

## Factors Influencing Internal Labour Migration from Agriculture sector to Non-agricultural Sector in Bangladesh

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**Abstract:** *In past, labor was extensively used in agriculture sector and there was huge surplus labor in agriculture sector. However, such trend has recently been changed where surplus labor in agricultural sector has reduced significantly and agriculture sector compete with non-agriculture sector in terms of hiring labor. The present study aims to analyze the determinants of transferring labor from agricultural sector to non-agriculture sector in Gopalganj district of Bangladesh. To this end, primary data were collected from labors who had involvement with agricultural activities. Descriptive statistics and binary logistic model were used to analyze the collected data. Results found from the logit model indicate that factors like family size, education, past experience, access to available information, transportation facilities, and savings are positively related with the log of odd ratio in favor of labor migration from agriculture sector to non-agricultural sector while wage rate, age, off-farm income and farm holdings are inversely related with labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. In addition, respondents in the study area have recognized lack of proper technical training as the major constraint in labour migration with a mean value of 4.48.*

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**Keywords:** *agriculture sector, non-agricultural sector, logit model, Bangladesh.*

## **Background of the Study**

Bangladesh has a total population of about 168.2 million and it's population is expected to reach 190 million in 2025 considering the current growth rate of population (GOB, 2021). Like many developing countries, the amount of labour that has involvement with agriculture sector in Bangladesh is found to show a decreasing pattern and they are often seen to migrate at non-agricultural sectors due to wage differential between sectors. In Bangladesh, most of the agricultural labour considered migration as their major livelihood strategy and thousands of agricultural labour come into the non-agricultural sector from agricultural sector with the aim of employment, higher wage and higher standard of living. Especially migration has occurred for better opportunity and for better job. Over the last few decades, the rate of migration is increasing gradually all over the world. In developing countries, people migrate from one to another area due to facilities of employment and to fulfill their subsistence need. Rural poor consider migration as a process to be free from the vicious cycle of poverty (Islam et al. 2009). Poverty is a social curse which resists the development of a society. Yet, by migration strategy, poor people can get better opportunities to remove their poverty and enhance their socio-economic condition (Siddique 2003). Thus, migration plays a greater role to poverty reduction as well as to improve their standard of living. Their socio-economic mobility is considered as a necessary condition for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. In addition, choice of destination and levels of benefits and risks, however, vary significantly, according to the economic and social power of the migrants (Siddiqui, 2003).

Labour migration, especially internal migration, is defined as the movement of labour from their home state to another state for the purpose of employment and It includes both permanent and temporary migration as well as rural-urban, urban-rural migration. Historically, it has played a significance role in improving the standard of living of the people of migrants' family. Internal migration is considered more important in terms of the number of people involved and perhaps the amount of remittances they send back home. In the rural economy, agricultural labours are always considered as the most deprived and neglected part of the population. Majority of the agricultural laborers includes landless, marginal, fixed rent tenant or sharecropper and they often found to diversify their profession by resorting to different types of non-agricultural activities as laborers, rickshaw-pullers, van-pullers, small businessman, street hawker, mason helper etc. Labour migration has become an integral part

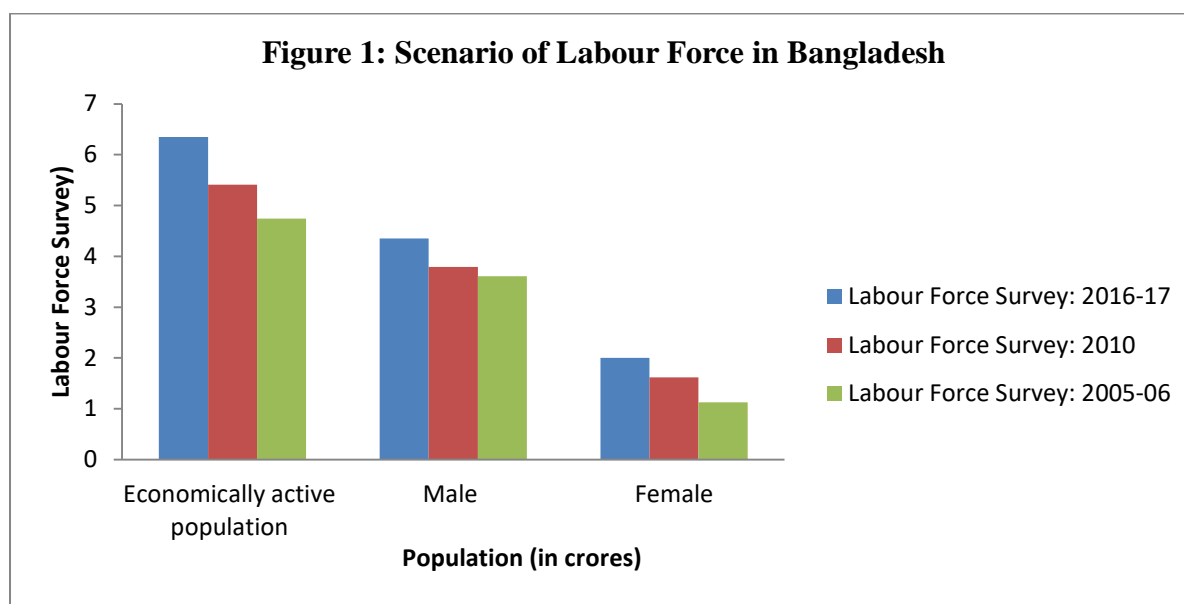
of the economic and social development of Bangladesh since 1980s. It offers additional revenues to the migrants to meet his subsistence needs as well as helps government to attain its long term developmental goals. In 1972, almost 80% of the labour had involved with agriculture while this amount has reduced by 40.6% in 2019 (GOB, 2021). At present, surplus labour is found to decline in agriculture sector and most of the agricultural labour prefers to migrate at non-agricultural sector basically due to wage differential between agriculture and non-agricultural sectors. In addition, they also face some difficulties while aiming to migrate themselves at non-agricultural sector. Working opportunities in agriculture sector round the year are not available which is considered as another cause of labour migration. As a result, they often lacking for employment opportunities which reduce their income, purchasing power and also hits their standard of living.

Table 1 illustrates the scenario of labour force in Bangladesh. It is evident from table 1 that the number of economically active population above 15 years, according to labour force survey 2005-06, was 4.74 crores with male 3.61 crores and female 1.13 crores whereas the economically active population has increased by 6.35 crores in labour force survey 2016-17 with male 4.35 crores and female 2 crores.

<b>Table 1: Scenario of Labour Force in Bangladesh</b>				
<b>Name of the Survey</b>	<b>Economically active population (in crores)</b>	<b>Male (in crores)</b>	<b>Female (in crores)</b>	<b>% of people who have involvement with agriculture</b>
Labour Force Survey: 2016-17	6.35	4.35	2.00	40.6
Labour Force Survey: 2010	5.41	3.79	1.62	47.33
Labour Force Survey: 2005-06	4.74	3.61	1.13	48.10

*Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (Various issues)*

In addition to economically active population, it is also obvious from table 1 that 48.1% people had involvement with agriculture sector in 2005 while this amount had declined by 40.6% in 2016. These above explanations are shown below with the help of Figure 1.



It is obvious from above diagram that people's involvement with agriculture sector has decreased throughout the survey period, though economically active population has increased from 4.74 crores to 6.35 crores.

### Statement of the Problem

In the theories of development economics put forward by Authur Lewis, Fei and Ranis, Harris-Todaro and Jorgenson, it is assumed that an economy with surplus labour always considers marginal productivity of labor ( $MP_L$ ) is zero or very near. According to these theories, labor in agriculture sector is paid a wage equal to its average product, not according to their marginal product which creates disequilibrium in terms of sectoral wages between agriculture and industry. This disequilibrium is responsible for inter-sectoral migration between agriculture and industry. This would lead to global efficiency in the sectoral allocation of labor in labor surplus economics. In the past, it was found that there was huge surplus labour in agriculture sector and this figure has continued to decrease in recent times. In addition, wage rate in agriculture sector is lower compared with wage in industrial sector. Though, surplus labour exist in agriculture, they often faces many difficulties in migrating themselves from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. The ultimate consequences are: lower wage rate, lower income, lower purchasing power and finally lower standard of living. When this is the case, it is an open question as to the design an appropriate policies regarding determining the factors responsible behind labour migration and how to remove those barriers of labour migration. Furthermore, the importance of labour migration has focused in several

public papers including five year plan, national budget, poverty reduction strategy paper, and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Identifying the major determinants of internal labour migration is vital for appropriate government policy formulation as well as to assess the impact of labour migration on surplus labour and to estimate their wage differential between agricultural sector and non-agricultural sector.

### **Objectives of the study**

The broad and general objective of this study is to analyze the determinants of labor migration from agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector in Bangladesh. This broad objective has been split into several specific objectives which are as follows:

- i. to show the scenario of economically active labour force in Bangladesh;
- ii. to identify the determinants of labor migration from agriculture sector to non-agricultural sector in the study area and
- iii. to assess the barriers towards labor migration from agricultural sector to non-agricultural sector in the study area.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies were done in the field of labour migration both in domestic and abroad (Mannan and Fredericks, 2017; Sarker and Islam, 2018; Imran et al., 2016; Zahonogo., 2011; Gimba and Kumshe, 2011). The most of the studies focuses on the determinants of labour migration by using different approaches. The findings of these studies widely differed from each other in terms of existing relation between labour migration and its determinants.

Mannan and Fredericks (2017) analyzed the household head relation to the migrant and remittances determinants among ten villages on the remittances receiving households in rural Bangladesh. They used household survey data from Bangladesh collected for the period of July to December, 2013. The empirical findings suggest that the household head relation to the migrant is one of the strong determinants of remittances as well as other variables. Shimada (1991) conducted a study on economic change and rural migration in Nigeria. They used both primary and secondary data in analysing their study. He used Simple random technique in his study. Result found from the study indicates that migration is viewed as a sign of economic and political change, or a manifestation of people's response to such

change. Using secondary data, Sarker and Islam (2018) explored the impacts of remittances on socio-economic development in Bangladesh. They found that international migration has positive impacts on socio-economic development in Bangladesh. Study reveals that remittance has significant impacts on Bangladesh economy and socio-economic development, for example, reducing the poverty, increasing the household expenditure, saving, leading to maintain the quality of life as well as gender equality.

Imran *et al.*, (2016) operated a study on migration and crop productivity in Punjab in 20016. They used-cross-sectional data which were collected from the Southern Punjab and they used Cobb Douglas production function to determine the impact of migration on crop productivity. Results found from the study indicate that cotton productivity was adversely affected by rural-urban migration while the wheat productivity was positively related with rural-urban migration. They found that Push and pull factors are involved in decision making process of rural-urban migration. The earlier studies by Todaro (1969), Harris and Todaro (1970) explaining rural-urban migration showed that expected wage differential is the main cause of rural-urban migration. It implies that people will continue migrating from rural to urban centers until the wages in the rural areas become equal to those in urban areas. Many studies have examined factors affecting rural to urban migration and revealed that the economic consideration was the primary motivation factor (Muhamud *et al.* 2010; Ikramullah *et al.* 2011). Other factors include lack better of social services, better education and health facilities and entertainment at urban centers, marriage and joining family at the urban centers (Hamid, 2010; Gimba and Kumshe, 2011). Other studies indicated that economic push factors (lack of credit, small landholding and rural poverty) were important while others showed high wage rate at urban centers, being the more crucial factor. However, income received from migrants can have positive impact on crop production and the net impact on crop productivity is negative (Rozelle *et al.*, 1999). Migration has positive impact on non-agricultural income and negative impact on agriculture income. The non-migrant households earn higher agricultural income compared to migrant households (Zahonogo 2011), as migration positively affects non-agriculture income and negatively affects agriculture income.

## Gaps in Previous Literature

While there are many studies regarding the determinants of labour migration in abroad, few studies were found in Bangladesh, especially in this study region. Most of the previous studies on the determinants of labour migration are cross section and cross country studies. The difficulty with such studies is the homogeneity assumptions across the countries, which is unrealistic due to variations in social, economic and institutional conditions. Therefore, country specific studies are needed to throw more light on the determinants of labour migration and the related policy issues. Such studies are either negligible or do not exist in Bangladesh. In determining the factors responsible for labour migration, most of the previous studies ignored some important variable like off farm income, size of farm holding which were important for making a good conclusion. So, this study will be an improvement over the previous studies as it considers all of those excluded variables in previous studies.

## Methodology of the Study

### Study Area and the Rationale

The study was carried out in Gopalganj Sadar upazila of Gopalganj district, which was selected purposively as there is huge agricultural labour in each of the villages. For this study, the sample obtained from the population of farmers of the three upazilas of Gopalganj district and subsequently, two unions from each upazila were selected randomly.

<b>District</b>	<b>Upazila</b>	<b>Union</b>	<b>Village</b>	<b>Number of Respondent</b>
Gopalganj	Gopalganj Sadar	Gobra	Sonakur	25
			Ghonapara	25
		Borasi	Charpathalia	25
			Bedgram	25
	Tungipara	Patgati	Gimadanga	25
			Gouhardanga	25
		Kushli	Nilpha	25
			Bashuria	25
	Kotalipara	Hiran	Majhbari	25
			Tarashi	25
		Kalabari	Kaliganj	25
			Shimulbari	25

*Source: Field Survey, 2020*

Finally, 12 villages were selected randomly from six unions and subsequently, a total of 300 agricultural labors were interviewed for the study.

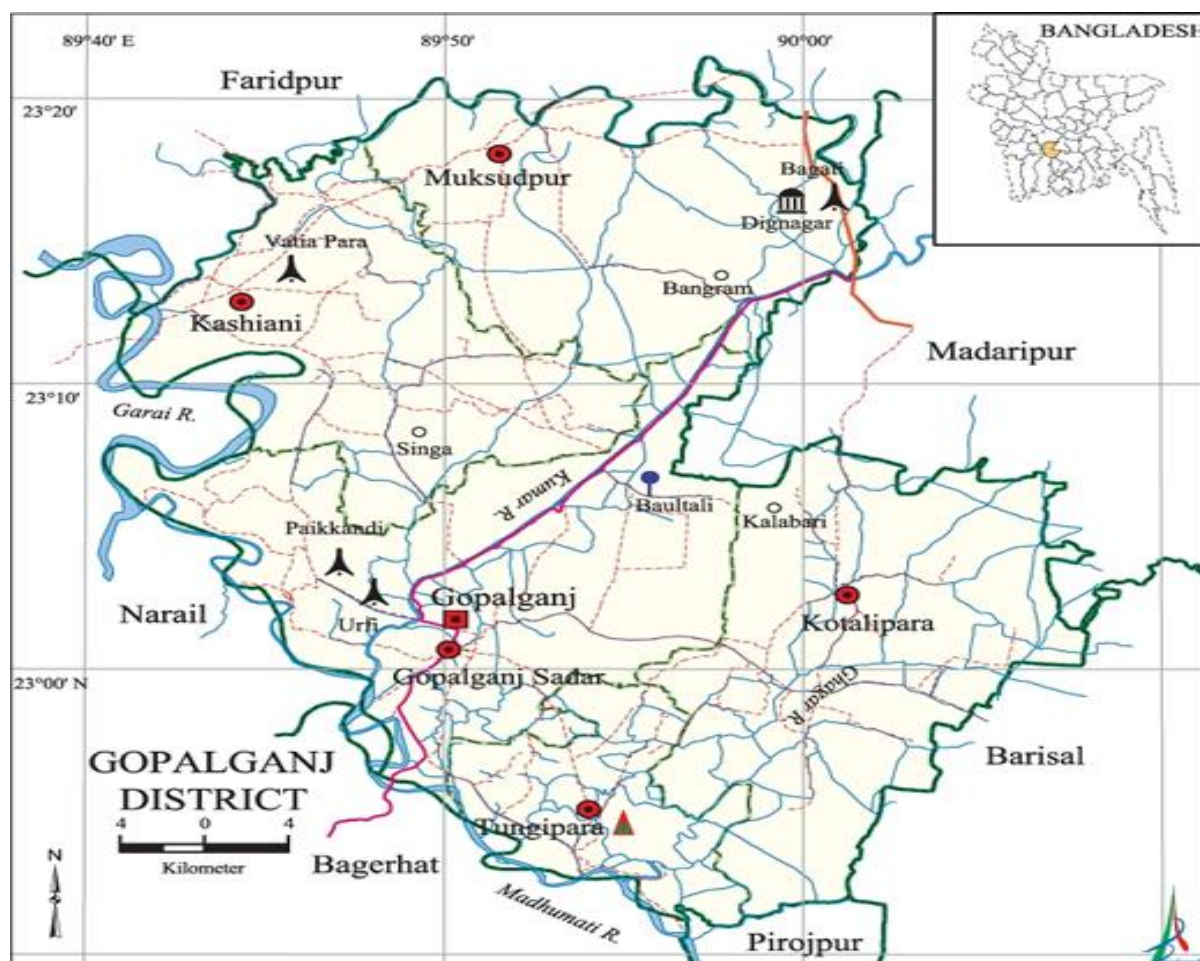


Image 1: Study Area

### Source of Data

The survey was conducted from July to December 2020. In order to select the agricultural labour for the interview, a list of 1145 agricultural labour was collected for sampling from Union Parishad Office. From the collected list 25 labors were selected randomly from each village. Hence, a total of 300 sample labors were selected randomly to collect socio-demographic and farm-level data to identify factors affecting labour migration from agricultural sector to non-agriculture sector in Gopalganj district of Bangladesh. However, secondary data were also collected and used in our analysis. These secondary data were collected from various government and non-government organizations such as agricultural sample survey, Yearbook of agriculture statistics (YAS), Bangladesh Bureau of statistics

(BBS), Ministry of agriculture (MOA), Bangladesh Economic Review (BER), Union Parishad office, journal, newspaper etc.

**Statistical Technique**

Simple random sampling technique was used to collect data. Then, collected data were classified, tabulated and analyzed in accordance to the objective set for the study. Both tabular and graphical techniques were used to analyze the collected data. SPSS, Microsoft-Excel and Microsoft-word were used for the analysis.

**Analytical Techniques**

In this paper, both the descriptive as well as econometric analyses were used to fulfill the objectives. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the summary statistics of agricultural labour in the area. Likert scale and logit model were used to address the determinants of labour migration from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector in the area. To determine the shares of the selected variables in the process of transferring labour from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector, the following specification of the model, in logit framework, will be employed:

$$Z = \log \left[ \frac{P_i}{1 - P_i} \right] = \gamma + \sum_{i=1}^{10} \delta_i X_i + \psi_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

$$Z = \log \left[ \frac{P_i}{1 - P_i} \right] = \log Y = \gamma + \delta_1 X_1 + \delta_2 X_2 + \delta_3 X_3 + \delta_4 X_4 + \delta_5 X_5 + \delta_6 X_6 + \delta_7 X_7 + \delta_8 X_8 + \delta_9 X_9 + \delta_{10} X_{10} + \psi_i \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where,

Z =Probability of labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector (1 if the respondent is capable to migrate himself from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector and 0 otherwise);  $\gamma$  =constant term;  $\delta_1$  to  $\delta_{10}$  = logistic coefficient for the independent variables;  $\psi$  = error term;  $X_1$  = wage rate  $X_2$  =Age;  $X_3$  = family size;  $X_4$  = education;  $X_5$  = Past experience;  $X_6$  =access to available information;  $X_7$  =transportation facilities;  $X_8$  = off farm income;  $X_9$  = saving and  $X_{10}$  = farm holdings.

## Description of the Variables

For this research, the dependent variable defined as the probability of labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector.

**Table 3: Summary of the variables used in the model**

Variables	Definition	Expected Sign
Wage rate	Taka	-
Age	Year	-
Family Size	Number	+
Education	Year of schooling	+
Past experience	Year	+
Access to available information	Dummy (1= access to information regarding migration, 0= otherwise)	+
Transportation facilities	Dummy (1=access to transportation, 0= otherwise)	+
Off-farm income	Taka	-
Savings	Taka	-
Farm holdings	Operated area in Bighas	-

Source: Field Survey, 2020

That is 1 if the respondent is capable to migrate from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector and 0 otherwise. The explanatory variables were taken as those variables which were thought to influence the agricultural labour migration decision. Wage rate, age, family size, education, past experience, access to available information, transportation facilities, off farm income, savings and farm holdings are considered as explanatory variables. For general perception, variables family size, education, past experience, access to available information, transportation facilities are considered to have positive influence on labour migration whereas wage rate, age, off farm income, savings and farm holdings are marked to have negative influence on labour migration.

## Results and Discussion

### Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Table 4 portrays the socio-economic features of agricultural labour in Gopalganj district. Descriptive analysis of the data collected shows that majority (34%) of the respondents were within the age group of 41-50 years (Table 4). A small number of the respondents in the study area were within the age group of 61-70 years having (7%). In terms of family size, it is found that 62% respondents had a family size ranges between 4 to 6 person, where 94%

male and 6% female. It is observed from table 4 that 78% of the surveyed respondents have small farms and just 22% of the respondents have marginal farms. Education plays an important role in deciding migration decision. Education has categorized as no formal education, primary education, secondary education, higher secondary education, graduate and above. Study reveals that 26% agricultural labors were illiterate but majority of the agricultural labors completed primary (43%) level and 18% completed r secondary school (Table 4). Considering occupational status, it is revealed that 79% of the respondents were full-time agricultural labour while 21% were part-time agricultural labour. Regarding marital status of the respondents, result revealed that a majority (71%) of the respondents were married with just a few that were single, widowed or divorced. These groups of chain players represent 9%, 14%, and 6% respectively. With regards to the source of collecting information on non-agricultural job, it is evident that 76% of the respondents collect news from their friends, neighbor and relatives while 17% of the labor reported that they collect their news from local agent.

**Table 4: Socio-economic Features of the Sampled Respondents**

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age Distribution (Years)</b>	
21-30	13
31-40	29
41-50	34
51-60	17
61-70	7
<b>Family Size</b>	
1-3 person	15
4-6 person	62
7 and above person	23
<b>Farm Holding</b>	
Small	78
Medium	22
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	94
Female	6
<b>Education</b>	
No formal education (0)	26
Primary Education (i-v)	43
Secondary education (vi-x)	18
Higher Secondary education (xi-xii)	12
Graduate and above	1
<b>Occupational Status</b>	
Full-time agricultural labour	79

Part-time agricultural labour	21
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	94
Female	6
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	9
Married	71
Widowed	14
Divorced	6
<b>Religious Status</b>	
Muslim	53
Hindu	47
<b>Years of Experience</b>	
3-7	9
8-12	24
13 and above	67
<b>Source of information on non-agricultural job</b>	
TV news	5
Newspaper	2
Friend/neighbor/relatives	76
Local agent	17

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*Source: Authors' own calculation.*

Study revealed that majority (67%) of the respondents had 13 years and above experience as agricultural labour, while 24% had experience of 8-12 years. The implication of this finding is that years of experience has positive impact on migration.

### **Determinants of Transferring labor from Agriculture Sector to Non-agriculture Sector**

In order to investigate the determinants of labor migration from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector a binary logit model is employed. Results found from the model indicate that factors like family size, education, past experience, access to available information, transportation facilities, and savings are positively related with the log of odd ratio in favor of labor migration from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector (Table 5). On the other hand, wage rate, age, off-farm income and age are inversely related with labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector meaning that their higher value will reduce the possibility of labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector and vice versa.

**Table 5: Results of Binary Logit Model**

Variable	Coefficient	Z-values	P-value
Constant	9.8980	2.6068	0.0291
wage rate	-0.3871***	-5.0912	0.0009
Age	-0.1272	-0.2743	0.6547
Family size	0.2890***	4.2831	0.0009
Education	0.1441**	2.5743	0.0275
Past Experience	0.2157*	1.5473	0.0580
Access to available information	0.7861	1.0863	0.1581
Transportation facilities	0.3665**	2.4528	0.0217
Off-farm income	-0.0228	-1.1287	0.1175
Savings	0.4192	0.1921	0.7529
Farm holding	-0.0180***	-3.2831	0.0001

LR Chi-Square Value: 82.41

Log likelihood: 57.34

Pseudo R<sup>2</sup>: 0.532

Note: \*\*\*Significant at 1%, \*\*Significant at 5%, \* Significant at 10%

*Source: Authors' own calculation.*

The values of log likelihood and chi-square statistic computed from the model are 57.34 and 82.41, respectively. The computed value of pseudo R<sup>2</sup> is 0.532 which indicates that the overall model is significant and the explanatory variables are jointly able to explain the decision regarding to labour migration from agriculture sector to non-agricultural sector.

### **Ranking of Barriers towards Migration from agricultural sector to Non-agricultural sector**

The Table 6 shows the major barriers towards labour migration from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. To this end, Likert scale was used in ranking the barrier of migration. The main strategy for ranking is that a variable with the highest mean value will be the top ranking and an item carry lowest mean value indicates the lowest ranking. Result obtained from Likert scale shows that lack of technical training carry a mean value of 4.48 and placed the 1<sup>st</sup> rank in case of the ranking of migration barrier whereas religion barrier placed the last rank with a mean value of 0.58 (Table 6).

**Table 6: Barriers towards labour migration**

Barriers of Migration	Mean value	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation	Rank
Intervention of middleman	3.82	5.00	3.00	0.59	4

Lack of education	3.92	5.00	3.00	0.56	3
Lack of necessary information	4.24	5.00	3.00	0.55	2
Transportation cost	0.64	3.00	1.00	0.64	7
High family ties	2.02	3.00	1.00	0.71	6
sex discrimination	2.82	4.00	2.00	0.66	5
Lack of technical training	4.48	5.00	4.00	0.50	1
Religious barrier	0.58	5.00	1.00	0.34	8

*Source: Authors' own calculation*

### **Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

The major objective of this paper was to identify the determinants of labor migration from agricultural sector to non-agriculture sector in Gopalganj district. Descriptive statistics were used to show the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area. Study showed that one fourth of agricultural labors was illiterate while 43% agricultural labors completed their primary level education. In terms of source of information on non-agricultural job, results indicated that 76% of the respondents collect news from their friends, neighbor and relatives while 17% of the labor reported that they collected their news from local agent. The study revealed that majority (67%) of the respondents had 13 years and above experience as agricultural labour, while 24% had an experience of 8-12 years.

Results found from the logit model indicate that factors like family size, education, past experience, access to available information, transportation facilities, and savings are positively related with the log of odd ratio in favor of labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector while wage rate, age, off-farm income and farm holdings are inversely related with labor transfer from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. In addition, respondents in the study area have recognized lack of proper technical training as the major constraint in labour migration with a mean value of 4.48 followed by lack of necessary (4.24) information, lack of education (3.92). Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

(i). Most of the non-agricultural jobs are skill oriented and it is found from the study that few amount of labors has skills oriented training. Thus, agricultural labors can take training before their migration. In this regard, government should take initiatives to open skill development institutions at rural level so that agricultural labour can take training.

(ii). Lack of necessary information is marked as second important constraint regarding transferring labor from agriculture sector to non-agriculture sector. NGOs, local agents and government, in case of migration, should take proper initiatives so that agricultural labors can easily get news regarding non-agricultural jobs.

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