

Seasonal Migration in Bangladesh

Faculty Member: [Mushfiq Mobarak](#)

Proposal Description:

In Bangladesh, 29% of the population lives below the poverty line, and in the Rangpur division in the northwest of the country, the incidence of poverty is even higher and chronic food shortages and hunger remain enduring phenomena of rural life. About 15.4 million people – roughly 11 percent of the total population in Bangladesh – live in the division of Rangpur. Of these, 13.6 million live in rural areas, where each year during the pre-harvest season of aman rice there is a fall in local labor demand and wages, and landless agricultural households regularly skip meals and go hungry. At the same time, low-skill temporary labor opportunities are available elsewhere in the country, and seasonal migration for these jobs is commonly used as a coping strategy among the rural poor in Bangladesh.

In past work, Professor Mobarak has shown that small cash grants or loans of just \$11.50, enough to pay for a migrant's travel costs, encourage seasonal migration, whereby poor rural households send a member to other areas of the country for work. The first Randomized Control Trial (RCT) relating to this research was carried out in 2008-2011, and found that 57% of families who were offered cash grants for migration actually sent a migrant, compared to only 36% in the control group. This migration encouragement translated into increases in expenditures and calorie intake for incentivized households.

A series of follow-up RCTs have been implemented since 2013 to measure the viability and impacts of this intervention at scale. In the upcoming RCT round, to be implemented in 2018-19, we expect migration subsidies will be offered to around 90,000 households in Rangpur, and plan to collect data on a representative sample of 6,000 households within the RCT framework.

RA responsibilities under this project may include assistance with survey instrument design and quality, data cleaning, data analysis, and translating analysis for clear data visualization.

Requisite Skills and Qualifications:

Familiarity with STATA is preferred, but any quantitative skills, such as working with statistics, data analysis, or a Randomized Control Trial, is a plus.

Knowledge of South Asia and/or of internal migration is also a plus. Bangla/Bengali skills preferred, but not required.

Award: Liana Wang

Tobin Application Link: [Tobin Application](#)

Project Type: Tobin RA

Project Year: 2019

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