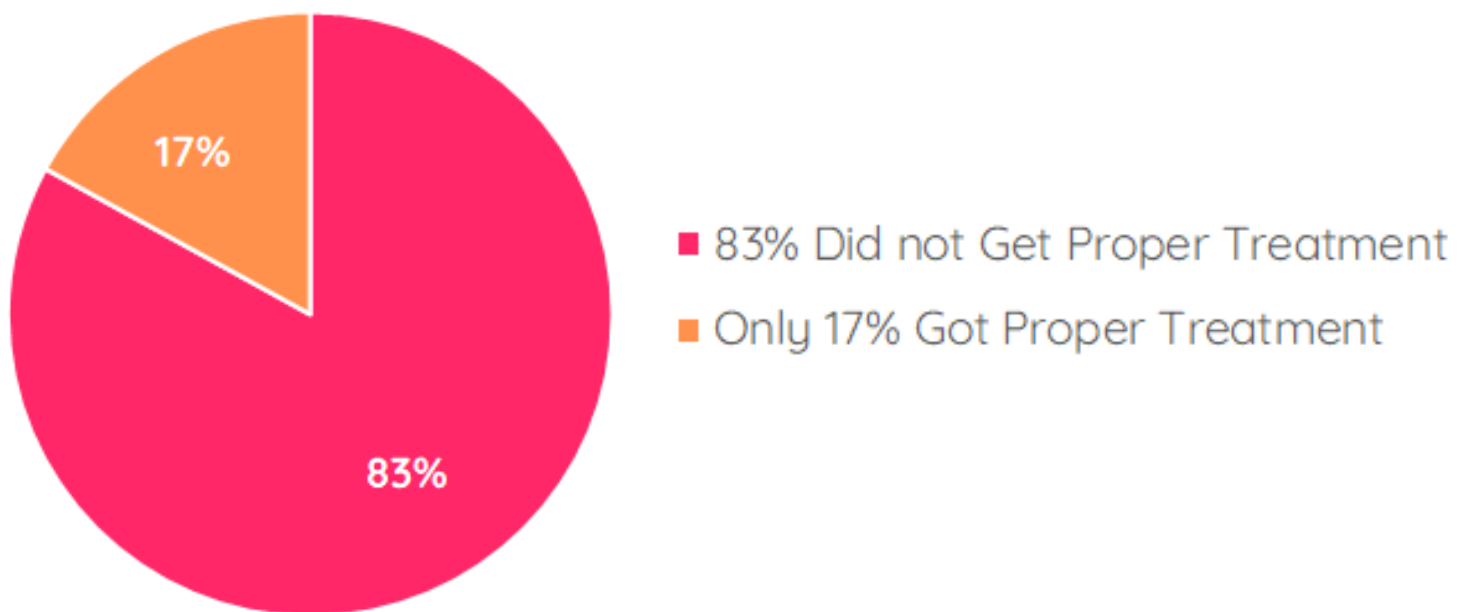
To reduce disease transmission all tools must be employed to keep migrant workers safe including the sufficient healthy food to boost their immune system. Food is a critical need for human. Migrant women were asked if they had enough food and only 18% of the returnee migrant workers said that they are receiving at least 3 time meals a day. During this Covid-19 Pandemic, 82 percent of women migrant workers don't receive at least three times meals a day



HEALTH CRISIS

Bangladesh has a multi-tiered, decentralized health system with three levels of primary care covering all communities, as well as secondary and tertiary health services offered in more urban areas. In order to understand whether migrant women had access to existing health care facilities in Bangladesh, the respondents were asked about medical treatment during the covid-19 pandemic.






Did You Receive Any Proper Medical Care?



Ruzina Khatun 32, a migrant from Chaunarughat in Bangladesh. She returned to the country empty-handed after working in Saudi Arabia for 20 months. She is currently very ill. She has a tumor in her throat. But she does not have the necessary funds for expensive treatment. She is going through a difficult time in her life. She does not know if she can survive at all

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Though of all these protection mechanisms have existed but the women migrant workers are still facing problems. From this research major findings are given in below-

-  24- Hour hotline services not available in destination countries - like SOS while women workers are facing problems at workplace and in the office of the recruiting agencies;
-  Women migrant workers are suffering financially due to wage theft;
-  Women migrant workers are deprived of medical care;
-  Unavailability/Scarce Monitoring mechanisms in destination countries to oversee women workers' issues;
-  No rest time and overtime pay for extra hour works though entitled in contract.



Recommendation



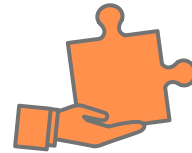
Increasing manpower and budget for Embassies to better support our migrant workers



Work condition monitoring by Labour Attaches through randomised calls and Recruiting Agency status reports of workers to BMET



Wage/Salary monitoring by Recruiting Agencies through Banking Channel Monitoring



Reforming migration system and forming mass reintegration plan for returning women migrants



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