

## CO-LIVING WITH SEASONAL MIGRANTS: IN RESPECT OF CHANPARA

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**Abstract:** In northwestern part of Bangladesh, people used to face seasonal famine which is called “Monga” in local language. They follow a way to cope with their seasonal famine. They migrate to the urban areas and work as day laborers to continue their earnings. They migrate every year from August to November. With the innovation of technology and transportation the motive of seasonal migration has slightly diverted from before, but still urban area has more working opportunities in famine season than rural areas. So, the habit of seasonal migration continues.

Many NGOs and Governmental organizations have taken steps to support this community by creating working opportunities, but no one is thinking about their housing condition during migration period. Some of these migrant people stay at their known person's house by seasonal renting system. They usually find urban slum areas to take rent. The rent of the slums which are situated at extended Dhaka, are comparatively lower than which are in the middle of Dhaka. Among many urban slums of extended Dhaka, Chanpara resettlement is one of the prominent one and existing people of Chanpara are habituated with the system of seasonal renting. This study is about the living condition of the adaptation of seasonal renting system in Chanpara resettlement.

**Keywords:** *Housing Condition; Seasonal Migrant; Seasonal Renting; Urban Slum*

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### 1. Introduction

Monga is a significant challenge for the people living in the char areas of northern Bangladesh. These regions frequently experience droughts and floods, which create severe food and work insecurities since the local economy is predominantly agricultural (Ansari and Atkins, 2014). To address these issues, NGOs like Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS) began offering micro-credit loans in the 1980s to support seasonal migration to urban areas. They covered transportation costs and provided a small amount of funds for the migrants' families to manage until they received remittances from the working family member (*Econometrica*, 2014).

By 2011, the issue of Monga—characterized by significant portions of land in northwest Bangladesh remaining unused for about a quarter of the year—was considered resolved, and the government declared Monga eradicated (the daily star, 2012). However, income levels remain a challenge. Surveys indicate that farming during the lean season yields much less income compared to what migrants earn in urban areas. Consequently, seasonal migration continues and is likely to persist.

When it comes to the living situations of migrants during periods of displacement, neither NGOs nor the government often address this critical issue effectively. As a result, informal living arrangements naturally emerge to meet the needs of these individuals. Some migrants manage to secure seasonal rentals in urban areas if they have acquaintances there. However, those without such connections are often left to live under the open sky, frequently settling along roadsides. This is a common and disheartening phenomenon in Dhaka, particularly during famine seasons (Ahmed et al., 2012). Migrants, who do not require permanent housing, face difficulties finding rental accommodation for just four months in Dhaka. As a result, they have devised a solution by renting rooms in the homes of acquaintances. This arrangement often leads to overcrowded living conditions and unique patterns in the distribution of utilities among low-income households and seasonal migrants.

### 2. Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the adaptability and the common practice of seasonal renting system of both seasonal migrants and Chanpara residents in support of understanding the problems and the ways of how to make their living condition better.

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The **objectives** of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the vulnerability of housing condition of seasonal migrants in urban area.
2. To identify measures for enhancing seasonal renting system and creating a beneficiary situation for both hosting community and seasonal migrants.
3. To understand the subsequent impact on employment, livelihoods, and local economies.
  - To understand the procedure of co-living and seasonal renting system.
  - To understand how to make their living condition better.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 DATA COLLECTION

- a) **Conducting surveys:** Administering structured questionnaires to gather primary data on the socio-economic conditions, migration patterns, and experiences of individuals and households in urban areas. Sampling techniques such as random sampling or stratified sampling can be employed to ensure representativeness.
- b) **Reviewing secondary data:** Analyzing existing data sources, including government reports, academic studies, and published literature, to gather information on demographic indicators and housing conditions in the informal/formal resettlements.
- c) **Field Survey:** Going to the places where seasonal migrants live and choosing one site where the pattern is most practiced. Then contact with inhabitants directly by interviewing them into their house about the adaptability and current conditions.

#### 3.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

- a) **Descriptive analysis:** Examining the collected data to identify patterns, trends, and disparities in socio-economic indicators such as income and housing conditions among the population in northwest Bangladesh.
- b) **Statistical analysis:** Utilizing statistical techniques, such as regression analysis or correlation analysis, to explore the relationships between socio-economic variables and the impacts of seasonal migration and natural disasters.
- c) **Mapping and spatial analysis:** Using Geographic Information System (GIS) tools to analyze the spatial distribution of vulnerable communities, infrastructure, and co-living scenarios among the places where they take rent.

#### 3.3. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- a) **Quantitative analysis:** Assessing the impact of host families who give rent to the seasonal migrants on the well-being of individuals and families.
- b) **Case studies:** Conducting in-depth case studies to examine the specific experiences and challenges faced by selected households or communities who are flexible for seasonal renting system. This qualitative approach can provide rich insights into the lived experiences and coping strategies of individuals and families.

#### 3.4. POLICY AND INTERVENTION ANALYSIS

- a) **Reviewing policy documents:** Analyzing existing policies and programs related to seasonal migrants in both urban and rural area.
- b) **Comparative analysis:** Conducting a comparative analysis of successful interventions or policies implemented in similar contexts to identify best practices and potential solutions.
- c) **Stakeholder consultations:** Engaging with relevant stakeholders, including government officials, NGOs, community leaders, and experts, through workshops or meetings to gather their perspectives, insights, and recommendations on addressing the challenges faced by the local population.
- d) Analysis of information and data to formulate a program where conclusive statements on spatial requirements and allocations, choices on building materials and construction techniques, provision of definite facilities and utilities and open space system in accordance with standards and BNBC code.

### 4. Literature Review

#### 4.1. COMMON LIVING PATTERN OF SEASONAL MIGRANTS

Seasonal migrants are involved in various kind of works in urban area. They mostly do works where payments are in daily basis which means no commitment with workplace. In this scenario, migrants have options like day labor, rickshaw pulling, vendor, construction works. Most of the availability of these works are in center of Dhaka. There are some informal low-income settlements in Dhaka like Korail slum, Kamrangir char etc. But the rent of these informal settlements is much higher. Informal settlements in extended Dhaka are cheaper and for today's transportation facilities these places are well connected with the central Dhaka.

#### 4.2. LOCATION OF SEASONAL MIGRANTS IN EXTENDED DHAKA

Gazipur, Rupganj, Keraniganj etc has tress of informal settlements and inside those the inhabitants live with seasonal renting system for extra income. Rupganj is part of the extended study. Chanpara is a low-income residential area under Kayetpara

union, Rupganj upazila near demra. The connection with Dhaka is very easy via bridge and chanpara is in the middle of industrial zone. So, opportunities for work are higher here.



Figure 1:Map of extended Dhaka (Detailed Area Plan)

4.2.1 History of Chanpara

In 1964, the 126 acre of land was named after Dhaka WASA. In 1974, former president of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman designated the land to the people who became landless during liberation war. People were taken from different part of the city by truck in this area. After that the whole 126 acre was divided into 12 ft by 16 ft blocks. The blocks were allotted to the residents by government. Later the residents made a system of tax called “choukidari Khajna” which is an amount they pay to the local land office every year. Still the land is under government’s name.



Figure 2:Location of chanpara (Open Street Map)

4.2.2 Demographic Information of Chanpara

According to the latest findings of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS),

Table 1: Demographic Information

Total Population	Over 1 lac
Valid Voter	20,592
Total Dwelling Unit	7134
Population Density	262.5/acre
Avg Size of Household	4.6 persons
Electricity Connection	98.8%
Types of Structure	Permanent- 14.02% Semi-Permanent- 59.12% Temporary- 26.79%

No. of Floors	1 storied- 88.81% 2 storied- 7.12% 3 storied- 3.26% 4 storied- 0.81%
Field of Employment	Service- 63.6% Agriculture- 3.18% Industry- 33.2%
Tenancy of House	Owned- 74.2% Rented- 24.7% Rent Free- 1%



Figure 3: Land use map of Chanpara (GIS Map)

#### 4.2.3 Land use map of Chanpara

#### 4.3 BACKGROUND OF SEASONAL MIGRANTS

Seasonal migrants are the people who migrate to a place for a little bit of time and remigrate to their origin. It is a cyclic process. There are so many reasons to remigrate. Seasonal migrants mostly migrate to the urban areas like-rangpur, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Barisal etc. Among the migrants 24% which is the highest number of people come to Dhaka as Dhaka has better opportunities of daily works (Ahmed et al., 2012). In here they can earn more, and accommodation is easier. There three kind of accommodation they manage for themselves. Firstly, some construction project authority provide accommodation on site. Secondly, they manage to live under the open sky beside the road. And thirdly, they live on seasonal rent. Chanpara has some areas where people live in seasonal rent. And their living pattern is the topic of this study.

#### 4.3 LIVING PATTERN OF SEASONAL MIGRANTS IN CHANPARA



Figure 4: Houses available for seasonal rent (Survey Date 25.12.2023)

Most of the people of chanpara have been living in this area from 1975. People built their own houses and expanded it by their need over the time. Government never interrupted on their living system. So, in chanpara people made their own system over the years. The owner of the houses expanded for their own lengthened family and renting. As the area is close to an industrial zone, the need of rent is extreme.

The average rent of a 450 sqft is 2200 taka. And for seasonal migrants the rent stands 1000-1200 taka. As we know, migrants do mostly day labor work. The daily average rate of these migrants is 600-1000 taka. So, the rent in chanpara is affordable for them. Migrants mostly are men or the head of the family who leave their family at home. So, the rest of the money they can send to the village.

Generally, men from char area migrate seasonally. 2/3 men make a group and take rent to a house of known or relative of one of them. They give rent and either share the cost of food or they cook for themselves. They make a schedule for the kitchen or use stove for individual cooking.

## 5. CASE STUDIES

While interviewing, the residents were asked whether they face any problem in chanpara or in seasonal renting system. They answered differently. But most of them give rent for extra income as what they earn is tough to live with. In this paper illustration has been made the living pattern of chanpara residents with seasonal renting according to their own explanation. 3 houses are chosen according to the tenancy of the house to show the diversity of renting system.

### 5.1 CASE STUDY 01 (SINGLE TENANT HOUSEHOLD)

#### 5.1.1. Host Family Background

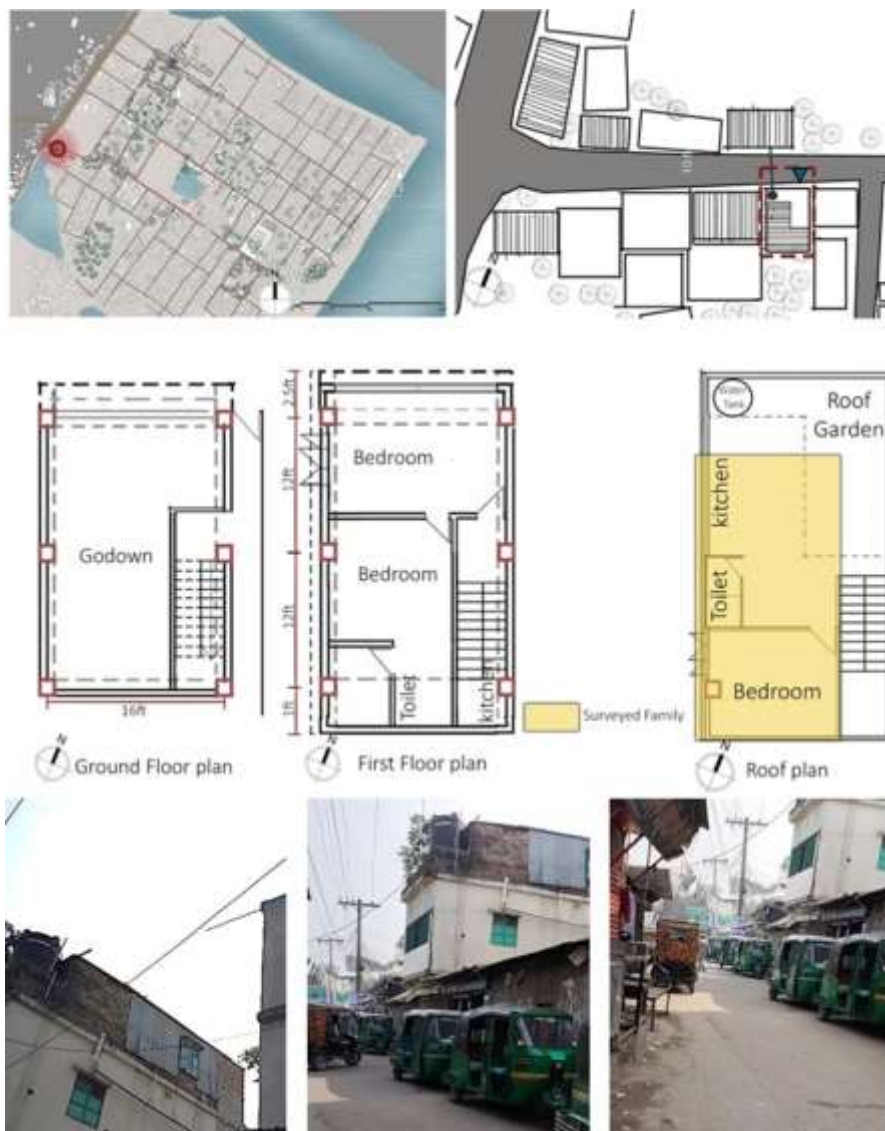


Figure 5: Location, illustrated plan and Site images of Case study 1

Md. Kashem, a barber in Chanpara for over 30 years, moved from Rangpur at age 12 with his uncle. Now, he runs his own shop, earning 25,000 taka monthly, and lives with his high school-going daughter in a rented home for 2,200 taka. His wife, son, and mother remain in Rangpur, as he cannot afford to bring them to the city. Kashem rents space to seasonal migrants from his hometown, compromising his family's privacy to share costs during peak migration periods. Seasonal migration increases pressure on basic utilities, highlighting the challenges of shared living arrangements in urban areas like Chanpara.

Difference of the user number and using of rooms in different time of the year.

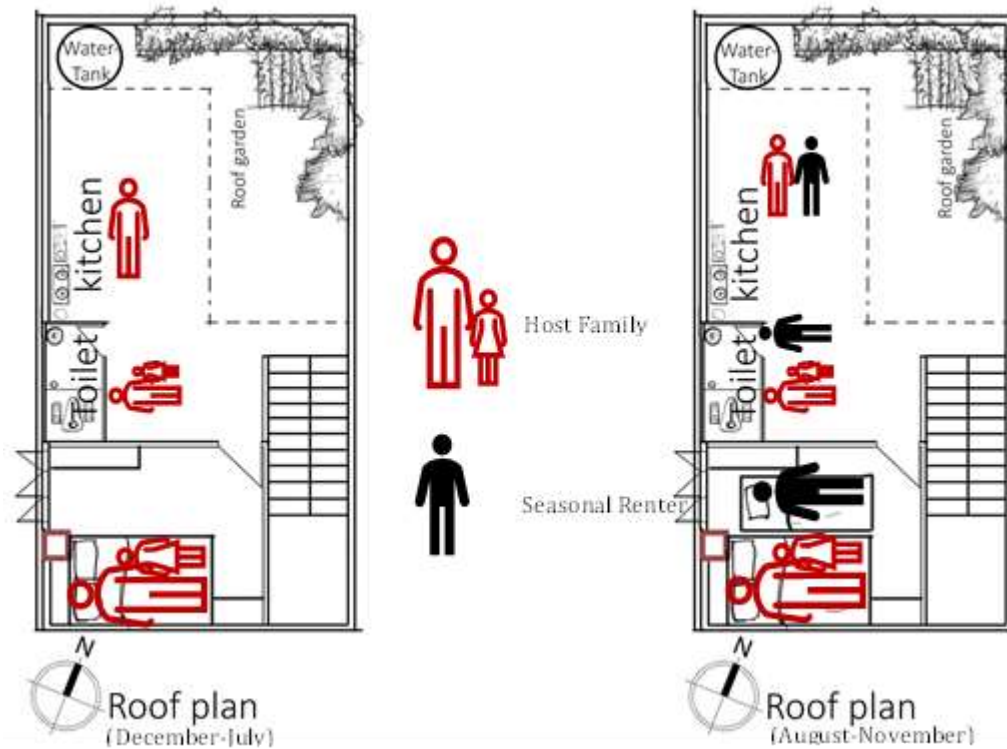


Table-2 The user numbers and income differences in both time of the host family in case study 1

December to July		August to November	
No. of Members	2	No. of Members	3
Household Type	Single (Father-Daughter)	Household Type	Single (Father-Daughter)+ Seasonal Renter
Occupation	Barber	Occupation	Barber + Renter
Income	25000 Bdt/Month	Income	26100 Bdt/Month
Utility	No Of User	Utility	No of User
Bedroom	2	Room	3
Toilet	2	Toilet	3
Kitchen	1	Kitchen	2

### 5.2 CASE STUDY 02 (SHARED-OWNER HOUSEHOLD)

Abul Kashem, a second-generation resident of Chanpara since 1975, owns an 800 sqft property single storied building shared with his younger brother. They built a one-story permanent structure, with the front semi-permanently made of bamboo mats. Living with his wife and married son's family, Abul earns 12,000-14,000 taka monthly as a tailor. To supplement his income, he rents out a room seasonally, hosting two renters who also share meals with the family and contribute to food expenses. During these periods, the family rearranges sleeping spaces, accommodating seven people in 400 sqft with only one washroom. This co-living arrangement reflects the adaptability and challenges of shared spaces during lean seasons, as detailed in the accompanying illustrations and table.

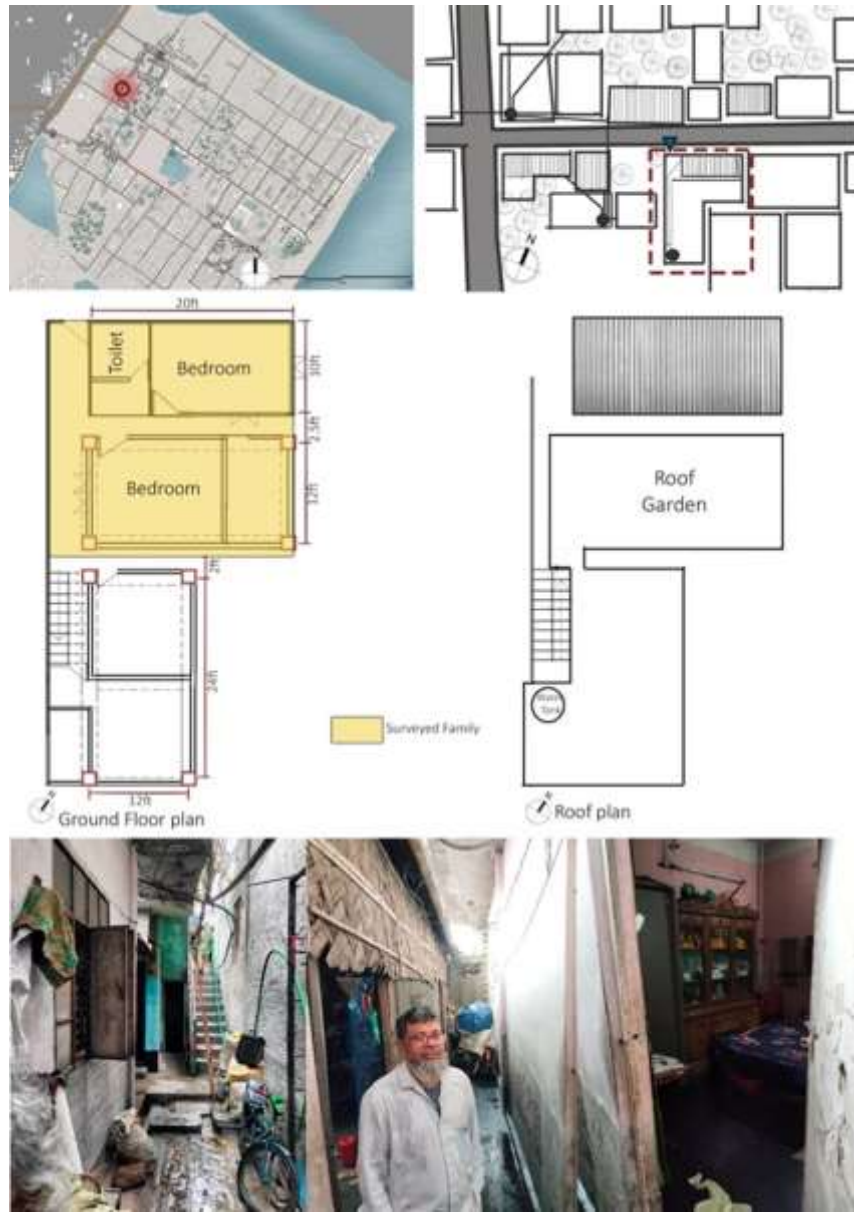


Figure 6: Location, illustrated plan and Site images of Case study 2

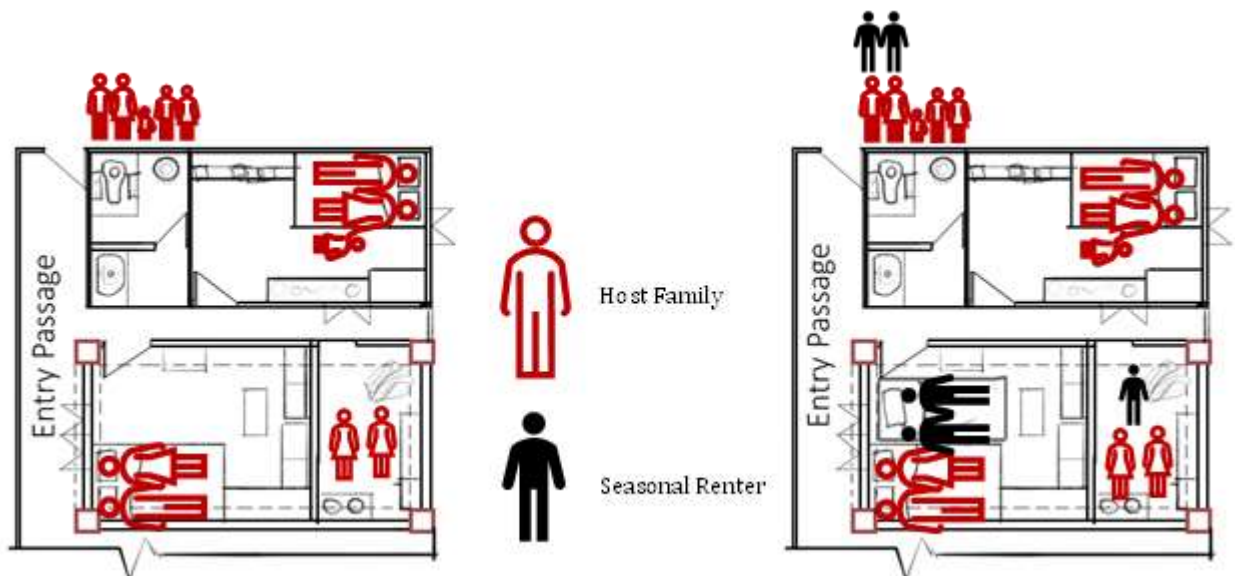


Table-3 The user numbers and income differences in both time of the host family in case study

December to July		August to November	
No. of Members	5	No. of Members	7
Household Type	JOINT (Father-Daughter)	Household Type	JOINT (Father-Daughter) + 2 Seasonal Renters
Occupation	Tailor	Occupation	Tailor + Renter
Income	25000 Bdt/month	Income	26100 Bdt/month
Utility	No Of User	Utility	No Of User
Bedroom-1	3	Bedroom-1	3
Bedroom-2	2	Bedroom-2	4
Toilet	5	Toilet	7
Kitchen	2	Kitchen	3

5.3 CASE STUDY 03 (SINGLE-LANDOWNER HOUSEHOLD)

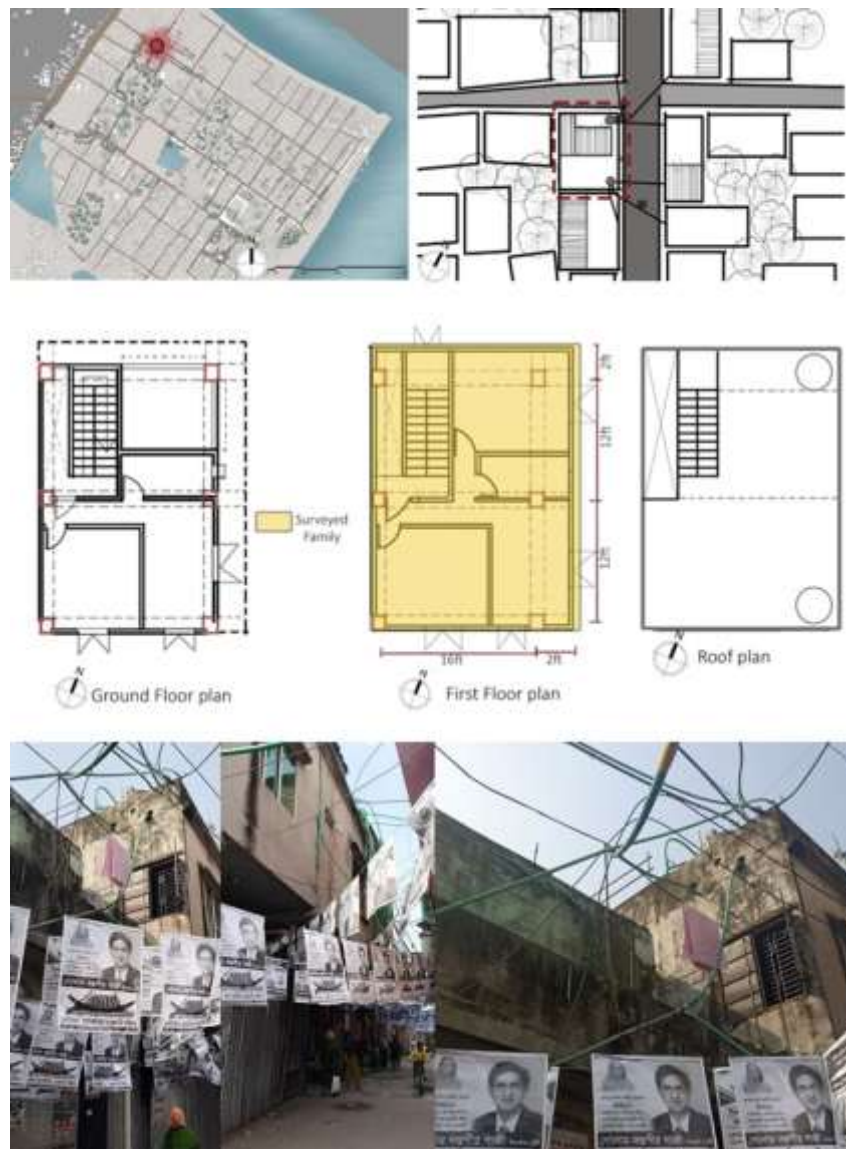


Figure 7: Location, illustrated plan and Site images of Case study 3



The surveyed house is a three-story building with permanent tenants and a shop on the ground floor, providing rental income for the owner. He resides on the first floor with his three children and rents one of their rooms seasonally to two male day laborers. The renters, who cook their own meals, share the kitchen and adjust their cooking schedule to accommodate the family. As they work during the day, they primarily use the kitchen at night. This flexible arrangement illustrates the challenges of shared living. The table and illustrations highlight the site's location and the changes in occupancy during different periods.

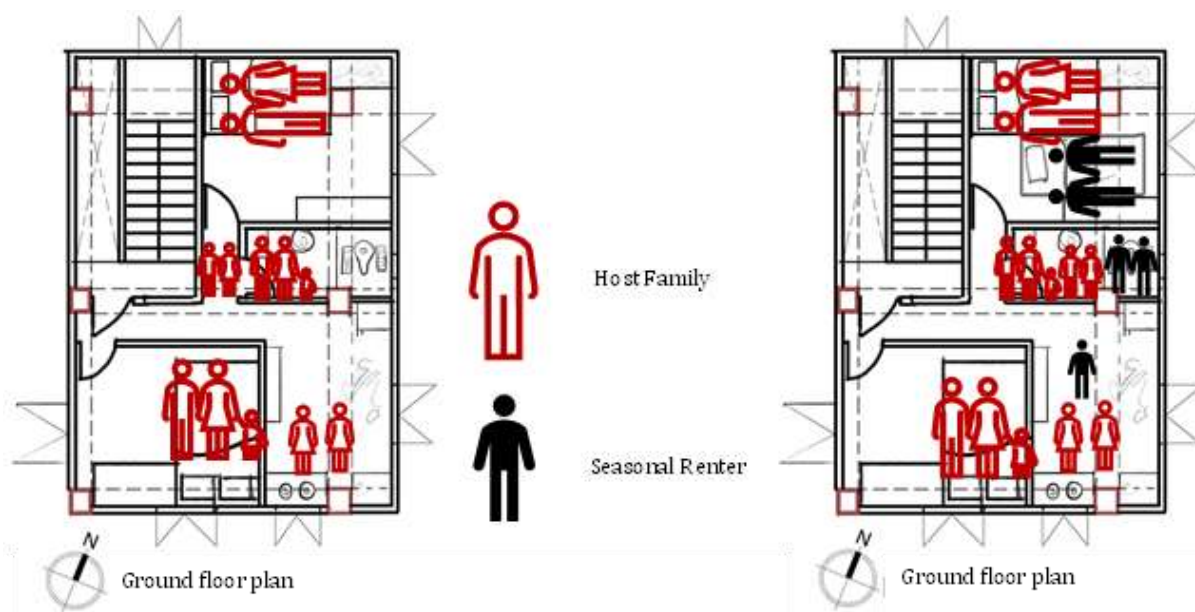


Table-4 The user numbers and income differences in both time of the host family in case study 3

December to July		August to November	
No. of Members	5	No. of Members	7
Household Type	Single	Household Type	Single + 2 Seasonal Renters
Occupation	shopkeeper + LANDLORD	Occupation	shopkeeper + LANDLORD+ seasonal land-lord
Income	20000 Bdt/month	Income	21000 Bdt/month
Utility	No Of User	Utility	No Of User
Bedroom-1	2	Bedroom-1	4
Bedroom-2	3	Bedroom-2	3
Toilet	5	Toilet	7
Kitchen	2	Kitchen	3

## 6. Findings

The study reveals key insights into the living patterns and challenges of co-living arrangements between seasonal renters and host households. The findings are summarized as follows:

1. Both tenants and homeowners prioritize earning extra income, often at the cost of compromising their privacy.
2. Due to privacy concerns, they prefer renting only to known individuals.
3. The inability to scale this system further leaves many seasonal migrants without shelter and deprives residents of potential additional income.
4. Utility services face increased strain from the added occupants.
5. The required living space per person diminishes significantly under seasonal renting.
6. The cramped and unhealthy living conditions during famine seasons conflict with the goals of sustainable development.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the complexities and challenges of co-living arrangements between host households and seasonal renters. While the system provides a means for residents to generate extra income, it comes at the cost of privacy and comfort. The limited scalability of this model leaves many migrants without adequate shelter and restricts opportunities for hosts to maximize income. Furthermore, the increased strain on utility services, reduced living space, and unhealthy conditions during peak migration periods underscore the urgent need for sustainable housing solutions. Addressing these issues is essential to align with the goals of sustainable development and ensure dignified living conditions for both hosts and seasonal migrants.

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