SOCIAL STIGMA AND COVID-19: THE EXPERIENCES OF BANGLADESHI RETURNEES FROM ITALY

Mohammad Riduan PARVEZ[I]

ABSTRACT

Social Stigma and COVID-19: The Experiences of Bangladeshi Returnees from Italy
The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has escalated social discrimination against migrants around the world. However, research on the forms of social stigma faced by the returned migrants in their home countries is absent. Based on in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi migrants who returned from Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic, this article explores their experiences of discrimination and social harassment in Bangladesh. Drawing on Link's and Phelan's (2001) conceptual framework of social stigma, this study finds that returned migrants experienced different forms of social harassment and stigmatization, including labeling, stereotyping, social separation, status loss, and discrimination.
KEYWORDS: returned migrants, social stigma, COVID-19, Bangladesh, Italy

IZVLEČEK

Družbena stigma in Covid-19: Izkušnje bangladeških povratnikov iz Italije
Izbruh pandemije Covida-19 je povečal socialno diskriminacijo migrantov po vsem svetu. Premalo pa so raziskane oblike družbene stigme, s katero se soočajo migranti povratniki v svojih domačih deželah. Članek na podlagi poglobljenih intervjujev z bangladeškimi migranti, ki so se med pandemijo vračali iz Italije, analizira njihove izkušnje z diskriminacijo in družbenim nadlegovanjem v Bangladešu. Študija, ki izhaja iz Linkovega in Phelanovega (2001) konceptualnega okvira socialne stigme, ugotavlja, da se migranti povratniki soočajo z različnimi oblikami družbenega nadlegovanja in stigmatizacije, vključno z etiketiranjem, s stereotipizacijo, z družbenim ločevanjem, izgubo statusa in diskriminacijo.
KLJUČNE BESEDE: migranti povratniki, družbena stigma, Covid-19, Bangladeš, Italija

---

I   MSS in international relations, lecturer; Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Chittagong, Chittagong-4331, Bangladesh; riduan.ir@cu.ac.bd, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9456-1308.

INTRODUCTION

Social stigma is a behavior that socially dishonors a person by classifying them as an "undesirable other" by the community (Bhattacharya et al. 2020: 382). There has been a historical connection of stigma with infectious disease. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens those millions of migrant people who returned to their country of origin or are currently staying in the destination countries. Bangladeshi returned migrants are also facing these kinds of challenges because of the corona crisis. Between February and March 2020, more than 200,000 migrant people, mainly from Italy, returned to Bangladesh because of the closure of business and industry and the rapid increase of the coronavirus in the destination countries (USAID 2020).

Since the 1970s, Bangladesh has become a renowned exporter of human resources to several foreign countries. About 13 million Bangladeshis are currently working abroad (Karim, Islam 2020; MoEWOE 2019). The countries of the Middle East and Southeast Asia are major destinations for Bangladeshi migrants. Gradually, such migration also expanded to the Southern European countries, mainly Italy, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, since the late 1980s (Anthias, Lazaridis 2000; King et al. 2000; King 2001; Bonifazi et al. 2008). Of these Southern European countries, Italy has been considered to be one of the main popular destinations for Bangladeshi migrants. The number of Bangladeshi migrants currently in Italy is 120,000 (Della Puppa, King 2018). It is also noteworthy that, in addition to regular immigrants, Italy also hosts a large number of irregular immigrants from both European and non-European countries (King 2001). In 2009, the reported Bangladeshi irregular migrants were 74,000 (Rahman, Kabir 2012).

It is important to note that Italy was the first European country in the world to be heavily affected by COVID-19. In particular, on March 8, 2020, in response to the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the concerned administration imposed a national restriction of movements on its population (Aragona et al. 2020). The migrant (mainly Bangladeshi migrant) people experienced more severe negative impacts than the general population in Italy due to restrictive measures. When the crisis arose, the protecting and returning of vulnerable Bangladeshi migrants from Italy became more crucial than ever before. That is why a large number of Bangladeshi migrants returned from Italy on March 7, 2020. After that, returning migrants and their family members who returned home from Italy were believed to be the primary transmitters of coronavirus to Bangladesh. In this circumstance, it is essential to understand the COVID-19 related social stigma against returned migrants. This research explores the social challenges of COVID-19 for the Bangladeshi returned migrants from Italy.

This article aims to investigate the returned migrants' experiences of social stigma during the COVID-19 pandemic. The main research question is thus: how did returned migrants in Bangladesh experience social stigma during the COVID-19 pandemic?

SOCIAL STIGMA AT THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC IN BANGLADESH

Coronavirus suspected and infected people faced social exclusion worldwide, which induced the rise of social stigma among several communities (Ramaci et al. 2020). The same things happened in the communities of Bangladesh as well.

Since the first transmission of the coronavirus, an airline strike was initiated worldwide, including in Bangladesh, to restrict the entry of infected people from other countries. But the delayed decision from the concerned authorities made the situation worse in Bangladesh and many other countries (Mahmud, Islam 2020).

In early March 2020, 142 returned migrants from Italy were permitted to go to their residences and were instructed to follow the rules of self-isolation. An unavoidable 14-day quarantine was not secured under governmental supervision (Hasan 2020). This incident has been considered the primary cause of the entry of the coronavirus pandemic and its associated social stigma in Bangladesh. Since then, the number of COVID-19 patients has increased at an alarming rate.

This stigma culture is manifested not only through hatred and discrimination but also through heated protests against the returned migrants. The same things happened in Diabari nature park of Dhaka city's Uttara Model Town when a plan to set up a quarantine center there was canceled after facing protests from the local people (Kamal 2020). It is also noteworthy that the *Daily Star* reported that the locals protested the government's decision to bury the dead bodies of COVID-19 patients at Khilgaon-Taltola graveyard in Dhaka city (Nasereen, Caesar 2020).

These returned migrants and the doctors working for COVID-19 patients also received threats from residents in several places in Bangladesh to leave the house willingly; otherwise, they would do it by force (Kamal 2020). This kind of stigma broke all kinds of social relations and produced unmeasurable frustration among the returned migrants.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social stigma refers to identifying a negative characteristic in an individual or group of individuals and behaving toward them as not worthy of respect or inferior to others regarding social status (Gilmore, Somerville 1994: 1341). Link and Phelan (2001) have discussed social stigma through a conceptual framework. I have used this model to explain the findings of this research. Based on this model and this study, it can be said that stigma is a process during which five correlated elements converge. These five components include:

- "Labeling" – a person is identified by specific status or characteristics and then labeled differently than the rest of the society members.
- "Stereotyping" – linking labeled persons to different characteristics or attributes that form negative stereotypes.

- • "Separation" – labeled individuals are forcefully separated from the mainstream population. Once the separation is achieved, the labeled individuals can be attributed with all the negative characteristics to devalue them.
- • "Status loss" – labeled persons experience underestimation that results in unequal treatments. This unequal treatment results in the loss of previous social status and discrimination.
- • "Discrimination" – the systematic exclusion of labeled individuals from every aspect of social life.

After careful explanations of this conceptual framework, it seems more relevant in developing countries like Bangladesh. This model is more interpretative and will help to explain the experiences of returned migrants during the pandemic upon their arrival in their communities of origin.

COVID-19 AND SOCIAL STIGMA: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

COVID-19 and its impact on migrants is a discussed topic in today's migration literature. Despite the growing body of literature on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on migrant workers, the research on COVID-19 and the stigmatization of returned migrants seems the least explored area in today's migration literature.

In the following section of the study, I will conduct an extensive review of the existing migration literature related to this research study.

Bhattacharya et al. (2020) have conducted intensive work to explore the untold side of COVID-19 and its consequences in India. Their study identified that the outbreaks of the COVID-19 pandemic had created social discrimination against suspected coronavirus carriers. Moreover, these findings show that migrants also experience oppression from the members of their society out of fear of contracting COVID-19.

The same kind of intensive research work has been done to assess the impact of social stigma on the community in Bangladesh (Mahmud, Islam 2020). This research revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic facilitated the rise of social stigma among the people in the Bangladesh community.

These studies mentioned above, however, mainly highlighted the negative impact of social stigma on community people of India and Bangladesh. Returned migrants and their post-return experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic were not the primary subject matter of these studies.

On the other hand, extensive research work has been conducted by Kindzeka (2020) in Cameroon to find out the impacts of COVID-19 on the community people. This study revealed that COVID-19 helps to spread anti-foreigner and anti-diaspora sentiment among the community people of Cameroon. York (2020) also points to similar results, highlighting that the novel coronavirus outbreak increased stigmatization and discrimination in most African countries. The same kind of result is also

found in Europe. Intensive research has been done by Bauomy (2020) to understand the impact of COVID-19 on migrant populations. Bauomy's research revealed that the Corona pandemic triggered extensive harassment and discrimination toward Chinese and Asian origin migrants in Europe and worldwide.

Although the three studies mentioned above discuss the Corona pandemic and its negative impacts among migrant people worldwide, these studies have been conducted only for the overall assessment of COVID-19 and its impact on the migrant people. Neither returned migrants (mainly in developing countries) and the rising social stigma associated with the coronavirus pandemic, nor the post-return experiences of returned migrants mainly from Italy were the primary subject matter of these studies. I try to fill this research gap in the existing literature by exploring the post-return experiences of Bangladeshi migrants who returned from Italy due to COVID-19.

Though there are several studies (Karim, Talukder 2020; Mannan, Farhana 2020) recognizing COVID-19 and its impact on migrant workers in Bangladesh, no studies were conducted analyzing social stigma associated with COVID-19 and its impact on the returned migrants from Italy. As Italy was the first country in the world after China to be heavily affected by COVID-19, many Bangladeshi migrants returned from Italy during the pandemic and faced discrimination. So, it is crucial to determine the social challenges faced by the Bangladeshi returned migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will facilitate understanding the actual scenario of returned migrants in the source countries. It will also examine and re-evaluate the existing support programs of concerned authorities toward the returned migrants.

METHODOLOGY

I conducted this empirical study primarily based on qualitative research methods (in-depth interviews) among twenty returned migrants from Italy due to COVID-19. To explore the post-return experiences of returnees, I used qualitative research methods. As little research has been conducted on this topic, qualitative research is best suited to understand this concept (Creswell 2003). I conducted the fieldwork in the Comilla district of the Chittagong division of Bangladesh in October 2020. This district was selected purposively because, in the literature, it is found that this district is the most significant regular migrant producing region from Bangladesh to Italy (Rahman, Kabir 2012: 259). For the in-depth interviews, samples were chosen through the snowball sampling method considering the availability of the respondents and their information. For the convenience of the respondents, interviews were conducted at the migrants' homes or places of their choosing. All of the interviews were conducted in the Bengali language, taking approximately one and a half hours each. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Moreover, I used the thematic analysis method to analyze the collected data. All of the respondents gave their informed consent before engaging in the interview. The research participants were aware of their freedom to withhold any information they did not want to disclose. Standard privacy measures have been taken regarding all the recorded interviews and written information. Pseudonyms have been used to replace their original names while describing the findings of the study.

THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research reveals respondents had lived in Italy for an extended time (10–12 years) and returned to their countries of origin during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many migrants decided to return because of their worsening working conditions in the destination country. The respondents of the study were relatively middle-aged, between 35–45 years. Only a small portion of the respondents was above the age of 55 years. Most of them were educated: nine-tenths of them completed their higher secondary education, and nearly one-third of them completed their graduation and post-graduation. Moreover, many respondents were skilled (nearly half of the respondents were restaurant and shop owners; one-fourth of them were professionals). Almost all of the respondents of this study were married. The research also shows that a major portion of the migrants had four to five dependent members.

In the following section, I describe the qualitative findings of this research and analyze the individual experiences of social harassment and discrimination related to the Corona pandemic. In this section, the data found in my study has been compared with global migration literature.

The Many Faces of Challenges During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This study reveals that the respondents faced several kinds of social challenges after their return. Among the challenges, the following are the most stated ones.

Labeling

According to Link and Phelan (2001), the primary step in the process of social harassment and stigmatization is the labeling in which people are recognized and entitled as COVID-19 bearers. From the discussion with the respondents, it has been found that they were labeled as potential COVID-19 virus carriers by the community people and their neighbors.

One participant explained: "Some local residents told me that I was a suspected COVID-19 positive, and I came to Bangladesh to spread the virus. Still, we are treated

differently because most of the people of the society think that we are carrying the COVID-19 virus."

These findings also show that returned migrants in Bangladesh were labeled and treated by their migratory status. Many migrants said they often felt stigmatized because they were from Italy, a country severely impacted by COVID-19. Some migrants explained that this type of identification was used not only by society members but also by government officials, mainly police. One returned migrant stated:

> Government officers treat migrants from COVID-19 infected countries, mainly Italy, differently because of their migratory status. Their ways of behaving vary depending on which background (countries) you are from. If they recognize you are from a Middle Eastern country, they treat you as natural. But, if they know you are from Italy, they will deal with you harshly.

When comparing this with global migration literature, we find similar cases. For example, an empirical study conducted in the Chinese context revealed that migrants are treated differently because of their migratory status (Li et al. 2007). The same kinds of scenarios were also found in India and Cameroon (Jha 2020; Kindzeka 2020). This research reveals that returned migrants from the countries heavily hit by COVID-19 have faced severe social discrimination.

Stereotyping

Social stigmatization occurs when people connect labeled persons to objectionable characteristics or harmful stereotypes (Link, Phelan 2001). Many participants explained that neighbors and influential local people had a role in consolidating negative stereotyping against the returned migrants. Local police marked their residence with red flags. During our interviews, some migrants explained that local people often distrusted them just because of their migratory status. One participant stated:

> Once my residence was marked with red flags, local people began to see myself and my family differently. Though I am completely fine, I could not understand why community people were scared of my presence. I explained to them, but they did not believe me because they believed in the stereotype idea that I was COVID-19 positive.

Mainly the media created the common negative stereotyping images of returned migrants during the pandemic. These findings also show that media and social networking sites (Facebook) were the tools of racist sentiment and discriminatory behaviors toward the migrants in Bangladesh, mainly returned migrants from Italy. Notably, using social networking sites, local representatives and politicians vehemently accused returned migrants of spreading COVID-19 in Bangladesh, which also

played a crucial role in raising anti-migrant sentiment among the mass people of Bangladesh. Nicholas, a 42-year-old male migrant said: "When COVID-19 suspected cases continued to rise in Bangladesh, some local politicians and young people were rallying to provoke sentiment against returned migrants. They were also involved in anti-migrant campaigning by using social networking sites."

This finding of this study is also similar to those of Bhattacharya et al. (2020), which revealed that in India, social media was flooded with provocative and communalistic sentiments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such kinds of incidents were also identified in Italy, France and the United States (Ullah et al. 2020; Villa et al. 2020).

Separation

According to Link and Phelan (2001), "separation" is a process of linking labeled persons into different categories and separating "us" from "them." In this research, almost all of the respondents expressed that they experienced social exclusion and separation from their community members and neighbors by any means. Many returned migrants indicated that their neighbors looked at them with an unkind expression in their eyes. A male migrant explained: "The separation can be realized from the expression of their (community people/neighbors) eyes. Being a returned migrant, wherever we go, people always look at us differently with a negative expression in their eyes. I was very heartbroken by that experience."

Some participants also experienced this kind of different expression among their relatives. Respondents also stated that relatives and family members spoke to them in an unfriendly manner after their return. Besides, a few of the respondents explained that their family denied them after their arrival. Edwards, a 50-year-old male migrant, stated: "When I came to Bangladesh, my family members did not accept me easily. Rather, they felt threatened by my unexpected return. My wife and my younger daughter separated all of my belongings because of their suspicion. So, I was forced to stay in a separate room in my own home like a stranger."

Similar observations were found at the time of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. When the survivors returned to their communities of origin, they faced exclusion and separation from their relatives and community people (Villa et al. 2020).

Almost all returned migrants I interviewed said that as a returned migrants, they were separated by the neighbors and community members. When migrants sought help or services, they realized that the treatment they received from their society and concerned administration was different from the general people. Similar things happened in situations of medical care and local transport like buses.

Status loss

Several returned migrants started losing their social status due to the continuous stereotyping and separation by the local people for fear of COVID-19. Almost all participants of this study reported that the present living condition was often below their expectations and needs. Many respondents said that after their return, they did not find the same respective position within their family and society they once had when they left.

One male respondent stated: "These are the same ones who used to treat me comfortably before the experience of COVID-19. But, when I came to Bangladesh in late February 2020 in the earlier moment of the Covid-19 pandemic, I did not find the same respect in society."

Roberts, a 43-year-old male migrant, also explained: "Before migration, I was a reputed person in my society. I was actively involved in all kinds of social works and programs. But, when I came to Bangladesh during the COVID-19 situation, people of the society did not invite me as they used to before migration."

Similar incidents were also identified in countries like Italy, France, and the United States. This research revealed that some private shops and restaurants excluded all clients who were migrants from China or other Asian countries. Also, people refused to be served by Asian-origin migrants in restaurants (Villa et al. 2020).

Discrimination

This research particularly revealed that almost all study participants said they faced social discrimination after returning from Italy. When the actual number of infections continued to rise, the possibility for social discrimination increased rapidly. Since people use traits (e.g., migrant identity) other than symptoms to determine who might be infected, migrants faced a very vulnerable situation after their return.

One respondent explained: "The sad reality of being a migrant is that you must do the most dangerous work and in exchange for the poorest return from society. Now, everyone believes this is the only reality for every migrant. However, we can still manage our daily food to eat and live. Since survival comes first."

Kindzeka (2020) also revealed a similar result in Bihar, India, stating that returned migrants from the countries heavily affected by COVID-19 faced fears and discrimination in their home communities. Research conducted in Europe and Africa (Bauomy 2020; Jha 2020) also revealed similar findings.

Most of the respondents of this study harshly blamed the government agencies for their inadequate response and discriminatory behavior toward returned migrants. Sometimes, the policeman inappropriately dealt with them and resulted in the perception of discrimination among the participants of this research.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, returned migrants experienced a greater negative impact in home countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following lockdown. Social stigma against returned migrants was common in all spheres of society. The most common components of stigma experienced by migrant people were separation, status loss, and discrimination. The complicated factors of social stigma toward migrants during this pandemic were fear of coronavirus infection, antagonistic media reports, and anti-migrant sentiment in social networking sites like Facebook.

Moreover, this study also shows that post-return social challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic increased the vulnerabilities of the returned migrants. The reduction of family care and support for the returned migrants and indirect family pressure were also identified as significant social challenges that returned migrants encountered. The findings of this study also reveal that most of the returnees were worried about their future as they had to go through unbearable social hardship in their home countries.

After returning from Italy, most returned migrants faced significant difficulties living in their community of origin partly because of continuous threats and verbal harassment from their neighbors. Returned migrants from the countries heavily affected by COVID-19 faced severe social harassment and discrimination. They did not receive any mental and moral support from their relatives, neighbors, or even family members. Their relatives and even family members also rejected them. These returned migrants also received threats and ultimatums from the owners of their houses to leave their properties for fear of coronavirus infection. Besides, they also received unfair treatment in various private and public services, even medical care situations. They did not find back their respective positions within their family and society they once left. The respondents expressed that they were depressed about their own living situation after return and might also consider risky options to migrate abroad to avoid further mistreatment.

REFERENCES

Anthias, Floya, Lazaridis, Gabriella (eds.) (2000). *Gender and Migration in Southern Europe*. New York: Berg.

Aragona, Massimiliano, Barbato, Angelo, Cavani, Andrea, Costanzo, Gianfranco, Mirisola, Concetta (2020). Negative Impacts of Covid-19 Lockdown on Mental Health Service Access and Follow-up Adherence for Immigrants and Individuals in Socio-Economic Difficulties. *Public Health* 186, 52–56, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2020.06.055.

Bauomy, Jasmin (2020). Covid-19 and Xenophobia: Why Outbreaks are Often Accompanied by Racism. *Euronews* (6 Mar. 2020).

Bhattacharya, Prama, Banerjee, Debanjan, Rao, Sathyanarayana (2020). The "Untold" Side of Covid-19: Social Stigma and Its Consequences in India. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* 42/4, 382–386, https://doi.org/10.1177/0253717620935578.

Bonifazi, Corrado, Okolski, Marek, Schoorl, Jeannette, Simon, Patrick (eds.) (2008). *International Migration in Europe*: *New Trends and New Methods of Analysis*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, https://pure.knaw.nl/portal/en/publications/bbda50aa-3cc3-45fd-b3a3-b6b7254ead8b.

Creswell, John W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Das, Manomita (2020). Social Construction of Stigma and Its Implications – Observations from Covid-19. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3599764.

Della Puppa, Francesco, King, Russell (2018). The New 'Twice Migrants': Motivations, Experiences and Disillusionments of Italian-Bangladeshis Relocating to London. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2018.1438251.

Gilmore, Norbert, Somerville, A. Margaret (1994). Stigmatization, Scapegoating and Discrimination in Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Overcoming 'Them' and 'Us'. *Social Science & Medicine* 39/9, 1339–1358, https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(94)90365-4.

Hasan, Rashidul (2020). *The Daily Star. Shambolic: 142 Italy Returnees Allowed To Go Home After Day-Long Mismanagement*, https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/shambolic-1880866 (15 Mar. 2020).

Jha, Sujeet (2020). Covid-19: Migrants Kill Resident in Bihar Village for Informing Officials about their Arrival. *India Today* (31 Mar. 2020).

Kamal, Raihana Sayeeda (2020). Fear, Hatred and Stigmatization Grip Bangladesh Amid Covid-19 Outbreak. *The Business Standard*, https://tbsnews.net/thoughts/fear-hatred-and-stigmatization-grip-bangladesh-amid-covid-19-outbreak-61129 (1 Apr. 2020).

Karim, M. Rezaul, Islam, M. Tarikul (2020). Covid-19 and the Vulnerability of Overseas Bangladeshi. *The Khabarhub*, https://english.khabarhub.com/. (4 May 2020).

Karim, M. Rezaul, Islam, M. Tarikul, Talukder, Bymokesh (2020). Covid-19's Impacts on Migrant Workers from Bangladesh: In Search of Policy Intervention. *World Development* 136, 105–123, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105123.

Kindzeka, Moki Edwin (2020). Covid-19 Spread Provokes Anti-Foreigner, Anti-Diaspora Sentiment in Cameroon. *Voice of America News* (23 Mar. 2020).

King, Russell (1986). *Return Migration and Regional Economic Problems*. London: Croom Helm.

King, Russell (ed.) (2001). *Mediterranean Passage: Migration and New Cultural Encounters in Southern Europe*. London: Liverpool University Press.

King, Russell, Lazaridis, Gabriella, Tsardanidis, Charalambos (eds.) (2000). *Eldorado or Fortress? Migration in Southern Europe*. New York: Macmillan Press Ltd.

Li, Xiaoming, Zhang, Liying, Fang, Xiaoyi, Xiong, Qing, Chen, Xinguang, Lin, Danhua, Mathur, Ambika, Stanton, Bonita (2007). Stigmatization Experienced by Rural-to-Urban Migrants Workers in China: Findings from a Qualitative Study. *World Health & Population* 9/4.

Link, Bruce G., Phelan, Jo C. (2001). Conceptualizing Stigma. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27, 363–368, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.27.1.363.

Mahmud, Ashek, Islam, M. Rezaul (2020). Social Stigma As a Barrier to Covid-19 Responses to Community Well-being in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Community Well-being*, https://doi.org/10.1007/s42413-020-00071-w.

Mannan, Kazi Abdul, Farhana, Khandaker Mursheda (2020). The Covid-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Reality of Quarantine, Isolation and Social Distancing for the Returnee Migrants in Bangladesh. MPRA (Munich Personal RePec Archive) paper no. 101348, https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/101348/.

Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) (2019). *Annual Report 2018–2019*, www.probashi.gov.bd (5 May 2020).

Nasereen, Zobaida, Caesar, Gopa Biswas (2020). Corona-Shaming *Exposes the Fault Lines of Our Society. The Daily Star*, https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/perspective/news/corona-shaming-exposes-the-fault-lines-our-society-1888933 (3 Apr. 2020).

Rahman, Md Mizanur, Kabir, Alamgir Mohammad (2012). Bangladeshi Migration to Italy: The Family Perspective. *Asia Europe Journal* 10/4, 1610–2932, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-012-0333-3.

Ramaci, Tiziana, Barattucci, Massimiliano, Ledda, Caterina, Rapisarda, Venerando (2020). Social Stigma During Covid-19 and Its Impact on HCWs Outcomes. *Sustainability* 12/9, 3384, https://doi.org/10.3390/su12093834.

Riyasad, Nahid (2020). Covid-19 and Mental Health around the World. *New Age*, https://www.newagebd.net/article/105119/covid-19-and-mental-health-around-the-world (26 Apr. 2020).

Ullah, AKM Ahsan, Nawaz, Faraha, Chattoraj, Diotima (2020). *Locked Up Under Lockdown: The Covid-19 Pandemic and the Migrant Population*, https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3631707.

USAID (2020). Situational Assessment of Labor Migrants in Asia: Needs and Knowledge During Covid-19. *Series Paper 2: Bangladesh*.

Villa, Simone, Jaramillo, Ernesto, Mangioni, Davide, Bandera, Alessandra, Gori, Andrea, Raviglioni, Mario Carlo (2020). *Stigma at the Time of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Clinical Microbiology and Infection*, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2020.08.001.

York, Geoffrey (2020). Coronavirus Triggers Xenophobia in Some African Countries. *The Globe and Mail* (19 Mar. 2020).

POVZETEK

DRUŽBENA STIGMA IN COVID-19: IZKUŠNJE BANGLADEŠKIH POVRATNIKOV IZ ITALIJE
Mohammad Riduan PARVEZ

Izbruh pandemije koronavirusa je po vsem svetu povečal socialno diskriminacijo migrantov. Medtem ko je njihova stigmatizacija zaradi Covida-19 v državah gostiteljicah pritegnila precejšnjo pozornost medijev in akademske sfere, se skoraj nihče ni ukvarjal s socialno stigmo, s katero se soočajo migranti povratniki v deželah v razvoju, kot je na primer Bangladeš. Študija analizira izkušnje bangladeških migrantov povratnikov iz Italije med pandemijo in njihove izkušnje z diskriminacijo in družbenim nadlegovanjem. Z uporabo kvalitativne metode članek zajame družbene izzive udeležencev po povratku, tehnika vzorčenja snežne kepe je namenjena migrantom povratnikom. Avtor se je poglobljeno pogovarjal z dvajsetimi bangladeškimi migranti povratniki iz Italije, ki živijo v četrti Comilla v mestu Chittagong, ki je v Bangladešu največje območje izseljevanja.

Študija se opira na konceptualni okvir družbene stigme, ki sta ga razvila Link in Phelan (2001). Njeni zaključki razkrivajo, da so se migranti povratniki po vrnitvi soočali s številnimi družbenimi izzivi, kot so etiketiranje, stereotipizacija, ločevanje, izguba statusa in diskriminacija. Izkazalo se je, da migranti povratniki niso bili deležni skoraj nikakršne moralne ali psihološke podpore s strani svojih družin in družbe. Iz kvalitativnih ugotovitev je razvidno, da migranti povratniki, ki se vračajo zaradi izrednih razmer, poročajo o napačnem razumevanju in sumničenju s strani družinskih članov in sorodnikov. Poročajo tudi o družbenem nadlegovanju in diskriminaciji s strani lokalne skupnosti, kar vse je po povratku pomemben družbeni izziv. Migranti povratniki so bili zaradi splošnega prepričanja, da utegnejo biti prenašalci virusa, diskriminirani na vseh življenjskih področjih. Članek prispeva k boljšemu razumevanju socialnega nadlegovanja in stigmatizacije kot dodatnih težav migrantov povratnikov v deželi, ki jo je pandemija že sicer močno prizadela. Obenem kot zelo pomembno poudarja obravnavo naraščajoče družbene stigme in diskriminacije zaradi Covida-19.