

International Conference on
Population and Development in Asia: Critical Issues for a Sustainable Future
20 – 22 March 2006, Phuket, Thailand

Abstract

**Bangladeshi Migrant Workers in Malaysia:
The View from Inside**

Md Mizanur RAHMAN

Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Brenda YEOH

Asian MetaCentre for Population and Sustainable Development Analysis, Asia Research Institute,
and Department of Geography, National University of Singapore, Singapore

In contemporary Asian labour migration system, a migrant worker is usually invited to stay and work in the labour-importing country for a definite period with a bundle of restrictions including return to home country after the end of the contract. The socio-economic situation that a migrant worker experiences during this short stay is crucial for himself and his family. By focusing on the Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, this study investigates their socio-economic experiences in relation to routes of migration, living and working environment, earnings, expenditures, channelling of remittances, medical facilities and leisure activities. Data was collected between July and August 2005 using a questionnaire having both closed and open ended questions. A total of 100 migrants were interviewed in face-to-face encounters. The findings suggest that migration venture is costly and risky; however, it should be weighed against the window of opportunity, especially in the area of social and economic positioning in source communities that migration opens up for migrants and their families back home in the long run.