

(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Rural-urban migration in Rangpur city: A sociological study

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World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2023, 19(03), 006–015

Publication history: Received on 19 July 2023; revised on 28 August 2023; accepted on 31 August 2023

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2023.19.3.1739>

### Abstract

The phenomenon of rural-to-urban migration has a long history. People's attempts to move from rural areas to cities originated in ancient times. In this context, the migration history to Rangpur is brief. The history of urbanization in Rangpur began not too long ago, with people from various villages in the surrounding districts settling in the city. Through the lens of economic and socio-cultural perspectives, multiple factors have directly and indirectly influenced migration from rural areas to this city. Therefore, understanding its intricate meanings is only feasible by discussing rural-urban migration through a sociological research approach.

**Keywords:** Rural-Urban Migration; Urbanization; Sociological; Perspective; Approach

### 1. Introduction

The city of Rangpur is mainly undergoing an urbanization process. This is because the extensive expansion of urbanization has yet to begin in its truest sense. The method of urbanization in Rangpur started after it was declared a metropolitan city. With urbanization, people immediately started migrating from rural areas to secure employment opportunities. People from various districts like Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Dinajpur, and Panchagarh, along with their diverse villages, migrated to this city to improve their livelihoods.

Residents from different districts and upazilas (sub-districts) of the Rangpur Division have moved to this city for temporary and permanent settlements. The influx of residents, or migration, gained momentum when urbanization and city expansion started. Although this northern region has yet to develop significantly in industries, these marginalized individuals have established themselves by seeking new employment prospects.

Additionally, the impact of migration has been most pronounced since the establishment of the renowned Begum Rokeya University in the city of Rangpur. People from various districts and upazilas across Bangladesh have migrated here to pursue education and have started residing here, temporarily or permanently.

#### *Objectives of the Study*

- To explore the driving factors of migration
- To know the socio-economic impacts of migration
- To investigate the housing and living conditions of migrants

#### 1.1. Significance of the Study

In the past, no study on this subject has been conducted in Rangpur. Despite prior research on various topics, an article, journal, or research paper on migration has yet to be published in this city. Given that this topic has yet to be extensively studied, the significance of this article has been emphasized. Since the town of Rangpur is a growing urban area, the

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study was conducted with greater importance to understand why people migrate to this city. Considering the city's status as a growing metropolis, the study examined how migration has influenced people's occupational transitions upon arrival and the differences between their current and pre-migration social statuses. Furthermore, the study's objective was to investigate the existing housing and living conditions of migrants in Rangpur City.

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## 2. Material and methods

The study has been conducted in some areas of Rangpur City, including Lalbagh, Shapla, Parkermore, and the modern regions of Rangpur Sadar Upazila. In this sociological study, both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used. Due to the nature of the research, a predominantly qualitative approach was used to achieve the research objectives. As a result, the investigation was completed using qualitative methods, enabling the collection of nuanced data and facilitating the observation of social practices. Because the study focused basically on rural-to-urban migration, there was no need to collect more quantitative data. Thus, quantitative methods were not widely used in the study. Both simple and stratified random sampling methods were used for data collection. The survey was structured with 25 respondents. For data collection, 20 in-depth interviews and five focus group discussions were conducted. Among the respondents, 16 were female, and nine were male in various occupations. Specifically, 5 participants were 20–25 years old, four were 25–30, 3 were 30–40, 4 were 40–50, and 4 were over 60 through direct interviews with these individuals and five focus group discussions. The information has been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The data provided by the respondents is considered a primary source, and various articles, journals, books, and research papers have been used as secondary sources for this research.

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## 3. Literature Review

Salman Sohel et al. (2018) researched rural-urban migration and urban transition in Dhaka city. The study identifies high unemployment, low income, unequal land distribution, and a demand for higher education as the primary drivers of rural-urban migration. Dhaka has become the leading destination for rural migrants seeking economic opportunities, with its industrial and financial sectors offering the best chances for upward mobility. The population of Dhaka has been rapidly increasing, attracting poor rural individuals. More than 20 million people are projected to live in Dhaka by 2025. Rural-urban migration has significant implications for urban poverty, as migrants often face challenges in finding adequate housing, accessing essential services, and dealing with poor drainage systems. Environmental disasters and the modernization of agriculture contribute to rural displacement and increase the demand for migration to cities like Dhaka. Mollah (2014) The present migration of the population from rural to urban areas worldwide is unparalleled in any other period of human history. The main factor for migration is the need for economic opportunity in rural areas of Bangladesh, and people migrate mostly from large households. Those who migrate to urban areas need more access to fundamental amenities and challenges securing steady employment. The research proposes several measures, including fostering employment avenues within rural regions, mitigating the burden of steep micro-credit interest rates, fortifying initiatives for women's advancement, and instituting social safety nets for the impoverished. Furthermore, the study advocates for the inception of support services or programs for migrants facilitated by governmental entities and non-governmental organizations.

Obaidullah (2022) Participants migrated to urban areas due to the poor economic background of their families, which resulted in a reliance on a single person for financial support. The scarcity of work in rural areas also contributed to the mobility of rural inhabitants. Poverty was identified as a distinctive category that played a vital role in the relationship between variables. Basu & Islam (2021) Rural-urban migration is one of the most prevalent demographic trends worldwide. It occurs for many reasons, including economic, environmental, and demographic crises, and is conducive to poverty eradication and human capital development. Hossain (2001) The urbanization rate is high among Asia's least developed countries, but rural-urban migration dominates this growth. There is a distinct selectivity concerning age, sex, caste, marital status, education, occupation, etc.; migration propensity differs significantly among these socio-economic groups. Shikdar (2012) states that Urban poverty is increasing in Bangladesh, and the number of people living in urban slums is expected to double by 2025. Most migrants are rural poor who take shelter in slums, squatters, footpaths, rail stations, and other scattered places. Migration has long been an important livelihood strategy for the people of Bangladesh. Both poor and better-off people pursue migration as a livelihood strategy in Bangladesh due to migration and various social, economic, and cultural issues in the region. (Alemante&et.al, 2006). People moving from small rural areas to large urban parts cause some severe threats to both the urban economy and urban geography. Some of the people migrate to get rid of conflict, oppression, or ecological dangers. The choice of migration is usually associated with significant life changes, like pursuing higher education, obtaining employment, or getting married. This occurrence has led to social, cultural, and demographic renovation of the groups of origin and destination (United Nations, 2013). These studies have been conducted in different contexts and dealt with partial issues, so they are

insufficient to understand the whole circle of driving factors, socio-economic impact, housing, and living conditions of the migrants in Rangpur. So, the present study aims at exploring those unexplored horizons.

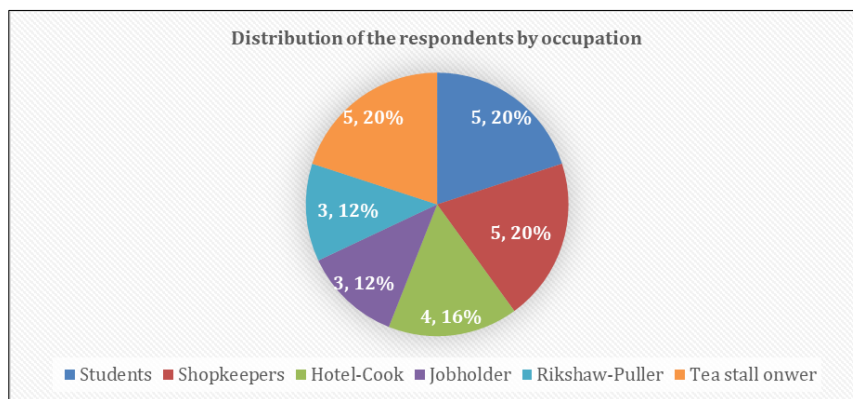
### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

Push-pull theory of migration: Everett Spurgeon Lee, professor of sociology at the University of Georgia, is known for his pioneering theory of migration, known as the Push and Pull Theory (1966), or Lee's theory of migration. The idea is based on the principles of sociology, which attempts to formalize a "theory" of migration to provide a map of the factors that can explain the migration volume between origin and destination. The Push-pull theory is a critical concept in understanding urban migration in Rangpur. This theory suggests that migration has push factors, which are adverse conditions in the region of origin (for example, lack of economic opportunities, poverty, natural disasters), and pull factors, which are positive characteristics entering (such as better job prospects and improved living conditions). Using this theory, we can explore the interactions among the attractions that drive people to migrate to Rangpur. The research aims to provide a deep understanding of the reasons for moving into Rangpur City and the specific factors affecting it. It seeks to understand the dynamics of urbanization and migration in a city using Lee's theory on Migration and examining both pushing and pulling elements.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Occupation of the Respondents

In the given figure, the occupations of the respondents have been indicated. A total of 25 respondents have provided information about individuals with various professions. Among them, there are five students, constituting 20 percent of the total respondents; 5 shopkeepers, also accounting for 20 percent; 4 hotel cooks, making up 16 percent; 3 jobholders, comprising 12 percent; 3 rickshaw drivers, contributing 12 percent; and five tea stall owners, amounting to 20 percent of the total respondents.



Source: Field Survey-2023

**Figure 1** Distribution of the respondents by occupation

### 4.2. Age of the Respondents

**Table 1** Distribution of respondents by age

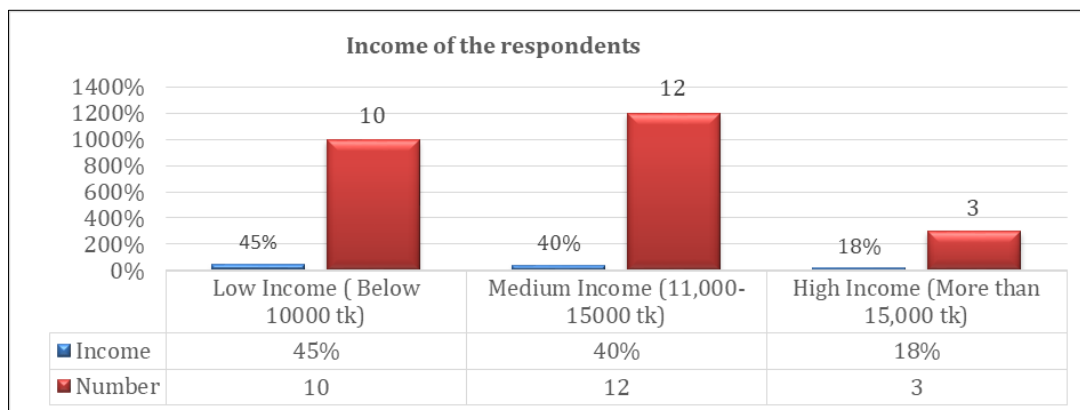
Age	Number	Percentage
24-28	4	16
28 - 35	2	8
35-40	4	16
40-45	8	32
45-50	7	28
Total	25	100

Source: Field Survey-2023

The table displays the age distribution among the respondents, categorized into specific age ranges. At the same time, four individuals (16% of the group) are aged 24-28. Two individuals are in the 28-35 range (8%). The 35-40 range also has four individuals (16%), while the largest group is aged 40-45, with eight individuals (32%). Lastly, seven individuals (28%) are between 45 and 50. Overall, 25 individuals are covered in the dataset, providing insights into the age diversity within this group.

### 4.3. Income of the respondents

The figure shows income distribution among respondents: 45% had low income (< 10,000 Tk) and facing financial challenges. 40% had medium income (11,000-15,000 Tk) and better resource access. 17% had high income (> 15,000 Tk), enjoying a higher standard of living. This highlights a significant low-income presence, a moderate-income balance, and a privileged high-income group.



Source: Field Survey-2023

**Figure 2** Distribution of respondents by income

### 4.4. Sex of the Respondents

**Table 2** Distribution of respondents by sex

Sex	Number of participants	Percentage
Male	16	64
Female	9	36
Total	25	100

Source: Field Survey-2023

The table presents participant sex distribution: "Male" - 16 individuals (64%), "Female" - 9 individuals (36%). Males dominate with a higher count, indicating sex dynamics and demographics.

### 4.5. Driving Factors of Rural-Urban Migration

The city of Rangpur is developing rapidly. Along with this development, the issue of migration is becoming more prominent. Migration was rare, and many factors have contributed to it. Various factors have played a role in the migration to Rangpur City, such as social, economic, educational, criminal, business, poverty, and Manga-related factors.

#### 4.5.1. Social Factors

Social factors have been a driving force for migration to Rangpur City. Analysis of survey data reveals that people from rural areas tend to migrate to Rangpur to improve their social status. Since rural areas lack the social amenities of this city, individuals have migrated to this city in search of better opportunities. Moreover, the healthcare facilities in rural areas need to catch up, causing people to migrate from the villages of various districts in the hope of receiving advanced medical care in this city.

#### 4.5.2. *Economic Factors*

The primary role behind migration to Rangpur City is economic factors. Most individuals who move from rural areas to this city have economic aspirations first. With limited income in rural areas, they have sought opportunities in this city to improve their lives. The low-income earners in rural areas have set up shops once they reach the town. Moreover, they have transitioned from their previous job to a new one after coming here. In rural areas, they were involved in small-scale handicrafts such as Naskhi Kantha (interstitial weaving) and handlooms. Still, they have found hotel employment in this city, especially in housekeeping.

#### 4.5.3. *Crime*

The factor that has played an essential role in the migration to Rangpur City is crime. After indulging in criminal activities, some individuals have sought refuge in this city by migrating here. That is the unique finding of the study.

#### 4.5.4. *Educational Factor*

Education has been cited as one of the main reasons for migration. This is because the demand for higher education has led to temporary and permanent migration of students from different parts of Bangladesh to this city. The prestigious Begum Rokeya University in the northern region has been a catalyst for migration, with many individuals moving here after establishing themselves as prestigious students.

#### 4.5.5. *Business*

The job has emerged as a significant factor in moving to this city. Individuals from rural areas have mainly settled in this city to expand their business and commercial activities. In the past, small business owners in rural areas have opened hardware stores, hotels, and supermarkets in this town.

#### 4.5.6. *Poverty*

Poverty is one of the major driving factors for rural-to-urban migration. In the northern region of Bangladesh, compared to the other areas, there is a higher level of economic backwardness, leading to most of the population residing below the poverty line. As a result, people from rural areas naturally tend to migrate to new job opportunities in urban areas. Therefore, there has been a significant influx of migrants to Rangpur searching for new employment prospects.

#### 4.5.7. *Monga*

The Bengali word "Monga" describes the yearly cycle of hunger and poverty in Bangladesh's northern region. A different name for it is "Mora Kartik," which means "the month of Death and Disaster." This occurrence occurs twice a year, in March–April (after the transplantation of the Boro rice crop) and September–November (following the transplantation of the Aman rice crop). Due to a reduced workload because of these natural occurrences, rural laborers move to urban areas in search of jobs. People who are unable to move experience starvation and a lack of nourishment. Due to this phenomenon, there is a noteworthy rise in migration during this time in Rangpur.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.5.8. *Job*

In the context of job migration, the driving factor has indeed been the role of employment. It has been observed that many individuals and their families have migrated to this city generally due to job opportunities. The distance from their homes and the difficulty in transportation have made commuting challenging, leading them to relocate permanently to this city.

#### 4.5.9. *Healthcare Service*

The availability of healthcare services drives migration from rural areas to Rangpur City. Analyzing the collected data and information reveals that people migrate from villages to this city due to the need for more sufficient healthcare services in rural areas. The healthcare services provided in villages are not mainly based on scientific principles and could be more effective in treating diseases. Consequently, individuals aim to migrate to this city for improved healthcare services.

The city offers advanced healthcare services, medications, and other health-related facilities. These services must be in the villages, so people have migrated to this city to receive enhanced healthcare services. The town offers superior medical care, medications, and other health-related services unavailable in the villages. As a result, they have permanently relocated to this city to access these improved healthcare facilities.

4.5.10. *Push-Pull Factors of Migration*

Migration is the result of both push and pull causes working together. Push factors are active in the rural end of the Push-Pull Model, whereas Pull factors are active at the urban destination. People are drawn to cities by pull forces and are pushed there by push factors. Migration from rural to urban areas is blamed on urban bias.

**Table 1** Push and pull factors of migration

Lack of jobs or opportunities.	Employment opportunities.
Need for good educational institutes.	Higher-income.
Poor medical care.	Better working conditions and facilities.
Poverty.	Educational opportunities.
Famine or drought.	Higher living standards.
War and political conflicts.	Better public services.
Religious or political persecution.	Religious freedom.
Natural disasters.	Freedom of expression.

Source: Everett Lee (1966)

**4.6. Socio-Economic Impacts of Migration**

The impact of immigration in the socio-economic field is noticeable. The social and economic sectors have had an effect, such as lack of housing, population growth, the creation of slums, cultural change, environmental pollution, river, water, and air pollution, and the significant reduction of arable agricultural land.

4.6.1. *Lack of Housing*

After moving from the village to the city of Rangpur, the lack of a fixed place to live has profoundly affected them. Having already homes in their towns, they have yet to find a suitable place to live comfortably in this city. Everyone lives in one or two-room rented houses or guesthouses. In some cases, students live in hostels, while others who work in various industries live in rented houses with their families. This survey has shown that no one in this city owns his home. When asked why, they explain that the land cost here is relatively high, making it impossible to buy land. They need to find a way to buy land based on their income. When asked about their future, they say they want to build their home in this city. P

4.6.2. *Population Growth*

Migration has had an impact on the population. When people from various districts, sub-districts, and villages establish settlements in the city of Rangpur, the population is naturally increasing at a higher rate. As a result, the population growth rate has escalated, and space constraint is evident.

4.6.3. *Creation of Slum*

Migration has resulted in the creation of slum areas. A slum has formed in the Lalbagh area, adjacent to Rangpur's railway line. Migration has played a significant role in the establishment of this slum. It can be observed that the residents here are mostly migrants and not permanent inhabitants. They have migrated to the Lalbagh area at various times, thus contributing to the formation of this slum.

4.6.4. *Change of Culture*

The people who migrate from villages to cities undergo significant cultural transformations. The culture they encounter in cities is quite different from what they are accustomed to in their villages. Social solidarity among the people in cities is comparatively lower. The culture in urban areas is complex and rapidly changing compared to rural areas. For those who have come to the town for the first time, it is initially challenging to adapt to this culture. Still, they eventually assimilate into the current cultural dynamics.

In this urban setting, interpersonal relationships and families are central. People prioritize their interests and need to understand more beyond that. The sense of community among village people appears to be the opposite in the city; it's more individualistic.

#### *4.6.5. Environmental Pollution*

The increase in population has led to environmental pollution. The drainage system of Rangpur, urban environmental management, and river pollution have taken on a dangerous form. In the small city, the consequences of migration resulting in population growth have highlighted the crisis of waste disposal management.

#### *4.6.6. River Pollution*

When the population increases, buildings, hotels, restaurants, factories, and other industries directly dispose of waste into the river to accommodate the debris. As a result, the river's depth has decreased, and the river's biodiversity has been wholly lost. The once vibrant Shyamasundari River, flowing through the heart of the city of Rangpur, is now almost dead, the leading cause of which is waste disposal.

#### *4.6.7. Air Pollution*

Rangpur, a divisional city in Bangladesh, is precarious due to the alarming population increase and escalating air pollution. Due to the lack of proper waste management, the level of air pollution has risen significantly in the region. Various construction projects have contributed to utilizing equipment primarily responsible for this situation. Air pollution has led to heightened risks of respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes among the population. It also adversely affects fetal development, causing harm to the embryo and hindering cognitive development in children. Migration can be attributed as a significant factor for these problems, as the influx of migrants worsens the problem of air pollution.

#### *4.6.8. Decrease Agricultural Land*

Due to migration, the extent of agricultural land is diminishing. The reason is that residential complexes have sprung up in the lands where cultivation and animal husbandry were practiced until a few days ago. Additionally, many students migrating to this city for higher education are arriving from other towns, necessitating housing. As a result, new houses and hostels are being built with the hope of substantial gains in urban agricultural lands.

### **4.7. Housing and Living Conditions**

Migration from rural areas to the city of Rangpur, even when migrants had their own homes in the village, initially led to much lower income levels. Despite leaving most of their shop products unsold, resulting in business losses and financial setbacks for many, they eventually stabilized their livelihoods in the city. While some previously employed in various professions faced significant changes in their lives after securing government jobs in the town, their income increased substantially.

In the past, they used to earn around 200-300 taka daily in the village, but after migrating to the city, their income escalated to 700-800 taka. This increased income enabled them to manage their households more comfortably. Interestingly, approximately 95% of the migrants had no homes; they lived in rented houses across different city areas. They revealed they initially came to the city for employment and later moved with their families.

Most respondents shared their aspiration to build houses with their funds in the city, but this remains a distant goal due to the high land cost. One respondent, who came to the town 26 years ago from a village in Kushtia, initially rented a rickshaw and later transitioned to owning a tea stall. He expanded his business to sell various snacks alongside tea. He proudly stated that he now owns a house in the city, where he lives with his children, whom he educated. Those unemployed or engaged in activities like Nakshi Kantha (traditional embroidered quilts) in the village now work in hotels in the city.

Due to financial difficulties, a mother and her son from a village named Damdama started working in a hotel when they first arrived in the city. However, their initial lack of skills led to lower wages. Their earnings increased to 500-600 taka daily as they gained expertise. The overall living conditions in the city have significantly improved compared to their previous circumstances. The migration to this city has brought about a positive change in the lives of everyone. Economic cleanliness is evident, and their living conditions have improved considerably. Those who secured government jobs now own land and houses in this city, living comfortably. Earlier, their tin-roofed dwellings in the village have transformed into entirely different lives in the town. Migration has primarily played a positive role in their life.

## 5. Discussions

The mentioned research has been conducted on "Rural-Urban Migration in Rangpur City." The research delves into the subject through a sociological lens, providing explanations and analyses. The significant findings of this research differ somewhat from previous studies. Among the key findings, various driving factors such as social, economic, crime, education, business, poverty, Monga (seasonal unemployment), job opportunities, healthcare services, and push-pull factors have played an active role in migration. Apart from that, the socio-economic impact of migration includes issues such as lack of housing, population growth, the emergence of slums, cultural changes, environmental pollution, river pollution, air pollution, and the reduction of available land. Furthermore, the people who have migrated have experienced changes in their housing and living conditions. Previously, those earning around 200-300 taka are now elevated to earning 700-800 taka. Although most live in rented houses, their economic situation has significantly improved after migrating to Rangpur City. Everyone is now economically self-reliant. This research had several limitations. The sample size was small, and the study was conducted within a limited area. The findings obtained in this research differed from other existing works. While the existing studies did not consider crime-driving factors, this research identified them. Previous research should have extensively discussed living conditions and housing, which were examined in this study. The impact of this research extended beyond this city and highlighted various factors of migration, housing, and living conditions. In the past, studies on migration did not consider crime as a driving force behind migration; however, in this city, crime has played an active role in the context of migration, which diverges somewhat from the unique findings of the mentioned research. Moreover, beyond the transformations in migrants' daily lives and housing, their social and economic lives have also changed. However, this change is progressive. This is because, compared to rural life, they are now enjoying a more beautiful and healthier lifestyle. Since these aspects were emphasized, this study is expected to enable various researchers to gain more knowledge. Furthermore, this will contribute significantly to more advanced investigations in future research.

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## 6. Conclusion

Studying the migration's effect in the progressively developing city of Rangpur has found a comprehensive picture of how the transition from rural to urban life has played a supportive role in enhancing the quality of life for those who have migrated. Where daily life was once challenging in the village, migration has made their life easier and more comfortable. The middle, lower-middle, and even some lower classes have re-gained a happy life in this city. Although the city's environment, culture, and social ties have been compromised, the purpose for which they have come to this city has been fulfilled to some extent. Currently, they are leading happy lives with their families in this city. Urbanization has brought forth new dimensions of settlement in the town of Rangpur, involving the transformation of rural communities in various ways, leading to the adoption of new occupations and the initiation of fresh social lives. The transition from the simple lifestyle of the village people to the complexities of urban living has created an energy shift. The culture of the migrated population, enhanced through migration, has contributed to the growth of this city and its urbanization. Migration and urbanization are parallel processes, with urbanization expanding alongside the increasing migration trend. In conclusion, after migration to the city of Rangpur, there have been significant changes in living conditions, housing, and social and economic aspects.

### *Recommendation*

Due to migration, the city of Rangpur faces various challenges that must be mitigated urgently. Otherwise, the living environment of this city could become unsuitable. Based on this study, the following list of recommendations is provided

- The city corporation should take appropriate initiatives to maintain a pollution-free environment.
  - In areas where slums have emerged, governmental and non-governmental efforts should ensure the residents' basic needs (such as food, clothing, healthcare, housing, and education).
  - To keep the river water pollution-free, direct waste disposal into the river should be stopped.
  - Littering and waste disposal on city roads should be Stopped.
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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Acknowledgments*

I express my profound gratitude to Nishat Tasnim, Dept. of Sociology, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh.



*Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The author and co-author disclosed no possible conflicts of interest for the study.

*Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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