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Migrants' Remittance and Its Impact on Social Structure: A Case Study of Londoni Gaon

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University of Rajshahi

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Migrants' Remittance and Its Impact on Social Structure:
A Case Study of Londoni Gaon

By

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the effects of remittance on the social structure of a village in Bangladesh. The study has been designed in nine chapters, along with a chapter making detailed descriptions on different theoretical propositions regarding migration. It has also investigated the causes, process and the time of migration, and has revealed that the kinship-tie helped to overcome the intervening obstacles between the place of origin and that of destination to complete the process of migration.

The remittance in fact pulled the migrant families from the arena of extreme poverty to affluence within a shortest possible time but failed to generate significant productive activities for the overall improvement of the village economy. The inflow of remittance has directly influenced the existing organization of production and brought about changes in one's position in it. It has also brought changes in the life style of the migrant families. Vertical mobility is also taking place in the village and the persons with remittance have already established their effective control over the power structure of the village.

The condition of the women having migrant husbands but staying in the village is really precarious. Many of them have married knowing that they may have to remain away from their husbands for the major part of their conjugal life. They are to perform the functions of rearing the children and looking after the household affairs, thereby changing their role in the household from working women to supervisors.

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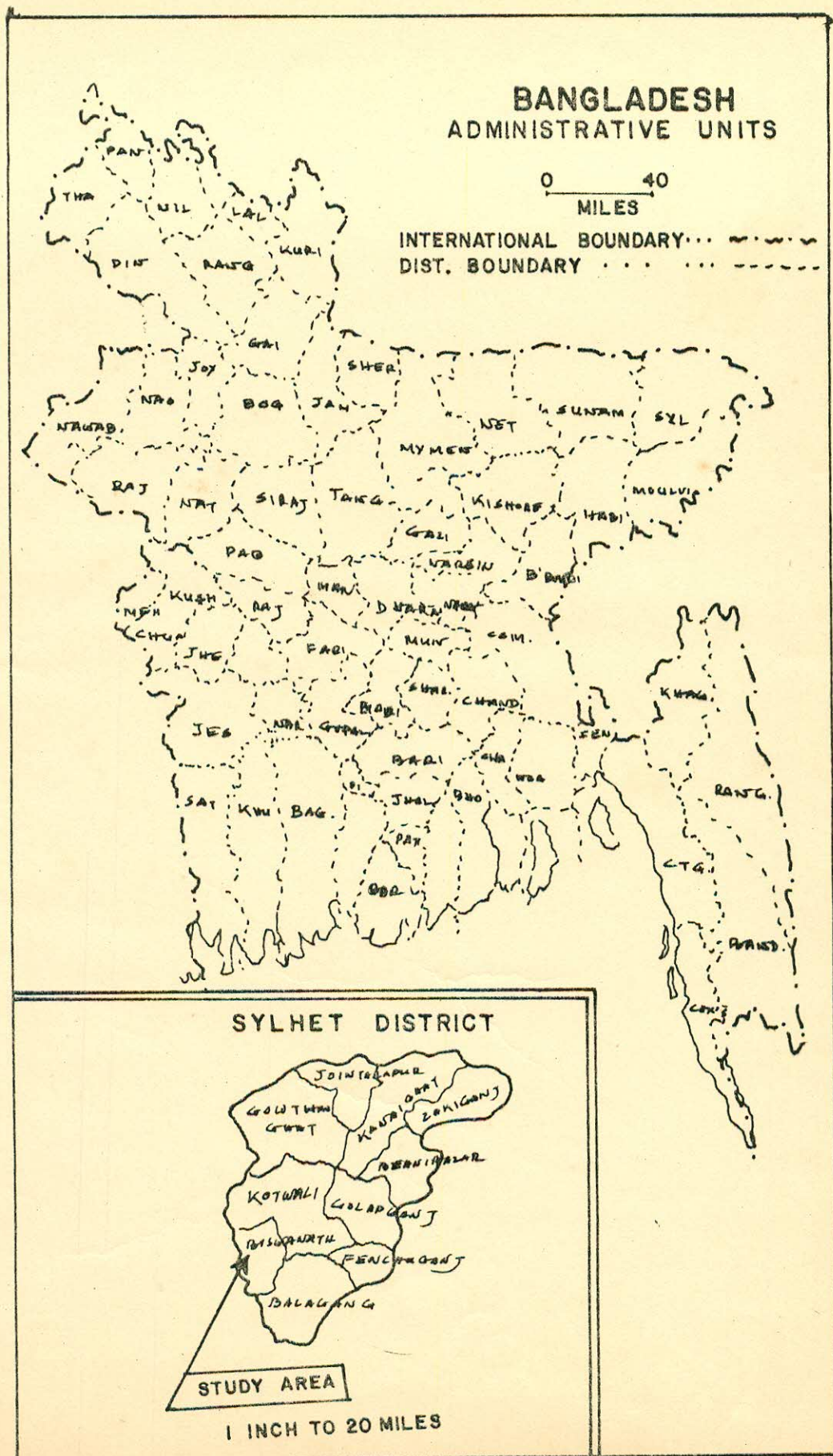


FIG. 1

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

International migration is an old phenomenon. People had always changed their places of residence for various reasons. In contemporary world too, people migrate from one country to another for reasons like economic hardships in the country of origin, political and religious persecution etc. Some migrants in modern times, as opposed to settlers of earlier days, maintain links with their kith and kin at home and in most cases remit home a part of their income. Emigration from Bangladesh is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although a regular flow of small number of Bangladeshis have been emigrating to England from the colonial times, the volume has certainly accelerated since the partition of India in 1947. Of late the sheer number of emigrants has grown in great proportion. Their destination no longer remains England alone but they have found way to oil rich Middle and Near Eastern countries as well. Most of them remit home a part of their income too. For the purpose of the present study I have choosen a local community, that is, a village in Sylhet district (Bangladesh) which is known to have a long ranging tradition of emigration, to assess the impact of foreign remittance on the village life.

The Research Problem

The Bangladeshi community of workers and emigrants are somewhat different from settlers of the colonial era, on account of a number of reasons. Foremost among these is a steady flow of remittance from their place of work. In the last decade migration from Bangladesh either on a

purely temporary or semi permanent basis had recorded a sharp rise, and so had the remittance income for Bangladesh.

It is evident from the statistics that in 1976, 6087 persons emigrated and sent back an amount of 600.1 million takas as remittance in 1975-76 financial year, while in 1982, 58,320 persons emigrated and the amount of remittances had increased to 8396.7 million takas in 1981-82 financial year.¹

International migration has a far reaching consequences on the social structure of Bangladesh. Remittance income has created a steady cash flow at the hands of the emigrants' families. Due to the currency regulations of the country the recipients of remittance receive the local currency equivalents of the foreign currency, while the foreign exchange is kept at commercial banks. The consequences of the cash flow in a local community are manifold. The most obvious noticeable changes are in consumption pattern expenditure on unproductive assets like ornaments and speculative expenditure on land, houses etc., and perhaps restructuring of the existing class structure. It is necessary to mention that the people who migrated to U.K. were mostly from rural areas. It has been found in a recent study that, out of the total number of migrants from the districts of Sylhet, 89.3 per cent were from rural areas and only 10.7 per cent were urban migrants.² Therefore, since most of the migrants are from village areas,

¹ Monthly Statistical Bulletin of Bangladesh, Vol. XII, June 1983. See table 2.6, p. 13 and table 11.3, p. 141.

² Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" in Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East. World Bank Staff Working Paper, No. 454, 1981, p. 38.

it is quite expected that the money they send to their kith and kin also goes to village. Thus, for any study directed to assess the impact of foreign remittances on grass-root level, probably a village would be a most appropriate unit. I, therefore, would like to examine the overall impact of foreign money as cash flow on the 'village social structure'. It is important to mention that in this research, no hypothesis was formulated to test its validity; I have kept my mind open to assess any noticeable change that took place due to the inflow of foreign money in the village community. To accomplish this, I have made an extensive review of the available village studies on Bangladesh to get a general idea about the rural social structure of Bangladesh, so that the changes taking place due to the inflow of foreign money can be identified easily.

However, the above issues will be explored in the study area. The present study hopes to demonstrate the complex interplay of variables that shape the social and economic structure of the micro level village community. It will examine from a socio-economic perspective of the social change and social mobility stemming from the migration of its inhabitants.

It is argued that, in the case of migration whether it is internal or international, the population both at the area of origin and that at the area of destination should be studied. Because when migration streams develop between two areas, both must be studied if effects are to be properly determined.³ M.S.A. Rao also holds the same opinion when he says, "the best

3

Bouvier, Leon F. et al., Migration, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, Population Reference Bureau, Inc., Vol. 32, No. 4, 1977, p. 4.

methodology to study migration is to make double ended studies, i.e., studies of migrants both at the place of destination and of origin.⁴

However, here we are not exclusively concerned with the demographic aspect of migration, our main emphasis is directed to study the impact of foreign remittances on the rural social structure.

True, it would have been better for the proper understanding of the different dimensions of the problem, if we had got some information about the migrants place of destination. Since time and resource constraints will not permit us to make double ended studies, we, therefore, shall have to remain content with studying the place of origin alone.

Justification of the Study

Foreign remittances have gradually become an important factor in our socio-economic life. It has already occupied an important place in financing our import.

Table - 1

Total Value of Remittances Received

Year	Remittances (In million Taka)
1975-76	660.1
1976-77	992.7
1977-78	1541.6
1978-79	1892.3
1979-80	3785.3
1980-81	6197.4
1981-82	8396.7

Source: Monthly Statistical Bulletin of Bangladesh, Vol. XII, June 1983.
See table 11.3 on page 141.

⁴Rao, M.S.A. "Some Aspects of Sociology of Migration" in Sociological Bulletin, Vol. 30, No. I, 1981, p. 33.

Table - 1 has shown that foreign exchange earnings through Bank transfer under the wage earners scheme amounted to taka 8396.7 million by the end of 1981-82 financial year. The Finance Minister of Bangladesh in his 1982-83 budget speech said, "our compatriots abroad have assisted us a great deal in financing our import. We hope foreign exchange remittances by them next year would exceed the level of taka 1000 crore".⁵

Moreover, the present rate of earning will increase significantly due to government's emphasis on man-power export. It is also one of the objectives of the Second Five Year Plan to make a headway in the overseas job market and to substantially raise the annual man-power export.⁶

It is evident from Table - 2 that the export of manpower has been significantly increasing since 1975. Thus, this issue deserves the attention of sociologists for investigating the changing pattern of rural social structure due to the inflow of foreign money and also for proper understanding of the socio-economic condition of the family of migrants.

Now it is necessary to explain some of the relevant concepts which we shall use frequently in our study.

Migrants: "If we define migration as the permanent movement of persons or groups over a significant distance, some of the key terms of this definition ("permanent", "significant") are ambiguous and in practice have to be delimited by an arbitrary criterion. A farmer who goes to the nearest town on a Saturday to buy a suit, we feel, is not a migrant. A person who leaves

⁵The Bangladesh Times, July 1, 1982.

⁶Second Five Year Plan (1980-85), Bangladesh. Chapter XVIII:7.

Table - 2

Yearly Increase in Number of Bangladeshi Migrants
(1975-1982)

Year	Total number of Migrants	Per cent Increase
1975	765	Not mentioned
1976	6,087	695.68
1977	15,728	158.34
1978	22,809	45.05
1979	24,485	7.36
1980	30,573	6.33
1981	55,787	82.47
1982	58,320	4.54
Total :		

Source: Bureau of Statistics for 1975 data. Bureau of Manpower,
Employment and Training for 1976-1982 data.

his home and goes to another country and settles there for the rest of his life, on the other hand, is a migrant. But between these two extremes lies a bewildering array of intermediate instances; and such criteria as distance, duration of stay, and importance of purpose do not clarify the concept entirely".⁷

⁷Peterson, William, Population. London: The Macmillan Company
Collier-Macmillan Limited, 1969, p. 41.

Everett Lee has defined migration as "a permanent or semi.-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration".⁸ M.S.A. Rao has defined migration as "a shift in the place of residence for some length of time. While it excludes short visits and tours, it includes different types of both voluntary and involuntary movements".⁹ Ralph Thomlinson sees a migrant as a person who "changes his place of normal habitation for a substantial period of time, crossing a political boundary in the process".¹⁰

Thus, according to Max Lacroix, "no objective natural criterion exists on the basis of which migrants distinguish themselves from travellers, ... (and) one should not expect to arrive at a unique criterion or definition of migration".¹¹ For the purpose of our study we shall use the term 'migrants' for those who are going to work outside Bangladesh leaving behind their families at home, and return to them after some months or years of earnings and saving (or remitting). Wayne A. Cornelius termed this type of migrants as "temporary migrants".¹²

⁸Lee, Everett S. Demography, 3, 1966, 47-57. Reprinted in Population Geography: A Reader - Demko, George J., Harold M. Rose, and George A. Schnell - McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1970: 288-306.

⁹Rao, M.S.A. "Some Aspects of Sociology of Migration". Sociological Bulletin, The Journal of the Indian Sociological Society, Vol. 30, No. I, 1981, p. 21.

¹⁰Thomlinson, Ralph. Population Dynamics, Random House, New York, 1965.

¹¹Lacroix, Max. "Problems of Collection and Comparison of Migration Statistics", in Milbank Memorial Fund, 1949, pp. 71-105.

¹²Cornelius, Wayne A. "Migration to the United States: The View from Mexican Rural Communities" in Development Digest, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1979.

Social Structure: "Social structure is one of the central concepts of sociology, but it has not been employed consistently or unambiguously. Though Herbert Spencer (1885), Durkheim (1938), Radcliffe Brown (1952), Firth (1963), Ginsberg (1965), Nadel (1957) and Gerth & Mills (1954), have tried to give it a more precise meaning, but their conceptions of social structure diverse widely".¹³ Ginsberg has defined the concept as "social structure is concerned with the principal forms of social organization i.e., types of groups, associations and institutions and the complex of these which constitute societies".¹⁴

After discussing the different conceptions of social structure Bottomore came to a conclusion and also identified the elements of social structure. He says, "the most useful seems to me that which regards social structure as the complex of the major institutions and groups in society. There is no great difficulty in identifying these institutions and groups. It can be shown that the existence of human society requires certain arrangements or processes; ... The minimum requirements seem to be: (i) a system of communication; (ii) an economic system, dealing with the production and allocation of goods: (iii) arrangements (including the family and education) for the socialization of new generations; (iv) a system of authority and of distribution of power; and perhaps (v) a system of ritual, serving to maintain or increase social cohesion, and to give social recognition to significant

¹³Bottomore, T.B. Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature, Bombay, Blackie and Sons (India) Limited, 1979, 113.

¹⁴Ginsberg, M. Essays in Sociology and Social Philosophy, Vol. I. On the diversity of morals, London, William Heinemann Ltd., 1965: I.

personal events such as birth, puberty, courtship, marriage and death. The major institutions and groups are those concerned with such basic requirements. From them, others may emerge, such as social stratification, which then influence them in turn. There is little disagreement among sociologists about which are major institutions ...¹⁵

However, the focus of attention of the present study will be particularly confined to the economic, political and socio-cultural elements of the social structure.

Social Change: Since the birth of mankind human society has been subject to ceaseless change. Philosophers, sociologists and social anthropologists tried to develop theories on social change to explain the phenomenon, but because of the incessant and manifold character of the concept their theories became unilateral and the conclusions they made were widely diversified. MacIver says, "the term 'change' itself is wholly neutral, implying nothing but a difference through time in the object to which it is applied. When we speak of 'social change', we suggest so far no law, no theory, no direction, even no continuity. The idea of continuity is introduced when we refer to a social change as a process. A process means continuous change taking place in the definite manner through the operation of forces present from the first within the situation ... In studying a process we observe a series of transitions between one state of being and another. There is no necessary implication as to the relative quality of the two states of being, or as to the direction followed. A process may be up or down, forward or backward,

¹⁵Bottomore, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

toward integration or disintegration. All that is meant by process is the definite step-by-step manner through which one state or stage merges into another".¹⁶

Nordskog defined the concept as, "social change means simply the process of becoming different in any sense".¹⁷ Change according to him, is not an evaluative concept, it denotes merely the process of becoming different.

Nordskog distinguished between social and cultural aspects of social change, when he said, "social and cultural aspects of change are in some respects distinguishable, though they are at the same time related to each other. The difference lies in the fact that 'social' refers to 'society', which is not synonymous with 'culture'. Culture includes both material and non-material elements, all of which are products of human society. But society is usually described in psychological terms not applicable to material things, e.g., sociability, gregariousness, association, the capacity to respond to social stimuli, the ability to communicate socially, etc."¹⁸ If the objective 'social' be restricted to these characteristics of society, it follows that social change refers to changes in mechanisms of human association.¹⁹

Here we cannot confine the definition of 'social change' only to the change of social elements of culture i.e., customs, mores, institutions, laws,

¹⁶ MacIver, R.M. et al., Society: An Introductory Analysis, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1949, pp. 521-522.

¹⁷ Nordskog, J.E., Social Change, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 1.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

¹⁹ Ogburn, W.F. Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature. B.W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1922, p. 59. Requoted in Nordskog, op.cit., pp.1-2.

language, ideologies, etc.; we are also concerned with material aspects of culture. Ogburn, through distinguishing between 'material' and 'non-material' culture says, when changes occur in the 'material' culture, these in turn stimulate changes in the 'non-material' culture.²⁰ Thus, by social change we mean some kind of change (both in material and non-material aspects of culture) in the structure and functions of a particular social system.

Social Mobility: The concept mobility is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted. As such it is not very easy to define. The problems that we are going to examine actually stem out of geographical mobility i.e., the movement of individual from one country to another. Such movement is not only sociologically significant and important but has many implications for social mobility. S.M. Miller defined the concept as "a significant movement in an individual's or stratum's economic, social and political positions".²¹

In addition to this working definition of Miller, for our present purpose, we shall also use the definition of social mobility and its two principal types i.e., horizontal mobility and vertical mobility, given by P.A. Sorokin in his book Social and Cultural Mobility. Sorokin defined social mobility as, "by social mobility is understood any transition of an

²⁰Ogburn, W.F. in his book Social Change, Parts IV and V. Requoted by MacIver, et al., op. cit., 1949, p. 574.

²¹Miller, S.M. "The Concept and Measurement of Mobility", in Social Mobility, Coxon, A.P.M. et al. (ed.), Penguin Books Ltd., England, 1975, p. 22.

individual or social object or value - anything that has been created or modified by human activity - from one social position to another". Horizontal social mobility according to Sorokin, "by horizontal social mobility or shifting, is meant the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated on the same level". And the definition of vertical social mobility according to Sorokin, "by vertical social mobility is meant the relations involved in a transition of an individual (or social object) from one social stratum to another".²²

Objectives of the Study

To assess the impact of foreign money, we have considered the following aspects of the village social structure:

1. To examine the magnitude and nature of migration from the village. And also to find out: causes of migration, how the process of migration began, time of migration and the ultimate aim of the migrants.
2. To examine the impact of foreign remittances on:
 - (a) Economic aspect i.e., land tenure system, land pressure, land availability in the market, income and occupational pattern, investment in the productive and business sector, voluntary activities (construction of school, college, madrasa, mosque, etc.) which is also connected with development strategy.

- (b) Political aspect, i.e., power structure, power relations, political awareness and leadership pattern.
- (c) Social aspect i.e., class and social mobility.
- (d) Role and position of women in the families of migrants.
- (e) Cultural aspect i.e., life style before and after migration.

Review of Literature

Sociological study of migration whether internal or international requires the examination of factors associated with the area of origin and of destination. Though a large number of people from Bangladesh migrated to United Kingdom during the decade of 1950s and 1960s and consequently to oil rich countries in 1970s, only in the recent past a comprehensive volume, "Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East" was jointly published by the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and World Bank Resident Mission in Bangladesh in 1981.²³

This volume consists of eight articles prepared by the Bangladeshi scholars. The articles were to examine:

- (1) "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" written by A.R.M. Anwar Hossain. It traces the historical development of the Manpower Export Policy of the Government over the years and presents a profile of the characteristics of the migrants from Bangladesh.

²³Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East. World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454, 1981, Dhaka.

- (2) "An Analysis of the Influence of Home Remittances by Bangladesh Nationals Working Abroad on the National Economy" is a study prepared by Syed Ashraf Ali. This study focusses on the Wage Earners Scheme, the methods and channels of remittance, their level, use and effects on financing of imports, effects on money supply and inflation, etc.
- (3) "An Analysis of the Impact of Remittance Money on Household Expenditure in Bangladesh" was prepared by Dr. Rizwanul Islam, based on a sample study of the households and their classification in terms of rural and urban centres, remittance-receiving and non-migrant households, the spending behaviour and consumption, saving and investment pattern are studied and analysed.
- (4) "Cost of Training of Bangladeshi Migrants to the Middle Eastern Countries" is an article by Dr. Quazi Mafizur Rahman. The study classifies the migrants into five major occupational groups and estimates the current (or recurring) costs of training of migrants, recurring cost of the employment exchange programme and capital cost of the training of migrants and of the employment exchange programme.
- (5) "Effects of Labour Migration on Planning of Production and Service Establishments in Bangladesh" are analysed by Abu Ahmed Arif. The article assesses the impact of labour migration from Bangladesh with regard to 14 groups of educated and skilled manpower in the national economy.
- (6) "Projection of Manpower Demand in the Middle East and the Prospects and Possibilities of Manpower Export from Bangladesh" is written by Dr. A.K. Md. Habibullah. The study "analyses the existing structure of the labour market in the Middle East, projects the future demand pattern by country and occupation, and assesses the prospects for supply of labour by skill and occupation from Bangladesh to the Middle East".

- (7) "Social Cost Benefit Analysis of Manpower Export from Bangladesh" is written jointly by Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud and Dr. Siddiquir Rahman Osmani. The paper deals with the theoretical issues of cost-benefit analysis and estimates the benefits and costs of manpower export to the economy of Bangladesh".
- (8) "Policy Recommendations and Implications for Promoting Manpower Export from Bangladesh" is an article written by A.M.A.H. Siddiqui, The paper raises both procedural and policy issues and recommendations with regard to manpower export from Bangladesh.²⁴

This volume provides us with many important information on different aspects of manpower export which would be useful to our present study.

Another important study was conducted by Sultana Kamal in 1982. She in her dissertation entitled, "Five Thousand Mile Journey for Freedom: A Classic Exercise in Thwarted Optimism - A Study on the Bangladeshi Women Living in Britain". Sultana Kamal described her focus of attention as, "the subject of my study concerns the life of the women mainly of rural peasant background and semi-urban background migrating to Britain either as dependents of their male guardians, or on their own".²⁵ She also tried to explain "the life style and self-perception of some of the Bangladeshi migrant women".²⁶

²⁴ Labor Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454. April, 1981. Please see preface.

²⁵ Kamal, Sultana. "Five Thousand Mile Journey for Freedom. A Classic Exercise in Thwarted Optimism - A Study on the Bangladeshi Women Living in Britain". Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1982, p. 1.

²⁶ Ibid., p. iv.

Jharna Nath, in her dissertation entitled, "Some Aspects of the Life of Indians and Pakistani in Newcastle with Special Reference to Women", emphasised on the "way of life and the complex problem of adjustment to a new environment faced by the Indian and Pakistani Women in Newcastle".²⁷

Wahiduddin Mahmud and S.R. Osmani in their article, 'Impact of Emigrant Workers' Remittances on the Bangladesh Economy' concentrate on "the impact on balance of payments on the one hand and the income and savings of the remittance receiving households on the other".²⁸

Binayak Sen, in his article entitled "A Model of Manpower Export and its Effect on Employment Situation (1981-85) - Some Reflections", tried to develop a model of manpower export. He says, "the purpose of the present study is ... intended to be a research on methodology so as to develop an aggregative behavioristic model of manpower migration, the level of employment and foreign exchange earning".²⁹

Md. Mainul Islam in an article, "Accommodation and Efficiency at Industrial Work: Case of Bengali Peasant Migrants in Britain", made an attempt to "analyse and evaluate the extent to which ... peasants from the simple and

²⁷Nath, Jharna, "Some Aspects of the Life of Indians and Pakistanis in Newcastle with Special Reference to Women". Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Durham University, 1970, p. 16.

²⁸Mahmud, W. and Osmani, S.R. "Impact of Emigrant Workers' Remittances on the Bangladesh Economy" in the Bangladesh Development Studies, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1980, p. 1.

²⁹Sen, Binayak. "A Model of Manpower Export and its Effect on Employment Situation (1981-85) - Some Reflections, in the Journal of Social Studies (ed.) by B.K. Jahangir, Vol. II, 1981, p. 71.

traditional environment of subsistence farming were able to accommodate themselves to sophisticated and highly disciplined industrial work in an economically advanced country".³⁰

R.A. Mahmood in one pertaining study, "Foreign Exchange Earning through the Export of Manpower - A Case Study of Bangladesh" posed a genuine question: "True, we need foreign exchange. And we are earning so. But what for? For present consumption or for future consumption".³¹

R. Islam also wrote an article on "Export of Manpower from Bangladesh to the Middle East Countries: The Impact of Remittance Money on Household Expenditure".³²

However, except these works very few studies were conducted in this field. So, it would not be exaggerated to say that migration in Bangladesh is the most under-studied and neglected field at least by sociologists and social anthropologists. Furthermore, there is very little information available regarding the impact of foreign remittances on the rural social structure.

Thus, the existing literature indicates the necessity of conducting a descriptive as well as analytical study of a village, where from a large number of people migrated.

³⁰Islam, M. Mainul, "Accommodation and Efficiency at Industrial Work: Case of Bengali Peasant Migrants in Britain". Journal of Social Studies, No. 17, p. 79.

³¹Mahmood, R.A. "Foreign Exchange Earning through the Export of Manpower - A Case Study of Bangladesh", paper submitted at the National Seminar on UNCTAD, 1979.

³²Islam, R. Export of Manpower from Bangladesh to the Middle-East Countries: The Impact of Remittance Money on Household Expenditure, National Foundation for Research on Human Resource Development, Dhaka, 1980 (mimeo).

Apart from these studies there are also other studies conducted on the migrants of India, Pakistan and Mexico. In this regard we may mention the works of E.T. Mathew and P.R. Gopinathan Nair (1978), Patricia Jeffery (1976) and Cornelius Wayne (1976).

Mathew and Nair in their article, "Socio-Economic Characteristics of Emigrants and Emigrants' Household - A Case Study of Two Villages in Kerala" tried to "examine the socio-economic dimensions of recent emigration from Kerala, on the basis of a limited case study in one of the pockets of emigration in the state".³³

Patricia Jeffery made a complete study of migrants both at the place of origin and of destination in her book "Migrants and Refugees - Muslim and Christian Pakistani families in Bristol". Jeffery puts the main objectives of her study this way, "the concern of the research and focus much more on the ways in which certain elements of the migrants' culture can be protected and how children may be brought up in a Pakistani domestic setting in Britain. In other words, I began to focus on the social processes involved in non-assimilation and the maintenances of ethnic boundaries".³⁴ Her all information were from Urban backgrounds, and as a result she could not get the access to any rural families.

Cornelius Wayne, in his article, "Migration to the United States: The View from Rural Mexican Communities", tried to investigate some fundamental

³³Mathew, E.T. and Nair, P.R. Gopinathan. "Socio-Economic Characteristics of Emigrants and Emigrants' Households - A Case Study of Two Villages in Kerala," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XIII, No. 28, July 15, 1978, p. 1141.

³⁴Jeffery Patricia. Migrants and Refugees Muslim and Christian Pakistani Families in Bristol, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 5.

issues relating to migration, such as, who migrates, migratory patterns, motive for migration, migrant participation in the U.S. Labour Market, and impact of migration to the U.S. on migrants' communities of origin.³⁵ The findings of the report will have some relevance if we want to view our findings in a wider context.

Review of Literature on Village Studies

I have already mentioned that for the purpose of assessing the actual changes taken place due to the huge inflow of foreign remittances, it is necessary to be acquainted with the existing rural social structure through systematic study of village studies. Keeping this in mind I have conducted a brief survey on the all available village studies.

There is no denying the fact that, in Bangladeshi sociologists and social anthropologists could not make a significant headway in revealing the village societies through the process of intensive village studies. Nicholas has rightly stated that "only a handful of the 60,000 villages in which the great majority of Bangladeshi live, have been subjected to intensive investigation".³⁶ Whereas, "in China village studies by sociologist virtually came to an end around 1946, in India it was only after independence in 1947 that they were begun in a really serious way".³⁷

³⁵ Cornelius, Wayne, A. "Migration to the United States: The View from Rural Mexican Communities in Development Digest, Vol. XVII, No. 4, October, 1979, pp. 90-101.

³⁶ Nicholas, Ralph W. Social Science Research in Bangladesh (mimeo), Dhaka: The Ford Foundation, 1973, p. 4.

³⁷ Beteille, Andre, Six Essays in Comparative Sociology, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 36.

However, few attempts also have been made to study the Bangladeshi villages. Here we can mention the works of Marion Smith, Nazmul Karim, Qadir, Pakrasi, F.R. Khan, Aziz, Afsaruddin, Bessaignet, Beech et al., Hara, Huq, Zaidi, Bertocci, Mukherjee, Nurul Huq, Islam, Sarkar, Wood, Zaman, S.H. Khan, Van Beurden and Arens, Chowdhury, Thorp, Bhuiyan, Jahangir, Westergaard Kirsten, etc.³⁸. In addition to these studies Bangladesh Rural

³⁸Smith, Marion W. "Village Notes from Bengal", American Anthropologist, Vol. 48, No. 4, 1946; Nazmul Karim, A.K. Changing Society in India and Pakistan, Dhaka, Oxford University Press, 1956; Qadir, S.A. Village Dhanishwar - Three Generations of Man-Land Adjustment in an East Pakistan Village (mimeo), Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1960; Pakrasi, Kanti. "A Study of Some Aspects of Household Types and Family Organization in Rural Bengal, 1946-1947". Lucknow: The Eastern Anthropologist, XV, No. 3, pp.55-63; Khan, F.R. "The Caste System of the Village Community of Dhulandi in the District of Dacca". In Owen, John (ed.) Sociology of East Pakistan. Dhaka: Asiatic Society; Aziz, A. "Social Status and its Relation to Income". In Owen, John (ed.) Sociology of East Pakistan, Dhaka: Asiatic Society, 1962; Afsaruddin, Mohammed. Rural Life in East Pakistan, Social Science Research Project, Department of Sociology, Dhaka University, 1964; Bessaignet, Pierre. "Family and Kinship in Hindu Village of East Pakistan: An Illustrative Analysis". In Afsaruddin (ed.) Sociology and Social Research in Pakistan, Dhaka: The Pakistan Sociological Association; Beech, Mary Jane, Peter J. Bertocci and Zauren A. Corwin. "Introducing the East Bengali Village". In Beech, Mary Jane et al. (eds.) Inside the East Pakistan Village - Six Articles, Michigan: Asian Studies Center, Reprint Series no. 2, Michigan State University, 1966; Hara, Tadahiko. Paribar and Kinship in a Moslem Rural Village in East Pakistan. (Microfilm) unpublished doctoral dissertation in the Australian National University, 1967; Huq, M. Ameerul. Rural Institution and Social Change (A Case Study of Azimabad Agricultural Cooperative Society, Comilla) (mimeo). Comilla: Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, 1969; Zaidi, S.M. Hafiz. A Village Culture in Transition, (A Study of East Pakistan Rural Society). Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1970; Bertocci, Peter J. Elusive Villages: Social Structure and Community Organization in Rural East Pakistan (mimeo). Unpublished doctoral dissertation in the Michigan State University, 1970; Mukherjee, Ramkrishna. Six Villages of Bengal. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1957; Haq, Nurul. Village Development in Bangladesh: (A Study of Monagram Village), Comilla: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, 1973; Islam, Rizwanul. "An Analysis of the Impact of Remittance Money on Household Expenditure in Bangladesh". In Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East. World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454, 1974; Sarkar, Profulla Chandra. "Aspects of Caste and Social Structure in a Rural Community of Bangladesh". Unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, 1976; Wood, G.D. "The Political Process in Bangladesh - A Research Note". In M. Ameerul Huq (ed.), Exploitation and

Advancement Committee (BRAC) published two intensive studies: one in Dhaka³⁹ and the other in Sylhet.⁴⁰ Here again all these above mentioned studies were not the outcome of intensive village studies. Moreover, these were also not alone conducted by the sociologists or social anthropologists. Thus, it is not an exaggeration when Bertocci comments, "East Bengal is one of the most under-studied parts of South Asia, at least by sociologists and anthropologists".⁴¹

Now, we shall try to mention what these studies are about. Smith (1946) in her article "Village Notes from Bengal" in the American Anthropologist

(contd. from previous page)

the Rural Poor. Comilla: Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development, 1976; Zaman, M.Q. "Social Conflict and Political Process in Rural Bangladesh: A Case Study". Unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, 1977; Khan, Showkat Hayat, "Beyond the Trap of Tradition? In-Migrants and Locals in a Rural Community of Bangladesh". Unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, University of Rajshahi, 1977; Van Beurden and Arens. Jhagrapur: Poor Peasants and Women in a Village in Bangladesh. Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1977; Chowdhury, Anwarullah. A Bangladesh Village: A Study of Social Stratification. Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka, 1978; Thorp, John P. Power Among the Farmers of Daripalla - A Bangladesh Village Study. Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1978; Bhuiyan, Md. Abdul Quadir. "The Family in a Village in Bangladesh". Unpublished Doctoral dissertation in the University of Delhi; 1978; Jahangir, B.K. Differentiation Polarization and Confrontation in Rural Bangladesh, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka University, Dhaka, 1979; Kirsten, Westergaard. Boringram: An Economic and Social Analysis of a Village in Bangladesh. Bogra: Rural Development Academy, 1980.

³⁹BRAC. Who Gets What and Why: Resource Allocation in a Bangladesh Village. Dhaka: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, 1980.

⁴⁰BRAC. Ashram Village: An Analysis of Resource Flows. Dhaka: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee.

⁴¹Bertocci, Peter J., "Rural Development in Bangladesh: An Introduction", In Robert D. Stevens, Hamza Alavi and Peter J. Bertocci (eds.) Rural Development in Bangladesh and Pakistan, Honolulu, East West Center, The University Press of Hawaii, p. 160.

gives the picture of the social classes of Alankar (Olankari), about 7 miles south-west of Sylhet town. She got the information from a former inhabitant of the village (who was a resident of New York city). Marion Smith says that there are seven villages around Alankar which formed a unit. Karim (1956) in his Changing Society in India and Pakistan devoted a chapter 'Rural East Pakistan To-day'. In this chapter he gives a description of typical village of the then East Pakistan. The fictitious name of the village is Nayanpur and it is located somewhat in the eastern part of East Pakistan. He studied "social organization" of a village of the then East Pakistan in order to "compare and contrast" its features with other contemporary accounts of villages of the Indian sub-continent. Although his method of study has been historical, it is relevant to our study because this study provides us with some information regarding the rapid changing pattern of the social structure of a village of early 50's. Qadir has studied village Dhaneswar in Comilla district: the focus of his study was on man-land adjustment (1960). Pakrasi's paper "A Study of Some Aspects of Household Types and Family Organization in Rural Bengal, 1946-47" (1962), provides "a general and impressionistic idea of the family structures of rural Bengal (p. 55). F.R. Khan in his article 'The Caste System of the Village Community of Dhulandi in the district of Dacca' in the Sociology of East Pakistan (1962) gives an analytical picture of the caste pattern in Dhulandi, because castism has exercised a great influence over the religious, economic, political, educational and cultural life of the villagers (p. 206). Aziz in his article "Social Status and its Relation to Income" in the Sociology in East Pakistan (1962) focussed on the social status and its relation to income in the village community of Kailine in the district of

Comilla. Afsaruddin in his Rural Life in East Pakistan (1963) made a sociological analysis of rural life in the then East Pakistan. The focus of its attention was on major changes that have taken place on various aspects of social life in the villages. Afsaruddin said, "The present survey is designed to find out facts on rural life and to analyse and interpret them in the context of changes" (p. 1). Bessaignet's paper, "Family and Kinship in a Hindu Village of East Pakistan: An Illustrative Analysis" (1963) studied family and kinship in Shahabad. Beech et al. "Inside the East Pakistan Villages: Six Articles" (1966), discussed the different aspects of village life in the then East Pakistan. Hara, Japanese scholar, has studied a Muslim village Gohira in Chittagong district, he focussed on the Paribar and kinship in the villages (1967), Mukharjee studied six villages in Bogra district in northern Bangladesh. He conducted a survey of all the households in these villages in 1942. His objectives were to study the people concerned from the point of view of their economic activity, that is the way in which they go about doing the necessary everyday work of life, and the relations they have entered into by so doing (1957: p. XXVIII). Huq's Rural Institutions and Social Change (1969) is a monograph on an agricultural co-operative society in Azimabad in Comilla district. Zaidi's book (1970) is a study of Ramnagar and Alipur, two villages in Comilla Kotwali Thana, focussed on social change in these two villages. Bertocci's dissertation (1970) is a study of Hajipur and Tinpara, two villages in Comilla Kotwali Thana, focussed on the rural community organization and social structure. Nurul Haq's book (1973) focussed to point out the nature and magnitude of the village problems and to indicate how these problems could be solved through co-operative effort (p. X). He conducted his study in village Monogram of Comilla

district. Islam's book (1974) is a study of the political process in village Badarpur in Dhaka district. Sarkar's dissertation (1976) focussed on caste and social structure of a multicasite and multireligious rural community in Rajshahi district. Wood (1975) studied rural power structure. Zaman's dissertation (1977) is an anthropological study of rural politics. It describes the sources of conflict and nature of politics of a village in northern part of Bangladesh. Showkat Hayat Khan's dissertation (1977) concerns with a comparative evolution of the behaviour of in-migrants and locals in the context of a holistic view of two villages of Rajshahi district. Van Beurden and Arens (1977) discussed peasants and women in a village. The main focus was on pattern of social stratification and principal contradiction in village social life. Chowdhury (1978) has studied the pattern of social stratification in village Meherpur in Dhaka district. Thorp's book (1978) emphasises the cultural aspects of life among the Bengali Muslim Farmers, which determine their outlook towards possible improvements in their condition. The inter-connection of internal village forces and government infrastructures is clearly brought out (p. VI). Thorp conducted this study in a village of Pabna district. Bhuiyan's (1978) dissertation is a study of the family in a village in Bangladesh. Jahangir's book (1979) is about the process of differentiation, polarization and confrontation in a peasant society. Westergaard's book (1980) gives a brief and short analysis of socio-economic aspects of the village Baringram in Bogra district. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) published a report entitled, "Who Gets What and Why: Resource Allocation in a Bangladesh Village" (1980). This report is an outcome of an intensive field work conducted by a team of BRAC research and field staff in the village Dhankura of Dhaka district. This report dealt with the problem of resource allocation in the village.

The focus of interest has been described in this report as "... we have investigated the complex of resources available to that village: which resources have been added to the resource base and which resources have either dwindled or increased in value over time. We have also explained the factors which affect and regulate the distribution and continuing redistribution of the resources available to and availed of by the people of the village. And we have attempted to understand who in the village maximised which resources for what reasons and under what circumstances" (pp. 1-2). Ashram Village: An Analysis of Resource Flows (1980), another village study was also conducted by a team of BRAC research and field staff in the district of Sylhet. This report "is a descriptive analysis of all the resources that are exploited in the village and of the distribution of these resources amongst different sectors of the community (p. ii).

Existing Theories on Migration

Migration is a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional phenomenon. No consensus has yet been reached among the social scientists regarding an unified theory of migration encompassing its social, political, economic demographic and cultural aspects. It is needless to mention that scholars belonging to different social sciences developed theories on migration emphasizing on particular aspects of the phenomenon and as such these are partial. It must, however, be said that from time to time serious efforts were made by the scholars to construct an acceptable paradigm to explain the concept, even then the need for a comprehensive theory of migration still remains. However, the purpose of the present study is not to evolve a model of migration; nor does it fall under the scope of the present study. I am

interested to see whether my findings can be related to any of the existing theories. To accomplish this job it is necessary to make a brief survey of a few important existing theories on migration.

Everett S. Lee in his celebrated paper "A Theory of Migration in 1966"⁴² recognized the validity of Ravenstein's article on the laws of migration⁴³ as a starting point for work on migration theory. According to Everett, "... Ravenstein papers have stood the test of time and remain the starting point for work in migration theory".⁴⁴ Donald J. Bogue also made a concrete

⁴²Lee, Everett S. "A Theory of Migration", Demography, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1966), p. 49.

⁴³E.G. Ravenstein, who in 1885 presented a paper on "The Laws of Migration" before the Royal Statistical Society on March 17, 1885. In his paper Ravenstein arrived at seven "Laws" or "generalization". His paper was based on the basis of the data collected from England and several other nations:

- i) Migration and distance - most migrants go only a short distance. As the distance from a certain place increases, there are fewer migrants who have moved from the place.
- ii) Migration by stages - persons living near large cities migrate when economic expansion occurs. The opportunities they forsake at home are filled up by migrants from more remote points in the hinter-land. As a result, the expansion of the city exerts an impact, step by step, that reaches to the outer limits of the hinterland.
- iii) Streams and counterstreams - to every stream of migration there is a counterstream.
- iv) Urban-rural differences in propensity to migrate - Urban populations are less migratory than are rural populations.
- v) Predominance of female among short-distance migrants - in short - distance migration, females tend to outnumber males.
- vi) Technology and migration - technological development tends to promote greater rates of migration.
- vii) Dominance of the economic motive - Although variety of forces can produce migration, the desire of the masses to improve their economic condition is by far the most potent force.

⁴⁴Lee, Everett S. "A Theory of Migration", Demography, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1966), p. 49.

comment about Ravenstein's "The Laws of Migration". He said "... There is still a surprising amount of validity in these statements after more than 80 years. However, they are not inflexible "Laws" without exceptions, and to explain the exceptions it is necessary to import the situation model".⁴⁵

Any way, there are also some other basic propositions about migration that have emerged from different research.

Everett S. Lee, in his article "A Theory of Migration" tried to develop a comprehensive theory of migration. He summarizes the factors which enter into the decision to migrate and the process of migration as follows:

- i) Factors associated with the area of origin;
- ii) Factors associated with the area of destination;
- iii) Intervening obstacles; and
- iv) Personal factors.

The first three of these are indicated schematically in Diagram - 1.

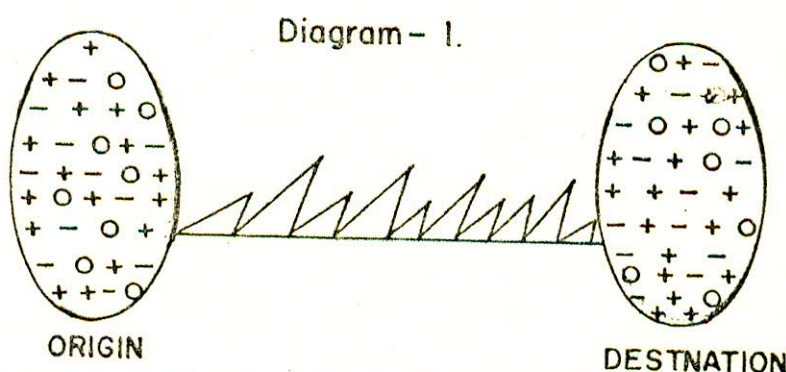


Figure: Origin and Destination Factors and Intervening Obstacles in Migration. The "Push-Pull-Obstacles" model.

Source: Everett S. Lee, "A Theory of Migration", Demography, 3 (1966), p. 48.

⁴⁵Bogue, Donald J. Principles of Demography, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., London, 1969, p. 756.

Diagram - 1 has shown that at both the place of origin and the place of destination, there are some positive as well as negative factors. Zeros represents the factors of no consequence and to which the potential migrant is indifferent.

Lee sees the positive and the negative factors i.e., the set of pluses and minuses affects different people in different ways.⁴⁶ However, the simple set of positive and negative factors cannot ensure the act of migration. According to Lee, there are some intervening obstacles which may be slight in some instances and insurmountable in others. 'Distance', strict 'Immigration Laws' are the examples of intervening obstacles.⁴⁷

Finally, there are some personal factors which according to Lee either facilitate or retard migration. He gave more emphasis on the migrants' personal sensitivities, intelligence, and awareness of conditions elsewhere enter into the situation at origin, and knowledge of the situation at destination depends upon personal contacts or upon sources of information which are not universally available.⁴⁸

This theory has profound significance in explaining the process of migration though it is not free from criticism. Sultana Kamal criticises the theory as, "one sided because Lee has left out the political, structural and demographic factors."⁴⁹

⁴⁶Lee, Everett S. Demography, 3, 1966, 47-57. Reprinted in Population Geography: A Reader - Demco et al. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1970, 288-298.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 291.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Kamal Sultana - Five Thousand Mile Journey for Freedom: A Classic Exercise in Thwarted Optimism - A Study on the Bangladeshi Women Living in Britain, unpublished M.A. dissertation, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1982, p. 33.

Emphasizing the importance of the economic aspect of migration Todaro advances his theory to explain migration flows. He begins his theory with the assumption that, migration is primarily an economic phenomenon which for the individual migrant can be quite a rational decision, for he migrates because he has some expectation about income in the place of migration.⁵⁰

Todaro does not go into exploring from where the expectation of better income gets such force as to make people disassociate themselves from the usual and familiar world to a new context of physical space and significantly, social relationships. Nor does he talk about the link between the conditions in the rich countries pulling them in a position to offer better income and the conditions of the migrant's own country which fail to retain her own people.⁵¹

Todaro concludes "migration proceeds in response to urban rural differences in expected earnings."⁵²

This historical position assumes that migration will not occur if there is no difference between the two sectors, i.e., rural and urban. But the fact remains that migration is taking place not only because of the poor conditions of the country of origin ('Push' factor), nor does it occur only because of the increasing demand of the labour receiving countries ('Pull' factor). True, 'Push' and 'Pull' factors create congenial atmosphere to move. But it is hard to explain why, living in the same socio-economic condition, some people move and some do not. Todaro's theoretical proposition fails to give answer to these questions.

⁵⁰Todaro, Michael P. Economics for a Developing World, Hong Kong, 1977, p. 220.

⁵¹Sultana Kamal, op. cit., 1982, p. 33.

⁵²Todaro, Michael, op. cit., 1977, p. 220.

Marshall belongs to the Structural-Functionalists school. She in her book The Import of Labour: The Case of the Netherland says, "migration cannot be seen as an independent, isolated and marginal phenomenon, but has to be placed in the context of the analysis of the stratified system of international economic and power relations. Import of workers is a response to lasting structural requirements in the receiving economy."⁵³

It is no use denying the fact that the concept migration cannot be explained without bringing international economic and power relations into considerations. But the fact remains that only lasting structural requirements in the receiving economy and poor social condition of the sending country cannot ensure migration; as a result the theory remains incomplete.

Finally, without even ignoring the logical criticisms of above mentioned theories, we can conclude that there are some validity of these theories in explaining the concept of migration. Although none of the above theories has paid any attention to such an important factor, i.e., kinship-tie which largely influences the process of migration. The role of kinship in the process of migration has long been recognized, but had not been expressed directly. Refuting the notion that the migration is related to distance M.S.A. Rao said, "the notion that the migration is related to distance is contradicted by the evidence that people migrate to far off places because they have prior kin, caste, regional and other links with that place. Hence, selectivity is based on social factors and not on the factor of propinquity

⁵³ Marshall, Adriana: The Import of Labour: The Case of the Netherlands. Rotterdam, 1965 (Reprinted, Sultana Kamal, op. cit., p. 36).

of the place of destination".⁵⁴ We have seen that Lee in his theory recognized the importance of personal factors. He even went to the extent of saying that, "the decision to migrate ... is never completely rational, and for some persons the rational component is much less than the irrational. We must expect, therefore, to find many exceptions to our generalizations since, transient emotions, mental disorder, accidental occurrences account for a considerable portion of the total migration".⁵⁵

Here again Lee emphasizes on the psychological explanation of migration. We do not question the validity of psychological factor in the process of migration. All that we are trying to say is that, even in the case of 'push-pull obstacles' model, kinship plays an important role in overcoming the intervening obstacles.

As we shall see in our later discussion that how and to what extent kinship is functional in the process of migration.

At last we can conclude the debate by stating that, the importance of kinship-relationship in the process of migration can hardly be exaggerated as it will be seen that the large scale migration to U.K. was possible significantly because of the history of an early migration of their kin.

Selection of the Study Area

I have selected one of the villages of Sylhet district for my study. The reason for this selection was first, a large number of people initially

⁵⁴Rao, M.S.A. Sociological Bulletin, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1981, p. 32.

⁵⁵Lee, Everett, S. Demography, 30, 1966 (1970, 288-298).

migrated from Sylhet. Secondly, Sylhet is my home district, so it is expected that I would understand the local dialects⁵⁶ and as a result I would be able to establish better rapport with my respondents.

Considering the nature of my work I emphasized on two important points regarding the selection of the study area. These are:

- i) A large concentration of the family of migrants in the village, and
- ii) Easy accessibility and manageable size of the village.

Keeping these in mind, I started locating a suitable village. First, I made a list of thanas from where a large number of people migrated to U.K. During the preparation of the list I took the help of different bank officials. All of them (whom I talked to) mentioned the name of the following three thanas: (a) Balagonj, (b) Bianibazar and (c) Biswanath.

All these thanas fall under the Sylhet district. First I visited Banagonj and Bianibazar and tried to find out a suitable village but failed. Because either the village was too big which was unmanageable with my limited resource and time or the number of people migrated from that village was very small.

Lastly, I visited Biswanath thana which is situated ten miles south-west of Sylhet town. I came to Biswanath on 30th June, 1981. First I met the Circle Officer of Biswanath thana and explained in details the purpose of my

⁵⁶The local dialects of Sylhet is different from that of standard Bengali language. Most of the Sylheties specifically rural illiterate people speak in typical local dialects. As a result, there is always a risk of communication gap between the researcher and the respondents. This language barrier could be bridged by knowing Sylheti well.

visit. He assured me of all necessary help and told me about a village which he thought might be suitable for my purpose but again urged me to contact the Chairman of Biswanath Union. He believed that the Chairman could tell me more about it. Then I went to see the Chairman in his office and found him talking with some people. I introduced myself and explained the purpose of my visit. He then consulted with the people sitting around him and suggested me the name of a village which was earlier suggested by the Circle Officer.

The village is small in size and the communication is fairly well; and above all, it has a large concentration of migrants. The name of the village is Londonigaon.⁵⁷ This village falls under the Biswanath Union and situated around two miles north-east of Biswanath Bazar. According to the census report of 1974, the total population of the village was 365; and there were 71 households. The average population and households per village in Biswanath thana (according to 1974 census) was 259 and 50, respectively.

At last I could find a village of my choice. I decided to visit the village, and when I expressed my desire, the Chairman requested me to see Mr. Mubarak Ali,⁵⁸ a resident of that village. Mr. Ali is the owner of a pharmacy and in Longonigaon he is known as 'member shahib'. Though he does not hold any office in the Union Parishad, yet he was associated with

⁵⁷ Londonigaon is a fictitious name of the village. The actual name of the village is not mentioned for some practical reasons.

⁵⁸ In order to preserve the anonymity of persons quoted in this dissertation, I have used pseudonyms throughout.

Gram Sarkar.⁵⁹ Mubarak Ali is the youngest among his four brothers. Three of them have been staying in U.K. for a very long time. But their parents, spouses and children stay in Londonigaon. I went to see Mr. Ali and explained to him the purpose of my visit and expressed my desire to visit his village. He agreed to take me to his village. Londonigaon could be reached in half an hour by a rickshaw from Biswanath Bazar. First, he took me to his house and introduced me to his sister-in-law. She was also a member of Gram Sarkar. Notwithstanding her little education, the lady is quite charming and free. After spending some time in the house we went out to move around the village. The village is not very large and one can easily reach any part of the village from its central point within fifteen minutes on foot. It seems to me that the village would be an ideal one, because a large number

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"Gram Sarkar is an extended institution building partly based on the experiences in a few selected localities with self reliant villages, Swanirwar gram. It is an attempt to remedy the lack of useful organizations on village level through which the government can carry out development programs".

The assignment entrusted to Gram Sarkar to successfully accomplish the government programme of achieving self-sufficiency in food production; effectively controlling the population growth; removing of illiteracy and ensuring law and order in the rural areas.

"The model for the creation of this new institution was a peaceful selection, by consensus if possible, where 12 members representing different interest groups in the village got appointed: 1 village prodhan, 1 secretary (preferably respected men already sitting as salish prodhans - members of the primordial village court), 2 farmer representatives, 2 youth representatives, 2 women, 2 representatives for the landless and 2 for crafts, fishermen or other occupations" (Dependence and Solidarity in Village Level Politics, Gram Sarkar Elections in Bangladesh, 1980 - by Ann-Lisbet Arn. The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Bangladesh, p. 4).

This village organization was formed during the regime of the assassinated President General Ziaur Rahman. Later it has been banned by President General Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

of people migrated from the village to U.K. Thus, the conditions I set for the selection of the study area seem to have been fulfilled. I then expressed my willingness to work in the village and sought Ali's help for an accommodation. We then came back to Biswanath Bazar and was introduced to Abdul Karim who owned an electronic shop in the Bazar. Karim is a cousin of Mubarak Ali. Initially Karim was suspicious of my visit and wanted to know whether the villagers would derive any benefit from my study. He, therefore, asked me to come and see him the next day. The following day I went to see Mubarak Ali, who told me that after much persuasion he was successful in convincing his cousin Karim about the sincerity of my purpose. We were later joined by Karim, who also extended his help to me. He also informed me that he had tentatively selected a place for me to stay. So I decided to work in the village and on the 1st July 1981, I finally arrived at Londonigaon for field work.

Methodology

The systematic collection of authentic facts is the first requirement of any scientific study of a society ... Facts can be collected either through (a) large scale social surveys or (b) through intensive field work.⁶⁰

For the purpose of collecting quantitative as well as qualitative data for my study, I adopted both participant observation and survey methods. Case study method has been applied to gather detail information about the migrant and non-migrant families.

⁶⁰ Chowdhury, Anwarullah. "Sociology in Bangladesh: The Need for Empirical Research". Delhi: Sociological Bulletin, Vol. 22, No. I, 1973.

Participant Observation

The specific unit of investigation was household in the context of an intensive micro study of the village. This was done by six months intensive village research through the application of participant observation. Observation may be defined as "systematic viewing, coupled with consideration of the seen phenomena. That is, consideration must be given to the larger unit of activity in which the specific observed phenomena occur. Not all phenomena, of course, are open to observation; not all those open to observation find a ready observer at hand ... but one can hardly think of an empirical study in which some observation had not been made."⁶¹ Explaining the advantage of gathering information through the process of participant observation Young stated that, "The participant observer shares, to lesser or greater degree, the life of observed group. This sharing may be intermittent but active contacts at close proximity afford intimate study of persons".⁶²

The importance of participant observation in the context of our society, especially, rural society can hardly be over-emphasized. Emphasizing the need of 'anthropological techniques' in the study of Bangladesh society Karim said, "It seems to me that we can possibly get a picture of the Muslim society better by an anthropological study of a predominantly Muslim village of East Pakistan than by the simple assemblage of a huge mass of statistical data. In the absence of any significant scientific information about Bengali Muslim society, anthropological studies of small magnitude will help us a great deal

⁶¹Young Pauline V. Scientific Social Surveys and Research, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966, pp. 161-162.

⁶²Ibid., p. 166.

in getting a correct glimpse into our societal mechanism. Moreover, they involve much less cost than the gathering of data on a mass scale. At the moment this is the only dependable means by which we can know how the minds of the people of different social levels are working in East Pakistan. Sociology, therefore, must be social anthropology in the context of our country at least for some years to come. We can plan for a real sociology of East Pakistan only when we have at our disposal the required minimum social anthropological data about Bengali Muslim society. If this is lost sight of I fear that the proper development of sociological study in East Pakistan will be greatly hampered".⁶³

Andre Beteille also holds almost same opinion for studying the contemporary Indian society. He writes, "Despite the absence of clearly defined procedures for making intensive field studies, a great deal of the systematic information that we have about social reality in contemporary India is based on this kind of society. Some of our best insights into kinship, religion and local level politics come from intensive studies made by social anthropologists using the method of participation observation. Although this approach has so far been used mainly in the study of village community, it can be applied to the investigation of practically any sector of contemporary society".⁶⁴

My experience in the field opened my eyes to how important the participant observation method is in collecting information which would have been simply impossible to collect through directly asking questions. I have made an

⁶³ Nazmul Karim, A.K. "The Methodology for a Sociology of East Pakistan". In Pierre Bessaignet (ed.), Social Research in East Pakistan, Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1966, p. 6.

⁶⁴ Beteille Andre. Six Essays in Comparative Sociology, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 100.

elaborate discussion later on the problems I have confronted during my field work, which I think will be enough to justify my decision to apply participant observation for collecting necessary information.

Survey Method

A census was conducted on household composition, land area, etc. for all the households in the village. The purpose of the census was to collect basic information on demographic and socio-economic characteristics of each household in the village.

There is a popular criticism against using structured questionnaires in our country for collecting relevant and necessary information. The critics are of the opinion that this technique has been specially developed in western countries for literate people. A peasant in Bangladesh when interviewed will often not understand why he is asked so many questions and what the intention of the interviewer is. Besides, such a peasant is not used to the rhythm of a questionnaire. He is just put in a mold that does not fit him.⁶⁵

This criticism has profound significance for the validity of data collected. The approach which I followed in this census was different from what is usually meant by the questionnaire method. I have already mentioned that, I followed both the participant observation and survey method to collect data. This required me to stay for six months in the field for directly sharing the total life pattern of the villagers.

⁶⁵ Van Veurden and Arens. Jhagrapur: Poor Peasants and Women in a Village in Bangladesh, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1977, p. 12.

Case Study

In order to collect detail information on households of the migrants as well as non-migrants, I conducted a few case studies, "Case study refers to intensive investigation of a particular unit ... It is in fact a technique which considers all pertinent aspect of a situation, employing as the unit of study an individual, institution or group, and intensively investigating it."⁶⁶ For such studies I drew up a number of households from amongst the migrants and the non-migrants to gather first hand information..

Problems and Challenges in the Field

On 1st July, 1981 I left Sylhet for Londonigaon for the purpose of conducting field study and went straight to Abdul Karim's house. We talked in general about the village and the villagers. He gave me some idea of village economy, politics, class-structure, existing social norms and values and many other things which in other words can be summarized as different aspects of total social structure of the village. The impression I could gather out of our long discussion was that, Abdul Karim was an influential man in the community and represented those who were at the top of the hierarchy of the village power structure. All that he tried to say was that he could provide me with more authentic information about the village than those illiterate villagers. However, this revelation made me cautious about my dealings with him and subsequently I decided to select my place of residence in an apparently neutral zone. It was, however, extremely difficult for me

⁶⁶ Gopal, M.H. An Introduction to Research Procedure in Social Sciences. Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1970, p. 184.

to find a place of my own choice. But Abdul Karim informed me that he had already arranged a room for me in his own house. There is no doubt that Karim had demonstrated his kindness through offering me a room in his house, but I thought that it would be disastrous for me if I accepted his offer for two definite reasons. First, if I stay with him the villagers may not feel free to speak to me about the village problem in general and about the power-structure in particular. Moreover, my association with the villagers would remain restricted. Secondly, I presumed that I might confront some unwanted interference from my host which might jeopardize my primary purpose of collecting first hand information. Considering these two important factors, I politely refused the offer and tactfully urged him to arrange an accommodation for me somewhere in the village wherefrom I can work independently.

After much persuasion Abdul Karim finally agreed to arrange an accommodation for me and then took me to a house, quite far away from him. That was a heavily constructed big house and almost looked like a school building. The walls were painted with different colours. The room which was allotted to me was at that time being occupied by household moulabi.⁶⁷ I was informed that I had to share the room with him.

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During my field work I have observed that, almost in every migrant's household, there is a Moulabi Shahib. The primary function of a Moulabi is to teach the young children of the household Arabic. In exchange of his service, he is provided with free food and lodging in addition to his monthly remuneration. These Moulabi Shahibs are very much respected in the village. They are also quite free with the female members of the household, as because they help the women in writing letters to their husbands in the U.K. In most of the cases, women are illiterate and the Moulabi Shahib is to write letters on their behalf.

This was how I settled down in Londonigaon. Before starting my field work, I tried to develop my relationship with the Moulabi Shahib, because I thought that if I could take him with me he would be helpful in collecting first hand information. Ultimately my assumption was proved to be correct. Initially I had the intention of conducting the household survey with the help of the educated villagers. But it was a frustrating experience for me when I came to know that there was none in the village who had passed the Secondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.)

An unemployed youth, at that time trying to go abroad, expressed his willingness to work with me. His name is Rahim Ali. Initially I was suspicious about the ability of the young man, but having no other alternative I finally decided to work with him. This young man helped me a lot. He furnished me with plenty of information which otherwise would not have been possible on my part to gather.

The most serious problem which I confronted was related to the collection of demographic information. I noticed that there was a tendency amongst the villagers to exaggerate the number of children in the family. The reason behind this was discovered later on. According to British Immigration law a British citizen has the right to bring his family to Britain. Thus, if they can show an increased number of their children, it will be possible for them to take the children of their relatives under the false identity of their own sons and daughters. The reasons for giving me wrong information could be found into their wrong notion of my identity. They thought that I had come from British High Commission to visit their village to detect the fraud cases. They had this idea because people from British High Commission

visited their village on a number of occasions and conducted inquiry into the cases of illegal migrants. It can, therefore, be easily imagined how difficult it was to collect authentic information about the actual number of the children. Due to my prolonged stay in the village I could manage to partially remove the misconception about my identity.

It may be mentioned that, whenever I had any doubt about the authenticity of the data collected, I visited that household several times and through informal discussion I tried to get the correct information. I had an advantage to verify my data through asking people of other households. One thing I observed that if the facts collected are correct, then the person would not disagree to further verification. But if the information provided were not correct, then the person providing the information would avoid the request for further verification. It seems to me that, there is a common consensus regarding not to disclose any secret information concerning migrants.

It would not be irrelevant to mention my first encounter in one household of the village. Household head stays abroad but his wife, mother, children and brothers stay in the village. Abdur Rahman is one of the male members of the family. When I approached him, he did not like to talk to me about his family matter. He was of the opinion that I might be a tax estimator. He is an illiterate man, so any information given by him might create problem for them later on. Even after repeated request he remained silent. Finally his mother and sister-in-law agreed to talk to me though Rahim opposed it like anything. Both his mother and sister-in-law talked to me because they thought that I am an officer of British High Commission. The mother was sincerely trying to convince me that one of her sons with all legal documents

had been refused entry permit by the British High Commission. I repeatedly told her that I have nothing to do with the British High Commission. She did not pay any attention to my words and urged me to make necessary arrangement so that her son could go to England. I had to visit this particular house several times to collect the socio-economic and demographic information. This type of problem more or less I faced almost in every house.

In another house I had to go several times to get the correct information. The owner of the household was Amena Begum. This lady concealed many information about her family to me. She first stated that her husband died long before, while he was in England, having behind two daughters and a son. Later on, I came to know that Amena Begum is married to another person after the death of her first husband. Her second husband also stays in United Kingdom. She is the third wife of her second husband. First two wives at present staying in the same village in another house. She stays at her first husbands house. She has only two daughters; the information of a son was not correct.

During my stay in Londonigaon, the worst experience was the encounter with an elderly man. This unpleasant experience rather compelled me to think of withdrawing myself from the village.

Usually I used to go out to the village either with Moulabi Shahib or with my informer Rahim Ali. That day I went alone. On the way I visited a house where I did not find the household head in house. Later on, the household head came to my place of residence and directly charged me why I had visited his house in his absence. He was asking lotsof questions without

bothering for any reply. He abused me like anything in front of so many people. I felt very embarrassed and humiliated.

Eventually, with the influence of Karim and others, the actual cause of his erratic behaviour was revealed. This man was preparing papers for his grandson (with whom I talked) to send him England as a son of his nephew. He thought that as an officer of the British High Commission, I went to his house to enquire into the matter. That impression about me made him angry. He finally apologized and asked me to forget and forgive.

CHAPTER - II

INTRODUCING THE VILLAGE

Bangladesh appeared on the world map as a sovereign state on December 16, 1971, following the war of liberation from March 25 to December 16, 1971. The area constituting the country was under Muslim rule for five and half centuries i.e., from 1201 to 1757 A.D. and passed into British hands after the defeat of the last sovereign ruler, Nawab Sirajuddowla, at the Battle of Palassey on June 23, 1757. The British ruled over India for nearly 190 years i.e., from 1757 to 1947 when the country was a part of the British Indian provinces of Bengal and Assam. With the termination of British rule in August, 1947, it constituted the Eastern wing of Pakistan and was known as East Pakistan for about 24 years i.e., from August 14, 1947 to March 25, 1971.¹

According to 1981 census the total population of Bangladesh is 89.91 million. Among this population 84.8 per cent people live in the rural areas while only 15.2 per cent are urban inhabitants. Again, this huge population live in the territory of 55,578 square miles, one of the highest densities of population in the world, i.e., 1703 per square mile in 1983. Male female ratio is, 106 males per 100 females.²

The principal source of the economy of Bangladesh is agriculture. It employs 61.3 per cent of the total labour force and directly contributes 46

¹1983-84 Statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, December 1984. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Division, Ministry of Planning, Government of Bangladesh.

²Ibid., p. 4.

per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Industry contributes only 10 per cent of the GDP.³

After the administrative reorganization by the present government the number of districts in the country has risen from 23 to 64. The newly created districts were the former sub-divisions. Each district consists of several Upazilas and each Upazila⁴ consists of several unions. There are 460 Upazilas and around 4350 unions in the country. Again, each union consists of several villages. The position of Londonigaon village in the National Administrative Structure⁵ is shown in page 47.

History

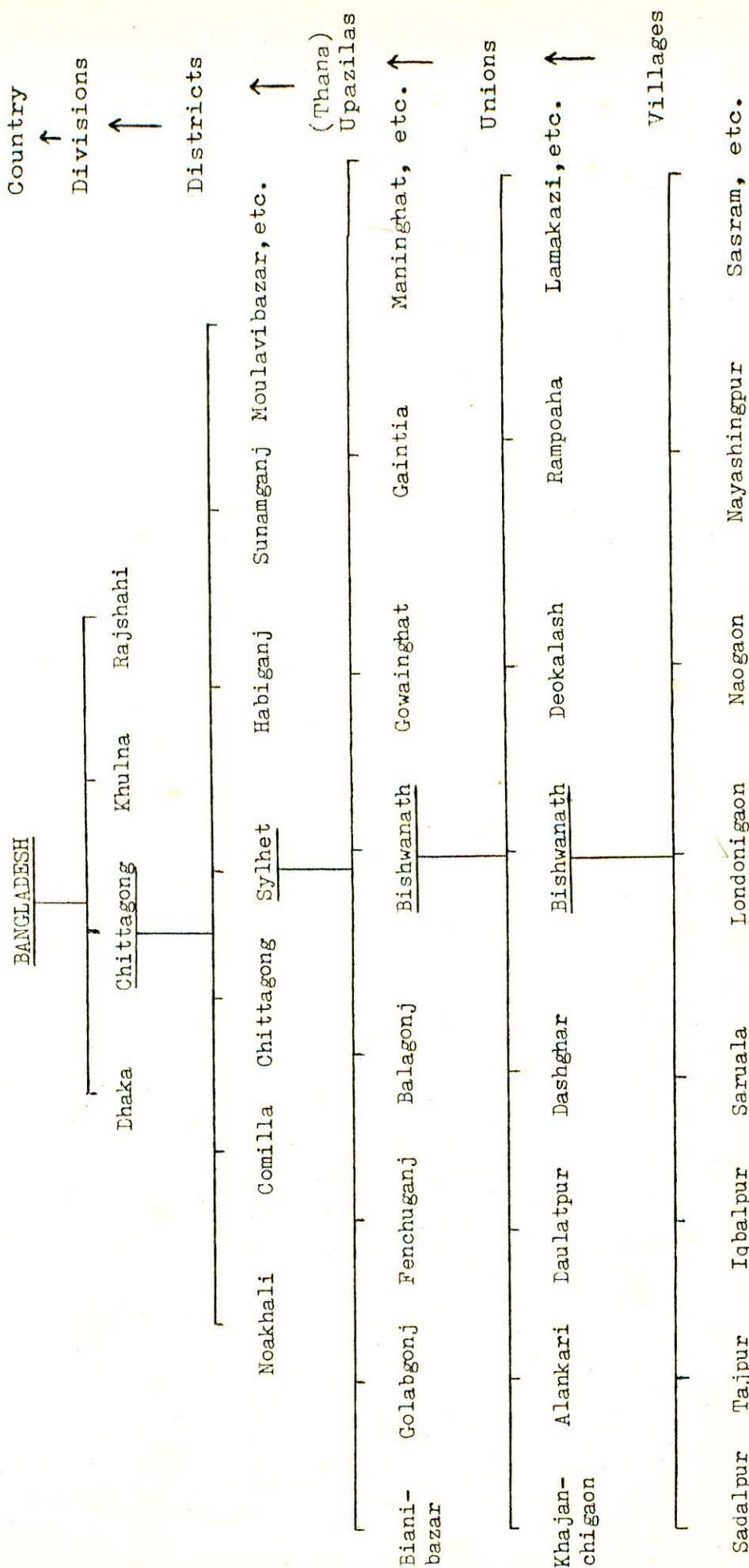
We could not get any specific information about the past history of the village. Any written or official documents which could inform us about its past tradition could not be found out either from the village, or from the Bishwanath Union Office, Sub-Registrar Office, and the Tahshil Office. So, it is not possible for us to say anything specifically about the past of the village. However, from discussion with the old people of Londonigaon more or less we have come to know about their past. They were very poor and had to work hard for a meal a day. They had to get out early in the morning everyday in search of work and had to come back only with two anas after working the whole day. At that time, i.e., in the decade of 1920's the wage of a day labourer was only two anas i.e., one eighth of a taka.

³Ibid., p. 7.

⁴ After the administrative reorganization by the government of President H.M. Ershad the former thana has been upgraded with a new nomenclature Upazila. As the field work was conducted before the reorganization we have retained the name, i.e., thana throughout the dissertation.

⁵Ibid., pp. 4-5.

LONDONIGAON VILLAGE IN THE NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE



There was no work inside village at that time. Almost all the inhabitants were landless. Their condition was more or less the same, and they had to go to the near-by villages in search of work. There was no rich man, no zamindar in the village. Therefore, ~~there is~~ no Choudhury Bari, Talukdar Bari, Master Bari, Daroga Bari is found in Londonigaon, except for some Sareng Baris. In the beginning of this century some people worked in Mahajan's boats as they had no boats for themselves.





If we pay attention to the geographical condition of the village, we will understand that in the past no rich man thought of settling in here. In the monsoon the whole village went under water as the river Bashia flooded its two sides every year. To understand why the houses of this village are clustered in small places we have to know these things. The village was called the 'poor men's village' as all the inhabitants were poor. In fact, the opportunity of working in the ship attracted many who wanted to develop their economic condition. Afterwards they settled in England and took others to there. They used to send lots of money to their families and the economic affluence led to a gradual change in the socio-economic conditions of the people of the village.

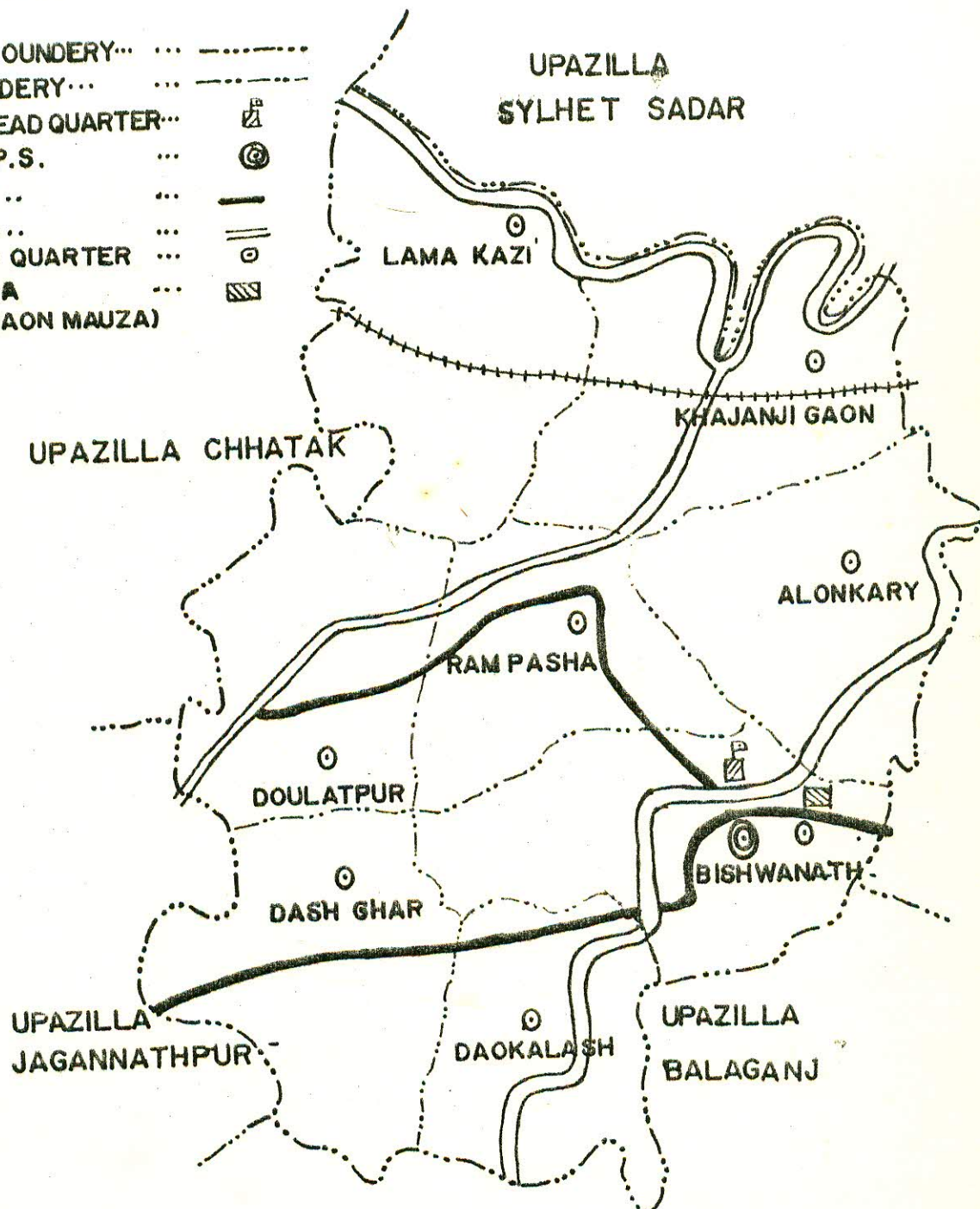
Location of the Village

Bishwanath thana is situated 10 miles south-west of Sylhet town and is directly connected with the metal road. The thana headquarter is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles interior from Rashidpur point situated on the right side of the Sylhet-Dhaka highway. The condition of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long road that has connected Bishwanath with Rashidpur is precarious due to the lack of proper maintenance, though a large number of scutters, mini buses and buses run

BISHWANATH UPAZILLA ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

INDEX

UPAZILLA BOUNDARY...	---
UNION BOUNDARY...	---
UPAZILLA HEAD QUARTER...	
UPAZILA P.S.	
ROAD ...	---
RIVER ...	---
UNION HEAD QUARTER ...	
STUDY AREA (LONDONI GAON MAUZA)	



SCALE 1" = 2 MILES

FIG. 2

along this road towards Sylhet everyday. The village we have selected is around two miles in the north-west from Bishwanath and is situated on the right side of the Bishwanath-Rashidpur road and on the left side of the river Bashia. Though the road which has turned inside the village from Bishwanath-Rashidpur-road is completely non-metal, it has culverts on it where they are needed and due maintenance can make it well-motorable. The geographical boundary of the village is that, the river Bashia is on the north-west, the Ahmada and the Kanipur mouzas are on the south and the south Sirajpur mouza is on the east. According to the settlement pattern the village has got six areas - Dakhiner Atti, Puran Atti,⁶ Majher Atti, Puber Atti, Nadir Par and Shakhhar Par. The reason for this clustered pattern of houses is that the ground (level) in these places is high. In the monsoon when the whole area goes under water, each cluster looks like an island in the sea as water normally cannot reach the houses. The grain and crops of the village are taken to the Bishwanath market by boats through the river Bashia.

Demographic and Socio-economic Characteristics

At the time of field work the population of Londonigaon was 427. The most striking feature was the predominance of female population. About 59 per cent of the total population of the village were females. The high rate of female population is due to the large scale migration of male members. If we include the total number of migrants in the village population then the situation would be completely different. Total number of migrants are 126. Ninety four of them are males. So after their inclusion in the village

⁶'Atti' means cluster.

population the ratio between the males and females becomes 49 per cent and 51 per cent respectively. Another important aspect of the village population is that, between the age group 25-29 only five are males while 28 are females. All of these females are housewives maintaining the households in the absence of their husbands.

Table - 3

Distribution of Population of Londonigaon
by Age and Sex

Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 - 4	26	6.09	43	10.07	69	16.16
5 - 9	38	8.89	47	11.01	85	19.91
10 - 14	21	4.92	32	7.49	53	12.41
15 - 19	16	3.75	22	5.15	38	8.89
20 - 24	17	3.98	13	3.04	30	7.02
25 - 29	5	1.17	28	6.66	33	7.73
30 - 34	12	2.81	12	2.81	24	5.62
35 - 39	7	1.64	15	3.51	22	5.15
40 - 44	3	0.70	8	1.87	11	2.58
45 - 49	7	1.64	8	1.87	15	3.51
50 - 54	5	1.17	7	1.64	12	2.81
55 - 59	4	0.94	9	2.11	13	3.04
60+	16	3.75	6	1.40	22	5.15
Total :	177	41.31	250	58.69	427	100.00

We have mentioned earlier that during the ti census the population of the village was 427. The total number of migrants were 126. Including migrants the total number of population was 553. It means that 23 per cent of the total population migrated to their different destinations outside the country.

The total population is divided into 68 households. The average size of families in this village is 6.28. It is found that according to 1974 census the total population of Londonigaon was 365. Among them 46 per cent (168) were males and 54 per cent (197) were females. Migration of male members could be the most probable explanation for this situation. Again, according to the 1961 census the total number of population was 397 of which 192 (48%) were males and 205 (52%) were females. This predominance of female population is more because of migration than any demographic cause. We have seen in the previous chapter that the tradition of migration from Londonigaon village could be traced back at least to the decade of 1930s, if not more.

Thus, this difference is increasing more rapidly. Because, in 1961 male-female rate was 48 and 52 per cent; in 1974 it was 46 and 54 per cent and in our survey it is 41 per cent and 59 per cent.

Education

It is revealed that out of the total 427 persons of Londonigaon none has crossed the level of Secondary School Certificate Examination. Though the table depicts that 101 (28%) have some education, i.e., literate and rest 257 (72%) are illiterate, only 3 per cent of these 28 per cent could cross the primary level and 25 per cent are in different stages of primary level. It may be mentioned here that in our statistics we have also included those who have just started their schooling. Though 25 per cent entered the primary school, many of them had left it even before crossing the primary level.

Table - 4

Percentage of Literacy of the People of Londonigaon
by Age, Sex and Level of Education

Age Group	No Education						Primary						Secondary						Grand Total	
	Male			Female			Male			Female			Male			Female			Total	%
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%		No.	%			
5-9	19	5.30	34	9.49	53	14.80	17	4.74	15	4.18	32	8.93							85	23.74
10-14	9	2.51	8	2.23	17	4.74	15	4.18	18	5.02	33	9.21	1	0.28	2	0.54	3	0.83	53	14.80
15-19	8	2.23	15	4.18	23	6.42	3	0.83	5	1.39	8	2.23	6	1.67	1	0.28	7	1.95	38	10.61
20-24	10	2.79	9	2.51	12	5.30	7	1.95	3	0.83	10	2.79	1	0.28			1	0.28	30	8.37
25-29	4	1.11	27	7.54	31	8.65			2	0.54	2	0.54							33	9.21
30-34	10	2.79	10	2.79	20	5.58	1	0.28	3	0.83	4	1.11							24	6.70
35-39	9	2.51	12	3.35	21	5.86	-	-	1	0.27	1	0.28							22	6.14
40-44	3	0.83	8	2.23	11	3.07	-	-	-	-	-	-							11	3.07
45-49	7	1.95	8	2.23	15	4.18	-	-	-	-	-	-							15	4.18
50-54	6	1.67	6	1.67	12	3.35	-	-	-	-	-	-							12	3.35
55-59	4	1.11	9	2.51	13	3.63	-	-	-	-	-	-							13	3.63
60+	14	3.91	8	2.23	22	6.14	-	-	-	-	-	-							22	6.14
Total:	103	28.77	154	43.01	257	71.78	43	12.01	47	13.12	90	25.13	8	2.23	3	0.83	11	3.07	358	100.00

Again, the age group 5-14 represents 19 per cent (68) of the total literate persons, and in the age group 40-60 there is not a single person who has any kind of education, possibly because during their time the socio-economic condition of the people of the village was not good; so their parents did not even think of sending them to school; but with the change of their socio-economic condition, these people have become conscious about the importance of education and are sending their wards to school. The village has a beautifully constructed mosque. Apart from five times prayer a day, it is used for religious teaching among children. There was no primary school in the village during the time of survey.

Occupation

Like many other villages of Bangladesh farming and farm-based activities are the principal occupations of 95 per cent households of Londonigaon; and the remaining five per cent of them are involved in different non-agricultural occupations such as, working in the mosque as Muajjeen, driving, business, etc. Table - 5 shows the distribution.






It may be mentioned here that we only mentioned the primary occupations, there are also secondary occupations among the villagers.

Utilization of Land

The village falls under Purba Janaia Mouza. The area of Londonigaon is approximately 130 acres. This data has been taken from the Land map and Land record of the village which were collected from the Bishwanath thana revenue office. The use of land for different purposes has been shown in Table - 6.

LONDONIGAON VILLAGE MAJOR LAND USE CATEGORY

INDEX

-  SETTLEMENT
-  GRAVEYARD
-  CROPLAND
-  RIVER, ROAD 

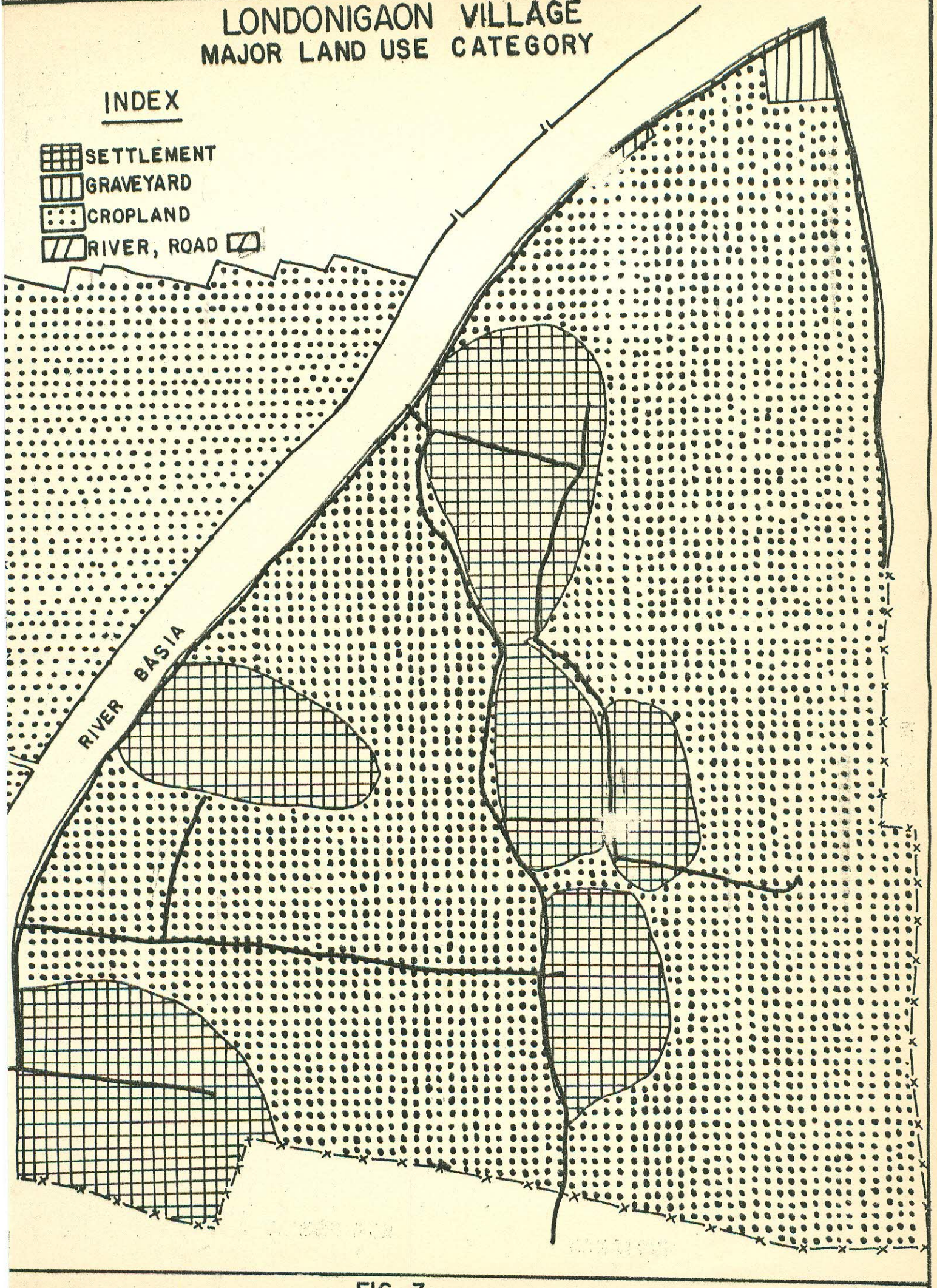


FIG. 3

Table - 5

Distribution of Primary Occupations of Migrant
and Non-migrant Families in Londonigaon

Occupation	Migrant Respon- dents' families		Non-migrant Respon- dents' families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture	44	64.70	21	30.98	65	95.58
Business	1	1.47	-	-	1	1.47
Muajjeen	-	-	1	1.47	1	1.47
Driving	-	-	1	1.47	1	1.47
Total:	45	66.18	23	33.82	68	100.00

Table - 6

Distribution of Different Types of
Land of Londonigaon

Types of Land	Total Amount (in acres)	Percentage
Shail	70.71	54.39
Aman	7.21	5.55
Boro	8.28	6.37
Seed-bed	14.26	10.97
Homestead	11.83	9.10
Fallow land	2.08	1.60
Road, Mosque, Pond, Graveyard, etc.	15.63	12.02
Total :	130.00	100.00

Table - 6 depicts that 54.39 per cent of the total area of the village is two crops land which is known in the village as shail. Boro is cultivated in 6.37 per cent land while Aman in 5.55 per cent. 10.97 per cent land is used as seed-bed. Therefore, 77.28 per cent land of Londonigaon is under cultivation. Homestead claims 9.10 per cent of the total acreage. As we have seen that for geographical reasons the houses are not scattered, rather concentrated in particular places. These places are called Attis (clusters). We have already mentioned that the village is divided into a few Attis. As houses are concentrated in Attis the amount of land used for homestead is very small. 2.08 acres of land are left as fallow land. Remaining 15.63 acres of land is used for different purposes such as roads, mosque, graveyard, garden, cremation ground, ponds, etc. Though there was no Hindu population in Londonigaon during our investigation, 0.03 acres was kept for a cremation ground. It is assumed that Londonigaon had some Hindu population in the past, but at present this place is not used for this purpose.

The agricultural land in Londonigaon is quite fertile. Due to the existence of Bashia river the village is inundated every year during monsoon and because of the siltation the land becomes more and more fertile.

CHAPTER - III

TIME, CAUSES AND PROCESS OF MIGRATION

Though the process of large-scale migration from Bangladesh received momentum in the last decade, in no ways migration is a post-independence phenomenon. The period of migration from Bangladesh can broadly be divided into three phases:

- i) migration during the British period;
- ii) migration during the Pakistan period; and
- iii) migration since the birth of Bangladesh.

Migration During the British Period

The Emigration Act of 1922 indicates that substantial migration had been taking place from British India in the early period of this century. However, it is not possible to find out whether emigration of any significant size took place from the territories now comprising Bangladesh. It is believed that most of the emigration took place to build railroads and other projects in former British colonies like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Fiziiland, Mauritius, Malaysia, Trinidad and Tobago. From an interview with an official who dealt with this in the then central government of Pakistan, it appears that except for a few cases in Mauritius and Trinidad - Tobago, there was no migrant population of Bangladesh origin in other countries.¹

¹Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" in Labor Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East. World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454, 1981, Dhaka, pp. 3-4.

Apart from this, during the early part of this century, a small number of Bangladeshi migrated abroad. Most of them were seamen. Since Bangladesh as a part of India was a colony of British Empire, these seamen could easily find jobs in the British merchant navy. From time to time some of them deserted the ships and managed inland employments in the United Kingdom.

These early migrants, whatever their size be, had subsequently played a significant role in establishing a chain of migrants to the U.K. from Bangladesh.

Migration During the Pakistan Period

Large-scale migration from Bangladesh (the then East Pakistan) started after the partition of India in 1947. People from Bangladesh especially from the eastern district of Sylhet developed a strong sea-faring tradition, and for many years they found work as seamen on ships out of Calcutta, Bombay and Singapore. However, since partition removed the Indian ports as work outlets, the seamen had two options before them, either to seek employment in the U.K. or to return home. For economic reasons, most of them decided to stay in Britain. The situation in that country was also in their favour. Because, after the World War II British economy was virtually shattered; she faced the gigantic task of economic reconstruction which required adequate manpower. As a result, the British Government adopted a policy of attracting workers from overseas countries, especially from many parts of the Commonwealth. It may be mentioned here that, though passports have been existing since the time of William Pitt, the first tentative legislation aimed at curbing the influence of European refugees was enacted in 1911. This remained in force until succeeded by the Aliens Order of 1953. Neither of these Acts restricted in any way the movement of Commonwealth citizens or erstwhile British Subjects.

As a Government policy, manpower export from Bangladesh on a large scale can be traced to the British Emigration Act introducing the system of issuing employment vouchers to overseas people seeking employment in the U.K. In the 1950s, it was observed that the actual job offers were made mostly for the lower professions under the employment voucher system and a large number of labourers especially from Sylhet emigrated to the United Kingdom.² In the 1960s the flow of emigration fell considerably and primary immigration to Britain gradually became standstill in 1970s. It is because of the enforcement of the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 which did restrict the free movement of Commonwealth citizens and this Act was subsequently amended by the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Both Commonwealth and Alien legislation were later amalgamated into the 1971 Immigration Act which remains in force.³

Migration Since the Birth of Bangladesh

During the third phase people shifted their destination from industrially developed England to the oil-exporting Middle-Eastern and North-African countries. The demand for labour in the oil-exporting states reached a new pitch after 1973, when more rapid economic development ensued. After this time, the demand for labour was both qualitatively and quantitatively extensive, seeking the work-forces essential to such rapid development programmes.⁴

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Information on all immigration legislation in the U.K. was provided by J.R. Moore, First Secretary, British High Commission, Consular and Immigration Section, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

⁴Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinclair. "Contemporary International Migration and Human Resources Development in the Arab Region: Background and Policy Issues" in Population and Development in the Middle East, published by United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia, p. 260.

In 1975, the major labour importing countries were Algeria, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. They host to more than two million immigrant workers, comprising 2.6 per cent of their total population and 11.0 per cent of the indigenous labour force. The major labour exporting countries were Egypt, Jordan, the Syriyan Arab Republic and Yemen.⁵

By 1975 some Asian labour was being used in the Arab world but on a small scale. Only in the United Arab Emirates and Oman did Asian labour make a substantial contribution to the labour force in 1975.

Indians and Pakistanis have long been involved in economic development in the Middle-East. As traders and entrepreneurs they existed in small numbers, under the traditional economic order in Arabian Peninsula. Indians and Pakistanis continued to make a contribution to the labour market, becoming associated with certain tasks and established in particular countries, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.⁶

Though Bangladesh entered into the Middle-Eastern job market in a large scale in the second half of the last decade, even before the creation of Bangladesh people from this region were also in the Middle-East.

People originated from present-day Bangladesh have been migrating to oil-rich Middle-East countries for the last twenty years. Beginning in the early sixties small numbers, mostly from the district of Chittagong, migrated

⁶ Birks, J.S. and C.A. Sinelair. "Contemporary International Migration and Human Resources Development in the Arab Region: Background and Policy Issues" in op. cit., pp. 260-263.

unofficially to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Some of these people who had been to Saudi Arabia during the early sixties managed to obtain Saudi nationality; they are now found in different occupations, including self-owned small business, namely in Mecca and Medina. Those who went to Qatar are known to have found work mostly in Doha Port and Qatar Navigation Department.⁷

It is revealed from the government statistics that 149377 Bangladeshi nationals left the country on employment from 1977 to 1981. Out of them 97.37 per cent migrated only to North Africa and Middle-East countries. They were the U.A.E., Qatar, Kuwait, Iran Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Bahrain and Oman.⁸

The early migrants are significantly responsible for such a large scale migration from Bangladesh. Hossain identified four important ways which according to him enhanced the flow of migration. Firstly, they (migrants) took enormous trouble to reach the country of their demand and to find employment through their own efforts, which set an example for those who followed. Secondly they made their services available to the employers at lower cost than that of other workers. Thirdly, they pleased their employers by their manners and output which created an image and the employers feel confident about them. Fourthly, the Bangladeshi labourers maintained a link with their homeland and some of them successfully negotiated deals with their

⁷Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" in op. cit., p. 5.

⁸Bureau of Statistics for 1975 data. Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training for 1976-1982 data.

employers inviting them to recruit workers from Bangladesh. Initially the early migrants were the only source which linked the Middle-Eastern employers with the workers in Bangladesh.⁹

In addition to that Bangladeshi migrants living in Britain also helped their kith and kin to migrate to the Middle-Eastern countries. However, in 1976 government formulated a policy of manpower export which also created a congenial atmosphere for large scale migration.

Causes of Migration

The migration from Bangladesh is not a matter of long past. Yet it is not known for sure when, why and how the people of Bangladesh started migrating initially. Moreover, it is to be noted that the people who emigrated especially during the first two phases were mostly from one particular region of Bangladesh, i.e. the Eastern District of Sylhet. Furthermore, it is also not known why and how such a large number of people could migrate from a land-locked area. Again, it remains unexplained how people from Sylhet region developed a strong sea-faring tradition being located around three hundred miles away from the sea. It could have been understandable had it been a coastal area. Thus the causes, process and the time of migration from Bangladesh cannot easily be determined. It requires serious investigation to discover the truth. Extensive study on the following issues would lead us to reach into a reasonable conclusion in this regard:

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Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar. "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" in op. cit., p. 6.

- i) internal migration (both immigration and emigration) from Sylhet;
- ii) existence of haors and navigable rivers in Sylhet;
- iii) land tenure system of Sylhet; and
- iv) existence of ship building industry in Sylhet.

Internal Migration

It is evident from the historical evidences that Sylhet experiences quite a large scale movement of people both in the form of emigration and immigration.

Large scale tea plantation in the district of Sylhet during the latter part of the 19th century required to import coolies (tea garden labourers) from the neighbouring districts of Bihar and Orissa.¹⁰ During the ten years ending with 1900 over one lakh fortyone thousand coolies were imported.¹¹ The total number of immigrants was one lakh sixty-four thousand eight hundred and ninety five (1,64,895), but a considerable proportion of these persons were not coolies. They had entered Sylhet from Hill Teppara and the three neighbouring districts of Bengal, i.e., Mymensingh, Teppara and Dhaka.¹²

So far as emigration is concerned Sylhet sent 25,971 persons in 1901, to the neighbouring districts of the Cachar plains. It needs hardly be said

¹⁰ At that time the Indo-Pak-Bangladesh subcontinent was under the British Rule and, therefore, internal movement was not restricted.

¹¹ Allen, B.C. Assam District Gazetteers, Volume II - Sylhet, Calcutta, 1905, Chap. III, p. 68.

¹² Ibid., pp. 68-69.

that the district could easily afford to space these men. But in places there was considerable pressure on the soil, and due to the introduction of railway through the North Cachar Hills, some of Sylhet's teeming thousands passed across into the fertile plains of the Assam valley.¹³

Though no direct linkage can be established between migration (i.e., immigration and emigration) and picking up jobs in the ships, we must not ignore the fact that both psychological and cultural aspects play an important role in the decision making process of migration. And once migration is taken place migrants become psychologically and culturally more adjustable; and the psychological barrier which usually stems out of feeling for the place of birth no longer exists. This change makes a man more desperate and enterprising to accept any new profession for better living.

This view can be substantiated by a recent study that the immigrants are less bound by tradition, and as a result they are quite adaptable to new ideas and thoughts.¹⁴

¹³Ibid., Chap. III, p. 70.

¹⁴A study was conducted in 1980 on a cluster of villages. The main purpose of the study was to collect socio-economic information. Bahar colony was one of the villages where study was also conducted. This village possessed different socio-economic characteristics. The principal reason for variation was that the inhabitants of this village were immigrants from Assam Province of India who came in the early sixties. The villagers of Bahar Colony were mainly dependent on non-agricultural sources of income. Again the village was less bound by tradition and so the villagers were quite adaptable to new thoughts and ideas. Through migrating from their motherland for the necessity of their own existence, the villagers of Bahar Colony broke with many of their traditional beliefs, practices and values. And in the process they became more adaptable than the other typical villages. [Village Development Training Program - Basic Social and Economic Information on Households, by Kamal Ahmed Choudhury and Ashraf Uddin Ahmed, mimeo. International Voluntary Services, Inc., Dhaka, June 1980, pp. 7-8.]

Though this loss and gain of population is not very significant in the context of total population of the districts, it paves the way for those who were in serious economic pressure to take up a vital decision, either to move to the fertile land of Assam valley or to pick up any kind of job which would ensure their economic solvency, does not matter even if it is in the ships.

Existence of Haors and Navigable Rivers in Sylhet

That geography or natural environment has a determining effect upon man and his culture is not a new idea rather it goes back at least to Aristotle, who believed that the greatness of the Greeks was due primarily to the favourable physical environment in which they lived. In modern time, Montesquieu was one of the first to expound the theory that geography determines both the physical and psychological qualities of man.¹⁵

Let us now examine the above theories keeping our original question in mind whether geographical condition of Sylhet had played any part to induce the people of certain areas of Sylhet to pick up jobs in the ships which ultimately helped to develop a sea-faring tradition among them.

Syed Murtoza Ali in his book Profile of Personalities quoted Robert Lindsay¹⁶ who gave an interesting account of his journey to Sylhet during the night of monsoon. Lindsay stated that he would be disbelieved when

¹⁵Koenig, Samuel. Sociology - An Introduction to the Science of Society, Barnes & Noble Inc., New York, 1969, p. 40.

¹⁶Robert Lindsay was appointed Collector of Sylhet in 1778. Prior to his posting at Sylhet he was stationed at Dhaka.

he said that in pointing his boat towards Sylhet he had to recourse to his compass, the same as at sea and steered straight course through a lake not less than 100 miles in extent, occasionally passing through villages, built on artificial mounds -- but so scanty was the ground, that each house had a canoe attached to it. Those who have seen the haor areas in Sunamganj during rains would agree that his description holds good even today.¹⁷

Apart from this, trade and commerce of the district were carried out through water transports. During the rains big steamers came up from Calcutta and called at different stations. Small steamers ran up the Surma from Markhali past Sunamganj and Chhatak to Sylhet town. In the cold weather, the big steamers went right upto Chhatak but beyond that point there was not enough water in the Surma for them during the dry season.¹⁸ But the greater part of the trade of the district was, however, carried not by steamers but by country boats.¹⁹

Lindsay's account of the geographical condition of Sylhet helps us to reach in an apparent conclusion that the physical environment of Sylhet was quite favourable to go for job as a sailor. Again, steamer services²⁰

¹⁷Ali, Murtoza. Profile of Personalities, as the first few pages of the only available book have been lost, it is not known when, where and by whom the book was published.

¹⁸Allen, B.C. Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. II, Sylhet, Calcutta, 1905, Chap. VI, p. 182.

¹⁹Ibid., Chap. VI, p. 183.

²⁰These steamers were owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Company Ltd., whose managing agents were Messers Kilburn & Co., 4, Fairlie Place, Calcutta, and the Rivers Steam Navigation Co. whose agents are Messers Meniell & Co., 2-1, Clive Chat Street, Calcutta.

(though for the purpose of commerce and trade) had linked Calcutta directly with the different parts of that region. As a result, communication between Calcutta and Sylhet became much easier. Although these factors could not imperically establish the aforesaid proposition, in no way it disproves the possibility for a boatman to become a sailor.

Existence of the Ship Building Industry

It is very difficult to believe that once Sylhet was in a position to build sea-going ships. This fact is very significant for our present purpose. According to Assam District Gazetteers, boat-building had always been an important industry in Sylhet. Mr. Lindsay who was Collector there in 1780, built one ship of 400 tons burden, which drew 17 feet of water when fully loaded. He also built a fleet of 20 ships and sent them to Madras loaded with rice, on the occasion of a scarcity in that Presidency.²¹

It is surprising that these ships built at a distance of 300 miles from the sea-coast could stand the strain of a journey to Madras. It was one Captain Thomas who was of great help in building ships. He employed the canoe builder of Sylhet in building his ships. Even to this day seamen from Sylhet are seen in large number in ships plying all over the world.²²

From our above discussion one can safely conclude that it is neither unusual nor unexpected for a Sylhetee to pick up a job of a sailor.

²¹Allen, B.C. Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. II, Sylhet, Calcutta, 1905, Chap. V, p. 156.

²²Imperial Gazetteers of India, Vol. XIII, London 1887, p. 152.

Land Tenure System of Sylhet

We know that historically in Bengal land was the main form of wealth and agriculture was the main form of economy. Sylhet is no exception to that, though of course, land tenure system of Sylhet was unlike the land tenure system of the rest of Bengal. Since economy is one of the determining factors of migration, it can naturally be expected that the peculiar land tenure system of Sylhet could be a collaborating factor of picking up alternative jobs apart from agriculture. As it is seen that most of the migrants are from the rural areas, one can very well deduce that the rural areas, i.e., the agriculture sector could not sustain her people in her own economy.

One of the chief peculiarities was the smallness of agricultural holdings. Perhaps in no other district of Bengal or Assam had the Sub-division of landed property been carried to a greater extent. Anything above five acres²³ was considered to be a large holding for the support of a cultivator with a family; $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres made a comfortable farm, and anything below $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres was a very small one, and barely afforded subsistence. For instance it may be mentioned that out of 78,000 estates on the rent roll of the district in 1870 upwards of 20,000 paid a land tax of not more than two shillings a year.²⁴ Quite a significant number of this class gradually became poorer because of the smallness of land and the Muslim Inheritance Law by which land continuously became divided into small plots. Thus, they

²³Imperial Gazetteers of India, Vol. XIII, London 1887, p. 153.

²⁴Ibid., p. 153.

became landless and had to look for other alternative jobs which presumably, created a large number of job-oriented families in Sylhet.

So far we have discussed why some people of Sylhet went for a job other than agriculture. It is not only a matter of luck and chance that one fine morning one gets a job of a sailor. We have already discussed the favourable geographical condition of Sylhet for such a profession. Even if anyone wanted to become a sailor he had to overcome a lot of intervening obstacles which was almost impossible for a plain and simple poor rural illiterate person. There must have been some media through which the rural people found jobs in the ships.

To discover the actual process of migration in general a lot of interviews were taken especially from among the old people who know about it. One such person was Natai Mia who served for 40 years as an employee of Kilburn & Co. in Fenchuganj, a port on the bank of the river Kushiara. He was of the opinion that, Aftab Ali of the Kathalkai village of Bishwanath thana was the main media through whom a large number of people found jobs in sea-going vessels. Aftab Ali was a very influential man in Calcutta Port. He was also General Secretary of the Sea-men Association. Natai Mia told me that Yusuf Ali and Zafar Ali of the village Bhadeshwar under the Gopalganj thana were sea-men (Khalashi) suppliers. Both of them had got their houses in Khidirpur dockyard. They collected people who wanted to take up the challenging job of sea-manship and sent them to Calcutta. They had to provide them with food and shelter in Calcutta and when a ship anchored at there after a voyage the old Khalashis went on vacation and were replaced by another batch of Khalashis. After the vacation the old batch again joined the ship.

Both Zafar Ali and Yusuf Ali had links with the shipping companies. They used to fix up the salaries of the Khalashis with the companies and besides their commission they also used to deduct the expenditure they had to spend for them.

Apart from these, there was a different process of migration we have come to know from our interview, which had no relation with sea-manship. During the British rule tea plantation had been started by some British companies in Sylhet. These companies sent their own men to manage these gardens. The nature of their jobs obliged them to live within the gardens and rely upon their local cooks for the preparation of their daily food. As the tea-gardens were isolated and located far away from the town, the life there was very much boring. To get rid of this monotonous life they required diversions. One of these was to take interest on varieties of local food prepared by the local cooks. Some of these British managers were so much fond of the local food that even after the completion of their assignment they took their cooks back with them to England. In this way many Sylhetee went to England and later on some of them started catering business there. Subsequently they took their kith and kin to meet up the expanding demand of manpower.

However, there cannot be one single cause of migration as it always takes place with the combination of different factors. Of course the importance of the factors varies in different situations. Inter-district migration, favourable geographical condition, peculiar land tenure system and a long ranging tradition of ship-building industry together have created a congenial atmosphere and the kinship relationship eventually completed the process.

Migration from Londonigaon Village

So far we have discussed in general about the causes and process of early migration from Bangladesh especially in the context of Sylhet district. Now we shall focus our attention to a particular village i.e., our study area to discover the actual causes and process of migration from that village.

The village under study had a long ranging tradition of seamanship. People from this village, even in the early part of this century served as sailors in the different sea-going vessels which used to ply all over the world. It is very difficult to ascertain as to why, when, and how this process had started. Due to the lack of any authentic written document we have no other option but to rely only on personal interviews. Our account of early migration from Londonigaon village highlighted purely on the basis of information supplied by the villagers and a few migrants who had been in the U.K.

Countries of Migration

Out of 68 households of Londonigaon village 45 have one or more migrants in their family. The total number of migrants from Londonigaon during the time of field study was 126. Migrants from Londonigaon village concentrated their place of migration to one particular country i.e., U.K. Out of the total 126 migrants 114, i.e., 90 per cent migrated to the United Kingdom. Among the rest 10 per cent, 8 per cent to Saudi Arabia, one per cent to Kuwait and one per cent to Bahrain. Table - 7 shows the distribution.

There is no dispute among the respondents and the old members of the village about the time of first migration from Londonigaon. But it is very difficult to identify and locate the first migrant or migrants as the

Table - 7

Distribution of Londonigaon Migrants by their
Destination of Migration

Countries of Migration	No. of Migrants	Percentage
United Kingdom	114	90
Saudi Arabia	10	8
Kuwait	1	1
Bahrain	1	1
Total :	126	100

villagers very much differ from one another on this issue. It seems to me that this issue has become a matter of prestige to them and as a result more than one claimed that their families were the first to set the example of migration and the other migrants were only their followers.

Information collected on the present migrants revealed that many of them went to the United Kingdom in 1940s. Table - 8 shows the year and country-wise distribution of migration from Londonigaon village.

It is revealed from the table that 13 per cent people migrated to the U.K. in 1940s. Seventeen per cent in the decade of 1950s. Increasing trend of migration again decreased in the 1960s, when 13 per cent migrated to the United Kingdom. This was due to the introduction of Commonwealth Immigrants Act which came into force in 1962. This Act did restrict the free movement of Commonwealth citizens or erstwhile British subjects and again

Table - 8

Distribution of Londonigaon Migrants by countries
and Time of Migration

Year of Migration	Countries								Grand Total	
	United Kingdom		Saudi Arabia		Kuwait		Bahrain			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1940-1949	16	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	13
1950-1959	22	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	17
1960-1969	16	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	13
1970-1979	45	36	6	5	-	-	1	1	52	42
1980-	15	11	4	3	1	1	-	-	20	15
Total :	114	90	10	8	1	1	1	1	126	100

this Act was subsequently amended by the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. Both Commonwealth and Alien Legislation were later amalgamated into the 1971 Immigration Act which virtually stopped the flow of primary immigration to the United Kingdom. But the above table shows that the largest number of people emigrated to the United Kingdom from Bangladesh during the decade of 1970s. Most of the primary emigration (emigration of heads of households) took place in the decade of 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and after the introduction of 1971 Immigration Act, there was no longer any provision in law for significant primary immigration to the U.K. The vast majority that has been proceeding to the U.K. since 1971 are dependents of heads of households already settled there.

Table - 8 reveals another important fact that migration to the Middle-Eastern countries started in the decade of 1970s. The reason was obvious. We have already mentioned that Immigration Act of 1971 has prohibited any primary immigration to the U.K. And on the other hand, after the Arab-Israel War in 1973, the increase in oil price created an economic boom for the Middle Eastern countries and as a result huge job opportunities were created there. Due to the immigration restriction those who could not go to the United Kingdom now decided to go to the Middle Eastern countries. The choice of emigrating to those countries was no less rewarding than that of the U.K. Another important factor also influenced the process of migration in the Middle Eastern countries, especially in the Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia did not recognize Bangladesh after its inception in 1971. It recognized Bangladesh after the change of government in 1975.²⁵ Since then migration to Saudi Arabia virtually started.

Process of Migration

Since migration did not take place at one particular time and, of course, not also in one country, different situations dictated to adopt different ways and means to materialize the decision of migration. Table - 9 shows how the process of migration was completed through adopting different means and ways.

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Hussain, Akmal. "Bangladesh and the Muslim World" in Emajuddin Ahmed (ed.) Foreign Policy of Bangladesh - A Small State's Imperative. The University Press Limited, Dhaka 1982, p. 88.

Table - 9

Process of Migration from Londonigaon

Process of Migration	Number	Percentage
Seaman deserter	12	9
Family passport	68	54
Medical passport	5	4
Employment voucher	25	20
British Army	4	3
Private Recruiting Agents	6	5
* Omra vissa	6	5
Total:	126	100

* Omra is a pilgrimage outside the season of the Haj.

Seaman deserters: Seamen deserters were considered as the early migrants of the village. It was found that out of the total migrants nine per cent were seamen deserters. All of them got their jobs in different sea-going vessels through Khidirpur dock. We have already mentioned that Aftab Ali of Kathalkai village of Bishwanath thana was the main media through whom large number of people from Sylhet found jobs as sailors. Aftab Ali hails from Bishwanath thana and the village under study also falls under the administrative jurisdiction of the same thana; as a result early acquaintance with Aftab Ali significantly helped the early migrants of Londonigaon village to get jobs in ships. Initially seaman deserters had no legal

passports to enter the U.K. After leaving the ship they managed some inland jobs; later on they legalized their entrance in the country and secured legal passports. Most of them are at present holding British passports. The desertion of ships mostly took place in the decades of 1940s and 1950s. We know that after the World War II Great Britain was badly in need of huge manpower for their national reconstruction. At that time British authority tacitly encouraged immigration in the United Kingdom. Immigration Department adopted a lenient attitude towards these illegal migrants. This situation allured the brothers and neighbours tending to follow the initial migrant who report favourably on his new environment.

Case Study - 1

Kandar Ali: Kandar Ali of Londonigaon village was a sailor. He was seventy years old at the time of field work. In the year 1936, he was recruited to work in the ship by Wahidullah, a sareng in the Harrison Co., and an inhabitant of Bishwanath thana, who frequently visited his village home. Wahidullah took Kandar Ali to Calcutta Port and managed a job for him in the same shipping company at a salary of Tk. 18/- (in local currency) per month. In the same year Kandar Ali made his maiden voyage for Singapore from Calcutta. It may be mentioned that at that time the wages of a day labourer were only two anas, (Tk. 0.12), i.e., around Tk. 4/- per mensom. On the other hand, a person working in the ship could earn more than Tk. 200/- and could easily save around Tk. 100/00 per annum after meeting all his expenses. It does not require mentioning that this new way of earning money greatly stirred the village. A new horizon of economic salvation was revealed before them. Mathematically the ratio of the monthly income increased around 5 times. At that time it was really like a difficult

expedition for the illiterate day-labourers to work in the ship and sail for other countries. But their pressing economic need could not afford them to spoil such an alluring chance of improving their lot. While serving in the ship, Ali returned to his country in 1938 with a saving of Tk. 90/- in cash. When the World War II began in 1939 he had still been in the ship, where he had started his career as a fireman. After putting five years of service he deserted the ship as a sareng in the year 1941 and settled down in Yorkshire, London. At that time no passport was needed to enter the U.K. as because the Indian sub-continent was a colony of that country. There he took up a job in an industry. Though now he is a British citizen, he still has connections with his village home and visits his motherland twice a year.

Wahidullah who later became supervisor of the Harrison Co. was entrusted with the charge of looking after all the affairs of local sailors. Each time after a voyage a batch of 50/60 sailors came back to the port and some others took their places. Whenever it was necessary to make a new recruit he usually managed to employ sailors from his own locality. In this way many others like Kandar Ali found jobs in ships.

British Army: Among the total number of migrants four (3%) persons served in the British Army. After the end of colonial rule in India they lost their jobs but could manage to go to the United Kingdom. They did not sever their relationship with their kith and kins and in some cases some members of their families joined them later on. These early migrants played an important role in establishing a chain of migrants after the independence of Pakistan in 1947.

Medical Passport: During the time of interview I came to know about a new system of collecting British entry permission which is popularly known among the villagers as 'medical passport'. Five persons (4%) of Londonigaon went to the United Kingdom holding medical passports. After being failed to secure necessary permission in normal procedure, these migrants appealed to the local British High Commission office to provide them with entry permission to visit the U.K. for medical treatment, though their primary motive was economic, not medical. As it was easier to collect an entry permission for medical purpose, many people secured visa on that ground and went to the U.K. Subsequently they legalized their stay in that country.

Employment Voucher System:²⁶ Twenty-five persons (20%) of Londonigaon village emigrated to the United Kingdom, taking full advantage of Employment Voucher System introduced by the British Immigration Department. Most of these early migrants obtained British citizenship by naturalization after four or five years in the U.K. It is reported that although they migrated as labourers, most of them have since switched over to various other professions of which catering claims the maximum number.²⁷

²⁶Employment Voucher System introduced by the British Immigration Department provided that any body could apply for a job in the U.K. stating his qualifications and experience on a special application form supplied by the British Department of Employment through Employment Exchanges. Those forms after being duly filled in and authenticated the statement of the candidate and his professional efficiency by the managers of the dealing Employment Exchanges in Bangladesh, are sent back to the British Department of Employment which would make the final selection and issue employment vouchers on correspond directly the candidate; other formalities like visa etc. would then be automatic. (Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, "Development of Manpower Export and Profile of Migrants from Bangladesh" in Labour Migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 454, April 1981, Dhaka, p. 4.)

²⁷Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, Ibid.

Private Recruiting Agents:²⁸ Those who migrated to the Middle-

Eastern countries went there either through private recruiting agents or through passage brokers. In the study area we found that out of the total migrants six persons (5%) went abroad through private recruiting agents. Since, the Middle-East is not known to them and furthermore, as there were no early migrants from Londonigaon, the migrants from Londonigaon had no other option but to rely on private recruiting agents to migrate to the Middle-Eastern countries. As there was a huge gap between the job-seekers and the jobs available abroad, the private recruiting agents found themselves in a very comfortable bargaining position. As a result, they began to extract illegal money from the prospective immigrants. Spurious labour contractors started taking advantage of the situation. They began to bluff the people by taking money and promising them jobs and later escaped with money. Job seekers were exposed to unnecessary harassment and exploitation by unscrupulous people in the Immigration and Passport Department, travel agencies, middlemen etc. In our study area we found a person who was cheated by his agent and lost taka twenty thousand.

²⁸ Private Recruiting Agents are private parties authorised by the government to recruit personnel for overseas employment against vacancies procured by themselves through their own efforts. The agents are supposed to make direct contact and negotiate with the employers either by correspondence or by personal visit at their own expense in order to procure vacancies. After examining the genuineness and the terms and conditions of the offer the Director General of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (here after BMET) gives permission to the agents to recruit the required personnel from among the candidates already registered with the Employment Exchanges. Often the agents recruit unregistered candidates without prior permission and call on BMET for clearance after completion of the whole process of recruitment. The agents do not charge any fee from the candidates, but receive a commission from the employers for the service rendered. But in most of the cases agents extract a huge amount of money from the candidates. (Hossain, A.R.M. Anwar, Ibid., p. 12).

Omra Visa: Six persons went to Saudi Arabia holding Omra visas (Omra is a pilgrimage outside the season of Haj). As no Muslim can be denied the religious right of performing Omra, these Bangladeshi travellers could obtain temporary visas for 15 days at Jeddah airport and thus entered the country. Later they could manage to escape notice of the Saudi Immigration authorities and to stay there. In due course they found employment and were allowed to stay on even without any work visa. Inspired by this indulgence of the Saudi authorities, Bangladeshi nationals began to set out for that country in an ever-increasing number, mostly with the plea of performing Omra or Haj.²⁹

Family Passport: During the time of field work it was found that the largest number of migrants (54%) went to one country, i.e., England with family passports. According to British Immigration law a legal immigrant is entitled to bring his wife and children as dependents. But our field level investigation has revealed two fraud cases regarding this kind of migration. These two children who emigrated as dependents of the household heads were not genuine dependents. This kind of migration virtually increased after the strict imposition of Immigration Act by the British authority during the decades of 1970s. When the British High Commission came to know about these incidences they, instead of taking necessary action against the fraud cases, became very suspicious and stringent regarding issuing visas which has created an alarming situation and an unnecessary harrassment to the genuine dependents. One such case we have mentioned in our discussion on methodology (see page 41).

²⁹Ibid., p. 5.

Persons Who Offered Help in the Process of Migration

In every process of migration, whether internal or international, there is a place of origin and a place of destination. In between them there are some common obstacles such as, financial involvement, distance, transportation, intricate immigration and emigration laws of respective governments etc. The importance of these obstacles varies in different situations.

In this study migration took place from a rural non-mechanized agricultural setting to a highly technologically developed urban society. Again both the places of origin and of destination are separated by a few thousand miles. Immigration laws in Britain gradually became stringent and virtually it stopped any primary immigration in the decade of 1970s. Furthermore, migrants from Londonigaon village came from a very poor economic and educational background and so it was really a gigantic task to overcome all these complicated lengthy processes to materialize one's decision to migrate.

Now we shall see from whom the migrants under study received required assistance in this regard. From our field investigation it was found that 82 per cent migrants received direct help from their kith and kin to overcome the intervening obstacles. Among these 82 per cent, 38 per cent directly went to join their immigrant fathers and 16 per cent to their husbands. Everything was done by their respective sponsors. Remaining 28 per cent were provided with necessary assistance by their respective elder brothers (13%), paternal uncles (7%), maternal uncles (4%) and brothers-in-law (4%). On the other hand, 13 per cent migrants completed the process of migration through their individual initiative. These 13 per cent composed of seamen deserters and ex-armymen. It is true that it was much more easier

to enter England when these people migrated to that country; but we should also keep it in mind that at that time it was definitely a difficult decision to migrate.

Lastly, only five per cent went abroad with the help of private recruiting agents. As there was no early migrants in the Middle-Eastern countries from our study area, they had no other option but to rely upon them. Even in these cases they received positive advice and necessary help from their relatives.

Table - 10

Distribution of the Persons who Offered Help in
the Process of Migration from Londonigaon

Relation	No.	Percentage
*Own initiative	16	13
Father	48	38
Husband	20	16
Brother-in-law	5	4
Maternal uncle	5	4
Paternal uncle	9	7
Elder Brother	17	13
Private Recruiting Agents	6	5
Total :	126	100

*Ex-British army men and seamen deserters.

Sources of Fund

Distance is very closely related with migration. The greater the distance, the more complicated, hazardous and expensive the migration becomes. People from the village under study had not migrated to a near-by country, rather migration was inter-continental i.e., the migrants went to the United Kingdom of Europe and to the Middle-Eastern countries. The distances of both the U.K. and the Middle-Eastern countries from Bangladesh are hundreds of miles. Most of them who had gone abroad since 1947 had travelled by air, and needless to say, air-travel is always expensive. It is important to find out how the migrants could meet the huge expenditure and what were their financial sources, when their pecuniary condition was so miserable.

Table - 11

Distributions of the Financial Sources for the Purpose
of Migration from Londonigaon

Sources	Number	Percentage
Own Income	16	12.69
Father	48	38.09
Husband	20	15.87
Brother	10	7.93
Land	21	16.67
Selling of Boats	1	0.79
Sources of Loan		
Paternal Uncle	4	3.17
Maternal Uncle	3	2.38
Brother-in-law	2	1.59
Father-in-law	1	0.79
Total :	126	100.00

The information we have collected so far shows that, out of 126 migrants of Londonigaon, 16 had borne their own expenditure (among them 12 were seaman deserters and four were ex-army men), 48 children were taken by their fathers and 20 women by their husbands living in England. The expenditure of 10 persons was borne by their brothers, and 21 persons disposed of their land and one his boat for this purpose. The rest 10 people borrowed money from their uncles, brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law. Table- 11 shows that the nearest relations were the main suppliers of money. The theoretical proposition we had put forward in our previous discussions on different theories of migration that the kinship played a determining role in the whole process of migration has now become imperically valid.

Demographic Information on Migration

With respect to age differentiation all migration is one: in both internal and international movements, adolescents and young adults usually predominate. This is one of the most firmly established generalization in demography.³⁰

Two dominant trends of migration have been revealed from the statistics collected from Londonigaon village. Table - 6 shows that 48 (38%) migrants were below the age of 14 and 59 (47%) were in between the age group 15-29. The median age of the later group was 22. Thirteen (10%) person belong to the age group 30-34 and only six (5%) persons migrated after the age of 35 and above.

³⁰Peterson, William. Population, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1969, p. 262.

One reason for the high proportion of young adults would seem to be that any migration involves a certain amount of adjustment at the destination, and youth connotes a better ability to adapt to new circumstances.³¹

Table - 12

Distribution of Migrants of the Londonigaon
by Age and Sex

Age Group	Male		Female		Grand Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-4	11	8.73	7	5.56	18	14.29
5-9	17	13.49	5	3.97	22	17.46
10-14	7	5.56	1	0.79	8	6.35
15-19	18	14.28	5	3.97	23	18.25
20-24	16	12.70	2	1.59	18	14.29
25-29	14	11.11	4	3.17	18	14.29
30-34	7	5.56	6	4.76	13	10.32
35-39	2	1.59	2	1.59	4	3.17
40-44	1	0.79	-	-	1	0.79
45-49	-	-	-	-	-	-
50-54	1	0.79	-	-	-1	0.79
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-
60 +	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total :	94	74.60	32	25.40	126	100.00

However, in our study the migration of young children was unusually high (38%). I intend to explain this phenomenon bringing the following issues into consideration.

³¹Ibid., p. 262.

We know that the introduction of Immigration Act in 1971 restricted all primary immigration to Britain. As a result an immigrant living in Britain thought it wise to take his young children as dependants before they were adults. Furthermore, after the liberation war in 1971, law and order situation in the rural areas of Bangladesh seriously deteriorated. This alarming situation dictated a migrant to take his wife and children so long living in Bangladesh to England.

Table - 12 also shows that 24 (75%) migrants were males, while 32 (25%) were females. None of the 25 per cent had any economic motive. Twenty of them (see Table - 10) were house-wives and the remaining 12 went along with their mothers to join their fathers. Thus we find another trend of migration in our study area that predominantly males were migratory than females.

Educational Background of the Migrants

It is revealed from the statistics that the educational background of the migrants are very poor. Seventy three (68%) migrants have no education at all, while 35 (32%) have some, and only 8 (7%) of them could cross the primary level. Among those who had some education 16 (15%) persons were below the age of 14. On the other hand 19 (18%) were above 14 years of age.

It may be mentioned here that respondents were the only suppliers of information on education. To me it seemed that they were exaggerating the educational level of the migrants to elevate their social position. At one stage of my investigation I wanted to see some of the personal letters written by the migrants, but most of the respondents failed to show any. It is quite

Table - 13

Distribution of Literacy of Migrants by Age and
Level of Education

Age Group	No Education		Primary		Secondary		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5-9	12	11	10	9	-	-	22	20
10-14	9	8	4	4	2	2	15	14
15-19	6	6	6	5	4	3	16	15
20-24	13	12	4	4	1	1	18	17
25-29	16	15	1	1	11	1	18	17
30-34	11	10	2	2	-	-	13	12
35-39	4	4	-	-	-	-	4	3
40-44	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
45-49	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
50-54	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1
55-59	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
60+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total :	73	68	27	25	8	7	108	100

unusual that an educated man would not write to his family. My observation in this regard is that these educated persons had only one or two years' of schooling, and therefore, for all practical purposes it had no impact on their family lives. Thus, it becomes obvious that most of the migrants who claimed themselves to be educated were in fact illiterate.

Migrants' Economic Activities Prior to Their Migration

Migrants' occupational situation prior to their migration is very relevant to our present study. In any study on migration, occupation is always considered as an important variable. We know that pattern of occupation determines one's position in the society. So, any change in occupation brings change in one's position in it too. Since our study is directed to assess the impact of foreign remittances (earned by the immigrants of the village) it is rather essential to know their economic position prior to their migration. Otherwise the change before and after the migration cannot be properly assessed.

Table - 14

Distribution of Migrants' Economic Activity Prior to their Migration

Economic Activity	Number	Percentage
Unemployed	17	29.31
Share-cropping	12	20.69
Owner cultivator	8	13.79
Agricultural labourers	8	13.79
Non-agricultural labourer	6	10.35
Driver	1	1.72
Boatman	4	6.90
Businessman	2	3.45
Total :	58	100.00

Table - 14 shows that 17 (29.31%) persons were not involved in any kind of economic activities, i.e., unemployed. Some of them belong to the family of migrants and were not willing to work as they had enough money and again were not as much educated as to get some white-colour jobs. Twelve persons (20.69%) were share-croppers while only 8 (13.79%) were cultivating their own land. Eight (13.79%) and 6 (10.35%) persons were agricultural and non-agricultural labourers respectively. Remaining 7 (12.06%) persons were boatmen, driver, and businessmen. One important finding is that 26 (45%) persons were labourers and share-croppers.

CHAPTER - IV

FOREIGN REMITTANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON VILLAGE ECONOMY

Sources of Income

Unlike many other villages farm and farm-related activities are not the only source of income in Londonigaon village. What is peculiar in case of this village is the inflow of foreign remittance. The information presented in Table - 15 shows that 66 per cent households, i.e., all the migrant families receive remittances from abroad. So, remittance has become an important additional source of income for them.

Table - 15

Distribution of Sources of Income of Respondents'
Families in Londonigaon

Sources of income	Migrant respondents' families		Non-migrant respondents' families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Agricultural Sources</u>						
Cultivation of own land	17	25	8	11.76	25	36.76
Rent out land	24	35.29	1	1.47	25	36.76
Sharecropping	1	1.47	9	13.23	10	14.70
Hired as agricultural labourers	-	-	11	16.18	11	16.18
<u>Non-Agricultural Sources</u>						
Business	1	1.47			1	1.47
Driver			1	1.47	1	1.47
Muajjeen of a mosque			1	1.47	1	1.47
Remittance	45	66.18			45	66.18

In Table - 15 we have divided the sources of income of both the migrant respondents' families and non-migrant households of Londonigaon village into two broad categories, e.g., agricultural sources and non-agricultural sources. Income derived from cultivation of own land (37%), share-cropping of others' land (15%) and hiring out as agricultural labourers (16%) fall under the category of agricultural sources. While on the other hand, remittance (66%), and income from business (1.47%), driving motor vehicle (1.47%) and working as a muajjeen of a mosque (1.47%) are considered as the non-agricultural sources.

However, two important findings from Table - 15 are that 37 per cent households of both the migrant (35.29%) and non-migrant (1.47%) categories lease out land for others to cultivate and 16.16 per cent households exclusively from non-migrant category are hired out as agricultural labourers.

Finally, as we shall see in our later discussion how the presence of foreign money minimizes the importance of agriculture in Londonigaon, exclusively among the migrants, as the only source of income.

Annual Income

It is very much difficult to find out the total income per annum of an agriculture-based rural society. Almost all households consider the exact amount of their income as a family secret and are never willing to disclose it to others. Again, as in the families connected with farming, the amount of income is not fixed; it is also not easy even for them to estimate their annual income exactly. Usually, the amount reported is

less than the actual amount. Mathew and Gopinathan's experience about the responds in this regard is the same. It became clear to them during the interviews that the respondents were extremely reluctant to divulge information on income from any source, not only that received from abroad. The income reported seemed to them to be gross understatements and they had the suspicion that all the sources were not disclosed either.¹

In our case, the information given in Table - 15 shows that many of the families of Londonigaon have more than one sources of income.

A sharp difference is very prominent between the annual incomes of the migrant and the non-migrant respondents' families. 36.76 per cent families of both kinds have an annual income of less than Tk. 10,000; among them 32.35 per cent are non-migrant respondents' families and only 4.41 per cent are migrant respondents' families. Income level of only one family of non-migrant category ranges from 20,000 to less than 30,000, while the range of income of 61.77 per cent migrant respondents' families varies from 10,000 to over 1,00,000.

We have already mentioned our reservation because of the conservative statements of the household heads about their real income. However, the pattern of the distribution of the annual income becomes quite clear from Table - 15 that the income of a migrant respondent's family is even nine times than that of a non-migrant respondent's family. Gradually, this gap is widening. This is primarily because of the uninterrupted flow of remittance from abroad. As a consequence of this situation social

¹ Mathew, E.T. and Nair, P.R. Gopinathan, op. cit., p. 1150.

inequality will be created in the village social structure which ultimately will lead to social imbalance.

Table - 16

Distribution of Annual Income of Migrant and Non-Migrant
Respondents' Families of Londonigaon

Amount (in Taka)	Migrant Respon- dents' families		Non-Migrant Respon- dents' Families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Upto 9,999	3	4.41	22	32.35	23	36.67
10,000 to 19,999	6	8.82	-	-	6	8.82
20,000 to 29,999	5	7.35	1	1.47	6	8.82
30,000 to 39,999	11	16.18	-	-	11	16.18
40,000 to 49,999	4	5.88	-	-	4	5.88
50,000 to 59,999	4	5.88	-	-	4	5.88
60,000 to 69,999	2	2.94	-	-	2	2.94
70,000 to 79,999	2	2.94	-	-	2	2.94
80,000 to 89,999	2	2.94	-	-	2	2.94
90,000 to 99,999	4	5.88	-	-	4	5.88
1,00,00 and above	2	2.94	-	-	2	2.94
Total :	45	66.18	23	33.82	68	100.00

This income variation has affected people in a way that they prefer migration to going for any other job, because the non-migrants think their income not adequate to go along with the migrants, and are seriously trying to send at least one of the family members abroad. Normally a non-migrant is not satisfied with his present position and considers his inability to go abroad as a bad luck.

Annual Income from Remittance

Once again the problem seriously confronts us is the understatement made by the household heads on their receipt of the foreign remittance. That is why it is so difficult to discover the pattern of inflow of foreign remittance. As it is reported, the flow of remittance from abroad for meeting up the daily household expenditure is regular; but no one can exactly estimate how many alternate days the money comes from abroad. One answer I got from every household: they write to their migrant relations when necessary and surely get the money. Generally, the definition of the word "necessary" is very wide. We have identified these necessities in some common heads, such as, (i) litigation; (ii) bribing the police; (iii) marriage; (iv) naming ceremony; (v) shirnee; (vi) milad mahfil; (vii) Eid (specially Kurbanī Eid); (viii) guest entertainment; (ix) visit to Sylhet; (x) medical treatment; (xi) consumer durable; (xii) purchase of land (xiii) jewellery etc. These are of course, occasional expenditures, but the way these "necessities" drain out the foreign income is very surprising.

Usually the money spent for the daily expenditure is different from the expenditure of 'special necessities'. As the amount of money for 'special necessities' is not fixed and comes according to need, we cannot mix it up with the money for daily expenditure. However, we are not interested in the amount or the way the money is spent, rather on what heads the money is spent. In addition to that migrants bring along with them substantial amount of money which are usually spent for meeting up big expenditures such as construction, repairing or renovations of buildings and purchase of land etc. In most of the cases respondents are not aware of the

actual amount spent by the emigrant members of the family during his stay in the village. Any way, the following table will show the distribution of annual remittance received for household expenditure.

Table - 17

Annual Remittance for Household Expenditure

Amount (in Taka)	Number	Percentage
Upto 9,999	7	15.55
10,000 to 19,999	15	33.33
20,000 to 29,999	10	22.22
30,000 to 39,999	4	8.88
40,000 to 49,999	4	8.88
50,000 to 59,999	3	6.66
60,000 and above	1	2.22
Total :	45	100.00

The table shows that all the migrant families receive remittance from abroad for household expenditure. Seven (15.55%) households receive less than Tk. 1,000 per year, while around 15 (33.33%) households have reported that they receive remittance more than Tk. 10,000 but less than Tk. 20,000. Again eighteen (40%) households receive from Tk. 20,000 to less than Tk. 50,000. And only 4 (8.8%) families have said that their annual income from foreign remittance is Tk. 50,000 and above.

Expenditure Pattern of Foreign Remittance

As we could not make an exact estimation of incoming remittances we also could not find out the particular items and the exact amount of money spent on them. It is almost impossible to collect information from the respondents on their item wise expenditure. And therefore, we have decided to identify the items of expenditures alone.

It was reported that 100 per cent migrant families spent money for daily household expenditure and for construction, repairing and renovation of their houses. Ninetyone per cent families spent some amount in purchasing cultivable land; 55.55 per cent in electronic goods while 48.88 per cent purchased ornaments of gold. 6.66 per cent families purchased land for constructing household and 4.44 per cent for shops, 4.44 per cent invested money in currency business, 2.22 per cent opened electronic shops and another 2.22 per cent constructed shops in the Bishwanath Bazar.

Like Gopinathan and Mathew we have divided our data into two broad classifications: 'productive' and 'non-productive'.² Investment in business, construction of market buildings for renting out, buying vehicles for public transportation etc. are considered as productive economic activities. In other words, any kind of economic activity that generates money falls under the category of productive. On the other hand, expenditures regarded as non-productive are mainly: (i) daily household expenditure; (ii) consumer durable; (iii) purchase of land for homestead; (iv) jewellery; (v) construction, renovation and repairing of the houses, etc.

²Ibid., p. 1151.

Table - 18

Expenditure Pattern of Foreign Remittance

Sectors	Number	Percentage
Daily Household Expenditure	45	100.00
Construction, repairing and renovation of house	45	100.00
Purchase of cultivable land	41	91.00
Purchase of Electronic goods	25	55.55
Purchase of ornaments and jewellery	22	48.88
Purchase of land for constructing Homestead	3	6.66
Purchase of land for constructing shops	2	4.44
Currency Business	2	4.44
Electronic shop	1	2.22
Construction of shops for the purpose of renting out	1	2.22

It is evident from the statistics that only 13.33 per cent households spent some amount of remittance income in different kinds of productive activities such as currency business, electronic shops, construction of shops for renting out, etc. The remaining 86.87 per cent households spent all the money on non-productive items.

One of the families reported that he had introduced mechanised cultivation³ in some of his cultivable land but soon he found it uneconomic

³Use of High Yielding Variety seeds, power tiller for cultivation, power pump for irrigation and also use of insecticides.

and discarded it. To me it seemed that introduction of mechanised cultivation is more or less a complicated process. It needs better managerial ability to harvest the benefit of the machine. The man who introduced it definitely lacked the capacity very much and as a result, had to experience failure. Mechanised cultivation is not possible through leaving everything in the hands of hired Kamla (day labourer). Without direct supervision and efficient management it is not possible to increase the production.

However, apart from these productive and non-productive expenditures there are also other items of expenses already mentioned which are the outcome of sudden change of overall economic condition.

The items we have identified for occasional expenditure involves substantial amount of money. A major portion of the money sent from abroad is spent after litigation. In most of the cases the litigating parties take the shelter of law for solution; but what is interesting about it is that the persons related with the process, especially police, take the opportunity and both the parties try to keep the police on their side by bribing them. These people, coming of so poor backgrounds can spend any amount of money to keep relation with the police which they think somewhat honorific. Furthermore, the litigants even try to bribe the lawyers of the opposite party with the help of village touts. A 'village tout' is one who is usually aware of the official procedures and known to different officials of the local court and pretends to be very influential to make the litigants convinced that he is competent enough to get the work done in their desired direction. In this way he takes the advantage of their ignorance. It may be mentioned here that lawyer's consultation fee is very high in the

local court; for example, minimum Tk. 500 is required to move a bail petition. However, the amount varies with the nature of the case. As a result a chain of vested interest grows up and the lawyers, the police, even the village touts try to influence the judicial system and to keep the hostility alive as long as possible.

Generally, quarrels start from very little things and gradually become violent. This kind of things happen also in Londonigaon village. When we described the village we mentioned that the houses in here are clustered and as they are concentrated in small places, quarrels about boundary are frequent. When a migrant wants to construct a building in place of his old house, quarrels occur. This problems can easily be solved but as both the parties are equally rich, they want to show their strength over each other. They will rather spend thousands of taka but will never retreat.

In the occasions like marriage, naming ceremony, shirnee, Milad Mahfil etc., the migrant families spend a lot of money which sometimes become more than their actual income. They are very much competitive with each other and show-off tendency is very much prominent among them. Say for example, Haji Atar Ali spends Tk. 1,00,000 in his daughter's marriage guestifying 500 people through sacrificing 10 big goats. On the other hand, another migrant named Shukur Ali invited the whole village to lunch in his father's death anniversary. It would be difficult to believe that an ox was bought by one migrant family at the cost of Tk. 9,000 only because some other migrant wanted to buy it. This price is at least 80 per cent more than the real price. All these expenditures are related to the so-called prestige of the family for which one is always ready to spend any amount of money.

Medical bills are another item of expenditure that drains out a substantial amount of money. The fees for consulting a qualified doctor is not fixed; and it is usually fixed up between the doctor and the patient according to the nature of the disease through negotiation. Here we can cite an example: Londonigaon is hardly two miles from Bishwanath Bazar and it is easily accessible either by motor cycles or by rickshaws. A doctor who came in a private call to examine a patient demanded Tk. 500, because he usually did not examine patients outside his chamber and as the patient, an old woman of a migrant family did not want to go to his chamber, he was brought and paid the amount. Only to push an injection in the pharmacy it costs Tk. 15.00 to 20.00; and if it's in the patient's house again it is negotiable. The cost of medicine is also very high.

Purchase of Land by Remittance

Ceaseless flow of foreign money could not diminish the importance of land as the main form of wealth in Londonigaon village. But then again it is to be admitted that the dominance of agriculture as the main form of economy no longer exists among a few migrants who remit a huge amount of foreign currency annually. The driving force behind the tendency of accumulating land is not directed to improve the economic condition through boosting up the agricultural output, but to purchase some assets (land) which can be converted to money again at the time of necessity. Nevertheless, economic activities still remain centred around land to most of the migrant and all the non-migrant families. There is a popular belief in the village that it is better to buy land rather than to keep the money in the bank. To them it is compulsory savings, because anytime they can spend the money if they keep it in the bank; but it is not possible in case of land.

Since there is no fixed exchange rate for land, price is to be fixed up through negotiation which takes time. Without any genuine and serious reason one does not sell his immovable property, i.e., land. However, whatever might be the justifications they buy land. We have already found that 91 per cent (41) migrant families bought land by their foreign remittance. The following table will show the distribution of households according to the amount of land purchased by foreign remittance.

Table - 19

Amount of Land Purchased with Remittance
in Londonigaon

Amount of land purchased	Number	Percentage
Upto 1 acre	12	29.26
2 to 4 acres	22	53.66
4 acres and above	7	17.07
Total :	41	100.00

Note: Family of migrants owning no land are not included in this table. Four migrants family own no land.

It is evident from Table - 19 that 12 (29.67%) households purchased land more than one acre. Two to four acres of land were purchased by the largest number of households, i.e., 22 (53.66%). Only seven (17.07%) households bought more than four acres of land.

Landholding Pattern

We have already mentioned that foreign remittance is the major source of income of 66 per cent households i.e., all the migrant families; yet the economic activities of the people under the study area are mainly centred around land. It is no use denying the fact that land ownership to a great extent determines the social stratification and leadership patterns in the village. The following table will show the impact of foreign remittance on the present landholding pattern of Londonigaon.

Table - 20

Amount of Land Owned by Individual Households in Londonigaon

Amount of land owned	Migrants Respon- dents' Families		Non-migrant Respon- dents' Families		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No land owned	4	5.88	14	20.59	18	26.47
Upto 1 acre	5	7.35	8	11.76	13	19.12
2 to 4 acres	25	36.76	1	1.47	26	38.23
4 acres & above	11		-		11	16.18
Total:	45		23		68	100.00

Extent of Landlessness

Though no attempt was made to assess the incidence of landlessness as a result of transfer of land possession through sell, inheritance or mortgage and the like, the study did reveal that a sizeable number of families are without any cultivable land. The number of such families in the village are 18 (26.47%) in total. Though they do not have any

cultivable land they have their own homesteads. There is no mobile family in Londonigaon.

The extent of landlessness is not very high in the village Londonigaon. This phenomenon can be explained as the impact of foreign money, because Table-20 has depicted that out of the total landless families 20.59 per cent are non-migrants while only 5.88 per cent belong to the migrant category. We have already seen that 60.29 per cent of total households and 91 per cent migrant respondents' families bought land by foreign remittance while only 8.88 per cent are landless of this category. On the other hand, 60.85 per cent non-migrant families are landless while only 39.13 per cent have some land. So now we come to the conclusion that the foreign remittance has brought a significant change in the landholding pattern of the village.

Near-Landlessness

The number of near-landless and those who are classified usually as small farmers comprise of 19.11 per cent of the total households. They have cultivable land of an acre or less. With an average family size these families cannot feed themselves round the year with the produce of their land. It is noticeable that 11.76 per cent households are non-migrants while only 7.35 per cent are migrants.

Subsistence Level Farm Families

Households who come under this category are the ones who have land (more than one acre but less than four acres) that can keep them fed in a very modest way throughout the year. Out of the total households 38.23

per cent fall under this category; among them only 1.47 per cent i.e., one family is non-migrant. Thus, Table - 20 reveals that the huge inflow of remittance could not improve the economic condition of the non-migrants of the village. However, it cannot be denied that the non-migrant families receive help both in the forms of cash and kind though, of course, these cases are very occasional. Another important thing should be noted here that due to the large scale emigration serious labour shortage has occurred in the village; and as a result per day wage rate is quite high in Londonigaon. It is normally around Tk. 40 per day with two meals and in the peak season the rate varies from Tk. 40-50.

Surplus and Big Farmers

In this category fall the farm families who own four or more acres of land. They can live decently throughout the year on the produce they get from their land. Little less than one sixth of the farm families who own land in this study area come under this category. They are affluent enough to sell a substantial amount of food grain after their own consumption. None of them belong to the non-migrant families i.e., all of them are migrant families. The only non-migrant household which belong to the subsistence level farm family was questioned about acquiring of more land. He was of the opinion that those who purchased land had brought money from abroad, for the price of land was so high that it was beyond the reach of any person depending only on agricultural surplus.

Eventually we can say, in a nutshell, that remittance money created a clear division in the village on the basis of ownership and non-ownership of land. Non-migrant families could not acquire the vital means of

production and are destined to remain poor under this socio-economic condition.

Land Tenure System

The accumulation of land in the hands of migrant respondents' families has immensely influenced the land tenure system of the village.

Owner cultivator: Owner cultivator is one who directly participates in the cultivation of land with the help of his family members. In our attempt to know the number of owner cultivators in Londonigaon village we could find out that precisely 31 per cent of the migrant farm families cultivate their own land. There is no owner cultivators in non-migrant families.

Table - 21

Land Tenure System of Londonigaon

Pattern of land tenure	Migrant Respondents' families		Non-migrant Respondents' families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Owner cultivator	16	31.37	-	-	16	31.37
Owner	24	47.06	1	1.96	25	49.02
Owner cum tenant	1	1.96	8	15.69	9	17.65
Pure Tenant	-	-	1	1.96	1	1.96
Total :	41	80.39	10	19.61	51	100.00

Land owner: Land owners own land but do not cultivate it for themselves. Usually they rent out their land to others to cultivate. Many of them have enough surplus to employ full time labourer in the farming. The largest number of families i.e., 48 per cent migrants and two per cent non-migrants fall under this category.

Owner-cum-tenant: Owner-cum-tenants take lease of others' land to cultivate in addition to their own small holdings. Usually they are classified as small farmers. These farmers normally cannot feed their families with the produce of their land and so cultivate others' land in share. In Londonigaon 18 per cent households (two per cent migrant and 16 per cent non-migrant) are owner-cum-tenants.

Pure tenant: Pure tenant is one who has no land of his own, but as they have other means of production they take lease of others' land for cultivation. We have found only one pure tenant of non-migrant family in Londonigaon village.

However, the most astonishing resolution we can easily draw from Table-21 is that, 48 per cent of the total land holders (all from the migrants' families) rented out their land to others for cultivation. This situation has been created due to the huge inflow of remittance money which has brought a change in the land tenure system of Londonigaon village.

Attitude of Migrants Families Regarding the Rational Utilization of Remittance

We have not simply confined our attention to the income and expenditure of remittance money; we have also kept our eyes open to the attitudes of the migrant families regarding the rational utilization of it. During the time

of field work an open question was asked to the respondents of the migrant families regarding the economic use of the foreign money, i.e., investment in productive sectors. More or less their attitude was positive but they had some constraint on the way which can be divided into two parts, e.g., personal limitations of the migrants: (i) shortage of man-power; (ii) paucity of investable enough surplus; (iii) lack of education etc., and the lack of proper investment opportunities, i.e., security of capital with a rational return. The data presented in Table - 22 show that 64.11 per cent families could not take any initiative due to their personal limitations i.e., shortage of manpower 13.33 per cent, paucity of investible surplus 31.11 per cent and the lack of education 20 per cent; on the other hand, 35.55 per cent were able as well as willing to invest, but could not materialize their desire only due to the lack of investment opportunities. My observation is that, if some investment avenues can be created in there, we can also have "success stories" even like the Mexicans.

Cornelius Wayne narrated a story about the consequences of migrant investments in one of the Mexican communities he studied. Prior to 1967, the community was so economically depressed that it was losing large numbers of inhabitants through permanent emigration, with most of those who remained dependent on income earned in the U.S. Since 1970 the community has more than doubled in population, is attracting migrants from surrounding villages and towns, and is experiencing the greatest economic boom in its 137-year history. In 1967 an individual who had spent nine years working in the U.S., most of them as foreman in a rubber factory in Los Angeles, used the \$1,600 he had saved to buy two small, manually operated cloth-weaving machines. With them he established a small factory in his home, turning out women's

and children's clothing for sale in nearby cities and in Mexico city. The business turned out to be profitable, and his neighbours took note. Today the community has about 180 small clothing "factories", all family-owned enterprises in private houses, and is a major supplier of clothing to department stores in Mexico city, Monterrey and elsewhere. The manual machines have been replaced in some of the factories by highly sophisticated, motorized machinery imported from Italy, Germany, Japan and the U.S.³

However, would it not be justified to pose a question why has Londonigaon failed to create any such economic boom in the village which has long ranging tradition of international migration? This phenomenon needs to be investigated further. There shouldn't be any reason to believe that I am going to advise to ape the Mexican model. What all I am trying to say is that investment experts should find out new avenues that suit the people of Londonigaon well. Because the socio-economic condition of the Mexican migrants is very much different from those of Londonigaon village.

Table - 22

Constraints Identified by the Respondents

Constraints	Number	Percentage
Shortage of manpower	6	13.33
Paucity of surplus fund	14	31.11
Lack of education	9	20.00
Lack of proper investment opportunity	16	35.55
Total:	45	100.00

³Cornelius, Wayne A., op. cit., p. 98.

Those thirteen per cent migrant families reported that they suffer from shortage of manpower. There are families which have no male member to undertake any enterprising initiative. Those who complained that they have resource problem have their arguments too. Some said that they lack enough surplus for investment. Again, according to some, only one's income is not sufficient for productive investment. Moreover, it is a real complicated process which needs competence and without some formal education it is difficult to be materialized. There are some people (20%) who do not dare to venture any kind of investment only because they lack the proper education, and as a result they have a chance to be exploited. Thirty-six per cent migrant respondents' families complained that opportunities for investment are very limited. If proper opportunities can be created and a security of capital can be ensured people will definitely invest more money in the productive sector.

Development Activities in the Village

Construction of school, college, madrasa, dispensary, community centre, village roads etc. falls under the perview of development activities. Lon-donigaon has a beautifully constructed mosque which is also used for imparting religious education among the children of the village. But unfortunately it has got no educational institutions, not even a primary school. One who is interested in formal education has got to be admitted in the school located in Bishwanath Bazar, some two miles from the village. Only recently the villagers have realized the importance of at least primary education and have started constructing a primary school which is not yet completed. Overall participation of all the villagers in development

activities is quite appreciable. Almost all the families have extended their cooperation according to their ability. The following table will show the nature of cooperation extended by the villagers in different development activities.

Table - 23

Villagers' Participation in Development Activities

Nature of Assistance	Migrants		Non-Migrants		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
With money	40	58.82	5	7.35	45	66.18
With construction materials	5	7.35	-	-	5	7.35
With land	4	5.88	-	-	4	5.88
With labours	9	13.23	20	29.41	29	42.65
With supervision	2	2.94	-	-	2	2.94
Do not extend any help	3	4.41	-	-	3	4.41

The construction of a kutchra road from the Sylhet Biswanath metal road and the bringing of electric connection to the village fall under the main development activities of Londonigaon. Furthermore, a mosque has been constructed and a primary school is now under construction.

The village people constructed the non-metal road of the village with their own initiative by collecting money from themselves, without getting any

kind of help either from the Union Parishad or from the government. The volume of the road and the bridges and culverts on it had cost approximately Tk. 6,00,000. The village also had been electrified without any help from PDB; even the electric posts had been set up by the money collected.

It is revealed from the above table that 66 per cent households of both the migrant (58.82%) and non-migrant (7.35%) families extended their help with cash money. Little more than 7 per cent migrants offered construction materials as their share of contribution while 5.88 per cent migrants donated land. 2.94 per cent supervised the work and 42.65 per cent, both migrants (13.23%) and non-migrants (29.41%) gave their labour in different development activities. Only 4.41 per cent all from migrants category did not extend any help. However, it has been noticed that there is a tendency among the villagers to improve the overall condition of the village.

CHAPTER - V

CAUSES OF CONFLICT, ITS RESOLUTION AND LEADERSHIP PATTERN IN THE VILLAGE

Though violent feuds may arise from very trifling matters, land and land related issues are the main reasons of feud in Londonigaon village. At least about 95 per cent inhabitants of this village hold this opinion. Distribution of inherited land, marking the boundary of land, construction of approach road, grabbing others' land with forged documents, dispute over ownership of purchased land, etc. are the main reasons of quarrel in Londonigaon.

Disputes over land especially in rural Bangladesh are not a new phenomenon. In Londonigaon, quarrels about the distribution of inherited land are frequent; usually there is neither any partition deed nor any specific boundary-line as the distribution is done verbally. As a result, when a partner wants to construct anything permanently the questions of border demarcation and the registration of 'deed of partition' come up which sometimes turn into a dispute. The number of feuds about grabbing others' land with forged documents is also very high.

We have already mentioned that the houses of this village are clustered in small high places. As a result it becomes difficult to maintain the boundary line and to keep the approach of one's house separate all the time, particularly when an inherited house is shared. Besides, some very trifling matters such as throwing dirt into others' boundary raise quarrel in the village. Sometimes, these turn into violence and the persons concerned have to take the shelter of law.

Many of the migrants' families living in the village have no male member to look after them. In such a case some relation of the family live with them and do the job. In some cases, this male relation grab the money sent from abroad or buy land in his own name which was to be bought in the migrant's or anyone of the family members' name. Naturally when the migrant comes to know it conflicts arise.

So far we have discussed the issues that create excitement in the village society. Now we shall focus our attention to their process of resolution.

In case of any conflict in the village, the villagers try to solve their problems through arranging a shalish.¹ The main purpose of this shalish is to help resolve conflicts amicably. Those who participate in the shalish are rural elites. Rural elites are the individuals who dominate the village scene as leaders, spokesmen, representatives of the village, and who make important decisions in regard to village problems.²

In Londonigaon, shalish is usually arranged to solve common problems. Problems related to land are generally resolved in the court, Not that these are not tried in the shalish, but unanimous verdict always does not become possible in these cases. Decision of the shalish sometimes depends on the background of the disputant parties.

¹ Meeting where disputes are settled.

² Sharma, S.S. Rural Elites in India, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., requoted from Rural Elites and Their Role in Conflict Resolution in Rural Bangladesh: Three Arenas and Some Cases by A.H.M. Zehadul Karim published in Bangladesh Journal of Sociology (ed.) Md. Afsaruddin, Vol. II Number 1, December 1984.

To identify the rural elites, two approaches have long been recognized.³ These are 'positional',⁴ and 'reputational',⁵. Schulze and Blumberg in explaining the adequacy and importance of these two approaches say that the commonest techniques for identifying a community's power elites are focussed either upon position, delineating elites on the basis of formal status in the local economic or political-civil structures, or upon reputation, determining elites through nominations of juries presumably knowledgeable local informants.⁶

Schulze and Blumberg have identified leaders in their respective studies depending mostly on one single method. Zehadul Karim criticized them for following a single method rather than combining the two or different other approaches together. However, he was of the opinion that a leadership study should be based on two or more methods as opposed to a single method.⁷

³Karim, A.H.M. Zehadul. "Rural Elites and the Power Structure in Bangladesh: A Case Study of Puthia Union". Unpublished M.A. paper, Department of Anthropology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, USA, 1983.

⁴Positional Elite: Positional elites are those persons who have some positions of authority in the different functional and occupational institutions or organizations of the community (Zehadul Karim, op. cit., p. 28).

⁵Reputational Elite: The term reputational elites is used to designate a distinct category of elite who have informal leadership in the village samaj (indigeneous social social unit) and also the persons who receive mention(s) on the basis of ranking method as reputed persons of the village (Zehadul Karim, Ibid., p. 1).

⁶Schulze, R.O. & L.U. Blumberg, "The Determination of Local Power Elites". The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LXIII, No. 3, November 1975, p. 290.

⁷Karim, A.H.M. Zehadul, op. cit., p. 28.

At the time of survey in my study area I did not find any positional elite. None of the villagers had any position of authority in the different functional and occupational institutions and organizations of the community. Even in the Union Council, no one from this village had ever been elected. But there are reputational elites who enjoy the memberships of the gram shalish.

There are many techniques of identifying reputational elites. Informants are one of them. To collect the names of the elites, one is to ask their informants to name and rank their leaders.⁸ These "informants may be a predesignated panel of experts or a random sample of community members, or they may be selected by what is known as "Snowball" or "Cobweb" techniques. The final list of leaders consists of (either of) these individuals who have received the greatest number of nominations ..."⁹

In my study area respondents were asked to name the persons who usually participate in the shalish. Nine common names were mentioned. These persons, according to the respondents are very respected as well as powerful. Table - 24 will clearly show their socio-economic background.

There are four criteria of leadership mentioned in the table; annual receipt of foreign money is the most important one. Remittance not only increases one's spending ability, rather it helps to acquire another

⁸Singh, Harjinder. Authority and Influence in Two Shik Villages. New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1976.

⁹Bonjean, C.N. and David M. Olson. "Community Leadership: Directions for Research". Administrative Science Quarterly. Vol. IX, No. 3, December 1964, pp. 281-282.

Table - 24

Age, Education, Remittance Income and Landholding of
the Persons who Participate in the Shalish

Name of the members	Age	Education	Annual Receipt of Remittance	Land- holding
Haji ¹⁰ Jobed Ali	74	Primary	45,000	20
Arman Ali	65	-	55,000	27
Haji Atar Ali	62	-	35,000	22
Haji Noab Ali	62	-	50,000	24
Haji Azmanullah	60	-	37,000	18
Omar Ali	60	-	43,000	22
Muhammad Karim	33	Primary	60,000	26
Mubarak Ali	32	Primary	60,000	36
Muajjeen ¹¹	50	-	-	-

important criteria, i.e., land. Earlier we have seen that 91 per cent migrant respondents' families purchased land by remittance. And through purchase of land they consolidated their power base. It is no use denying that power springs from control over the principal means of production: land.¹² Stepanek also observed land is the security and power

¹⁰ Muslim pilgrims who performed Haj.

¹¹ There was no Imam at the time of investigation. All the persons except the Muajjeen belong to the migrant respondents' families.

¹² Jahangir, B.K. Differentiation Polarisation and Confrontation in Rural Bangladesh, Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka University, Dhaka, 1979, p. 63.

in a poor economy like Bangladesh.¹³ These statements have significant relevance with our findings. Because it is noticed that those who participate in the shalish are big or surplus farmers and no representation from the landless, near-landless or subsistence level farm-families. There is also no representation from non-migrant respondents' families. Thus it is evident that foreign money receivers who consequently turn into big and surplus farmers are in the helm of village affairs. People belonging to other categories try to meddle in the village affairs but virtually cannot play any decisive role, because, those who participate in the shalish are also equally important and influential in other matters.

Age is also an important criterion for becoming a leader. Average age of the shalish participants is 53.33 years. Only two of them are below the age of 40 who have at least primary education. No doubt this education helped them to elevate their position as elites in a comparatively much younger age and establish them as powerful leaders of the village. These two persons are cousins. Besides them, the rest of the members except one are illiterate. They have no former education; but they can read the holy Quran without understanding its meaning.

It cannot go unexplained what the circumstances were that helped the two young persons to become the influential and effective participants in the shalish where the average age of the remaining members were 61.85 years. Two case studies will reveal the causes of their emergence.

¹³Stepanek, Joseph F. Bangladesh - Equitable Growth. Pergamon Press, New York, 1979, p. 109.

Case Study - III

Muhammad Karim: Muhammad Karim, son of Abdul Gaffar, was 33 years old during the time of investigation. He has got one sister and four brothers. Among his brothers, three are living abroad (Abdus Sobhan, Torab Ali and Abdur Rafique).— Abdus Sobhan went to England in 1967. His paternal uncle took him as his son (under a false identity) and borne all his travelling expenditure. The uncle also financed and helped Torab Ali to go to Saudi Arabia in 1977. Abdus Sobhan took his another brother, Abdur Rafique, to England in 1973. Rafique is still unmarried. Now Sobhan is trying to take his whole family to there.

Except foreign remittance agriculture is another source of income of Karim's family. Now the land is being cultivated with the help of hired agricultural labourers. Karim, who has some primary education can read and write Bengali and reads daily newspapers. He does not work in the field for himself. He has constructed a big building with the foreign money costing approximately Tk. 7,00,000. Now his family is very well off with the income of land and the foreign remittance received for other expenditure. His annual income is around Tk. 85,000 in which Tk. 60,000 comes from abroad. Before the migration of the family members they had some land, but now they have bought 26 bighas more by remittance.

Muhammad Karim has got an electronic shop in the Bishwanath Bazar. He opened the shop with the intention of investing surplus remittance in Business. But to me it seems the shop is not very organized, and I doubt whether he gains any profit from it. It is in fact a place of gossiping and

a venue for all kinds of social and political discussion. Karim goes to the shop at around 11 in the morning and keeps it open for the whole day. I visited his shop several days and spent several hours with him but did not notice much transaction. His customers are small-thing-buyers and in most cases do not pay in cash. It seems that Karim does not bother about it.

Though he denied his association with any of the political parties, Karim is a politically conscious person, and knows at what age a person can exercise his adult franchise, i.e., 18 years. He cast his votes in 1978 and in 1981 for President Ziaur Rahman and President Abdus Sattar respectively (the former was killed in an abortive coup in 1981 and the latter was removed from power without any bloodshed by the present President General Hussain Muhammad Ershad in 1982). He was of the opinion that during the reign of Ziaur Rahman, country experienced stability of price, mainly of the daily necessary commodities, law and order situation improved etc. From my discussion with him it was clear to me that he belongs to the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (here after BNP). My assumption was further strengthened when I could detect that Karim has personal friendship with the local BNP leaders and is a regular contributor to the party fund. He also cast his vote in favour of a BNP candidate in the Union Council election; but the person who became elected was an active Awami League worker.

Every day a postman visits Karim's shop instead of going to the village. He collects the letters of the migrants, open them, and convey the contents to the respective families. Again, he writes the replies on their behalf after consulting them.

Almost every day he receives a lot of demand drafts made from different banks of Dhaka and Chittagong. These are the money of different migrant families which he takes care of. A migrant in England gives the money (in British pound) to a man who has agents in Dhaka. The agent sends a demand draft of that amount in the name of the migrant's family living in the village, and Karim receives the draft from Dhaka. The agent gives a much better exchange rate than that of Bangladesh Bank. There is no chance of any misappropriation of money.

In addition to all these useful social services Karim is also a member of school construction committee. He informed me that there was a primary school in the village which was stopped by the government due to the shortage of students. Now the villagers are constructing another primary school in which he has contributed some money. He is also supervising the construction. Karim's acquaintance with the local bureaucracy and the bureaucrats of the District Head Quarters helped Karim in playing a dominant as well as an important role in construction of roads and bringing electricity in the village. Because of his all these services people call him 'Chairman', though he does not hold any office. Some sycophant, mostly from the non-migrant landless peasants, centre around him all the time. Of course, they have got their own interest. Karim does not employ other labourers in his land except these men and provide them with financial help. This security of work makes them more or less dependent on him. Karim tacitly exploits the situation and use them as his musclemen.

In conclusion we can say that the acquisition of the criteria mentioned earlier and his useful social services helped him to emerge as an important personality in the village.

Case Study - IV

Mubarak Ali: Mubarak Ali, 32 at the time of field work, is the youngest among his four brothers. Three of them (Muzammel Ali, Raquib Ali and Mushahed Ali) have been staying in the U.K. for a long time, but their spouses and children live in Londonigaon.

Muzammel Ali, the eldest brother, went to England in 1958 and was followed by his younger brother Raquib Ali in 1960. Both of them were taken by their paternal uncle. Their father himself was not a migrant but their grandfather was a sailor who spent a few years in England to do some inland job. He made all necessary arrangements to take his grandson Muzammel to England but his sudden death prevented him from materializing the plan; later on his nephew, Mubarak's uncle, completed the process. Mushahed Ali was taken by his brothers in 1968. The migrant brothers are now trying to take their families.

The primary occupation of Mubarak's family is agriculture. They have about 36 bighas of land. He manages all the farm activities with the help of hired agricultural labourers and does not physically participate in cultivation. He has got one pharmacy in the Bishwanath Bazar in which he himself is the salesman. His annual income is around Tk. 100,000 of which around Tk. 60,000 come from abroad and the rest from agriculture. He has constructed two buildings one at Bishwanath Bazar and the other at Londonigaon for residential purpose. In the construction of the school building he has donated some money and is playing a supervisory role. He is also a regular participant in the community activities. Though Mubarak Ali denies his attachment to any particular political party, he is an active supporter of BNP and even donates money to the party fund.

The main purpose behind his opening the pharmacy is to invest foreign remittance for generating money. No doubt he is a competent manager, for he gets a good profit from it. On the other hand, he has become the supplier and prescriber of medicine in the village; he even knows how to push an injection. Every village patient first comes to him. If the nature of the disease seems too complicated he takes the patient to some qualified doctor.

There are also other services he provides for the villagers. Though he could not go further than his primary schooling, he has got a clear conception about the different aspects of law and is himself a litigant. Villagers seek his counsel in different legal matters; he is personally acquainted with lawyers practising in the local and district courts.

Sometimes Mubarak Ali stays in the Bishwanath Bazar house, alone. The reason I could detect is that, he has some social vices, e.g., gambling, drinking wine, etc. which he cannot do within the village so freely. Both Muhammad Karim and Mubarak Ali, the two cousins, act in all the affairs of the village as compliment to one another. And along with all other factors, there lies their strength.

Decision Making Process

In case of any conflict in the village, attempts are usually made to resolve it amicably through convenning a shalish. If there is any difference of opinion among the participants of the shalish and if the disputant parties are not satisfied with the verdict of the shalish, normally the matter is brought into the notice of the Union Council and finally to the court. Generally, villagers are reluctant to take matters to a civil court as proceedings are expensive and time consuming,¹⁴ but the situation in

¹⁴Jahangir, B.K., op. cit., p. 94.

Londonigaon is different. Money is not at all an important factor to be considered here. Sixty-six per cent of the total households have one or more members abroad to support them financially. They do not just bother about money if any way it can be related with their family prestige. It implies that generation of cash flow in the hands of the migrants' respondents' families has become instrumental to go straight to court which in turn loosen the effectiveness of the shalish as an important agency of social control. However, the intrusion of other agencies and the growing tendency to refer disputes to the law court¹⁵ and the extension of franchise and the villagers' relative awareness of their political rights¹⁶ have significantly diminish much of its power. But that does not in any way mean that this traditional village organization entrusted to ensure peace and stability and also to preserve traditional norms and values has altogether lost its functional importance. It has its importance although the authority is questioned time and again. Those who now-a-days question the authority or disobey the decision of the shalish are mostly the members of migrant respondents' families. A poor peasant mostly non-migrant neither physical nor economic strength to disobey the shalish. We have already mentioned that the decision making process is highly influenced by the background of the disputant parties. Though most of the shalish members categorically uttered their impartiality in the judgement keeping themselves above

¹⁵Nazmul Karim, A.K., op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁶Islam, Aminul, op. cit., p. 109.

above their personal interest, it is, in fact not true. We shall see it in our later discussion. Shalish is effective with all its rigor and might mostly on poor non-migrant landless peasants. The verdict is an imperative on them. But members are frequently divided on their judgement if the disputant parties are of migrant respondents' families. And no unanimous decision usually comes out. And even if any verdict is given, there is no enforcing agency to execute it.

Resolution of Conflicts

Case - I: Shaheb Ali, son of a poor peasant abated a person of some nearby village in stealing a boat. The thief was released after a good beating, but Shaheb Ali was punished with 50 shoe-strokes. Muhammad Karim played a vital role in executing the punishment. These things happen only in cases of the poor who are directly or indirectly dependent on the rich.

Case - II: Zaman, who is known in the village as a tout, took Tk. 15000/- from a poor villager promising to make necessary arrangements to send him to the Middle-East. But the man neither kept his promise nor did he give the money back within the next two years. As the poor man complained to the shalish, the shalish ordered the tout to return the money, who even promised to do so before the committee but just ignored the verdict. In this case the shalish did not execute the punishment, only because the man had a very good relation with the matabbors (leaders). So, what these matabbors say about justice without descrimination is not, in fact, true.

There are also other serious incidences occurred in the village which are not even tried in the shalish. An example can be cited in this regard.

Case - III: Karim's youngest brother Rafique who live in England came to see his family on a leave of two months and was patched up in an illicit relationship with a maid, Safia (17), who worked in their house down to dusk. Finding her alone in a rainy day when she went to sweep his room, Rafique violated this young maid by alluring her with Tk. 100/00. Gradually the event became frequent and within a few days Safia became pregnant. When Karim came to know about it he, with the help of his cousin Mubarak, secretly managed to compensate Safia's father with Tk. 2,000/00 and bore all expenditure of her abortion in the Sylhet Medical College Hospital. He also threatened the poor man not to make any hue and cry and keep it a secret. Otherwise he would have to face a grave consequence. On the other hand, he sent his brother back to England before the villagers could come to know anything. When the matter came to light everybody whispered but nobody opened his mouth. The poor peasant had to remain content with Tk. 2,000/00 and could not even arrange a shalish for justice.

Case - IV : Piara Begum (24), a housewife was married to one Akbar who went to England within one month of their marriage, and never visited his wife again. Piara Begum had been staying in Londonigaon with her mother-in-law, Nazibun Bibi for the last five years. She used to visit her parents once a year. The total number of Nazibun Bibi's family staying in the village is four, she herself, her eldest daughter-in-law Sabia (34), and her grandson Habib (8), and Piara Begum.

Sheru Mia was a wage labourer (his social status in the family is little more than a household servant) of this house. Apart from his farm work he did the daily marketing for this family. Once Sabia went to see her parents.

As the house became almost vacant, Nazibun Bibi ordered Sheru to stay there at night. It was reported by Sheru Mia that, at the dead of night, Piara Begum went to Sheru Mia's room and induced him to have sex with her. Sheru Mia, so young and so low in his social position became very frightened; but anyway they had the sex. After this the event became quite frequent. One day they were caught red-handed by Sabia. When the matter came to light, Karim and other shalish members took it very seriously and inflicted a heavy punishment on Sheru Mia. He was punished with hundred dorra, his head was shaved off and he was debarred from working in the village which was a serious blow to his economic condition. Surprisingly there was no punishment for Piara Begum; only she was sent to her parents' house, though it was she who took the initiative. It was not Sheru Mia who was to be blamed. But he was seriously punished not because of the sin he committed but only because of his social position.

Case - V: Here we will mention a case which has not been amicably resolved in the village. The disputant parties were Mubarak Ali and Arman Ali; of them Mubarak himself was a member of the shalish. Though they were relations, the dispute arose from the construction of a boundary wall. Arman Ali wanted to construct a wall rounding his boundary but Mubarak Ali opposed it saying that as the boundary line was not marked he should not construct any permanent wall. The matter was very delicate, and was brought to the notice of the shalish. However, Karim and Mubarak Ali manipulated other members on their side. As a result the verdict was in Mubarak Ali's favour and they asked Arman Ali to stop the construction.

Arman Ali without paying any heed to the verdict continued his construction. Mubarak Ali without being violent went to the court and asked for its interference. Ad-interim injunction was issued to maintain the status-quo. A civil case started in the district court. Since both of them are moneyed persons, they do not bother about money.

CHAPTER - VI

LIFE STYLE BEFORE AND AFTER MIGRATION

In our definition of social change, we have mentioned two aspects of culture, e.g., material culture and non-material culture. Material culture means all material aspects of human life; norms and values, attitudes, folk-ways, mores etc. fall under non-material culture. To make out a case for social change, we must pay due attention to these aspects. Society is ever changing - it is no new notion. But to understand the nature and the process of social change we have to discover the forces working behind it.

In this chapter, we have concentrated our attention on remittance to see whether it has played any significant role in bringing about noticeable changes in the cultural aspects; i.e., in the life-style of the village people and if it has, then to what extent.

To make out the course of change in their life-style we have collected some specific information on the necessities of social life e.g., dwelling-houses, food-habits, costumes, use of electricity, drinking water, sanitation, conspicuous consumption, medical treatment etc. It requires an indepth study of each and every family, but these changes have taken place so rapidly that more or less accurate information can be gathered from anybody. However, we have collected our data from every individual household.

Food habit

In our earlier discussion we have seen that the economic condition of Londonigaon was so miserable that it was not possible for many to

provide subsistence twice a day. But today we can see a directly opposite picture at least in the migrant respondents' families; not only have they enough provision for food, but their food habits have also changed. For example, in every migrant family break-fast is now a regular practice. This practice which was never in their past food habit before is still absent in non-migrant families. In general, the people of the migrant families take rice thrice a day. In the morning they have break-fast, at about 10 or 11 O'clock they have curry and rice cooked fresh, then again rice at 4 or 5 in the afternoon and lastly at night after Esha prayer, i.e., before going to bed. The villagers in general take rice three times a day, before going out for work, after coming from work and before going to bed at night. Though the migrant families include break-fast in their daily food habit they could not give up the habit of taking rice in the morning. Here, I will describe my own experience in Londonigaon which I think will not be irrelevant. I took my food in the same house I used to stay during my field work. My first opportunity of taking food in that house came at night. Though there were many tables and chairs, a mat was spread out on the ground for us to sit. I along with the Moulavi Shahib with whom I shared a room, sat together to take our meal. The dishes in which the food was served were very costly and no doubt were bought from England. The way the food was served seemed very ill-matched with the costly dishes. For example, there were no spoon in the rice dish; several times Moulavi Shahib took rice with the hand he was eating with, and there was only one glass for us to drink water. This in Ogburn's word is 'cultural lag'.¹

¹Ogburn, W.F. Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature, B.W. Huebsch, Inc., New York, 1922.

Costume

Not only does money come from abroad, but whenever the migrants come home, they bring lots of clothes and costumes for their families and relations. The quality of these costumes bought from England is very high. One can easily differentiate between a migrant and a non-migrant by the costumes they wear. Though the migrants are buying costly and quality clothes for their relations, they do not know when and where to wear them. For example, some go shopping wearing a sleeping suit or a dressing gown, or coat and tie with lungi. This is because of their cultural lag.

The most remarkable change is that all the migrant families have enough foreign clothes and costumes which they did not have before migration and which the non-migrant families still have not. All the teenagers of the migrant families wear shirts and trousers, whereas the elders wear costly lungi or pyjamas and panjabi. On the other hand, those of the non-migrant families wear lungi, genji and shirts. I have never seen Haris Ali get out in bare body or bare foot, but his own brother (a non-migrant), who lives in another house with his family, works in the field in bare body. I have not come across any woman from any migrant family without blouse or petticoat and bare-footed, but have seen several women of non-migrant families just wearing a saree without blouse and petticoat. They do not even wear any sandal. Young girls belonging to migrants family wear Salwar and Kamiz, but this is not the case with the non-migrants. Even a ten year old girl wears a low-cost saree. As a result, the village has also become divided even in respect of clothes and costumes.

Housing

We have already mentioned that 100 per cent migrant families spend their remittance in constructing, repairing and renovating their dwellings. At the time of survey it was found that 32 (47.05%) families, all belonging to migrants, constructed pucca² dwellings. Brick built walls and tin-roofed houses were built by 30.88 per cent households of which a little more than 16 per cent are migrants and the rest are non-migrants; 22.09 per cent households reside in kutch³ huts. They are mostly non-migrants. Table - 25 would reveal that there was no non-migrant family in the village who could construct a pucca house for the purpose of dwelling.

Table - 25

Distribution of Existing Types of Dwelling in
Londonigaon

Types of structure	Migrant respondents' families		Non-migrant respondents' families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Pucca	32	47.05	-	-	32	47.05
Mixed [*]	11	16.17	10	14.70	21	30.88
Kutch	2	2.94	13	19.11	15	22.05
Total :	45	66.16	23	33.81	68	100.00

^{*}Brick-built walls and tin-roofed houses.

²Brick-built houses.

³The walls are made of bamboo mats or mud, the roof of thatch supported on bamboo or wooden posts, and the floor is earthen.

In Table - 25 we have included only the main living houses like Baitak khana;⁴ kitchen, cow-shed etc. were not included in the table. There are seven Baitak khanas six of which are owned by the migrant families and only one by a non-migrant family. Table - 25 shows that all the 68 households of the village have their own homesteads though the types and patterns of construction are different. There is no homeless family in the village. The remittance has a profound impact on the house building pattern of the village. A lot of heavy constructions were made which has resulted in great changes in it. The extent of change can be conceived if we consider the condition of the houses before and after migration. Around 71.11 per cent of the total number of migrant respondents' families have constructed new buildings on the sites of their existing structures which were either thatched huts or tin-roofed houses. About 24.44 per cent households constructed houses with brick-built walls and tin-roofed and only 4.44 per cent have kutcha houses. There was no building in the village prior to their migration. It is interesting to note that before migration 77.78 per cent households had thatched huts and the remaining had tin-roofed houses.

Table - 26

Changes Occurred in Types of Structures Among the
Migrant Respondents' Families

Types of structure	Prior to migration		After migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Pucca	-	-	32	71.11
Mixed	10	22.22	11	24.22
Kutcha	35	77.78	2	4.44
Total:	45	100.00	45	100.00

⁴An outer house for receiving visitors.

Electricity

We have also mentioned in our previous discussion that the electricity was brought to the village without any financial help from the Power Development Board. But the bringing of electric facility to the village does not mean that every house of Londonigaon is electrified. A little more than 58 per cent households have got electric connections in their individual houses. Among them 55.88 per cent are migrant and only 2.94 per cent are non-migrant families. Most of the non-migrant households could not bring electricity to their houses owing to the paucity of necessary fund. Twenty five per cent families from both the kinds (migrants - 2.94% and non-migrants 22.06%) still use kupi or lamps, and the rest 16.18 per cent use lanterns. Among these 10.18 per cent, 7.35 per cent are migrants and 8.82 per cent are non-migrants.

Table - 27

Distribution of Households Using Electricity

Lighting system	Migrant Respon-		Non-migrant respon-		Total	
	dents' families		dents' families			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Electric light	38	55.88	2	2.94	40	58.82
Kupi (lamp)	2	2.94	15	22.06	17	25.00
Lantern	5	7.35	6	8.82	11	16.18
Total :	45	66.18	23	33.82	68	100.00

One important and remarkable change in the village is noticed in the use of electricity among the villagers. There was no electricity in the village before its inhabitants went abroad. Before migration, 85 per cent households used kupi or kerosin lamps for the purpose of lighting, and only 20 per cent could afford lanterns. But now the situation is dramatically changed especially among the migrant families. Though electrification needs a large amount of investment, more than 84 per cent of them now use electricity and the remaining 16 per cent use either kupi (4.44%) or lantern (11.11%). The situation more or less remained constant with the non-migrant families, though they constitute around 34 per cent of the total households of Londonigaon. Only two of them could get electric connections to their houses.

Table - 28

Changes Occurred in Using Electricity Among the
Migrant Respondents' Families

Lighting System	Prior to their migration		After migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Electric light	-	-	38	84.44
Kupi (lamp)	36	80	2	4.44
Lantern	9	20	5	11.11
Total:	45	100	45	100.00

Sanitation

The information we have been able to collect on the sanitation system of Londonigaon village shows that 63.24 per cent families have pucca sanitary latrins in their houses, of which 58.82 per cent families belong to the migrants and the rest 4.41 per cent are non-migrants. 23.53 per cent (migrants 7.35% and non-migrants 16.18%) have kutchra latrins fenced with bamboo. These latrins are a real threat to public health. But the 13.23 per cent households, all belonging to the non-migrant families, have no latrin at all. So we can see, the difference between the migrant and non-migrant families in regard to sanitation is quite sharp. The 58.82 per cent could construct sanitary latrins only because they had remittance. But most of the non-migrants could not change their sanitation system for it involves a big amount of money.

Table - 29

Distribution of Existing Types of Sanitary System in the Households of the Village

Sanitation system	Migrant Respondents' families		Non-migrant respondents' families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sanitary latrin	40	58.82	3	4.41	43	63.24
Kutchra latrin	5	7.35	11	16.18	16	23.53
Open place	-	-	9	13.23	9	13.23
Total :	45	66.17	23	33.82	68	100.00

If we consider the situations before and after migration the change will be more conspicuous. According to the report of the respondents only 6.67 per cent households among the migrant families had sanitary latrins prior to the migration of any member of the family; 77.78 per cent had kutcha latrins and the rest 15.55 per cent had no latrin at all. They used open places for this purpose. But now 88.89 per cent migrant families have sanitary latrins and others have at least kutcha latrins. The change is very significant and has a far-reaching impact on public health.

One important aspect of these latrins is that they are not attached to the houses, but are constructed far away from them. They have not yet realized the importance of attached bathrooms along with latrins. Most of them, both males and females, use ponds for bathing and washing.

Table - 30

Changes Occurred in the Types of Sanitary System
among the Migrant Respondent Families

Sanitary System	Before Migration		After Migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Sanitary latrin	3	6.67	40	88.89
Kutch	35	77.78	5	11.11
Open places	7	15.55	-	-
Total :	45	100.00	45	100.00

Drinking Water

At the time of survey it was found that only 29.41 per cent i.e., 20 families both from the migrant and non-migrant categories (27.94% and 1.47% respectively) use tubewell water for the purpose of drinking while more than 70 per cent households (migrant 38.24%) and non-migrant (32.35%) still rely on ponds (67.65%) and ringwells (2.94%) for the same purpose. Almost every family owns a pond either individually or jointly. It is surprising that only 42.22 per cent migrant respondent families are using tubewell water while the majority (57.71%) are still drinking surface water.

Table - 31

Distribution of Households Using Different Sources of Drinking Water in Londonigaon

Sources	Migrant Respondents' Families		Non-migrant respondent's Families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Tubewell	19	27.95	1	1.47	20	29.41
Ringwell	-	-	2	2.94	2	2.94
Pond	26	38.24	20	29.41	46	67.64
Total:	45	66.18	23	38.82	68	100.00

But the situation was absolutely different before people migrated from the village. At that time there was no tubewell in the village; therefore, the question of using tubewell water did not arise at all. Everyone depended on surface water: 95.55 per cent used pukur or pond and 4.45 per cent used ringwell.

Table - 32

Changes Occurred in the Use of Drinking Water Among
the Migrant Respondent Families

Sources	Before Migration		After Migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Tubewell	-	-	19	42.22
Ringwell	2	4.45	-	-
Pond	43	95.55	26	57.78
Total :	45	100.00	45	100.00

The importance of pure drinking water is gradually being felt among the migrants' families. Especially when a migrant visits his village home he shows his complete reluctance to drink pond or ringwell water as it is not so pure. But surprisingly there are families who do not think pure drinking water indispensable and still they are the majority. The house where I stayed used pond water. However, the overall condition is changing among the migrants' families owing to their frequent interaction with the migrants.

Use of Electronic Articles

There is a popular belief that one of the important items to purchase with foreign remittance is electronic goods either from abroad or from the local market. To empirically verify this belief, we have investigated, among the members of the migrant families the possession of electronic goods.

Among the non-migrant respondent families only two households have wrist-watches, one household has a table clock and another household has a table fan.

On the other hand, 40 (88.89%) households from the former category possess wrist-watches, 30 (66.67%) have table clocks, 35 (77.78%) have radios, and 42 (93.33%) have tape recorders. Twelve (26.67%) and 10 (22.22%) households possess cameras and televisions respectively. One household has a V.C.R. (Video Cassette Recorder) while eight (17.78%) have refrigerators. Thirty (66.67%) and 20 (44.44%) families use table and ceiling fans respectively.

The information presented in Table - 33 very well proves that only those people of Londonigaon can afford costly electronic items, whose family members have migrated and who get foreign remittance. The migrants either bring these things from abroad or send money to buy them from the local market. The more they are using costly electronic goods the more its impact is becoming significant in their lives.

Furniture

At the time of survey the furniture used by the respondents was mostly made of wood. But a sharp difference is prominent between the migrant respondent and the non-migrant respondent families regarding the use of furniture. Chairs, tables, khats (beds), chowkis (very plain beds made of wood and without any mosquito stands), moras (tools made of cane), piris (low tools made of wood), dressing tables, showcases, steel almiras etc. are

Table - 33

Distribution of Electronic Articles Among the Migrant
Respondent Families in Londonigaon

Electronic Articles	Number	Per cent
Wrist watch	40	88.89
Table clock	30	66.67
Radio	35	77.78
Tape recorder	42	93.33
Camera	12	26.67
Television	10	22.22
Refregerator	8	17.78
V.C.R.	1	2.22
Table fan	30	66.67
Ceiling fan	20	44.44

mostly used by the migrant respondent families, while the furniture of the non-migrant families is confined only to chairs (8.89%), tables (2.94%), chowkis (13.21%), piris (33.32%) and moras (11.76%). There are no khat, dressing table, showcase or steel almira among them.

But the situation before the members of some families migrated to foreign countries was completely different. The condition of all the families was almost the same. We have asked our respondents to identify the furniture purchased before and after migration. The statistics have been given in Table - 35.

Table - 34

Distribution of the Furniture Among the Respondents
of Londonigaon Village

Items	Migrant Respond- ent's Families		Non-migrant Respond- ents' Families	
	No.	%	No.	%
Chair	45	66.18	4	5.88
Table	40	58.62	2	2.94
Khat	25	36.76	-	-
Chowki	45	66.18	9	13.23
Piri	43	63.23	23	33.82
Mora	45	66.18	8	11.76
Dressing table	20	29.41	-	-
Showcase	21	30.88	-	-
Steel Almira	16	23.53	-	-

Table - 35

Changes Occurred in the Use of Furniture Among the
Migrant Respondents' Families

Items	Prior to Migration		After Migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Chair	8	17.78	45	100.00
Table	6	13.33	40	88.89
Khat	-	-	25	55.55
Chowki	10	22.22	45	100.00
Piri	45	100.00	45	100.00
Mora	20	44.44	45	100.00
Dressing table	-	-	20	44.44
Chowcase	-	-	21	46.76
Steel Almira	-	-	16	35.55

In the migrant respondent families items like dressing tables (44.44%), showcases (46.67%), steel almiras (35.55%) and khats (55.55%) were not included in the list of their furniture prior to migration. Some of them had a few chairs, tables, chowkis, piris and moras. Now the situation has significantly changed. Not only has the number of the old items increased, many new and very costly items have also been included in their furniture.

Medical Treatment

The information collected on the system of treating patients in case of illness shows that three kinds of medical treatments are in practice among the people of Londonigaon village, e.g., Allopathy, Homeopathy and Ayurvedic.

Table - 36

Distribution of Households Adopting Different Kinds of Medical Treatment

	Migrant Respondents' Families		Non-migrant Respondents' Families		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Allopathic	43	63.23	11	16.18	54	79.41
Homeopathy	36	52.94	17	25.00	53	77.94
Ayurvedic	28	41.18	25	36.76	53	77.94

Allopathy

In every sphere of life the change in the economic condition of the migrant respondent families is reflected. At present about 79.41 per cent

inhabitants of Londonigaon go for allopathic medicines prescribed by qualified graduate doctors. Of them 63.23 per cent are migrant families while only 16.18 per cent are non-migrant families. But the situation was not always like it is today. It is revealed from Table - 37 that prior to migration only 6.67 per cent households relied on allopathic treatment. Most of the people, i.e., 71 per cent primarily relied on Ayurvedic treatment. So we can see more and more families belonging to migrant are going for allopathic medicine because the change in their pecuniary condition has enabled them to undertake a much costlier treatment.

Table - 37

Changing Attitude of the Migrant Respondents'
Families in Treating their Illness

Medical Treatment	Prior to Migration		After Migration	
	No.	%	No.	%
Allopathy	3	6.67	43	63.23
Homeopathy	8	17.78	36	52.94
Ayurvedic	32	71.78	28	41.18

Homeopathy and Ayurvedic

About 77.94 per cent households from both migrant (52.94%) and non-migrant (28%) families go for homeopathic treatment. One thing is noticeable here that most of the migrant respondents' families depend on allopathy when most of the non-migrant respondent families depend on homeopathy. The reason is no doubt economic. The allopathic treatment is so costly that the poor cannot afford it. There are Ayurveds in the village, and about 77.94% households from both the categories go for ayurvedic treatment.

CHAPTER - VII

CHANGING CLASS STRUCTURE

In this chapter we shall consider how the inflow of remittance, which began primarily in the decade of 1940s, created social mobility and affected the existing class-structure in the village.

The concept "social class" is as old as human civilization. Society had always been stratified and divided into major classes. Of course, the stratifications were not as complex and as heterogeneous as they are today. However, different scholars used the concept in different ways but failed to reach an unanimous definition of the concept "class". Plato, the greatest of all the Greek philosophers made classes the basis of his 'ideal state' in Republic. He observed that "there are always in them (cities), two parties at war with each other, the poor and the rich (The Republic)."¹ American sociologist MacIver was of the opinion that communities are stratified in various ways ... But the principal type of stratification is seen in the phenomenon of class.² For Max Weber, class is an analytical term which identifies individuals who have similar 'life chances' in the opportunities for gaining income; market assets include skill as well as property. He sees the major historical class struggle as being between creditors and debtors, with the conflict under capitalism between employers

¹Nazmul Karim, A.K. Samaj Bigyan Shamikkhan, Nowroz Kitabistan, Dhaka, 1972, p. 7.

²MacIver, R.M. & Charles H. Page. Society - An Introductory Analysis, London, MacMillan, 1962, p. 348.

and workers as merely a special case.³ Max Weber's definition of class is essentially economic. But when MacIver defines the concept he lays more emphasis on social status. According to him the various occupations make up vertical divisions of the community, whereas the divisions that reflect the principle of social class are the horizontal strata, always a graded order. Wherever social intercourse is limited by considerations of status, by distinctions between 'higher' and 'lower', there social class exists. 'A social class', then 'is any portion of a community marked off from the rest by social status.'⁴

The greatest contribution of the Marxist Leninist theory is that it has managed to solve this complex problem.⁵ Although Marx's voluminous writings do not contain a coherent exposition of that theory i.e., the theory of social classes, they contain, instead, many scattered fragments on the topic.⁶ However, Marx cannot be altogether accused of not defining the concept which had a profound influence on modern social thought. He in fact made the concept crystal clear to us when he posed a question in one of his unfinished writings - what constitutes a class? And the reply to this follows naturally from the reply to another question: What makes wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three great social

³Bullock, Alan & Oliver Stallybrass (ed.). The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought, Fontana Books, London, 1977, p. 104.

⁴MacIver, R.M., Charles H. Page. Op. cit., p. 348.

⁵ABC of Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 299.

⁶Bendix, Reinhard & Seymour Martin Lipse (ed.). Class Status & Power, Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1967, p. 6.

classes?⁷ Now it is no longer difficult to answer these questions because it is the ownership and the non-ownership of means of production which divides hitherto existing societies into two major classes i.e., freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journey man, in a word oppressor and oppressed.⁸ Therefore, a social class in Marx's term is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production.⁹ But, the most comprehensive, profound and complete definition of classes in Marxist theory was given by Lenin in his work "The Great Beginning": classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed or formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it.¹⁰ Thus, according to Marx, a social class is constituted by the functions its members perform in the organization of production. The organization of production no doubt plays a determinant role in providing necessary but not a sufficient basis for the existence of social classes. Marx put forward a few other variables such as repeated conflicts over economic rewards between the classes, ready communication of ideas between

⁷ Unfinished Chapter from Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. III, Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, pp. 862-863.

⁸ Marx, Karl & Frederick Engels. Manifesto of the Communist Party, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p. 32.

⁹ Bendix, Reinhard & Seymour Martin Lipset. Op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰ Lenin, V.I. Collected Works, Vol. 29, p. 421.

members of a class, the growth of class-consciousness, and the growing dissatisfaction with exploitation for the emergence of social classes.¹¹

In the light of above discussion, we shall now examine the existing class-structure of Londonigaon to assess the effects of remittance in the organization of production. There is no denying that the huge inflow of remittance has been directly influencing the existing production process. As a result, the village is broadly divided into two major categories, i.e., migrants' families with an effective control of the principal means of production, land, on the one hand, and the non-migrant families with no control over the means of production, on the other.

Therefore, on the basis of the ownership and the non-ownership of the means of production, we find the existence of two broad classes in Londonigaon. Of course these two classes occupy different positions and perform different functions in the process of production. No doubt, positions and functions in the organization of production have provided necessary basis, but it is to be seen whether these divisions fulfil other prerequisites as proposed by Karl Marx to form classes. Class-consciousness, in a broad sense, according to Bottomore, may be regarded as one form of the 'consciousness of kind' which develops in all enduring social groups. But in Marx's usage, class-consciousness involves the gradual formation of distinctive ideologies and political organizations which have as their object the promotion of particular class interests in a general conflict between classes.¹²

¹¹ Bendix, Reinhard & Seymour Martin Lipset (ed.). Op. cit., p. 8.

¹² Bottomore, T.B. Class in Modern Society, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1965.

No such consciousness has yet been manifested by the landless agricultural peasants in Londonigaon. The reason may be that: many of them are interested to go abroad, which, without the help of the migrant families is not possible. As a result, the polarisation is not very sharp. Furthermore, if a labourer goes abroad or manages to send any of his kin he no longer remains a landless labourer because we have seen in Table - 18 that 91 per cent migrant families invested remittance on land. For all these reasons, there is no communication of ideas between members of a class, and no sense of dissatisfaction of being exploited. So, according to Marx, they cannot form a class; may be, they are class 'in itself'. Because Marx observed: in so far as there is merely a local inter-connection among the small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class (writing about the peasantry in the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte).¹³ On the other hand, minute consolidation of consciousness has been taking place among the migrant families who have a long ranging tradition of migration. They are gradually consolidating their position not only in the organization of production alone, but also in all other aspects of village life. Here we can refer the village shalish, its composition and decision making process. Marx himself recognized that the growth of corporate class-consciousness does not take place automatically or according to any definite life-schedule; noticing the absence of corporate feeling in large sections of the European working class of his day, he

¹³Ibid., pp. 64-65.

explained this lack by attributing it to the first 'stage' of working class development, when the economic conditions are appropriate, to be sure, to the existence of a class, but when its members do not as yet rid themselves of comparative attitudes. The stage, that of the class 'in itself' is followed in the course of historical growth, and especially with the aid of history's instrument, the Marxists themselves - by the stage of the class 'for itself', marked by society, common interest, and most importantly, by converted 'class action'.¹⁴

Though some sort of class-consciousness is noticed among the migrant families, it is still in its embryonic stage. The members of this class yet to get rid of their competitive attitude among themselves. However, the overall situation of the village gives this impression that, the coming years will complete the process of consolidation of migrant families as a class through fulfilling all the prerequisites as proposed by Marx.

Social Mobility

Social mobility is an important factor in assessing the impact of remittance in the village. Due to the huge inflow of foreign money one's position in the organization of production is changing quickly. For example, a landless labourer's position is not static. Because if he goes abroad or manages to send any of his kins, he no longer remains a landless labourer. He buys land, and we have already stated that land ownership to a great extent determines the social stratification and leadership pattern in the

¹⁴

MacIver, R.M., Charles H. Page. Op. cit., pp. 361-362.

village. On the basis of land holding we have already divided the village into four broad categories, such as, landless, near landless, subsistence level farm families and surplus farmers. Again these categories also do not remain static due to the accumulation of land by the respective category. It means, within a few years a person belonging to near landless group may change his position and become a subsistence level farmer and gradually take part in the village affairs, that means, the village is experiencing vertical mobility.

CHAPTER - VIII

THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN LONDONIGAON

The social condition of the migrants' wives staying in the village is really deplorable. In most of the cases, they are to stay far away from their husbands for the major part of their lives. At the time of survey it has been found that there are in total 94 male migrants from the village. Among them 66 persons were married, and only 20 of them took their wives to England to stay with them. Seven of these 20 persons have two wives each, and have left one wife in the village to take care of the household and other properties. One migrant have three wives staying in Londonigaon. Therefore, total number of the migrants' wives staying in the village is 55. Most of those migrants took their wives to England in the later part of the British rule or in the early part of the Pakistani period. Now all of them are British citizens.

We wanted to know the reasons why the wives were not taken along with their husbands. The respondents (in most of the cases the male members of the families) identified a few practical problems. These are as follows:

- i) problem in getting entry permission;
- ii) huge expenditure involved;
- iii) if a migrant takes his wife he cannot remit sufficient amount of money to his village home;
- iv) for rearing the children;
- v) to take care of husband's old parents.

We have earlier mentioned that it is really difficult to secure a British visa from the Immigration Office. Even the legal immigrants who want to take their wives cannot accomplish the process smoothly because of its intricate procedure. Again, in our society son is considered as a symbol of security. It is almost obligatory for the son to take care of the old parents. Sometimes he performs his duty through leaving his wife to take care of and by sending money to them. To get first hand information we also directly interviewed some of the female members to know their views. All of them are interested to go abroad to join their immigrant husbands. However, they have also acknowledged that the above mentioned problems prevented them from fulfilling their desire.

Case Study - I

Teraban Bibi : Teraban Bibi was married and came to Londonigaon about 25 years ago. Good-looking Teraban Bibi with a little educational background claimed herself to be coming of a good family. Her poor parents, thinking of the happiness of their daughter married her to a 'Londoni'.¹ She has two daughters and a son. The eldest daughter was married to some other village. Though her husband could not attend his daughter's marriage, he bore all the expenditure of the wedding and that was a very ostentatious ceremony. The second daughter is 15 years and the son is 7 years old. Teraban Bibi's husband used to live in England and he went back to England just after three months of their marriage. At that time she was pregnant and was blessed with a daughter in her husband's absence. Since then her

¹Those who go to London are known as 'Londoni' in Sylhet.

Teraban bibi's husband has visited her thrice. Last time he visited her around six years ago. The reasons she put forward for not going with her husband is like this: at the time of her marriage her husband's parents were alive, and she could not go leaving them alone. After seven years her father-in-law died, and her mother-in-law died only four years ago. But now her second daughter is grown up, she has to be got married. Land and other properties that has been bought have to be looked after. Besides, her husband will retire within a few years and wishes to come back to his own country. So it is no use going her abroad now, though she would have loved to go to England just after her marriage. "I have passed my days in waiting", she said, "and shall ensure that my daughters should not have the same fate. One can enjoy affluence if he has peace in mind. How can a wife get peace living far away from her husband and not seeing or meeting him for years together?" She will now try to send her son to England to take his father's place who will afterwards take the responsibility of his parents.

Case Study - II

Amena Begum: Amena Begum, the only child of her parents, was born in some other village. Her father, a man almost like a darbesh, was not very attentive to his family. Her mother worked hard to earn the living and naturally Amena Begum was not in peace and happiness in her father's place. From her very childhood, she could feel her mother's agony very much. However, her mother had not had to endure such agony any longer, and she died. After Amena's mother's death, her father lost all attraction for home, and she became almost a burden on him. Fortunately, she was rescued

by one of her distantly related uncle who brought her up. At the age of 17 she was married and came to Londonigaon to her husband's place. Within one year of her marriage a daughter was born to her; before the birth of her second daughter, when she was in the advanced stage of her pregnancy, her husband went to England and died there within three years of his departure. Again began Amena's unhappiness. With great difficulty she had been living in her late husband's house, but economic constraint and the future of her daughters almost obliged her to marry another Londoni who had two more wives living in a separate house. Amena Begum still lives in her late husband's house, though all her and her daughters' expenditure is borne by her present husband. This man has been living in England for a long time. He came to his country in 1978, married Amena Begum, stayed only for three months with her and then went back to England. This is the tragedy of Amena Begum who could never get peace throughout her life.

Case Study - III

Fulbanu: Sixteen years old, very beautiful Fulbanu is married to such a person who had married four times before, and had divorced all the four wives only because he could not be fathered by any of them. But this man is known in the village as an impotent one. Fulbanu married him three years ago but has not borne any child yet. After her marriage, her husband lived one year with her and then left for England. She lives with her mother-in-law, her sister-in-law and her two children. Her sister-in-law is the main authority over household affairs. We could know from Fulbanu that her father, an inhabitant of Londonigaon, was a very poor day labourer and married her daughter to such a man only in exchange of money. It is believed that he got Tk. 10,000 from his son-in-law by this marriage.

Case Study - IV

Suktara Bibi: The fate of Suktara Bibi seems to be more fortunate than that of the other migrants' wives, because her husband is trying to take her to England along with their two sons. When she was married around 15 years back, she was only 16. Now her husband's parents are dead, and her brother-in-law has married. So she can easily bestow the responsibility of the household on the couple and go to live with her husband. Her husband also has sent all the papers necessary for the arrangement, but the British High Commission at Dhaka would not allow her two minor sons to accompany her. Suktara Bibi too would not go leaving her sons alone here. For around two years she and her husband have been trying to get the visa from the British High Commission at Dhaka and the Immigration Office in England, but in vain. Suktara Bibi's husband used to visit her every two or three alternate years and stays about 5/6 months with her.

If we observe the whole process very meticulously one thing becomes clear that the migrants in general are unmarried when they first migrate to some foreign countries. There they consolidate their economic and other conditions and then come back to the country to marry. Due to their stay abroad they generally think themselves far more superior to their other fellow members of the village and even to the other members of the family. So, when they think of marrying they want to get educated, beautiful girls of good families, though in most of the cases they themselves are not bestowed with these virtues. Naturally, they do not get this kind of girls from economically solvent families, and turn their attention to the literate, beautiful girls from poor but good families. And now-a-days the economic condition of the poor people has deteriorated to such an extent that in many cases parents are obliged to give their daughters to these persons.

The Reasons for Bringing Brides
from Outside the Village

In Londonigaon most of the migrants' wives are more or less good-looking. Some of them are literate and have a comparatively better family background than that of their husbands. Out of the total 75 wives of the migrants 50 have been brought from outside, and the rest are from the village. We wanted to know from our respondents the causes for bringing brides from outside. The main causes they pointed out have been presented in the following table.

Table - 50

Distribution of Reasons for Bringing
Brides from Outside the Village

Reasons	No.	%
Good-looking	50	100
Educated	12	24
Better family background	48	96
To extend family relationship	14	28

It is revealed from the above table that 100 per cent migrants who brought brides from outside the village, brought them only because they were beautiful. Forty-eight (96%) paid much attention to the lineage or Bangsho of the bride. These persons have tendency to project their affluence by showing that they are competent enough to get married to those women of the recognized families with high lineage or Uchcha Bangsho. It is possible for them only because either as a migrant or as a prospective

migrant they have better value as bridegrooms in the society. Twelve households (24%) paid attention to the education of the bride and 14 (28%) brought brides from outside to extend the network of social relationship through matrimonial connection.

Changing Role of Women

With the significant improvement of their economic condition women's role in the household activities is gradually changing. As a result, works performed by the migrants' wives are also becoming different from the works performed by the non-migrants' wives who do almost all the household works themselves. Table - 51 shows the change.

With the change of their economic condition, housewives of the migrant families have also changed their pattern of the household work. Now in most of the cases, the heavy and troublesome jobs are done by the wage labourers, and they only supervise their work. For example, only eight (17.78%) housewives now crush spices, sweep the house, fetch water from pond, and preserve the seeds, and the rest 37 (82.22%) are done by wage labourers. Similarly, only two housewives (4.44%) clean the cowshed, and four (8.89%) husk paddy, while the labourers do the rest 43 (95.96%) and 41 (91.11%) respectively. Again, there are some works which about half of the housewives still do, e.g., 21 (46.67%) of them still wash clothes and 20 (44.44%) wash dishes. Forty (88.89%) housewives make and fold up beds, prepare breakfast and tea; in five (11.11%) households these are done by the wage-labourers. But jobs like cooking and serving food are still done by all the housewives. As most of the heavy and time-consuming works are done by

Table - 51

Changing Role of Women in Performing Household Activity

Work Performed	Migrants' wives	%	Wage labourers	%
Make and fold up beds	40	88.89	5	11.11
Prepare breakfast	40	88.89	5	11.11
Dish washing	20	44.44	25	55.56
Fetch water from pond	8	17.78	37	82.22
Crushing spices	8	17.78	37	82.22
Cooking	45	100.00	-	-
Sweeping the whole house	8	17.78	37	82.22
Cleaning the cow-shed	2	4.44	43	95.55
Cloth washing	21	46.67	24	53.33
Serving food	45	100.00	-	-
Sewing	18	40.00	-	-
Husking paddy	4	8.89	41.00	91.11
Preservation of seeds	8	17.78	37	82.22
Prepare tea	40	88.84	5	11.11
Embroidery	4	8.89	-	-

the wage labourers, the housewives get enough leisure time to concentrate on other things like sewing, embroidery etc. About 18 (40%) and four (8.89%) housewives now sew and embroider clothes respectively.

From the above discussion it is clear that the role of women are changing from a working position to supervisors.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary world all countries, whether rich or poor, are dependent on each other. Rich countries have resources but not enough man power to utilize them. On the other hand, poor and underdeveloped countries have surplus manpower but not enough resources and technologies to make use of them. Because of this, rich countries welcome manpower import for their socio-economic reconstruction, while poor countries export manpower with the hope that it would help them to earn some foreign exchange which would be used again in their economic development. In between the export and the import there are some obstacles standing on the way of completing the process of migration. The field level investigation revealed that kinship-tie significantly helped to overcome these obstacles.

Intensive investigation was made to find out the actual causes of migration especially from the district of Sylhet. The study reveals that the history of internal migration, existence of haors and nevigable rivers, land tenure system, and the existence of ship-building industry in Sylhet helped to develop a sea-faring tradition among the people of this region. Some of the sea-men settled in England after deserting the ships and established a chain of migration.

However, in regards to Londonigaon large-scale emigration has been creating an acute shortage of manpower in the village. Moreover, most of the male members of the migrant families staying in the village do not physically participate in the agricultural production, thereby aggravating the existing labour crisis. As a result, the rising demand of agricultural

as well as household labourers makes their wages high enough to attract outsiders, not only from neighbouring villages, but also from other districts of the country; for example, in Londonigaon an agricultural labourer gets Tk. 40 to 50 with two meals a day, and a household servant gets Tk. 200 to 300 monthly with his all other necessities. Most of the household servants employed by the migrant respondent families and the agricultural labourers have come from outside Sylhet. Even in Bishwanath Bazar, the number of immigrant labourers is quite high. They are day-labourers, rickshaw pullers, small traders, hotel waiters etc. These people usually do not bring their families with them, but keep them at their village homes, and maintain them with the income they earn here.

From the above observations it can be safely said that international migration leads to internal migration.

Again, the inflow of foreign money has generated surplus cash in the hands of migrant respondents' families after meeting up their basic needs properly. This surplus has enabled them to indulge in conspicuous consumption. As a result, amount of investment of foreign remittance in trade and commerce is very small, and in industrial sector it is nil. Only 13 per cent migrant respondents' families have reported that they have invested some amount of money in currency business and in constructing shops in the Bishwanath Bazar. The commercial purpose behind constructing shops in the market is nothing but to ensure the security of capital. In this business the capital is highly secured, while no complicated technology or no prior experience is required. Day by day more and more people are

becoming interested in this business; and construction of markets and super-markets even in the district town is becoming very popular. If proper opportunities can be created and security of capital is ensured people would definitely invest more money in productive than in unproductive sectors. Therefore, effort should be made to formulate an appropriate policy for the proper utilization of foreign remittance.

Besides, the influence of foreign remittance on the village power structure is also very prominent. It has not only increased one's spending ability, but also helped one to acquire land which is the principal means of production in our society. Moreover by controlling this principal means of production one has been able to establish his effective control over the village power structure. On this basis, the village is stratified into two broad categories, e.g., migrant respondents' families with effective control over the principal means of production i.e., land, and on the other hand, non-migrant respondents' families, most of whom are non-owners of the means of production. They perform different functions in the organization of production. Even in their life style the difference between these two categories is very sharp. The village is also experiencing vertical mobility.

The condition of the migrants' wives staying in the village is really miserable. In most of the cases they have married the migrants knowing very well that they would have to stay far away from their husbands for the major part of their conjugal life. They are to perform the functions of rearing children and looking after household affairs thereby changing their role in the household affairs from working women to supervisors.

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