

# International Migration from Northeastern Bangladesh: Socio-economic and Cultural Characteristics

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## Abstract

This study attempts to assess the impact of international migration on the socio-economic status of rural households in the northeastern part of Bangladesh. The data has been collected from the Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Habiganj districts. This study used a descriptive research design and found that international migration positively contributes to the development of rural households in Bangladesh. Their socio-economic indicators, such as household income, expenditure, land possession, nonproductive assets, housing status, water and sanitation facilities, and healthcare facilities, are improved in comparison to the same factors before migration. There is the impact of traditional cultural components such as folksong and folk rhyme on international migration. In other words, international migration contributes to the improvement of rural households' socio-economic status in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** International migration, Socio-economic status, Folksong, Remittances, Poverty.

## 1. Introduction

People migrate from one place to another for the development of their overall living standard and to enhance their social position (Farid et al., 2009). Morve talks about the internal migration in Maharashtra, where Kolhaty is a community, they migrate for Tamasha folk theater (Morve, 2014). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Migration means people's movement, whatever its reasons, length or composition; it includes refugees, displaced people and economic migrants (IOM, 2011). Migration from rural areas means the departure of individuals or households, for more than a week or so, from the small, primarily agricultural community in which they live (Lipton, 1980). Several factors are related to migration. All factors of migration are included in two broad classifications: Push and Pull factors, which compel a person, for various reasons, to leave their home and move to another place (Kainth, 2009). For instance, a lack of work opportunities, unemployment and underdevelopment, poor economic conditions, exhaustion of natural resources, and natural calamities. On the other hand, pull factors indicate the factors that attract migrants to an area, such as employment and higher education facilities, higher wage facilities, and better working

conditions (Haider, 2010; Kainth, 2009; Farhana et al., 2012; Sharma and Zaman, 2009).

Bangladesh is a developing country, and most people live in rural areas. Day-by-day unemployment as well as scarcity of land and other resources are increasing rapidly in the rural areas of the northeastern part of Bangladesh. The socio-economic and demographic status of rural households worsens, and poverty prevails (Rokib and Islam, 2009). From the perspective of Bangladesh, factors such as poverty, natural calamities (e.g., flood, drought, soil erosion, and river erosion), and sociocultural factors such as marriage, family conflict, social discrimination, social problems, political chaos, better employment, better life living, and better education facilities are considered to be the determinants of internal migration (Haider, 2010). Over the past few decades, the movement of impoverished individuals from rural to urban areas in Bangladesh has led to a remarkable expansion of both urban territories and populations in the country (Begum, 1999). Migration significantly contributes to urban expansion in Bangladesh (Afsar, 2003). Approximately 60 percent of migrant workers migrate independently, 39 percent with the help of recruiting agencies and about one percent migrate through government and other channels (World Bank, 2012). According to the IOM survey, the average cost of migration is Taka 219,394, whereas the government's legal maximum charge for migration to the Middle East was Taka 84,000. On average, for every migration, about 60 percent of the cost has to be paid to Dalals (Middleman), helpers about 18%, and visa and recruiting agencies 10% of the total migration cost (Siddique, 2003).

The objectives of this study are to examine the impact of international migration on socio-economic status. The broad objective of this study was divided into several specific objectives. These are to measure the socio-economic status of migrant families before and after migration, to understand the impact of remittances on the status of rural households, and to assess the impact of traditional cultural components on international migration.

## **2. Review of the Literature**

Migration is a broad term that incorporates all kinds of movements of people from one place to another (Haider, 2010). Migration is defined as a permanent or semi-permanent shift from one location to another. Migration can also be expressed as people moving from one territory to another for a job or establishment. According to Mahmud (1997), migration is an act of people moving to overseas countries for a certain period of time and with explicit purposes. Sikder, Higgins and Ballis (2017) in their book *The Remittance Income and Social Resilience among migrant households in Bangladesh* show how the foreign money earned by the migrant class accelerates the socio-economic development

of rural Bangladeshi families. They have tried to show that remittances play an effective role in ensuring improvement in the economic life of rural families. Sirajul Islam, and Shahnaz Parvin in their research paper socio-economic Impact of international migration in Bangladesh have tried to expose the socio-economic impact of migration and remittances sent by migrants. They used information related to migration from 1991 – 2011. Here, we used statistical and descriptive analyses simultaneously as the methodology. In their numerical analysis, they used science-based econometric tools through which researchers analyzed the effects of remittances on various socio-economic variables (2013).

Iqbal Ahmed Chowdhury in his article, "Impact of remittance on the socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh: An analysis" (2014) has tried to show the impact of remittance on the socio-economic condition of Bangladesh. He said that remittances improved the economic status and living standards of rural households. Sayed Maruf Ahmed in an article entitled, "Migration remittances and households' development" (2012), published a research report on the impact of international migration and rural households. Researchers such as Hasan, et al (2019) have primarily studied the interrelationship between remittances and GDP growth in the country. Rahman and Montclare (2021) the appropriate knowledge about 'Comparative Indigenous Folklore Theory' is taken. With regard to this theory, the potential social aspects and challenges of migration in different parts of Bangladesh are discussed using local traditional verses and literature. Rahman (2018) studied the practical contributions of folk cultural elements to social development. Several examples of how the essence of indigenous intangible folklore changes with context, along with geographic and social shifts such as internal and international migration.

From the study of literature review, it shows that the study did not show how migrants' remittances impacted marginalized rural households after migration. This study explores the role that migration plays in the socio-economic transformation of migrant families through social survey methods. Remittances play a significant role in Bangladesh's GDP. The relationship between remittances and GDP is discussed in most studies. However, very little research has examined the level of economic and social emancipation of migrant families at the rural level. Therefore, we tried to determine the extent to which migration affects the socioeconomic and folkloric status of rural households.

### **3. Data and Methodology**

Social survey method is used in this study. *Families are considered to be the main respondent of this research study. The data were collected through interview method from the mature members of a family such as students who are above 21 years old, farmers, housewives, etc. 32 migrant families were randomly selected from the northeastern part of Bangladesh for the study. The data has been collected from Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Habiganj districts.*

The descriptive research design was used to complete the research. In the aspect of social surveys, semi-structured questionnaires and guide questionnaires have been used. The schedule included respondent age, gender, occupation, household income, expenditure, family pattern, residential status, housing status, health facilities, possession of prestigious goods, vehicles, land, and flow of remittance. Various types of folk songs have been collected from the regions, which have been discussed. In the present study, data has been collected mainly from primary sources. Secondary sources also have been used as required. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel are used to analyze the data. A simple random sampling technique was used to reduce selection bias and to ensure representation of different migrant household profiles. The sample size was constrained by time and resource limitations but was sufficient for descriptive analysis at the household level.

Given the exploratory nature of the study and the focus on household-level socio-economic change, descriptive statistical analysis was considered appropriate to capture patterns of variation before and after migration. Actually this study is based on a relatively small sample, which limits statistical generalizability. However, the research is intended as an exploratory, context-specific case study focusing on northeastern Bangladesh, providing in-depth descriptive insights rather than nationally representative conclusions.

### **4. Results and Discussions**

A household is a social organization of various dimensions. As it has its own characteristics, it also has economic and social aspects. Since the family is a part of the society, its social aspect is also structurally significant. Following this, in research, we tried to analyze the socioeconomic status of rural households following migration given below.

#### 4.1 The Pattern of the Respondents' Family

Migrant families may be structurally nuclear or joint families, where their percentages are given below Figure 1.

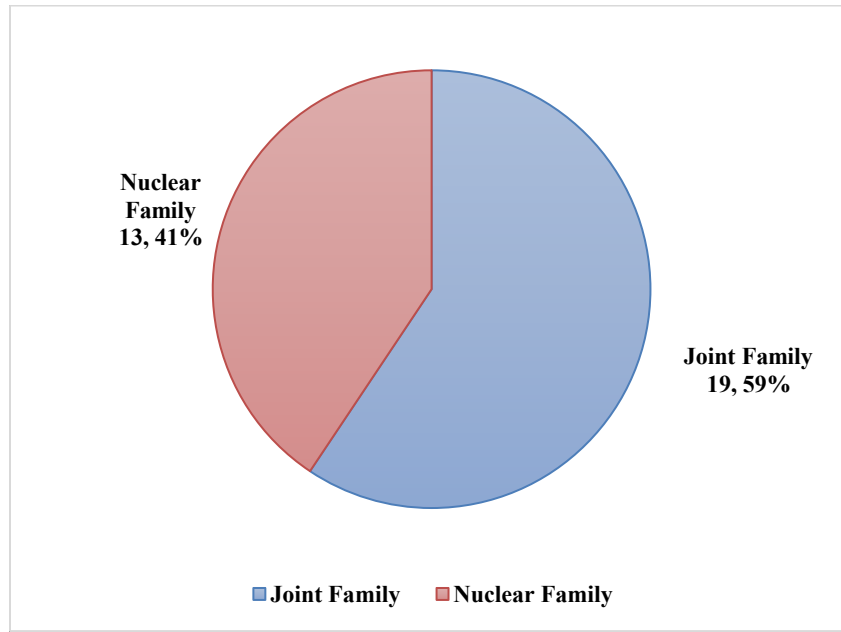


Figure 1. Pattern of the Respondents' Family

Figure 1 explains that migrant families may be structurally nuclear or joint families. In the northeastern part of Bangladesh, the nuclear family is 41% and the joint family is 59%.

#### 4.2 Migration Cost

The actual migration cost from Bangladesh is very high. The migration costs of the household are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Migration cost

Cost	No. of household	Percentage (%)
0 – 200000	1	3.13
200000 – 300000	4	12.50
300000 – 400000	11	34.38
400000 – 500000	9	28.13
500000 – 600000	6	18.75
600000 +	1	3.13
Total	32	100

Table 1 illustrates that a mere 3.13% of household migration expenditures fall under the 2 lakhs bracket. The costs of household relocation range from 3 lakhs to 4 lakhs, or 34.38%. The relocation expenditures for 28.13% of households are between 4 and 5 lakhs, while 18.75% are between 5 and 6 lakhs. The migration expenditures incurred by households exceed 6 lakhs by 3.13%.

#### *4.3 Monthly income of the family before and after migration*

The impact of migration on family income depends on a variety of factors, including the skill level of migrants, the length of stay, the destination, and the conditions of work. The monthly income of the family before and after migration is shown in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Monthly income of the family before and after migration

Monthly Income (BDT)	Before Migration		Monthly Income (BDT)	After Migration	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
5000 – 10000	15	46.88	15000 – 25000	11	34.38
10000 – 15000	8	25.00	25000 – 35000	11	34.38
15000 – 20000	5	15.63	35000 – 45000	4	12.50
20000 – 25000	4	12.5	45000 – 55000	1	3.13
25000 +	0	0.00	55000 +	5	15.63
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

According to Table 2, prior to migration, monthly incomes for 46.88% of households were between Taka 5000 and 10,000, whereas 25% of households earned between Taka 10000 and 15000. The monthly income of 15.63% of households was between Taka 15000 and 20000. No household in this study had an income beyond Taka 25,000 before to relocation. Following migration, the monthly income of 34.38% of households is Taka 15000 to 25000, 34.38% of households is Taka 25000 to 35000, and 12.50% of households is Taka 35000 to 45000. Once more, 3.13% of households earn between Taka 45000 and Taka 55000 per month, while 15.63% of households earn more than Taka 55000. At last, It is evident that the monthly income received by migrant families can increase significantly, as migrant workers are often able to earn higher wages abroad. This increase in household income after migration is consistent with earlier findings by Ahmed (2012) and Sikder et al. (2017), who also observed significant income growth among migrant households due to remittance inflows.

#### *4.4 Monthly expenditure of the family before and after migration*

The monthly expenditure of families before and after migration from Bangladesh can also vary significantly. This is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Monthly expenditure of the family before and after migration

Monthly Expenditure (BDT)	Before Migration		Monthly Expenditure (BDT)	After Migration	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
5000 – 10000	6	18.75	15000 – 25000	13	40.63
10000 – 15000	14	43.75	25000 – 35000	15	46.88
15000 – 20000	7	21.88	35000 – 45000	2	6.25
20000 – 25000	2	6.25	45000 – 55000	1	3.13
25000 +	3	9.38	55000 +	1	3.13
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

From the above Table 3, we can see that 18.75% of households have monthly expenditures of Taka 5000 – 1000, 43.75% have monthly expenditures of Taka 10000 to 15000, 21.88% have monthly expenditures of Taka 15000 to 20000, and 6.25% have monthly expenditures of Taka 20000 to 25000. But only 9.38% of households’ monthly expenditure is more than Taka 25000 before migration. After migration, there are 40.63% of households’ monthly expenditures of Taka 15000 to 25000, 46.88% are Taka 25000 to 35000, 6.25% are Taka 35000 to 45000, and 3.13% are Taka 45000 to 55000. But only 3.13% of households’ monthly expenditures are taka above 55000. Before migration, the monthly expenditure of the family is lower than after migration. After migration to a developed country, the family’s monthly expenditure changed significantly. Overall, the family’s monthly expenditure has increased after migration, but so has their standard of living.

#### 4.5 Receipt of monthly remittance

Globalization and liberalization have led to a significant increase in remittance flows in countries such as China, the Philippines, India, Mexico, and Bangladesh, even in the face of new restrictions implemented after the events of 9/11 (Rashid, 2011). Depending on the duration and type of work of the migrants and how much foreign currency they sent to the family as remittance at the end of the month. This is illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: Receipt of monthly remittance

Monthly remittance (Taka)	No. of household	Percentage (%)
5000 – 20000	8	25.00
20000 – 30000	10	31.25
30000 – 40000	11	34.38
40000 – 50000	1	3.13
60000 +	2	6.25
Total	32	100.0

Table 4 shows the receipt of monthly remittances from the migrants. From the table, the evidence suggests that 25% of households receive remittances of Taka 5000 to 20000, 31.25% of households receive remittances of Taka 20000 to 30000, 34.38% receive Taka 30000 to 40000, and 3.13% of households receive Taka within 40000 to 50000. But 6.25% of households receive taka more than 60000 from migrants who have good jobs.

#### 4.6 The main source of income of the family before and after migration

Before migration, the main source of income for the family in the northeastern part of Bangladesh was agriculture, business, job, etc. But after migration, the main source of income for most of the families is remittance. This is represented graphically below in Table 5.

Table 5: Source of income of the family before and after migration

Source of income	Before Migration		Source of income	After Migration	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Agriculture	14	43.75	Agriculture	4	12.50
Business	5	15.63	Job	1	3.13
Job	13	40.63	Remittance	27	84.38
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

From the above Table 5, we can see that before migration, 43.75% of households' main source of income was agriculture, 15.63% was business, and 40.63% was business. But the findings indicate, 84.38% of households' main source of income is remittance, and 12.50% is agriculture. But only 3.13% of households' main source of income is a job.

#### 4.7 Amount of possession of prestigious goods after migration

The amount of possession of prestigious goods is an important variable in a family. The findings indicate, the use of these goods has increased. This is represented in the following Figure 2.

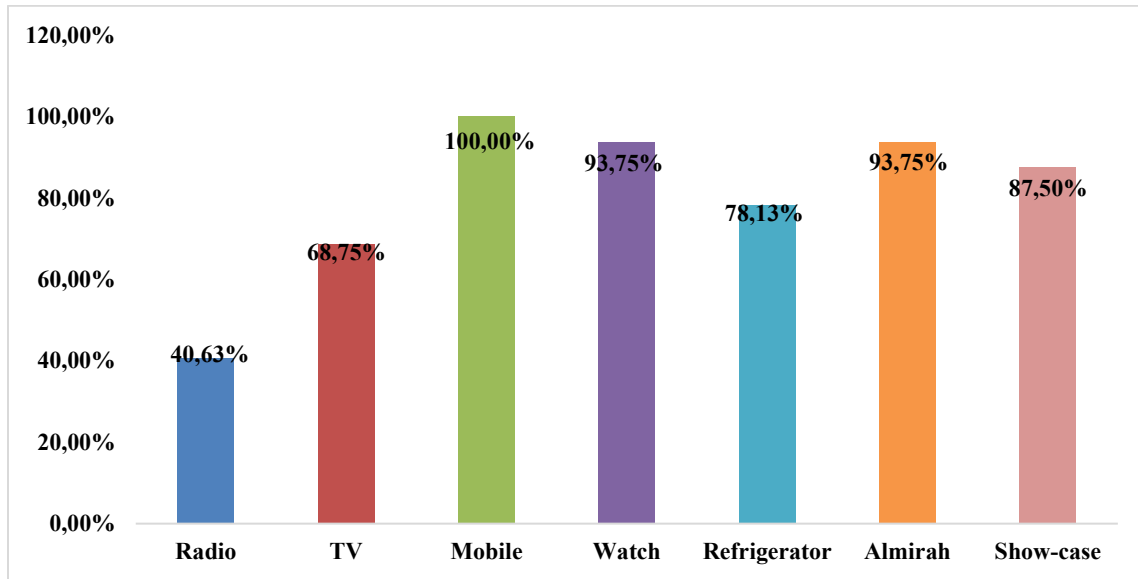


Figure 2: Amount of Possession of Prestigious Goods After Migration

From the above Figure 2, It appears that 40.63% of households have a radio, and 68.75% of households have a TV After migration. In addition, it may be concluded that all of the families or households have mobile phones following migration. The highest 100% of the migrant families possessed prestigious goods like mobile phones after migration. Migration affects household use of mobile phones. 93.75% of households have Watch, 78.13% of households have Refrigerator, 93.75% of households have Almirah, and 87.50% of households have Showcase in post-migration.

#### 4.8 Possession of vehicle after migration

Vehicle is an important variable to determine the economic status of the family. The vehicle is shown in the following Figure 3.

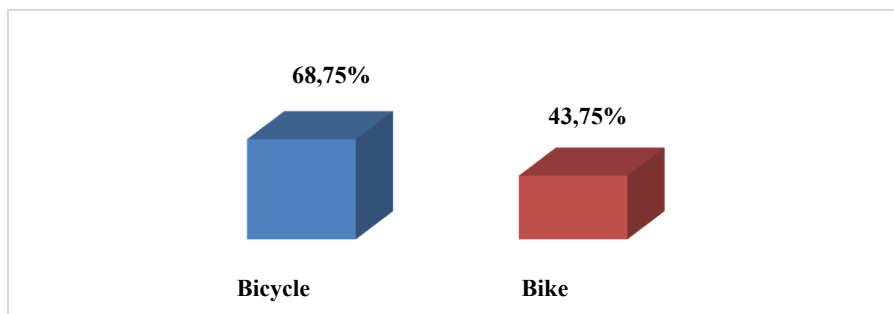


Figure 3: Possession of Vehicle After Migration

From the above Figure 3, it is clear that the highest 68.75% percent of the migrant households possessed vehicles like bicycles. But only 43.75% of households have motorcycles following migration.

#### 4.9 Amount of land of the respondents' family

The amount of land is an important economic indicator of the rural household. In rural households, land was very low before migration. After migration, land is increased in most of the households. This is depicted in the following Table 6.

Table 6: Amount of land of the respondents' family

Before Migration			After Migration		
Amount of land (Decimal)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Amount of land (Decimal)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
0 – 10	8	25.00	0 – 15	5	15.63
10 – 20	11	34.38	15 – 30	10	31.25
20 – 30	6	18.75	30 – 45	5	15.63
30 – 40	6	18.75	45 – 60	1	3.13
40 – 50	0	0.00	60 – 75	4	12.50
50 – 60	0	0.00	75 – 90	4	12.50
60 +	1	3.13	90 +	3	9.38
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

From the above Table 6, shows that 25% of households have within 10 decimal amounts of land before migration. 34.38% of households have 10 to 20 decimals, 18.75% of households have 30 to 40 decimals, and 3.13% of households have above 60 decimal amounts of land before migration. But following migration, 15.63% of the household has within 15 decimal amounts of land. The highest 31.25% of households have 15 to 30 decimal amounts of land after migration. 15.63% of households have a 30 to 45 decimal amount of land, 3.13% have a 45 to 60 decimal amount of land, 12.50% have a 60 to 75 decimal amount of land, and 12.50% have a 75 to 90 decimal amount of land upon migration. 9.38% of households have more than 90 decimal amounts of land after migration. So, it can be stated that, subsequent to migration, land is increased.

#### 4.10 Economic status of the respondent family

From the below Figure 4, it may be concluded that the extent of changes is assigned through, like, no change, medium change, high change, and very high change. 12.50% of households have no change in the aftermath of migration. The highest 43.75% of households have a medium change in economic status after migration. 28.13% of households have a high change of economic status following migration. At last, the findings indicate that international migration contributes to 15.63% of households have

very high changes in economic status following migration. So, the findings indicate, after migration, positive changes in economic status exist in rural households.

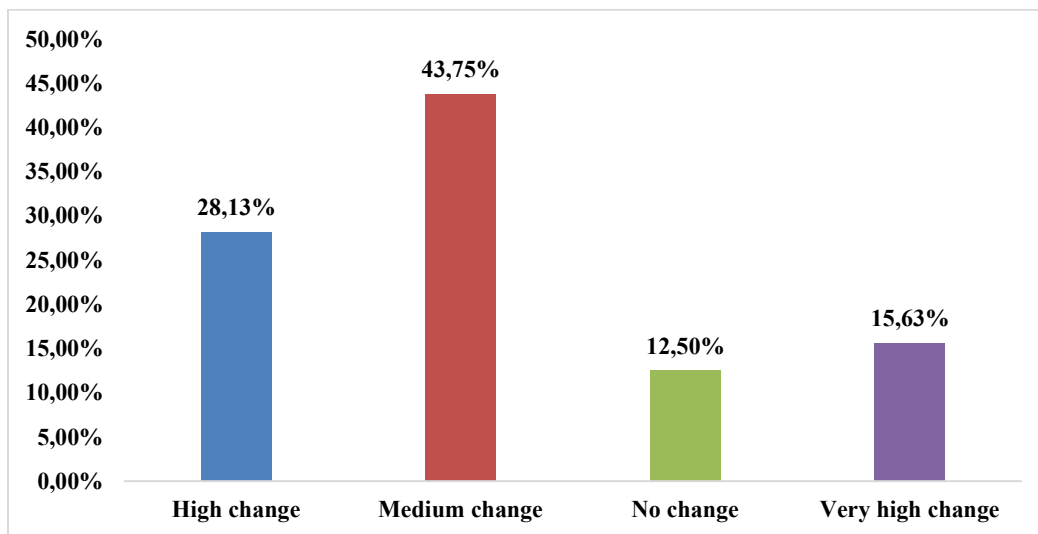


Figure 4: Change in Economic Status After Migration

#### 4.11 Residential status of the respondent family

Residential status is an important social indicator. Types of housing primarily demonstrate the social status of a family (Islam, 2007). There are four types of houses that exist in rural areas. This is depicted in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Residential status of the respondent family

Residential status	Before Migration		After Migration		
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Residential status	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Straw house	3	9.38	Tin shade	5	15.63
Tin shade	15	46.88	Semi-pacca (Half brick-built house)	14	43.75
Semi pacca (Half brick-built house)	14	43.75	Pacca (Brick-built house))	13	40.63
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

We can observe from Table 7 above that there were four different types of homes: semi-pacca, pacca, straw houses, and tin sheds. Prior to migration, semi-pacca accounted for 43.75% of households, tin shade for 46.88% of households, and straw dwellings for

9.38% of households. Due to migration, there were fewer straw houses in rural regions (15.63% of households), semi-pacca households (43.75% of households), and Tin Shade households (15.63% of households). Once more, 40.63% of households in Pacca still reside there following migration. Similar improvements in housing quality and asset ownership were reported by Chowdhury (2014), suggesting that migration-induced remittances play a critical role in rural capital accumulation.

*4.12 Sanitation facilities of the respondents' household*

The level of sanitation facilities determines a family's social status. There are three types of sanitation available in rural areas, such as Katcha (Non-sanitary) and sanitary, which were used before migration. But sanitary and perfect sanitation are used after migration. This is displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Sanitation facilities of the respondents' household

Sanitation status	Before Migration		Sanitation status	After Migration	
	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)		Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Kacha (non-sanitary)	14	43.75	Sanitary	15	46.88
Sanitary	18	56.25	Perfect sanitation	17	53.13
Total	32	100	Total	32	100

Table 8 reveals the sanitation facilities of the respondents. It shows that after migration, about 53.13% of households use perfect sanitation, and 46.88% of households are in sanitation facilities. There was no perfect sanitation used in rural households. Before migration, 43.75% of households used katcha (non-sanitary) and 56.25% of households used sanitary latrine. There was no respondent who used a non-sanitary latrine after migration.

*4.13 Health facilities of the respondents' family*

In this study, four types of facilities, such as homeopathic doctors, DMF doctors, MBBS doctors, and private hospitals, were taken into consideration. Figure 5 reveals that about 50%, 43.75%, and 6.25% of the households took facilities of homeopathic, DMF, and MBBS doctors, respectively, before migration. It has been changed after migration. There was no respondent who took the facilities of a homeopathic doctor after migration. Facilities of DMF doctors decreased to 18.75% from 43.75% after migration. There were 6.25 percent of households who took medical facilities of an MBBS doctor before migration, which increased to 62.50% of households after migration.

There was no respondent who took facilities of a private hospital before migration, but 18.75% of households take facilities of a private hospital.

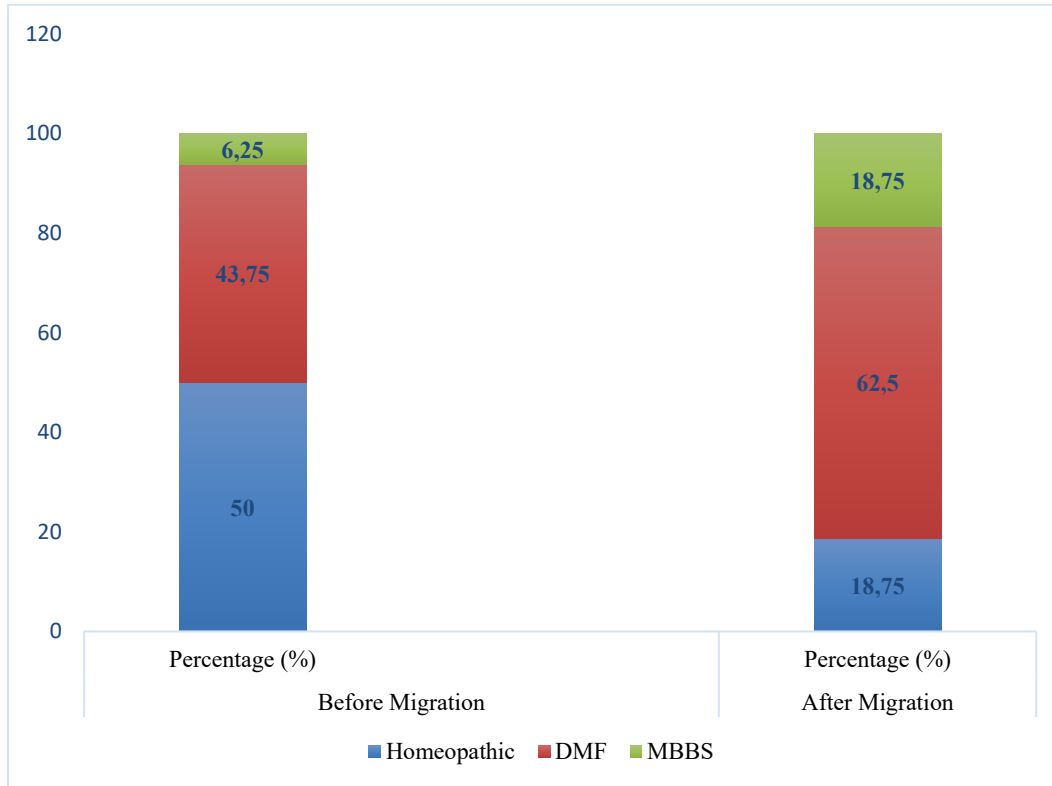


Figure 5: Healthcare Facilities Before and After Migration.

Note: DMF: Drug Master File; MBBS: Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

#### 4.14 Source of using water of the family before and after migration

From Figure 6, the study found pond and tube well water for cooking and other purposes. Of them, 46.88% of households used pond water, and 53.13% used tube well water before migration. There was no respondent who used deep tube well water before migration. Subsequent to migration, only 9.38% of households use pond water, and 68.75% of households use tube well water. 21.88% of households use deep tube well water after migration.

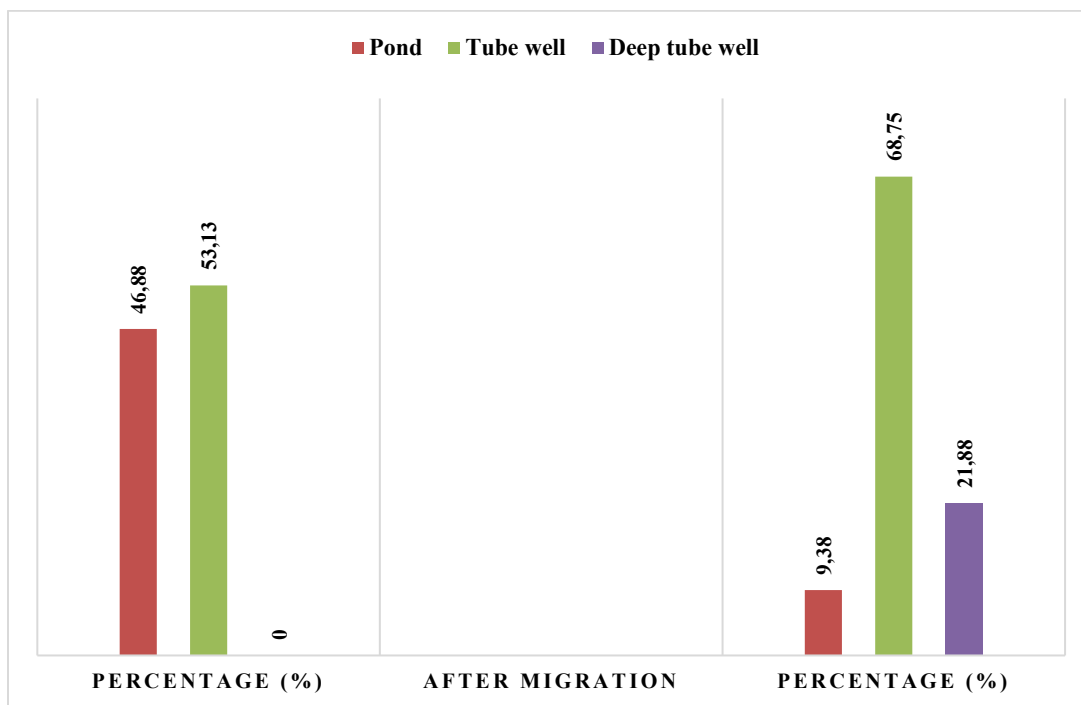


Figure 6: Sources of Water Before and After Migration

4.15 Educational qualification of the migrants’ family

Education is the backbone of a nation. The educational qualification of the migrant family is an important issue in determining social status. Its data can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Educational qualification of the migrants’ family

Educational Qualification	Number of households	Percentage (%)
Primary	20	62.50%
Secondary	20	62.50%
Inter-mediate	18	56.25%
Graduate	12	37.50%
Post-graduate	3	9.38%

From the above Table 9, this shows that 62.50% of households’ students are studying at primary and secondary levels subsequent to migration. The intermediate level is 56.25%, and the graduate is 37.50%. There are only 9.38% of rural households with postgraduate students. From the above discussion, It follows that upon migration, there are fewer students studying at the graduate and postgraduate levels.

#### *4.16 Change of social status subsequent to migration*

The change in social status is divided into three categories. The following table shows the respondents' social status.

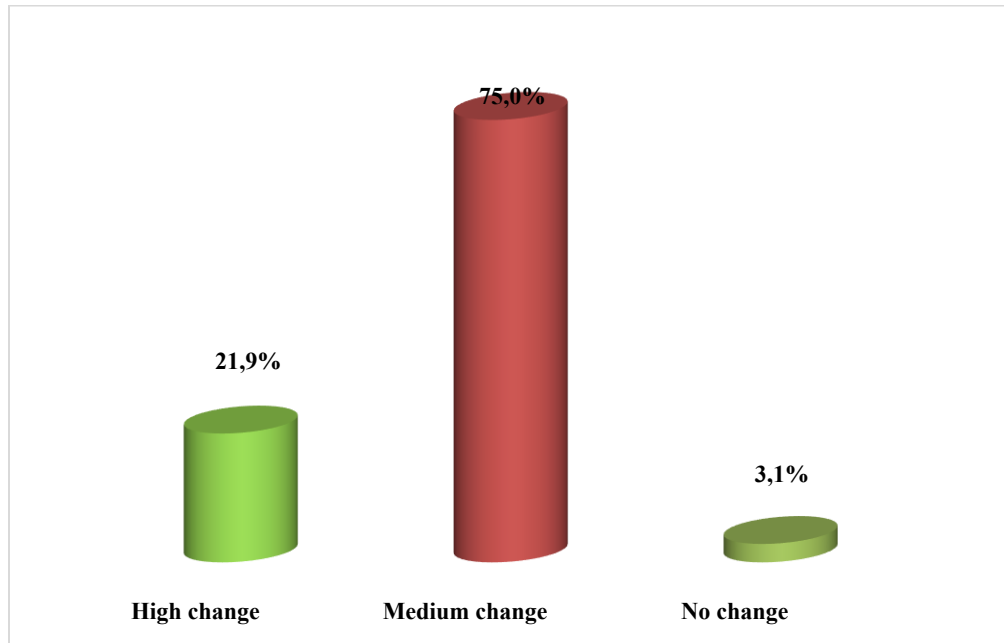


Figure 7: Change of Social Status of the Family After Migration

From the above Figure 7, it is reasonable to suggest that only 3.1% of households' social status is no change upon migration. But 75% of households' social status is medium change, and 21.3% of households are high change after migration.

#### *4.17 Impact of Folk Culture on International Migration*

Folk songs and rhymes in the Sylhet region function not only as cultural expressions but also as social narratives that normalize, motivate, and legitimize international migration. These cultural texts reflect aspirations related to economic mobility, social prestige, and improved living standards, thereby linking symbolic meaning with material socio-economic outcomes. Such cultural representations reinforce migration decisions, which in turn contribute to observable changes in income, housing, land ownership, and social status documented in this study. In the early decades of the 1960s, the gurgitation of going to London began among the people of the Northeastern Part of Bangladesh (NPB). For a long time, many people from the NPB have been living in London. People from the NPB are also working in different countries around the world. They have achieved significant economic development. Besides this, through literature, journalism,

and cultural tendencies, they have generated a unique receptacle of emotions. A strong bond has been constructed between the majority of the people of the northeastern part of Bangladesh and London, which has influenced Sylheti's indigenous intangible folklore. In a popular folksong, we listen to the following verses and literature,

সিলেট পাইলে যেমন তেমন  
ঢাকাত পাইলে কই আছেন কেমন।  
লন্ডন পাইলে ধরিয়া কই  
ও আমার সিলেটি ভাইসাব  
লন্ডন যাইমু, আমেরিকা যাইমু  
যাইমু গো জার্মানী।  
পিয়াসী পরানে চায় আমার  
সুরমা গঙ্গের পানি। (Chowdhury 2003, p. 11).

(Metaphorical Meaning: When we meet local people in your own area Sylhet, there is very little mutual emotion or kindness but when we meet in Dhaka, the capital of the country, the passion and love for each other works a lot. Again, when I go abroad, i.e., London, America, Germany I remember my own area, country especially the traditional Surma River of Sylhet. That is, as the distance increases, the people, nature, river, and environment of the locality are perceived more in the mind).

Some people, by going abroad and earning sufficient amount of money, have improved their wretchedness. So, the desire to go to London becomes profoundly ingrained within everyone. Even if they sell their property or most cherished possessions, they will go to London. This aspect has also greatly expressed in the following Sylheti folksong,

‘উঠলরে লন্ডনের জ্বর, জমি বাড়ী বিক্রি কর  
তাড়াতাড়ি পাসপোর্ট কর, দিনত গইয়া যায়।  
ভাই বন্ধুরা যতই ছিল, সকলেই লন্ডলে গেল  
দেশটা উজাড় পড়লো, কি করি উপায়  
মুল্লা-মুন্সি যতছিল, তারাও দেওয়ানা হইল  
ফটোটা তুলিতে বেটায় দাঁড়িটা মুন্ডায়।’(Chowdhury 2003, p. 11).

(Metaphorical Meaning: Everybody is tempted to go to London. To go to London everyone is eager to sell their land, and get their passports. Brothers, friends, and relatives, all living in their own country go to the dream area of London. Even local religious leaders are busy living their religious work by cutting their beards (which is one of the symbols of Muslims) and taking passport-sized photos for immigration activities to go to London).

Many parents prefer those who are either living abroad or have returned from London. Such young men expose them by the following indigenous element of folk rhyme,

‘সুট কুট ঠাই ফিন্দি  
যাই আমি লন্ডনি  
লন্ডন থাকি আইয়া  
করি ফুটানি।’ (Chowdhury 2003, p. 12).

(Metaphorical Meaning: Everyone is going to London, wearing European clothes such as Suits, Coats, and Ties by leaving traditional Bengali clothes. After returning from London, somebody is drunkenly roaming the area with the approach of Europeans).

In society, greater importance is often placed on a girl’s outlook in the context of marriage, while for a girl who lives in London, the emphasis on outlook is noncrucial.

‘লন্ডন পাসপোর্ট কইন্যার রূপের কি দরকার  
খবর পাইয়া জামাই উঠলা হাজারে হাজার  
কেই কইন জমিন জিরাত সবকিছু নিয়া  
কেবল কইন্যার দেও আমার কাছে বিয়া  
যাইতাম লন্ডনের দেশে নিয়া।’ (Chowdhury 2003, pp. 12–13).

(Metaphorical Meaning: A bride with a London passport is more important in marriage. Many do not hesitate to sell their land and property to marry such types of girls living in London).

London is the dream city for the people of the northeastern part of Bangladesh. The value of an ordinary London-returnee bride is inestimable, similarly, the value of a London-returnee groom is inestimable. As such,

‘লন্ডনী দামান্দ মিয়া জাতের কি দরকার  
ধন কড়ি থাকলেই অইলো জাতের নাই বিচার।  
টেকার নাম চধরী খনকার, টেকায় কিনা করে  
টেকার জোরে মেকুরেও বাঘের খাপ ধরে  
দামান্দ ফিরাইও না।’ (Chowdhury 2003, p. 14).

(Metaphorical Meaning: In the case of marriage, the groom in London is also very important to the bride’s parents. Generally, the social status of the bride’s family is not considered in this case, i.e., the bride's presence in London and their financial ability are considered important rather than the family identity of social status).

The current of that trend has also increased. Achiya, Chaya, and Kuthina were found as symbols of rural women in that society. The lack of exposure to different aspects of

the country leads to the origination of a reflection of scarcity and backwardness, resulting in different problems. In addition, even as the sons-in-law return from London, the complacency of the daughters is absent. Such situations have existed for a long time. These individuals are unhappy, but their melancholy is not primarily monetary, but rather tumultuous. We can understand it clearly through the following indigenous intangible folklore of verses,

‘কঠিনা গো কুঠিনা খন্ডলি,  
কুঠিনার জামাই লন্ডনী,  
কুঠিনা গেল গাই থিরানিত্  
গাইয়ে মারলো লাত,  
কুঠিনায় কয় বাফরে বাফ।’ (Chowdhury 2003, pp. 15–16).

‘আছিয়া আছিয়া এলাচি  
আছিয়ার জামাই বিদেশী  
আছিয়া যদি জানত  
চিঠি দিয়া আনত।’ (Chowdhury 2003, p. 17).

‘ছায়া মায় চৌকির পায়  
চৌকির ডাহে টনটন  
ছায়ার জামাই লন্ডন।’ (Chowdhury 2003, pp. 17–18).

(Metaphorical Meaning: The whole plot of the folk rhyme revolves around local three women namely Kuthina, Achia, and Maya’s expatriate husband from London. As the husbands of these three women living in London, the fact that society shows more importance to them is manifested in various ways).

## **5. Conclusion**

This study examines the impact of international migration on the socioeconomic status of rural households in northeastern Bangladesh through an integrated socio-economic and cultural analysis. The findings demonstrate that international migration has significantly improved key household indicators, including income, expenditure capacity, land ownership, housing conditions, access to sanitation, safe water, and healthcare services. Remittance inflows have emerged as the principal driver of these positive changes, reshaping household livelihoods and enhancing overall living standards. Beyond material improvements, the study reveals that folk songs and rhymes play a crucial role in shaping migration aspirations by normalizing overseas mobility and associating it with social prestige and economic security. These cultural narratives both reflect and reinforce migration decisions, creating a dynamic link between symbolic expression and socioeconomic transformation. While the study is based on a limited sample size, its findings provide context-specific insights into how migration operates as a livelihood

strategy at the household level. The study therefore contributes to a deeper understanding of international migration as a multidimensional process encompassing economic, social, and cultural dimensions in rural Bangladesh.

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