3. MIGRATION AND BANGLADESH'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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3.1 Introduction

I have been writing and talking about the economic development of Bangladesh for the last eight years and have borrowed freely from some of my earlier work in order to arrive at a synthesis. I have broken the discussion into several topics. Section 3.2 notes the poignancy of the brain drain from Bangladesh and asks how this is to be contrasted with, say, England. Section 3.3 inquires into the general properties of economic development and argues that the mobilization of human energy is the critical factor. What sort of system will ensure this? Section 3.4 asks about the cultural features that uphold capitalist civilization and insists on the primacy of non-market features in making the market work. This is especially important for the maintenance of the rule of law and in order to keep human capital rooted. Section 3.5 asks about the positive features of Bangladesh today, in the form of Garments, Grameen and HYV (High-Yielding Variety) Agriculture. How do we forecast the future? What are the general features of needed reform? Section 3.6 inquires into the effects of migration in India and Pakistan and the lessons Bangladesh can learn. Section 3.7 concludes with reflections and suggestions for expatriate action.

3.2 Brain Drain from Bangladesh

Why is economic development so hesitant and so difficult? One of the primary reasons must be the widespread pessimism about achieving growth. I take it as axiomatic that economic development provides no problem if the people involved are determined to achieve it. Nonetheless a vicious circularity influences thinking on this issue. Since development is assured if everyone works for it, development is also assured if all but one work for development. In other words, in the current state of apathy there is no point in my working for Bangladesh since my efforts will be wasted; on the other hand, if everyone else is working for Bangladesh, my efforts are not needed anyway. In either case, my efforts appear pointless. There is no denying this logic. This is why we need an ideology to make people begin work regardless of the logic of self-interest and a system to keep them in groove once started.

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A careful look suggests two important differences between eighteenth century England and a modern LDC. First, the English landlord took pride in his country home. Many lived there and all felt a deep pride in the accomplishments of their own locale. The modern Bangladeshi finds the countryside a suitable place to flee from. Secondly, and sadly, migration from England (or other developed countries) was typically confined to the upper rungs of the working class or the middle class. The pathos of Bangladesh is that it seems unable to attract anyone, even the elite, at any level, to identify unequivocally with itself! If one can summarize the pathetic common failure suggested by both the above points, it lies in a general disposition to identify with the soil of "Sonar Bangla" as little as possible.

Neither migration abroad, to the Middle East and the U.S.A., nor a rush to cities such as Dhaka and Chittagong will solve, or even palliate, the deep-rooted poverty of the masses. What then is to be done? Once again, it bears repeating that unified and decisive action will succeed. Economic development is no theoretical problem, only a practical one. Historically, one of the great galvanizers of human energy has been Marxism. The more we know about the Soviet Union, the more likely it seems that the success of Soviet Industrialization was due to a will to create rather than on some well-thought-out industrialization strategy. Nor can one distance the success of the early Chinese Communists from the heroism of the Long March. Today, after "perestroika" and "glasnost" and the breakup of the Soviet Union, as well as the seeming volte-face of Chinese economic policy, it is plain to all that the roots of this historic ideology have been sapped of vitality. The great moral attraction of Socialism was its promise to the poor, the hungry and the oppressed that they too could succeed in an alien, imperialistic world. The abandonment of this dream faces Bangladesh with a stark question which is basic to the establishment of a market economy--shall we be equal in poverty or unequal in wealth?

The specific topic I am most concerned with is migration by educated, skilled, intellectuals from Bangladesh. There are two novel features about migration today. The feature common to all countries is the miracle of modern communications which permits migrants to remain "next door" at all times, even in foreign lands. The feature peculiar to a few countries like Bangladesh is the desire of the elite to leave. By focusing primarily on the brain drain, I want to reflect on the economic prospects of a society where the cream of society wish to leave. That carpenters and mechanics can be replaced is true. It may well be shown that the migration of such skilled (and unskilled) workers has only a temporary negative effect, followed by a more lasting positive effect. Yet it is only the blessing of modern technology that permits, enables and encourages the elite of a free people to continually wish that it were somewhere else.

That modern communications makes Dhaka closer to Chicago than to Dinajpur is a fact. So far we have faced up to only its individualistic implications. Think of how many Bangladeshi officials have come abroad since independence. How many of them have settled back in Bangladesh? A very misleading number. If you probe for a while you will see that they have secured the future by obtaining a green card, or better yet, a position in an international organization. Even as they serve, they make contacts. Of course, meeting people is their job. But when contacts are actively cultivated because of the rewards in the years after retirement one wonders when the country's work gets done.

Diplomats are but part of a larger society and only reflect their milieu. What can be effectively done by diplomats is equally striven for by all others who have a chance. I know of a large contract with a donor being approved, even though it was of questionable value to everyone directly uninvolved in the project, simply because the Bangladeshi supervisory officer in the States needed to make his contacts and keep them happy. When people travel to the United States as soon as a pregnancy occurs and stay till after childbirth--when people have children immediately upon hearing of a pending transfer back to Bangladesh--we are being sent clear signals of the enormous value of life in these United States.

In terms of both its scope and intensity, we are facing something new. If we look at those who came here before 1970, the pattern is clear. Whether it be F. R. Khan, or Kazi Enamul Hoque or Fazle Hossain, in each case we find the individual to have been pushed out of their home. The pattern today is startlingly different. The manager of a large multinational--affluent, respected and comfortable--suddenly packs up his bags and moves across with his family. A high-ranking officer in the Bangladesh Army, established and well-regarded, quietly uses his wife's connections to prepare for a sudden jump across the oceans. No doubt others know of many such cases. What has happened? Rather than go through a multiplicity of cases, let me summarize the problem with a few catchy phrases, whose details are still being collected and which I hope to elaborate upon later.

"Our elders failed us"--by failing to give us a vision of what life in Bangladesh one could aspire to.

"Our families stifle us"--for all the closeness of our family ties, we dread returning to the control of "joint" families.

"We are lousy husbands"--because Bangladeshi girls who are educated abroad show such clear preference for American husbands.

3.3 Economic Development and Mobilization of Human Resources

What is it that leads to economic growth? The traditional textbooks tell us that the factors of production are "land, labor and capital." Let each factor be analyzed. What is capital? Spades and shovels, plows and tractors, blast-furnaces, screwdrivers and so on. Is there some compact way to describe such a welter of items? The Marxists have spent much time worrying about this issue and provided us with a model answer: Capital consists of produced means of production. Every item stated above is a means to producing output. What distinguishes them from items like an acre of land or an hour of labor is that spades and shovels are produced by commercial calculation. Defining capital as "produced means of production" is marvelously comprehensive and compact. But then, can capital be a primary factor of production. If it is a produced means of production, what was it produced with? Not with capital surely, because that would be going in circles. So capital is produced with land and labor and is not a primary factor of production.

Let us focus on land next. Do we mean only acres of earth? What is the value of Siberia? Or the Sahara? Perhaps we mean something of wider import, or conveyed by the phrase--natural resources. This will allow us to include oil and coal and timber. But how do we find a general definition of a resource? Is oil a resource? Was it a resource for the millions who walked over the sands of Arabia for thousands of years? Is not the silicon chip the primary ingredient in the transistor--one of the primary bases of modern electronics? Did the Bedouins ever glimpse such potentialities as they traipsed back and forth over the sands for centuries? Whatever a resource is, it cannot be defined independently of the knowledge of the people who will use it. So the real resource worth focusing on is the mind of man.

What remains of the three primary factors of production? Capital is not primary, as it is produced by land and labor; land is not primary because the value of it as a resource is dependent upon human intelligence. So it is ultimately the human being who is the primary economic resource. Economic development, when viewed over the long run, is nothing more than human development. An old English saying claimed "God sends a pair of hands with every mouth,"--which may be properly amended as--"With every mouth God sends a pair of hands and some brains. Whose fault is it if those hands remain idle and the brains dull?"

To claim that economic development is but one aspect of human development may appear to be a sophisticated way of evading the question. But it does serve to focus upon the fundamental importance of philosophy for economics. How can one discuss what contributes to human development without a notion of what constitutes human nature and how it is to be developed? This is why economic growth cannot be left to the care of the economist alone. History, politics, culture

and religion must be merged in any view of economic growth. If I have to seek a fundamental disagreement with those who espoused socialism as the path for Bangladeshi economic development, it will be in their failure to read the strength of the nuclear family in our culture. Even before Bangladesh became independent I would meet intellectuals who said "I was once a dedicated socialist--but it all changed when I had a family." This pattern has repeated itself many times over and one has no trouble finding firebrands well-ensconced in international posts. Our elders failed to understand this fundamental, and seemingly permanent, feature of our social being and built their hopes depending upon a species of dedication that never materialized.

Such a misreading of our society was compounded by the superficial grounds for accepting socialism adopted by the most vigorous section of Bangladeshi intelligentsia--the students. Many years ago I came upon a group of my M.A. students in Economics arguing vigorously about the merits of Chinese versus Russian Communism on the open space outside the Dhaka University Library. I asked them what differentiated the two economic systems and what made one more valuable for Bangladesh. After an embarrassed silence I was told "We choose on the basis of international politics, not on the basis of economics." Not the best basis for a poor country like Bangladesh!

3.4 Choice of an Economic System for Bangladesh

The choice of an economic system is the fundamental choice facing Bangladesh today. Historically, this choice has been a choice between socialism and capitalism. Recent world events have taught us a great deal about what each choice entails and it seems worthwhile to rehearse the conditions under which each system can be expected to succeed. My interest now lies primarily in the economic aspects of each system.

At a conceptual level, there is no difficulty in stating that, if only the people of Bangladesh are willing to work for it, Bangladesh can be a much richer and more prosperous country within a decade. Just how much richer, it is hard to say because of the considerable uncertainty surrounding our statistics, but let us remember that in the early 1960s people were making negative comments about Korea's economic prospects in much the same vein as one hears about Bangladesh today.

The really interesting question is, how are the people to be so mobilized for action? The direct answer is Socialism. Indeed, for many years this was the dominant answer in Bangladesh. Recent world events have forced us to re-evaluate this strategy. No doubt many good things have been achieved in socialist countries but this success appears to be limited to the period when a

dedicated and selfless cadre could be found. These cadres grew under oppression and were forged under war--conditions not easily repeatable. How can one develop and maintain a selfless and dedicated cadre of socialist workers?

There is also a deep theoretical issue with the fundamentals of the Soviet economic model. It has been assumed all along that the transfer of resources from agriculture to industry--the "surplus"--has been at the heart of Soviet industrialization between 1928-1938. Of course there was much bitterness and cruelty and hardship involved in the process of collectivization but this was a necessary price. "One generation must suffer." It is rather astonishing to find that there is no sound empirical evidence to back up this version of the Soviet model. The farmers and peasants who held the agricultural "surplus" in 1928 were not happy at the prospect of having to give it up to the State--so they destroyed as much as they could. If one counts this as a necessary cost involved in applying the Soviet model, as one should, then recent estimates suggest that resources actually flowed from industry to agriculture during the period of industrialization. The "Soviet model" is a myth.

One has to ask "How did the Soviets develop?" There appear to be no convincing answers to this question so the following is only a conjecture based on the following, perhaps apocryphal, incident. Around 1924 a young Soviet citizen visited Paris and was treated with great charm and hospitality. Despite seeing the lights of Paris the young man wanted to return to Moscow. The astonished French asked why. "Everything you do is very nice but it is the same thing over and over" they were told. "In the Soviet Union we are trying to create a new man." This sense of mission is impossible for us to grasp today but it so clearly motivated millions to make continuous exertions and, in my opinion, it is the prime reason why Socialism has had the success it has had. In short, there is no reason why Socialism would not work in Bangladesh if a dedicated cadre could be found.

If Bangladesh cannot grow by using selfless dedication it has to grow by using dedicated self-interest. What are some specific features that can be suggested as ways of implementing an efficient and equitable market system in Bangladesh? First, we must have an honest bureaucracy. A sine qua non for having an honest bureaucracy is the payment of a decent salary. This will not solve the problem by itself, but without this, nothing will get solved.

Secondly, while we must hold firm to the thought that capitalism as a System can only work by rewarding success and respecting private property, it is still within our abilities to suggest rules of property and criteria of success that are most conformable to equity. One important, and largely unrecognized, mechanism for stabilizing labor relations, providing workers incentives and increasing our perception of justice is that of profit-sharing.

Thirdly, there should be more effective decentralization. It is said that our electricity transmission system suffers a loss of 40 percent. How can this be stopped? One possible solution, for the rural areas, is to place a central meter for each village and to make the Union chairman responsible for collecting the total charges for each village. It is impossible for a central authority to police theft of electricity from dispersed village lines but it is a relatively straightforward matter for a Union chairman to do so. In general, our goal should be to make each 'zila' as financially dependent on its own resources as far as possible.

Finally, we have to be careful about accepting capital-intensive projects simply because foreign consultants have approved them, e.g., the initial acceptance of a mammoth Flood Action Plan took place without adequate public debate and without the environmental, economic and social aspects of this gigantic undertaking having been examined?

3.5 The Role of Culture on Economics

Any discussion of the role of culture on economics cannot proceed without some idea of what an economy should be. Until recently, the issue was clouded over by the prospect of Communism. The current danger is not in the specter of Communism but rather that an unqualified and naive faith in Capitalism will dominate. A smoothly successful capitalist economy requires five major prerequisites: (1) the rule of law and respect for property, (2) a work ethic, (3) justified consumption, (4) the cultivation of scientific knowledge, and (5) a support framework to sustain people through the ups and downs of everyday life. Let me comment briefly on each. It is very hard to figure out our cultural attitude to Science because there is so little "attitude" to base an opinion upon.

It is not enough to simply uphold the law. If we wish to recharge our economy, we must actively admire and applaud those who serve the public by the honest, successful accumulation of wealth. It must be said that Bangladeshi society currently fails to meet this test. Envy is an institutionalized feature of our social mores and it is directed increasingly to those who are successful.

I remember a chef in Dhaka who had perfected the art of making strawberry jam, french mustard and a variety of foreign foods. He used local ingredients as the base and added only a touch of imported ingredients to get the appropriate flavor and taste. These he obtained from contacts with pilots and stewards on several airlines. The imitation products were so good that he would pass them under foreign labels to foreigners! This man, known popularly as "Dada," was asked by local

Bangladeshi investors to open a food company under his own label. He refused. Dada was so jealous of his own cleverness that he refused to make money from it for fear that others would learn the secrets of his art! This envy and insecurity ran so deep that he taught his trade to his children only just before dying!

When we turn to Bangladeshi society we find the common people imbued with a tremendous desire to work. Unfortunately, it appears to be limited to the common people. The elites--especially the educated classes--are filled with a variety of complexes the most depressing of which is their aversion to manual labor and an insistence on its own dignity. We have yet to stop being "bhadra-lok" (gentleman).

The other face of this distorted attitude to life and work lies in an excessive fear of consuming the good things of life. In America people have so much faith in the future that they think nothing of spending a lifetime's income today; in Bangladesh they fear so much for the future that the constant attempt is to make a lifetime's income today, by any means available.

Our general moral attitude has been well characterized as a "familial morality." We draw a ring around a select group of people and apply all the rules of morality conscientiously to this group. The rest of the world, unfortunately, is an instrument to be used for the welfare of this well-defined group. But modern society is based on the application of interpersonal norms to a widely defined group--how can we possibly create such a modern society while we cling to our familial norms? The other unfortunate aspect of our culture is excessive reliance on the Government. People have to achieve the conviction that it is they who create economic growth--whatever the government seems to give comes out of someone else's pocket.

I have not attempted to assign an order of importance to each of the aspects in our cultural heritage. The task may be attempted, but it really has little point. The basic problem is one of attitude. If we wish to shed our faults, we only have to acquire the determination to do so. With a new way of looking upon life, it will be as easy to correct one fault as to correct five.

3.6 Impact of Migration on the Countries of Indian Subcontinent

It is necessary for perspective to look at the impact of migration on India and Pakistan. There exists a long tradition of migration from the Indian subcontinent and between 1846 and 1932 it is estimated that as many as 27 million left during this period. The facts of migration to the United States are as shown in Table 1. It is likely that the steady rise of those with "no occupation" reflects

the family members who have come to join the original migrant. It should be noted that while about 11 percent of all Indian migrants qualify as being part of the "brain drain" for the period 1984-86, the proportion coming to America are always over 60 percent of all Indian migrants, and the highly educated even exceeded 80 percent in the early seventies. To Deepak Nayyars' surprise, the Indian government appears quite unconcerned.

Table 1
Immigration From India to North America by
Major Occupation Group: 1971-1990
United States

	number of persons (percentages)			
Occupation Group	1971-5	1976-9	1982-5	1986-90
Professional and Technical	31,623 (43.4)	20,586 (26.9)	15,461 (15.7)	19,160 (13.5)
Executive, Administrative and Managerial	1,503 (2.1)	3,574 (4.7)	5,059 (5.2)	8,292 (5.8)
Total above with occupation	37,772 (51.8)	31,966 (41.8)	31,776 (32.4)	48,105 (33.8)
No occupation or occupation not reported	35,140 (48.2)	44,595 (58.2)	66,403 (67.6)	94,035 (66.2)
Total Immigration	72,912 (100.0)	76,561 (100.0	98,179 (100.0)	142,140 (100.0)

Source: Nayyar, p. 19.

The numbers who migrated formed less than 1 percent of all educated graduates and must be considered as numerically negligible. Even the substantial numbers of unskilled and semiskilled workers who left for the Middle East leave no trace of their absence. It is doubtful if an increase in capital intensity in Indian production was induced because the great majority of migrants were in the service sector, where it is very hard to change factor intensities; moreover, the impact of return migrants from the Middle East, workers whose contracts had expired, has to be taken account of.

Insofar as migration from India has had an effect, it can only be on the Balance of Payments, where remittances and capital flows were substantial. The large capital flows do not necessarily bode well since they are dependent upon interest-rate differentials and hence are very volatile. The

flow of remittances are not quite as volatile but have to be interpreted with care because they move from a period of fixed exchange rates to one of flexible exchange rates.

Table 2
Estimated Composition of Remittances to India by Origin
(in Rs million)

Year	North America	Western Europe	Britain and Australia	Middle East oil exporting countries	Other develop-ing countries	Total Remitt-ances
1970-1	284	114	223	37	147	805
1980-1	2,100	1,684	2,548	12,194	2,771	21,297
1990-1	8,645	4,633	4,844	14,499	3,639	36,260

Source: Nayyar, p. 44.

Pakistan provides a considerable contrast to India. The numbers who have left are relatively large and the volume of remittances of definite importance. As the table shows, in some cases, such as computer programming, the numbers abroad were almost double those employed domestically! (p. 170)

Table 3
Profile of Migrant Workers by Skills, late 1970s

Skill Category	Total Employed Domestically 1977-78	Total Employed Abroad			
		Emigration Bureau, 1977-78		PIDE/Gilani 1979	
A. Professional and Managerial Workers					
Engineers	39,470	12,600	(31.9%)	33,268	(84.3%)
Accountants	12,295	5,400	(43.9%)	6,853	(55.7%)
Managers/ Executives	155,978	3,600	(2.3%)	997	(0.6%)
Teachers	423,822	3,600	(0.8%)	4,361	(1.0%)
Nurses	4,300	9,000	(209.3%)	2,492	(58.0%)
Computer Programmers	1,208	--		2,367	(195.9%)
B. Skilled Manual Workers					
Masons	114,691	120,600	(105.2%)	75,757	(66.1%)
Carpenters	142,271	135,000	(94.9%)	77,626	(54.6%)
Electricians	125,728	39,600	(41.5%)	42,616	(33.1%)
Plumbers	29,058	18,000	(61.9%)	16,447	(56.6%)
Welders	36,773	27,000	(73.4%)	17,195	(46.8%)
Mechanics	241,340	61,200	(25.4%)	30,402	(12.6%)

Source: Addleton, p. 170.

The impact of such massive migration of educated personnel has not been fully evaluated but it is important to note that the fears of a shortage of skilled workers simply did not occur. Neither the large numbers going abroad in the 70's nor the substantial return migration in the 80's seemed to create more than temporary disruption. As to the volume of remittances generated by these migrants, it suffices to note that in almost every year these remittances exceeded $2 billion and were more than foreign aid. Of all Asian countries, the table below shows that Pakistan was clearly most dependent upon remittances to balance foreign accounts (Addleton, p. 117).

Table 4
Remittances as a Ratio of Key Economic Indicators in
Selected Asian Countries (Peak Years), Early 1980s

Year	GDP	Exports	Imports	Oil Imports
Pakistan (1982)	11.5%	120.5%	53.6%	180.5%
Bangladesh (1983)	5.0%	78.8%	26.8%	223.0%
Philippines (1983)	3.5%	19.1%	12.0%	69.1%
Korea (1982)	2.7%	9.3%	8.0%	32.6%
Thailand (1984)	2.9%	14.2%	10.2%	32.8%
India (1980)	2.1%	32.9%	19.6%	50.0%

Source: Addleton, p. 117.

It is no surprise that such massive movements led to social changes, such as the psychological stress dubbed the "Dubai syndrome," the independence of women during their husbands' absence and their increased seclusion upon the now-richer husbands' return. However nothing matches the political importance of the migrants. In 1977 the Peoples Political Party of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was so committed to centralized policies that one commentator made the extreme suggestion that "state ownership and management of all significant resources is now a fact and the country can expect a period of consolidation in which the changes that have been wrought are institutionalized" (Addleton, p. 206). The enormous afflux of workers, utilizing decentralized means and seeking only their self-interest, cut directly into the heart of such a strategy.

Bangladesh appears to provide a mixed case between India and Pakistan both in terms of the volume of migration and of remittances. This was already visible in the earlier table. What micro studies of Bangladesh migrants to England show is that migrants are high savers--over 90 percent of the sample studied saved 50 percent or more of their income. These savings find their way to rural areas where much construction takes place and land prices rise. The migrants show newer attitudes in desiring smaller families but reinforce traditional attitudes by spending more on Urs, Milad and such festivities. Migration is no direct boon to the poorest because none of the migrants appear to be from the landless. Those who move are more enterprising and to express this daring spirit some resources are necessary. The most significant indicator for the future of Bangladesh politics is the large number of migrants who chose the BNP over the Awami League. The quiet influence exerted by such migrants in changing the political landscape of Bangladesh has yet to be adequately charted (Islam et al., 1987).

3.7 Suggestions for Expatriate Action and Conclusions

In order to project the value of expatriate action, one needs to have some idea of the economic future of Bangladesh. Let me make a stab in the dark. First, as to population. The most recent findings suggest a growth rate of 1.8 percent, implying a sharp contraction in population growth rates. Nonetheless, let us project the population in 2020 to be 150 million. The most hopeful indicator is the high proportion--over 50 percent--of families who accept birth control once they have been provided with some initial help to take them out of abject poverty. The most relevant model for our purposes appears to be that of Julian Simon, The Economics of Population Growth. Simon has argued that moderate rates of population growth, while burdensome in the short run, can be beneficial in the long run. The most successful population control programs in Bangladesh are those which have combined a holistic approach. Instead of simply providing family planning services at low cost, the Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) provide a comprehensive program including legal aid, income generation, elementary education, cheap credit, etc. We will assume that NGO's continue to grow as in the past and extrapolate population patterns based on the success of the NGO's. What sort of lifestyle can these people aspire to?

Let us assume that about 2 million Bangladeshis will be working abroad--a very conservative estimate. During the Gulf War an American newspaper reported that Bangladeshis are most supportive of their families back home--each Bangladeshi supporting about 11 dependents. This will account for 20 million. At present the garment industry has about 3 percent of the world market, and employs about 2 million workers. On economic grounds alone there is no reason why this should not grow to 10 million. Assuming a family of four, this provides for another 40 million. We are left with 90 million Bangladeshis who have to find a livelihood in agriculture or in new industries. Even if nothing dramatic takes place in setting up new industries it is clear from the report of Lydon et al. that as long as water supplies are adequate Bangladesh can feed these 90 million. (Note that I am not assuming that Bangladesh necessarily has to grow the food within her own borders--if the money is there, the food will be found.) In short, without making any dramatic assumptions, I think it safe to say that the crisis view of Bangladesh should be a thing to be kept in the back of our minds and a more positive framework should come to the forefront.

The role of NGO's, the Grameen Bank and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) in particular, come to mind as examples of hope. Not only have such institutions exhibited dramatic success in Bangladesh, they have been widely emulated in the developing world and even in the USA. Equally heartening is the fact that such organizations belie the universality of

the desirability of migration--here is a dedicated elite striving to make Bangladesh better. The contrast between the despondency of those in power and the fighting attitude of those who work directly with the poor is stark. While doing a comparative study of poverty alleviation I explained my objectives to a district magistrate. He smiled wearily and said "No matter what you do, the poor will always be here." Then he and his hangers-on laughed about Bangladesh having been described as "hopeless" by a Western commentator. By contrast, the field officer of a government project told me forcefully on a trip to a project "If only our superiors supported us, we would have wiped out poverty in Bangladesh." Why is it that our education only serves to make us dispirited and despondent?

To migrate is good--so far. The worry I have elaborated upon earlier is fear of the wholesale evacuation by the elite. Indeed, so long as migration remains a controlled process, the experience of many groups, e.g., Dominicans, shows that there are increasing returns to migration (Diaz-Briquets and Weintraub, 1991). The more migrants, the easier it is to settle and prosper abroad. Friends and Families--the F-connection, is vital.

What can the migrants do to make their homeland happier? Perhaps the most important contribution is to pressure the political parties into making a clear statement about the value of property rights and the enforcement of contracts. In democracies like the United States or France or Germany, foreign investors (or domestic ones) do not worry about nationalization or the failure to enforce contracts in a court of law. If all the political parties (or at least the major ones) could be pressed to make a clear statement in this issue, such a public declaration would do wonders to infuse the confidence that investors currently appear to be lacking. In addition to this large but far-reaching undertaking, which will need the cooperation and goodwill of all the different expatriate and political groups, a number of other actions can also be suggested. First, they have to utilize the media to project a better image of Bangladesh. Secondly, they have to create and sustain an international investigation of the lifeline of Bangladesh--water. This particularly necessitates a cool and objective study of the Farakka barrage. Thirdly, expatriates who have the time and resources, need to study a variety of issues that bear directly on the economic future of Bangladesh. Some examples of such problems are: air pollution in Dhaka city; legal impediments to fish farms in village ponds or "pukurs"; adequate nutritional possibilities for the entire population. Let me elaborate upon the last briefly. Is it possible to provide an adequate diet by changing Bangladeshi consumption patterns? The possibility of potatoes has been broached by the Government but no studies exist of its feasibility. On a smaller scale, cashew nuts grow quite plentifully in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and would form a nutritious addition to the local diet but are allowed to rot because of a lack of harvesting and marketing facilities. Some of the above problems are programming ones--what is the "best" diet for each region--while others are those of economic policy--what price structures will

speed adaptation of the optimal diet by local producers and how fast can innovations be adopted by local farmers.

It will have been hard for the reader to miss how often I have complained about my own cohort of educated Bangladeshis. Lack of vision, dedication, drive and a readiness to depart!

3.8 Notes and References

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