

Article Link

<http://m.prothom-alo.com/bangladesh/article/916753/%E0%A6%95%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%9C%...>

IPA Bangladesh's study is covered in the largest national daily

Professor Ahmed Mushfiq Mubarak of Yale School of Management was recently interviewed by a leading Bangladeshi newspaper 'The Daily Prothom-Alo'. In the interview, he was asked about his research projects, especially the seasonal migration project, and how it impacted farming families who face food insecurity for a period before the harvest (popularly known in Bangladesh as 'Monga'). He also answered many additional questions regarding this study that the editorial board of the newspaper raised.

In response to a question on why seasonal migration to be incentivized when migration is a natural phenomenon, Dr. Mobarak said that the poor who live on the verge of subsistence often fail to act upon opportunities in attempts to avoid the risk of losing everything. While seasonal migration is a natural phenomenon, the poorest of the poor cannot take advantage due to fear of not getting a job after traveling and losing the bus fair in the process. By offering incentives as grants or loan, the study mitigated this risk and identified the role of risk in making the decision to migrate and the effect of migration on income, consumption and other welfare measures at the household level.

In response to another question on why the policymaker should incentivize migration rather than creating jobs locally, Dr. Mobarak said that creating artificial jobs through social safety net programs is an inefficient solution. By incentivizing seasonal migration, the project is taking laborers to a place where gainful jobs are available. It's cheaper to move laborers to where jobs are than to move jobs to where laborers are. Dr. Mobarak also mentioned that the calorie intake of the households received seasonal migration incentive rose to 2000 kilo calories from 1200-1300 kilo calories. He also mentioned that most of the social safety-net benefits have one time income or consumption impact. But the IPA study shows that 75 percent of households incentivized for seasonal migration continued to migrate in later years without further incentives, showing continuous benefits of the intervention.

July 17, 2016