

OPINION

Manpower export against the backdrop of recession

THE area of Bangladesh measures 147,000 square kilometers. It is the most densely-populated country in the world. Here 144 million people live. Some 950 people inhabit in each square kilometer, which is rare in the world. If some surplus workers, without hampering the production and service sectors, go abroad, it increases the individual income and helps the country earn much needed foreign exchange.

According to Bangladesh Economic survey 2008, the employment abroad and the remittance of the Bangladesh dwelling abroad have been contributing largely to the reduction of unemployment and the economic development of the country and the enhancement of foreign currency reserve. The professional skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manpower of the country have been engaged in different countries of the world including Middle-East. Excepting a few exceptions, the rate of manpower

We should keep in mind that our export basket is small and most of the manpower is semiskilled and unskilled. If we can export more skilled manpower, the country could earn more from workers' remittances.

Bangladesh needs to build up a large foreign exchange reserves as it largely depends on imports, writes M Azizur Rahman

export of the country is increasing every year. Nearly 5.69 million Bangladeshis went abroad with jobs from the year 1976 to 2008. Breaking all the past record 833,000 Bangladeshi citizens went abroad only in 2007. It is 118.24% more than those of previous years until 2006. During the first 10 month of the financial year 2008, more than 792,000 people went abroad, which is 88.25% more than those of previous financial year. After long 10 years of stoppage of recruitment Malaysia again began to recruit Bangladeshi workers from October, 2006. Similarly after long 12 years

stoppage of recruitment, the Bangladeshi workers again began to go to Oman from November, 2007. The new labour markets for the Bangladeshi workers have been opened in Canada, Romania, Russia and Sudan. The female workers are also getting opportunity to go abroad.

Because of international depression the demand for our exportable goods has fallen. At the same time the export value has also dropped. We should keep in mind that our export sector is small and most of the manpower is semiskilled and unskilled labours. If we can export to some extent more skilled manpower, the coun-

try would earn more remittances. Bangladesh needs to build up a large foreign exchange reserves as it largely depends on imports. As the country's export basket is small we should concentrate on sending more skilled people abroad to fetch more foreign exchange.

The total numbers of Bangladesh emigrants are nearly 6.0 million. Half of them are residing in different Middle-East countries. Because of the depression, a few of our semi-skilled workers have already begun returning from some of the Middle-East countries and from South East Asia and Malaysia. The war stricken

Middle-East country Iraq will recruit a huge number of workers from Bangladesh for its re-structuring and re-building. Libya has already announced that it would recruit more workers from Bangladesh. A Bangladesh Bank representative thinks that world recession may not hurt us if we can earn 700 million US dollar every month from workers' remittances. We should keep in mind that our export basket is small and most of the manpower is semiskilled and unskilled labours. If we can export to some extent more skilled manpower, the country would earn more remittances. Bangladesh needs to build up a large foreign exchange reserves as it largely depends on imports. As the country's export basket is small we should concentrate on sending more skilled people abroad to fetch more foreign exchange.

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