



Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare & Overseas Employment
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Report

on **Labour Market**

Situation

Bahrain 2015



Labour Market
Situation | **Bahrain**
2015



Editorial Team

- 1. Mr. Jabed Ahmed** Convener
Additional Secretary
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
- 2. Mr. Muzaffar Ahmed** Member
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
- 3. Mr. Mohammad Shaheen** Member
Deputy Secretary
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
- 4. Dr. Md. Nurul Islam** Member
Director
Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
- 5. Mr. Noor Ahmed** Member
Assistant General Manager
Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd.
- 6. Rahnuma Salam Khan** Member Secretary
Deputy Chief
Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Published by

Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Published in

June 2016

Printed by

Adfair Design & Supply

Acknowledgement

This publication is based on Annual Report 2015 of Labour Wing of Bangladesh Embassy in Bahrain. Support and contribution of concerned officials are acknowledged with profound gratitude.

Prepared by

Mohammad Shaheen

Deputy Secretary

Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Contents

- 
- 1.0 Introduction **04**
 - 2.0 Country Profile **06**
 - 2.1 Basic Facts **07**
 - 3.0 Status of Bangladeshi Workers in Bahrain **08**
 - 4.0 Workers from Other Countries **10**
 - 5.0 Setup of Labour Wing at Embassy of Bangladesh in Bahrain **10**
 - 6.0 Labour Migration Diplomacy **11**
 - 7.0 Visit to workplace and accommodation of workers **13**
 - 8.0 General Amnesty for illegal workers in 2015 **14**
 - 9.0 Welfare tasks of Labour Wing **15**
 - 10.0 Consular Services **18**
 - 11.0 Remittance in Bangladesh from Bahrain **19**
 - 12.0 Market Opportunities for new trades or professions for Bangladeshi workers **20**
 - 13.0 Challenges **22**
 - 14.0 Way Forward **23**

1.0 Introduction

Migration is an integral part of the development process in Bangladesh and it is a livelihood option for its people. After independence of



Bangladesh in 1971, formal migration started for employment in 1976, when the demand of labour increased in gulf countries. During early sixties the Middle Eastern countries enriched their economy on the basis of oil exploration and started to recruit various kinds of manpower. Predominantly this region became the major destination for Bangladeshi workers along with other people of Asian countries. International migration, mainly by the form of temporary contractual labour movement, has also been considered as an integral part of globalization processes associated with increasing integration

of national economies. It has not only reduces unemployment but also facilitates the flow of foreign currency in the country through remittances. Persistently it is contributing to a large extent in escalation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Income (GNI) and per capita income as well.



Yet expatriate Bangladeshis face a range of challenges, including difficulties in financing their migration cost; in finding decent and productive work abroad; and in obtaining effective protection from human rights violations. The Government of Bangladesh has made great strides in addressing the issues of migration in development agenda, strategic papers and latest in Seventh Five Year Plan. Government steps also include the creation of a dedicated Ministry for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and adopting relevant policies and legislation. All such initiatives of government recognize migration, human resource development and overseas employment as most important elements of development. In the context of Bangladesh, overseas employment has been playing a significant role in socio-economic development as well as in poverty reduction.

This publication intends to address briefly the pertinent factors of contemporary affairs of migrant workers in Bahrain as part of series of country specific publications based on annual activities in the year 2015 under institutional and functional set up of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. This humble endeavour aims at providing a handy reading book to all stakeholders as to share the activities pertaining to country specific labour market scenario, welfare and interests of expatriates worker of Bangladesh, present status and prospect of overseas employment and migration development as a whole.

2.0 Country Profile

Bahrain is one of the major destination countries for Bangladeshi workers. The word "Bahryan" is dual of "Bahr" which literally means "Two seas". This country is generally flat and arid archipelago of 33 islands in the Persian Gulf having no land boundary with another country but comprises 161 km coastline. The largest land mass of Bahrain island is 55 km long by 18 km wide. Saudi Arabia lies to the west and is connected to Bahrain by the King Fahad Causeway while Iran is located at 200 km to the north across the Persian Gulf. The peninsula of Qatar is to the southeast across the Gulf of Bahrain. Bahrain's largest islands are Bahrain Island, Hawar, Muharraq, Umm an Nasan, Nabih Saleh and Sitrah. The population in 2014 stood at 1,343,000 of which 46% Bahraini, 45.5% Asian, 4.7% other Arabs, 1.6% African, 1% European and 1.2% are other nationals. Like other Gulf states, Bahrain has historically relied largely on oil as a primary source of income. Forecasting the reserves to run dry in future, Bahrain has diversified its economy and now the financial sector, tourism, construction and the service industry are also major contributors to the country's economy. Bahrain is a high income country and ranks "very high" on the UNDP's Human Development Index.



Financial Harbour
Bahrain

2.1 Basic Facts

Official Name	Kingdom of Bahrain
Capital	Manama (Largest city)
Independence	On 16 December 1971, (In 2002 it was declared Kingdom, before that it was an Emirate)
Currency	Bahraini Dinar (\$1= .377 BHD)
Area	Land770 km ² . (Arable Land 2.82%);Sea 7,499 km ² .
Population	1,343,000 (Bahrainis: over 654,830 & Non-nationals over 688,170)
Density	1,626.6/km ²
Labour Force	716,473 (Non Bahraini 527,749; Bahraini 188,724)
Arable Land	2.82%
Time zone	GMT+3
Climate	June- Sept Hot & Humid (36-45°C) Oct-April Mild & Cool (10-25°C)
GDP Per Capita	\$28,559
Religion	Muslims- 70.2%, Christians, Jews and others- 29.8%
Main Industry	Petroleum production & processing (30% of GDP),Manufacturing Industry (12.4% of GDP), Aluminum 2nd largest export, Fertilizer, Ship repairing
Main Ports	Mina Salman and Sitra
Governorates	Four

Map of Bahrain



3.0 Status of Bangladeshi Workers in Bahrain

3.1 Bangladeshi nationals are the second largest expatriate workforce in Bahrain, which constitute about 25% next to India, about 50%. The flow of Bangladeshi workforce in Bahrain has been rising over the years. For the past few years, Bangladesh emerged as the top manpower sending country to Bahrain overtaking India. The trend in 2016 appears same as like as 2015. The table below depicts the inflow of Bangladeshis in Bahrain over the years:

1997-2001		2002-2006		2007-2008		2009-2013		2014-2015	
1997	5,010	2002	5,421	2007	16,433	2009	28,426	2014	23,378
1998	7,014	2003	7,482	2008	13,182	2010	21,824	2015	20,720
1999	4,639	2004	9,194			2011	13,996		
2000	4,637	2005	10,716			2012	21,777		
2001	4,371	2006	16,355			2013	25,155		
Total	25,671		49,168		29,615		1,11,178		

3.2 It is noteworthy that government of Bahrain declared general amnesty for illegal expatriate workers from 1 July to 31 December 2015 and requested all embassies of labour sending countries to give more emphasis on legalizing existing illegal workers instead of bringing fresh ones. Labour Wing of Bangladesh Embassy extended utmost efforts and resulted to a figure of 24,298 illegal Bangladeshi workers regularized under fresh employer.

3.3 Categories of Bangladeshi professionals/workers

3.3.1 The biggest sector of employment for Bangladeshis is the 'construction' in Bahrain. About 70% of our workforce work in this sector who are unskilled, semi skilled and skilled.

3.3.2 Apart from construction, Bangladeshis are employed in cleaning companies, carpentry, retail shops, tailoring shops, hair dressing shops and as accountants, drivers in offices, fishermen in fishing trawlers and hotel management staff, chefs, cooks, bakers and service staff in restaurants, workers in agricultural farms and plantations. Around 10,000 Bangladeshis, both male and female, are working as domestic aides.

3.3.3 The number of white-Collar Bangladeshi employees is very limited, hardly 50, working as lawyers, teachers, engineers, financial experts, bankers, business management officials and doctors. A small number of Bangladeshis are also working in Police and Bahrain Defense Force.

3.3.4 About 100 investors are now having their own business in Bahrain and about 15000 Bangladeshis are running their own business successfully by hiring commercial license from Bahrainis. Bangladeshis own or run grocery shops/cold store, internet cafe, small restaurants, Garages, workshop, laundry, and saloons etc. centered in Manama, Muharraq, Hamad Town and East Rifa.

Contribution of Bangladeshis in their economy is always recognized by the government and the people of the Kingdom. Bangladeshi workers, in general, have a good reputation as honest, decent, hard working, committed, amiable and disciplined people.

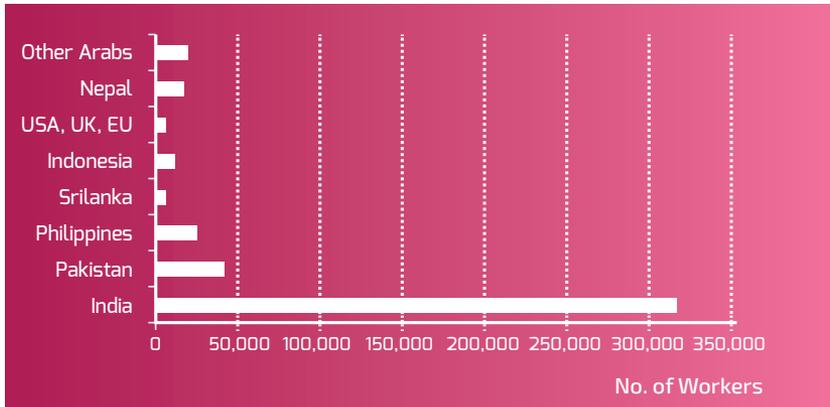
4.0 Workers from other countries

4.1 India is the largest expatriate community in Bahrain. They constitute about 50% of the total expatriate workforce. In the recent years, Indians are less interested to come to Bahrain as their salaries are increased at home. On the other hand, Pakistanis are less welcomed while Nepalese are only interested in certain types of work, but employers are less interested to recruit them.

4.2 The table below shows the share of manpower of other sending countries in labour market of Bahrain:

Country	India	Pakistan	Philippines	Sri Lanka	Indonesia	USA, UK, EU	Nepal	Other Arabs
No. of Workers	317,498	41,212	24,973	5,617	11,000	5,700	16,998	19,000

Graph: No. of Workers in Bahrain by Sending Countries



5.0 Setup of Labour Wing at Embassy of Bangladesh in Bahrain

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	Sanctioned Post
1	First Secretary	1
2	Administrative Officer	1
3	Office Assistant cum Steno Typist	1
4	Welfare Assistant	1
5	Legal Assistant	1
6	Driver	1

6.0 Labour Migration Diplomacy

Labour migration diplomacy plays a pivotal role in maintaining the friendly relation between the source country and receiving country. The Labour Wing as well as Embassy of Bangladesh in Bahrain has continuous efforts in labour migration diplomacy towards maintaining a safe and orderly migration in a labour friendly congenial atmosphere in Bahrain with a view to further expansion of existing market share of Bangladesh. In pursuant to this diplomacy, delegation from Labour Market Regulatory Authority of Bahrain headed by Chief Executive Officer visited Bangladesh from 23-26 February 2013. Honourable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh also visited Bahrain from 21-23 December 2015. Subsequently, Honourable Minister of Labour & Social Welfare of Bahrain may visit Bangladesh during the month of September or October. Regular quarterly meeting are being held with Labour Market Regulatory Authority for employment of more labours from Bangladesh.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Government of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the recruitment of Bangladeshi Workers has been framed from the side of Bahrain, which is being reviewed by Bangladesh side. Bangladesh has given its views on the drafts and recently Bahrain has given its opinion on it. It is expected that the MoU will be finalized soon. This will further strengthen strong ties between the two countries. Considering the importance of developing these ties to achieve common interests, both the countries are desirous to make best use of close relations of cooperation in the field of manpower recruitment in more systematic way on the basis of the principles of equality and mutual interests, in accordance with the memorandum and the applicable laws in both countries.

6.1 Efforts and services extended to expatriates by Labour Wing of Bangladesh Embassy in Bahrain in order to strengthen and expansion of labour market

Labour Wing of Bangladesh is persistently keeping its efforts to strengthen the labour market share of Bangladesh and its expansion by exploring avenues of employment in various sectors.

6.1.2 Firstly, the Labour Wing is maintaining regular communication with recruiting agents and employers and holding meeting with them. More than 100 meetings were held in 2015 with this view.

- 6.1.3 Labour Wing actively participates in seminars and conferences organized by the concerned agencies of Bahrain and fosters potential resource of manpower of Bangladesh. Labour Wing participated In five such seminars and conferences in 2015.
- 6.1.4 Owners and top level managers are requested to bring more Bangladeshi workers, specially through Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), provided these companies are found in good quality and the working condition and accommodation are observed satisfactory during the routine visit by Labour Wing. In 2015, more than fifty companies of such category were visited.
- 6.1.5 Employers and female sponsors are extended special services of fast track with highest priority if in any occasion they come to the embassy, even without any prior appointment. Labour Counselor talks to them directly and instantly provide them with the best possible services by entertaining their lawful demand.
- 6.1.6 In most cases, Labour Wing, accomplishes the procedural tasks of recruitment within a day. In case of failure, it is ensured to accomplished in next working day. Officials of Labour Wing dedicates their time beyond office time and even holidays as and when requires to provide these services.
- 6.1.7 The major task of Labour Wing is labour diplomacy for retaining the market and its expansion by exploring the avenues of employment for Bangladeshi workers. The wing spends most of the time towards that goal and target beside its day to day work of attestation of demand letter, visa and contract letter. It is notable that the Labour Wing has to further attest all the photo copies of documents including passport, medical certificate, police verification and birth certificate despite all these documents are attested by the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh. Such related documents were attested as against recruitment of 31,277 workers by the Labour Wing in 2015. This figure is higher than that of the previous year. As a result of these positive functions of the wing, a favourable attitude towards recruitment of Bangladeshi workers has been possible to develop among employers. Subsequently, recruitment of Bangladeshi workers is being increased day by day.

6.1.8 Regularization of irregular/illegal workers

Labour Wing puts much emphasis in regularization of irregular/illegal Bangladeshi expatriates considering them as 'distressed person' and always inspire them to work legally.

6.1.9 Regularization of irregular workers in general

A list of information of interested employers to recruit Bangladeshi workers including the type of demand, committed salary, allowances and other benefits are preserved in the Labour Wing. Appropriate employers are identified from the list and communicated duly, whenever an irregular/illegal Bangladeshi worker wishes to be legal based on his competency and demand of the employer. All out support and cooperation are extended in favour of his regularization. In this process 10 to 15 Bangladeshi workers are regularized in every month with the mediation of the Labour Wing.

7.0 Visit to workplace and accommodation of workers

Regular visits are made at workplaces of various companies and accommodation of the workers. In 2015, Labour Wing performed such visits to more than fifty in number. Financial and management capacity of the company, stock of employment at their hand, total number of workers and number of Bangladeshi workers, employment category of Bangladeshi workers, their salary and allowances, whether payments are made regularly, working condition and safety security both at workplace and residence, food, medical facilities, weakly holidays/yearly holidays, whether the air ticket during leave is provided by the employer according to the employment contract and so on are verified during the visit. Besides, it is instantly reviewed if any complaints are noticed during the visit and attention is drawn provided any lacking is found on the part of company or employer. This is also kept in follow up of the Labour Wing. Moreover, workers are briefed with laws, rules & regulations, culture of Bahrain, safety and health issues of the workers and information are exchanged with them and telephone numbers of officials of Labour Wing are provided so that they can communicate in any necessity.

After accomplishment of visit, companies which are found satisfactory with their performance and quality or which are observed cooperative in mitigating deficiencies or shortcomings are extended cooperation of Labour Wing in recruitment of Bangladeshi workers there. On the

contrary, they are listed specially. Number of such listed companies are 168 till 2015. It is notable that the condition of work place and accommodation are found suitable in well established and relatively large companies of Bahrain. Measures are taken by communicating with the concerned offices including Labour Ministry against the companies. If they are found different and fail to mitigate the shortcomings.

8.0 General Amnesty for illegal workers in 2015

Bahrain Government declared an amnesty with effect from 1 July to 31 December 2015 for the expatriates workers who are staying illegally in Bahrain. Labour Wing marked it as special opportunity and extended all out efforts for the highest benefit. Embassy of Bangladesh undertook several programs of mass communication and building awareness among Bangladeshi communities so that the highest number of irregular Bangladeshis can avail the opportunity. Alongside these initiatives, manpower of the Bangladesh Embassy was increased and day night shifts were operated there. Multi dimensional initiatives including measures to enhance everyday communications with offices of Bahrain involved in general amnesty process were taken. Under the amnesty, the illegal slayers are getting opportunity either to legalize their stay or to return to Bangladesh under easier scheme without paying any fine. So far, 24,298 Bangladeshis availed the opportunity of regularization under fresh employer and 8,300 Bangladeshis voluntarily returned home. The number of regularized Bangladeshi will further increase since the last moment applicants are yet under the consideration of Bahrain Government. Primarily this number is known as 5000. Bangladesh Embassy alone and together with other labour sending countries urged for time extension. On the other hand, Bangladesh Embassy has continuous efforts through diplomatic communication with Bahrain Government for effective measures in favour of Bangladeshi nationals with visit visa, transit visa or with fake documents or under the prosecution of Bahrain court. It is expected that a positive outcome will be there in favour of such Bangladeshi nationals, who failed to avail this opportunity in any reason.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), Wage Earners Welfare Board and Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) have provided remarkable support to the embassy with necessary advice and inspiration during the process of general amnesty.

9.0 Welfare tasks of Labour Wing

The prime function of Labour Wing is to ensure the welfare of workers. As a continuous process, several activities pertaining to the welfare of the Bangladeshi workers were conducted during the year 2015.

9.1 Visit to workplace and accommodation

As also detailed in 8.0, the routine work of the Welfare Wing is focused on ensuring the welfare of the Bangladeshi workers. This includes visit to their workplace and accommodation on regular basis and also on the basis of any problem or complaint or information received from workers of any company. Both preventive and remedy measures could be taken from such visits. In most cases problems could be resolved easily.

9.2 Visit to prison and deportation centre

Besides the Juw Central Prison in Bahrain, there is another prison in Hidd. The only deportation centre of Bahrain is in Alba. In 2015 the Juw Prison was visited 3 times, Hidd Prison 2 times and Alba deportation centre was visited at several times. Prior permission of Home Ministry through Foreign Ministry of Bahrain is needed to visit the Juw and Hidd Prison. It takes time to obtain the permission due to the present political situation of Middle East and revolution in Juw Prison at two occasions in last year. Usually the convicted prisoners under trial are kept in Hidd Prison and the criminals awarded with punishment are kept in Juw Prison. On the other part, who waits to return home after punishment or arrested due to illegal stay are kept in Alba deportation centre. During the visit on an average 100 to 125 in Juw Prison, 80 to 110 in Hidd Prison and 60 to 100 Bangladeshis in Alba deportation centre were found in imprisonment.

9.3 Visit to Hospitals

Salmaniya Medical Complex is the prime hospital of Bahrain where all can avail treatment facilities almost at free of cost. Besides, some Bangladeshis are admitted in King Hamad University Hospital. In some cases, severely ill patients receive treatment in Bahrain Defense Force Hospital. Basically officials of Labour Wing visit hospitals on the basis of information received about any sick Bangladeshis. In 2015, a total number of 30 visits were paid to Bangladeshi patients with a distribution of

17 in Salmaniya Medical Complex, 05 in King Hamad University Hospital and 01 in Bahrain Defense Force Hospital. Apart from these visits another visit was made to a psychiatric hospital for 01 Bangladeshi.

9.4 Visit to Migration Centre

No migration centre was visited in 2015 since there was no Bangladeshi.

9.5 Cooperation in mitigation of problems of workers

Any worker can enjoy the 'open door policy' of the embassy and approach directly to the officer level or call by phone at any time in 24 hours. There is a Help Desk at Bangladesh Embassy and a staff by rotation is assigned there to provide services to the workers. Help desk staff instantly bring to the knowledge of Labour Counselor considering the urgency of the information or problem of the workers. Usually these problems are related to release of captured passport, cancellation of visa by employer before the end of validity, less salary by non-compliance of conditions of contract, delay in payment of salary, even non-payment of salary at all, non-sanctioning the weakly holiday or yearly leave, misbehave etc. Due attention is given to every complaint and primarily effort is made to resolve by discussion with the accused. This saves money and time and at the same time relationship between worker and employer is not hampered. A dedicated staff is assigned to address these problems. In usual situation 100 Bangladeshis on an average lodge such complaints, while it was increased to 600 during the general amnesty.

9.6 Legal Support

Firstly, assistance of Labour Ministry is taken to settle disputes and complaints in case of failure to resolve the matters through discussions. These are referred to police station if the Welfare Wing fails to obtain a desired result. It is notable that sincere cooperation is extended in almost all cases by the concerned offices of Bahrain since, the Labour Wing has a close and intimate relation with their Labour Ministry, LMRA, Home Ministry, Immigration Department and Health Ministry. Specially, Bahrain Police provides sincere cooperation in these cases.

These are referred to court unless they fail to settle at police station level. One learned barrister and two learned lawyers provide legal assistance to Bangladeshis at a very nominal cost. Labour Wing always maintains the courtesy through communication with them and they are invited as honourable guest in the occasions of several national days of Bangladesh. It could be mentioned that number of such cases in court is very low. Because, at the very outset efforts made at staff level, then counselor level and even at the level of H.E. Ambassador to settle. The employers respond well to the recommendations of embassy since, they are to approach the embassy twice for attestation of documents against recruitment of a worker.

9.7 Communications with embassies and expatriates' associations of different countries

Labour Wing has a good relation with embassies and expatriates' associations of different countries. Regular communication is made and offered entertainment to them. Labour Wing of Bangladesh undertakes program interventions jointly with them in common issues. Specially, valuable and effective support is obtained from them in conducting health camp at various company/locations and in case of fire incidence.

9.8 Sending the body of deceased

Embassy of Bangladesh put highest priority in sending the body of deceased. One staff is dedicatedly assigned to deal with this as to expedite the process of sending the dead body. As a result it has been possible to send the dead body within 3 working days. 88 dead bodies were sent to Bangladesh from Bahrain in 2015.

9.9 Realization of compensation

Embassy monitors the matter of realization of compensation against accident or death or claim of insurance against policy through communication with concerned offices and/or court. After accomplishment of the process, court or insurance company directly send it to the account of victim if alive or to the valid successor of deceased as per law of Bahrain.

9.10 Return of injured, sick or person with severe financial crisis

Bangladeshis who are found injured, sick or facing severe financial crisis are provided support in accomplishment of

official process and sent back at home by the embassy with the financial support of donour agency or interested solvent persons or at government expenditures. In 2015, two persons with the support of donours and four persons with the support of Wage Earners Welfare Board were sent back to Bangladesh.

9.11 Financial assistance to the distressed

Labour Wing of Embassy of Bangladesh also provides assistance to the distressed through various donour agencies or interested donours or directly with the funding of Wage Earners Welfare Board. In 2015, nine persons with the assistance of donours and one person with the assistance of Wage Earners Welfare Board were provided financial support.

9.12 Awareness build up program

Labour Wing puts much emphasis on public awareness in order to ensure safe stay of Bangladeshi workers and to uphold the image of the country. Labour Wing takes the opportunity of exchanging information with workers during the gathering of Bangladeshis on any occasion. In particular, information on relevant law, rules and regulations of Bahrain, restrictions, health care in extreme weather etc. are exchanged with Bangladeshis during Monthly 'open house' organized by the own arrangement of embassy, in socio-cultural events and at the time of inspection of labour Counselor. In 2015, number of such events was seven. Besides, leaflets were prepared and distributed by Labour Wing at several occasions. Bahrain Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) also provided 40,000 leaflets in addition to the leaflets of the Labour Wing during the inception of general amnesty program. Text message from embassy is sent to the mobile of workers in extraordinary matter. Even, publicity is arranged at mosques after Jumma prayer. Fruitful result is obtained due to the activities of Labour Wing on publicity by involving Bangladeshi expatriates' associations and 1 or 2 volunteers/leaders in the areas much populated with Bangladeshis.

10.0 Consular Services

10.1 Machine Readable Passport (MRP)

Bangladesh Embassy has been able to aware the Bangladeshi expatriates on embargo of travel with hand written passport

through mass communication and publicity and sensitize them for having Machine Readable Passport. 33,626 Bangladeshis were given Machine Readable Passport in 2015 as against 36,013 applications in process.

10.2 Hand Written Passport

9,367 hand written passports were issued for the illegal workers to regularize quickly during the general amnesty. At the same time applications were received from them to issue Machine Readable Passport. Hand written passport will be cancelled upon due endorsement of visa in the Machine Readable Passport.

10.3 Travel Permit/Out pass

7,066 Out passes were issued in favour of Bangladeshi nationals to return home who had at all no passport or any document.

10.4 Attestation of documents for work visa

Relevant documents of 31,277 workers were attested prior to issuance of work visa by Labour Wing in 2015. In same year 21,115 visas and contract letters were attested.

11.0 Remittance in Bangladesh from Bahrain

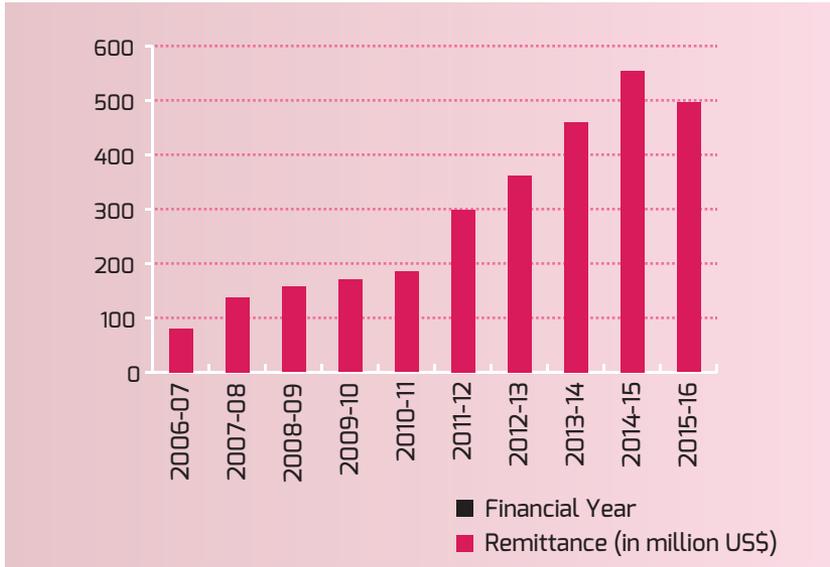
Bangladeshi nationals are persistently motivated to send their hard earned foreign currency to Bangladesh in legal channel. The table below shows the growing trend of remittance sent through legal channel to Bangladesh by Expatriate Bangladeshis in Bahrain.

Financial Year	Remittance (in million US\$)
2015-16*	495.90*
2014-15	554.34
2013-14	459.39
2012-13	361.70
2011-12	298.46
2010-11	185.93
2009-10	170.14
2008-09	157.00
2007-08	138.00
2006-07	80.00

*Estimated figure of 2015-16 based on 10 months' average

(413.25 US\$ in millions till April 2016) (Source: Bangladesh Bank)

Graph: Remittance from Bahrain to Bangladesh by Financial Year



12.0 Market Opportunities for new trades or professions for Bangladeshi workers

12.1 Bahrain is a small island country with an area of 770 square kilo meter. Around 700 thousand people are foreign national out of its 1.35 million population. The economy of the country largely depends on oil. Recent fall in oil price and unrest in Middle East has started to impact negatively in the economy of the country. Mean time, government has merged two ministries with other two ministries in order to reduce expenditures. Subsidies withdrawn from food, fuel, electricity and water consumed by the expatriates. Even the adoption of tax on remittance by expatriates are in active consideration there. As against these efforts to reduce expenditure and increase income, government is strongly trying to keep the continuation of development activities which is also a positive sign for retention and creation of employment scopes.

12.2 Program for infrastructure development in government sector

The common feature of the governments of Middle East countries is to undertake development projects for the welfare

of general people. There are also many development projects in Bahrain which are on the way, while many are under their active considerations. Some of these projects are:

- 12.2.1 Measures taken for construction of 25 kilo meter long 2nd Bridge between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia together with the provision of Rail Bridge in order to reduce the traffic congestion and to mitigate the pressure of vehicles.
- 12.2.2 Recently the issue of construction of long desired 48 kilo meter Bahrain- Qatar Bridge is getting priority in discussions. The estimated cost of this project is 3 billion US dollar.
- 12.2.3 Bahrain, consists of 33 islands, is considered as the Gateway of gulf region. Initiative has been taken to build Open Sea Port to implement the trade potentials of sea by utilizing its 161 kilo meter coastal belt.
- 12.2.4 It is now under active consideration of government for massive expansion of well reputed Arab Shipbuilding and Repairing Yard (ASRY) as it has become crucial in this region.
- 12.2.5 Expansion of Bahrain airport is going on. Government has taken decision for more expansion. The estimated cost of it is 950 million US dollar.
- 12.2.6 It is assumed that the process of building railway network within gulf countries will be started soon, estimated cost of which has been fixed at 4.12 billion US dollar.
- 12.2.7 Government has taken measures to construct hundreds of dwelling apartments for its people. It could be mentioned that the process of construction of these apartments are running at several parts of the barren fields of this region since long. Government has now taken more wider program and extended adequate budget in this sector.

12.3 Program of infrastructure development in private sector

Now many development projects are being implemented there in private sectors too along with the public sector of Bahrain, such as:

- 12.3.1 Construction of large residential and commercial buildings at Bahrain Bay is going on at a cost of 2.5 billion US dollar.

- 12.3.2 Deluxe hotel, motel, posh residential buildings and commercial buildings are being constructed continuously in new land obtained by filling earth since the surrounding sea is shallow. Development cost of such Amwaj Island and Diyar Al Muharraq Island has been fixed at 3.2 billion US dollar, which will be accomplished in 2018.
- 12.3.3 More investment of private sector is in construction of various residential apartments and its maintenance and repair, rather than investment in giant construction.
- 12.3.4 In addition to menial workers mentioned in 3.3, there are small-scale demands of work forces mainly for the following professions and occupations as observed by the Labour Wing
- Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, medical technicians, bankers, accountants;
 - Teachers holding Ph D Degrees/Professors;
 - Mechanics/ skilled manpower in civil, mechanical, electrical, electronic and automobile engineering (field level); welding, repairing denting and painting, air-conditioning, tailoring, ship building and repairing, fishing and any other technically experienced persons;
 - Persons having experience in hospitality services, cooks and chefs;
 - Semi-skilled or unskilled workers;

13.0 Challenges

There are a number of negative factors which act as impediments in improvement of employment of Bangladeshi workers through a safe and orderly migration process. These are:

- Huge migration cost in order to come to Bahrain for employment
- Visa trade by unscrupulous recruiting agencies /middlemen/ sponsors
- Low wage/salary
- So called 'free visa' and suffering of people with such visa

- Submission of fake and fabricated documents and papers and providing false information including changing names and addresses
- Unskilled worker in the name of skilled
- Committing crimes and involvement in unsocial activities of some workers
- Unruly attitudes and behavior of few workers
- Disputes, quarrel and clashes among themselves
- Legislative and institutional frameworks in Bahrain provide little protection for non nationals.
- There is a tendency, mostly among Bangladeshis, to run away from employer in search of better wages (main cause being highest migration cost in the World). Very difficult to recover this money within the contract period. 18% Bangladeshis live in Bahrain without valid resident permit. Next highest is India (4%).
- Negative image in terms of education and expertise, generally seen as a country of illiterate labour force. Lower level of education and expertise is also the reason for offering lower wages.
- Premature termination of contract creates difficulties and Labour Wing has to deal for settlement of such unexpected issues
- Language problem of workers sometimes creates difficulties at their workplace.

14.0 Way forward

- Present trend of receiving Bangladeshi workers are increasing steadily
- Bangladesh has now become the highest sending country of workers in Bahrain
- Growing trend of remittance from Bahrain to Bangladesh is encouraging
- Scopes of employment in Bahrain increased due to their

interest in recruitment of Bangladeshi workers

- Bangladeshi workers are treated as honest, modest and hard working
- Scopes of sending skilled workers in place of semi-skilled or unskilled workers
- 70 Technical Training Centre (TTC) including 6 Institute of Marine Technology(IMT) of BMET are resourceful to provide training to generate skilled manpower
- Alongside English, Arabic language course of basic and working level could be conducted for Bahrain bound and other Arab countries bound worker
- Could strengthen the briefing session on overall terms and conditions of the job, laws, regulations, practices as well as social and religious values and minimum level of manner and behavioral pattern prior to the departure of workers
- Apart from job, Bangladeshis are successfully running small businesses
- Proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is being reviewed for finalization. This will mutually facilitate both Bahrain and Bangladesh in improvement of recruitment process with safe and orderly migration. Besides, this will bring opportunity in identifying more fields of employment for Bangladeshi workforce and will also guide in human resource development with mutual understanding and support.

