



**Save the Children**



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The UN Migration Agency

## **R E S E A R C H   S U M M A R Y**

# **SOCIAL COST OF MIGRATION ON CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND**



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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

Save the Children in its endeavor to ensure healthy and prosperous life for children seeks to reduce their vulnerability to risks. Migration, with or without the company of their parents, often puts children in a situation that leads to violation of their rights. Save the Children works with the government and other stakeholders to strengthen the services of Local Government Institutions in making rural-urban migration safer for children.

This report has been prepared by the Disaster Management and Climate Change Programme, BRAC and the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University. The contents of this publication can in no way be taken to reflect the views of IOM or Save the Children.

Publisher: International Organization for Migration (IOM) Bangladesh  
House # 13A, Road # 136,  
Gulshan – I, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh.  
Tel: +880-2-55044811 to 13  
Fax: +880-2-55044818, +880-2-55044819  
E-mail: IOMDhaka@iom.int  
Website: [www.iom.org.bd](http://www.iom.org.bd)

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# RESEARCH SUMMARY

## SOCIAL COST OF MIGRATION ON CHILDREN LEFT BEHIND

*Prepared By:*



Disaster Management and Climate Change Programme, BRAC



Inspiring Excellence

Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University

## FOREWORD

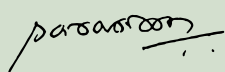
Migration, both international and internal, has long been considered as a strategy for improving livelihood conditions. While the impact of migration on improving economic conditions has often been reflected in major policy documents and research agendas, inadequate focus on the social cost of migration has been given in the development discourse.

Migration, as a multi-faceted phenomenon, has diverse impacts on individuals, families, societies, economies and cultures, both in the place of origin and destination. Migration affects the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of migrants themselves, and of people left behind at countries of origin and those at destinations. Amongst the left behind families, children are perhaps the most affected due to having limited or no say in the process, while they require more care and guidance. Many parents leave their children behind when they migrate internally or externally and this group is often disregarded in the development of related policy frameworks. The absence of either one parent or in some cases both often hinders social cohesiveness and these children, may face a range of social, psychological and physical/health challenges, which may not be offset by the increased financial security.

However, when we look at the plethora of research and policies, there is a dearth when it comes to the social cost of migration. In order to formulate policy recommendations that enhances children's welfare in all aspects and ensure compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), there is a need for reliable data to assess the positive and negative effects of migration on children left behind. Given this backdrop, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) initiated this study on 'Social Cost of Migration on Children Left Behind due to Labour Migration'. This study provides valuable analysis to help better grasp the social impacts of migration, and outlines policy recommendations to enhance the objective of diminishing the negative social effects of migration on the children who are left behind.

I express my utmost appreciation to the research team of the Disaster Management and Climate Change Programme, BRAC and the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University for their relentless efforts and innovative approaches to gather information from both children and caregivers who are affected by international and internal migration. My sincere gratitude to Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, C3ER, BRAC University, for his valuable guidance to the research team. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Global Affairs Canada and Save the Children International, who have partnered with IOM to initiate this research and their colleagues who have provided valuable inputs throughout the process. I would also like to thank my team who have worked closely with the research team and provided their insights for this research.

I believe this research provides a good source for deepening understanding of impact on children due to parental migration and would support to pave the way for improving social and policy interventions. I would like to reiterate IOM's commitment to work closely with all related stakeholders in ensuring migration benefits all.



**Sarat Dash**

Chief of Mission, IOM Bangladesh & the Special Envoy to India and Bhutan

## FOREWORD

Labor migration, the movement of people for the purpose of work or employment, is an age-old phenomenon that has affected communities and countries all over the world. People continue to be pushed and pulled by the same universal expectations – of prosperity, better opportunities, and better lives for themselves and their children. With improving access to information, transportation and communication, we can only expect to witness an increasing incidence of migration.

It is crucial to acknowledge the reality of this movement of people and recognize it concretely at the policy level. The effects of migration are incredibly complex, manifest in the outcomes of not just individuals, but entire villages, cities, and countries. An important consequence of parental migration is the impact on children left behind, who are separated from one or both of their parents for extended periods of time. Children are exceptionally vulnerable because their agency to influence the decision to migrate is limited, but being in their formative years, they require great care and support and are affected by the prolonged physical absence of their parents. With the rate of labor migration increased by 35 per cent over four years 'til 2015 in Bangladesh, policies must be sensitive to its social cost. At present, there is a dearth of evidence-based recommendations that would enable policymakers to take children's welfare into account, and enhance their well-being in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This study on "the Social Cost of Migration on Children left behind" is a concerted effort to fill that information gap.

I would like to express my appreciation for the research team of the Disaster Management and Climate Change Programme, BRAC, and the Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University. Each phase of this study – from design to data collection and analysis – presented new and difficult challenges, which they surmounted with their meticulous efforts. I would also like to thank Ainun Nishat, Professor Emeritus, C3ER, BRAC University, for guiding the research team in their endeavors. Further, my sincerest gratitude to the International Organization for Migration and Global Affairs Canada, who partnered with Save the Children for this research. Their ideas and feedback over the course of the process were instrumental in the production of the report. Last but by no means the least, I acknowledge the contributions of colleagues at Save the Children in Bangladesh, who worked closely with the research team.

In addition to providing valuable analytical insights, this report opens up several interesting and relevant avenues for further research and collaboration. It underscores Save the Children's continuous efforts to advocate for and secure the rights of children. I'd like to conclude by reiterating our commitment to creating a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, and development.



**Laila Khondkar**

Director, Child Rights Governance & Child Protection  
Save the Children in Bangladesh

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## ACRONYMS

BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BDT	Bangladeshi Taka
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BMET	Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
C3ER	Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research
DMCC	Disaster Management and Climate Change
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ILS	International Lunch Services
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
NGO	Non-government Organization
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SCI	Save the Children International
UCL	University College London
UN	United Nations

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with Save the Children International (SCI) and Global Affairs Canada, commissioned a study "Social Cost of Migration on Children Left Behind due to Labour Migration". The objective of this study is to investigate and identify the social costs of migration on children who are left behind when their parents (one or both) migrate internally or internationally for employment. The study identifies the impacts on children associated with migration at household and community levels in terms of their safety and protection, health, education and rights. The study also attempts to discern how children (both males and females) of migrants are affected as a result of being left behind.

Carried out through consideration of both qualitative and quantitative aspects, the study involved the utilization of purposeful and snowball sampling methods to ensure the effectiveness of the cross-sectional study. Households were considered as sampling units for this study and the total sample size was 1000 households, including both internal and international migrant households. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) along with Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with respondents (including caregivers) in eight districts. The personal story-writing segments were utilized to explore real cases of physical and mental abuse.

### Physical Growth and Development

The study finds that children of migrants were less healthy in terms of height and weight compared to children of non-migrants when controlling factors like income, age, gender, etc. However, the study findings suggest that children of migrants are in a better situation than children of non-migrants in terms of having three or more meals per day. It is important to note that while assessing how many meals children had per day, the assessment covered a relatively short time span rather than a holistic view of the nutritional intake of the children which is beyond the scope of this study.

### Health Care Facilities and Hygiene

The findings indicate migrant households were more than two times likelier to visit private treatment facilities compared to non-migrant households indicating improved access of migrant households to more expensive healthcare facilities. A comparative study of disease prevalence showed that children with internal migrant parents had lower probabilities of facing major health issues than children of international migrants. For children of migrant and non-migrant families, female children are less likely to get vaccinated than male children, which seems to supplement the fact that sick male children received greater attention from the caregivers than what the female children received. No significant variations were observed between the children with migrant parents and non-migrant parents. Ensuring gender neutral treatment of children by caregivers is a requisite to tackle these issues. Significant differences between children of internal migrants and international migrants were observed in terms of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health. Children of internal migrant parents showed lower tendency of knowing about these issues than children of international migrant parents with no difference, or insignificant difference between children of migrant and non-migrant families.

### Education

Almost all children surveyed had access to school education. School authorities mentioned that they found children with migrant fathers particularly difficult to

discipline, an issue that teachers attributed to the irregular means of communication with the parents affecting the behavioural patterns of the children. In other areas, there was no or insignificant differences between children of migrant and non-migrant families. About two-thirds of the children with migrant parents reported taking tuition outside school, making it a common practice in the communities. Female children were more likely to be enrolled in school compared to male children, and twice as likely to be awarded scholarships.

## Emotional and Behavioural Changes in Children

When parents migrate to different places within the country, their children had significantly lower likelihood of mental breakdown, addiction to harmful substances but exhibited a comparatively greater tendency of being introverted and disobedient compared to children with international migrant parents. Bearing the previous in mind, parental migration exerts considerable social and emotional costs on left-behind children with long term absence of a parent resulting in the children feeling downhearted. Separation from parents, especially mothers, affects the lives of the children to a great extent. Though caregivers observed certain behavioural patterns, with negative connotations, about 30 per cent of children left behind (aged 5-10 years) were reported to have become more complaisant following the father's migration. Around 18 per cent of the children who are 16 years and above showed a lack of interest in studies.

## Psychosocial well-being

Qualitative analysis revealed the existence of a communication gap between children and their migrant parents. Some mothers reportedly talked to their migrant husbands every day but did not allow children to do so. It indicates that, though a regular contact is being maintained with the family as a whole, the children are at times not given adequate opportunities to communicate with the migrant parent. Parental separation seems to affect the psychological development of the child and contributes to a sense of insecurity for them.

## Child protection and safety

The study sample indicated a prevalence of physical punishment by family members of migrant and non-migrant households. In Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions, a majority reported being psychologically affected when subjected to corporal punishment by their parents. A common complaint from children of migrant families was the onset of unhappiness when they were physically punished by their teachers. It was found that female children compared to male children, had a higher tendency to be mentally affected when their parents physically punished them.

## Early Marriage

Female children experienced more pressure for marriage through the parents, as well as were more likely to get married before the age of 16 when compared to male children. Qualitative findings related to child marriage showed that children of migrants were continuously getting proposals for marriage and in some cases, they were under social pressure to get married. This was further compounded by the fact that there were incidences of teasing and sexual harassment for female children in particular. The culmination of these factors often amounts to forced early marriage of female children to "ensure their safety". As the migrant parents, mostly fathers, live far away, the family left behind begins to consider the female child as a liability and plans to marry them off.

## Economic & Material well-being

The majority of the children surveyed admitted having access to pocket money. A very small proportion of the children (1.6%) engaged themselves in labour through informal occupations for example working in restaurants, as helping hands in households and selling newspaper. Children of migrants had a lower likelihood of being classified as poor (wealth status) compared to children of non-migrants. However, two-thirds of the caregivers for children with migrant parents said that they had no savings whatsoever.

## Recommendation

The overall impact of migration on children left behind due to labour migration has been given limited attention in analysis and discussions on migration. Lack of correlation exists between the policies and the social dimensions of migration induced problems. The laws and policies in the fields of migration and child welfare should focus on the children of both internal and international labour migrants.

One of the initiatives to address the psychological health and physical abuse of children could be the creation of awareness raising programs to facilitate continuous communication between migrant parents and the children. Other measures like organizing counselling sessions in schools and establishing youth support centers within the community can also have positive impacts. Crisis centers should be established by the Government in order to provide support to cases of abuse and exploitation.

Another recommendation would be the effective utilization of Migrant Resource Centers around the country that will allow the government to keep track of children left behind while providing better dissemination of the information and migrant specific services provided by these centers.

It is recommended that issues relevant to children left behind be addressed by policy makers through incorporation into national plans for children's rights. Provision of child rearing and development training to caregivers of children of migrant workers could help foster effective, nonviolent discipline techniques and successful communication skills.

Finally, knowledge management is an essential component for problems at a national scale and as such, action based research should be carried out on different practices addressing various aspects of food security, health, nutrition, and poverty level of children left behind due to migration.



## INTRODUCTION



Photo Credit: IOM

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

According to the United Nations, an estimated 244 million people are currently living outside their country of origin (United Nations, 2016) due to global economic issues, political turmoil, social strife and armed conflicts, to name just a few. Considering Bangladesh's status as a developing country, it is not a surprise that on average, around 10.6 million citizens are living abroad in over 162 countries with approximately 600,000 leaving the country each year (BMET, 2016).

The movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence for the purpose of employment is termed as labour migration (IOM, 2011). Depending on the duration of stay, migration can be classified as short-term or temporary, or long-term or permanent. Short-term migration occurs where a person moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 3 months but less than 12 months. Permanent migration describes a person who never returns to his or her place of origin, or long-term if a person moves to a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 12 months (UN, 2016). Migration can be international (movement from one country to another), internal (movement within a country), and transnational regarding spatial variability (movement from one nation-state to another live their lives across borders) (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

The impacts of migration often include fragmented families, wherein children are separated from their parents over extended periods of time, an issue prevalent in both internal and international migration. For example, 14 to 40 per cent of all rural households have at least one member working abroad, and a study on "Children and Migration" estimates that the percentage of children living in migrant households is between 18 and 40 per cent in rural Bangladesh (Whitehead & Hashim, 2005).

The assessment of health and psychosocial well-being of children who are left behind reiterates an urgent need to assess the impacts of separation from the family. Children of migrant workers are vulnerable to significant psychological, educational, and social challenges (Cappelloni, 2011). These psychosocial negatives are further aggravated by cases of abuse, school dropout, and the absence of a cohesive family unit (Thapa, 2014). The lack of protection and welfare of the children and the social and psychological costs associated with migration have been major areas of concern for policymakers. Although the Government of Bangladesh has taken several steps to improve the rights of migrant workers and the welfare of families that are left behind (such as formulation of policy and legislation, development of welfare foundation and scholarship for migrants' children among others), the effectiveness of these measures in improving the present conditions remains unclear.

The emotional and economic deprivation experienced by children of migrants leave them in a more vulnerable state than children raised with family members (UNICEF, 2006). Social behaviour of children can also be affected by the migration of either one or both of the parents. Children with absent mothers showed poorer social adjustment and suffered from impeded psychological development (Battistella & Conao, 1998). However, another study showed that children left behind in the Philippines have generally socially adjusted, mainly because of the strong social support from other family members and relatives (Scalabrini Migration Center & Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, 2004). In both the cases, internal and international migration of the parents plays an important role in social cohesion,

choice of careers, academic performance, behaviour, general well-being and socialization capabilities of the children.

Social costs can be expressed as intentional and unintentional outcomes with undesirable impacts on individuals and society. In this regard, at a micro-level, social costs may be found in the form of personal problems experienced by migrants and their family members. Prolonged unresolved problems can be translated into social issues at the meso-level (villages, communities, cities) in areas of migrants' origin (UN Women, 2013). In this perspective, the Institute for Labor Studies has argued that the social costs of migration are a combination of issues like the impact of separation affecting the family, especially the impact on the personalities of children who are growing up without fathers or mothers or both (ILS, 2011). At the macro-level, migration affects the flow of remittance, poverty reduction, and overall improvement of social indicators such as health and education (Islam, 2011).

In this context, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with Save the Children International (SCI) and Global Affairs Canada have commissioned a study on the "Social Cost of Migration on Children Left Behind due to Labour Migration" to investigate and identify the social costs of migration on children in Bangladesh who are left behind when one or both of their parents migrate for overseas employment. The study aimed to specifically identify the impacts on children associated with migration at household and community levels related to their safety and protection, health, education and rights. The study attempts to discern how girls and boys of migrant families are affected.

The study findings seek to inform and enrich the development of policy and advocacy objectives; especially in relation to enhancing investments in those children who are taken care of by other caregiving adults, whose decisions affect the rights and lives of children who are left behind by their parents. Additionally, it will help to identify important information regarding the risks faced by these children. The research study is jointly conducted by Disaster Management and Climate Change (DMCC), BRAC and Centre for Climate Change and Environmental Research (C3ER), BRAC University.

This study defines social cost as social consequences, intentional or unintentional, which arise from the migration of parents (father/mother/both) within the country (internal) or outside the country (international). Other impacts investigated in the study include how migration affects the well-being of children left behind in terms of the parameters of: physical (health, consumption patterns of nutritious and diversified foods), psychosocial, educational, social safety and security and economic status. It is important to note here that social costs will be evaluated based upon the impact on welfare of children (boys and girls) whose parent/s are no longer their primary caregivers due to migration.

## 1.2 Objective of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to investigate and identify the social costs of migration on children whose parents have moved away from them as a result of labour migration (internal and international).

Specific objectives include:

- Identify, derive and analyze the impacts of labour migration on children left behind;



- Measure and present the context-specific social cost<sup>1</sup> of migration in rural and urban areas; and
- Policy recommendations towards developing programmatic interventions under the social policy framework of Bangladesh.

### 1.3 Methodology

The study took a mixed-method approach, with consideration of both qualitative and quantitative aspects. To ensure the effectiveness of cross-sectional study, purposeful and snowball sampling methods were implemented. Households were considered as the sampling unit of this study. A total of 1000 households was selected from fourteen *Upazilas*<sup>2</sup> of eight districts of Bangladesh. During the study, eight districts were selected based on the following criteria:

- Information accessibility, availability and study indicators for example, households with children;
- Labour migrant workers (father/mother/both) who have been away from their residence for at least six months;
- Children (equal representation of male and female) with age groups ranging from 5 to 18 years;
- High risk areas with significant occurrences of natural disasters.

For international migration, 400 households were selected from Chandpur, Tangail, Cox's Bazar and Faridpur. For internal migration, 400 households were selected from Barisal, Narsingdi, Khulna and Gaibandha. The remaining 200 households were non-migrant households. Included were households of international migrant workers (employed abroad for at least six months) having children (age group ranging from 5 to 17 years). Long-term effects of parental absence were analyzed through short durations of parental absence ranging from 6 to 12 months and long durations of more than three years. The distribution of the sample catered to variables like the gender of parents and children and the age group of children, for example, boys whose father/mother are away (age group: 5-10, 11-17 years), and girls whose father/mother are away (age group: 5-10, 11-17 years).

Based on the objectives of the research, two semi-structured questionnaires (one for children and one for caregivers) were used for quantitative data collection. For the collection of qualitative data, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with the groups of children (boys/girls), caregivers and community people in eight districts. Key Informant Interviews (KIs) were also used to collect information from eight districts. Interviewees for the KIs were selected from local elites, teachers, health workers, NGO workers and government officials. Child-respondents were asked open-ended questions to allow them to willingly express their thoughts through writing or drawing about acts of violence carried out against them. The exercise, however, was not a specific subject of the questionnaire survey due to its sensitivity. The personal story writing segments were noticeably useful to explore the real scenario related to the physical and mental abuse segment of the study.

The survey tool went through a process of expert review by multiple stakeholders, and finally, modifications were made. The survey team was provided with training for safeguarding children and following this, the questionnaire was pretested to assess its validity in the district of Tangail. Data collection was followed by data quality

<sup>1</sup> Social costs may be quantifiable but in this study social costs are outcomes with impacts on children.

<sup>2</sup> Upazilas function as sub-units of districts

checks, data entry and removal of anomalous data. Data management comprised of the following activities: (a) registration of questionnaires received from the field; (b) data processing; and (c) digitization of data. It included detailed transcribing of the FGD information recorded by the transcriber and taking active assistance from the proposed experts in qualitative assessments and analyses. Written and informed consents were obtained from parents before conducting interviews with children during the data collection process to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

Statistical analysis of the processed data included descriptive analysis and regression modeling (univariate and multivariate analyses) to estimate significant differences in health, education, the psychosocial status among children of migrant and non-migrant families. The statistical analyses tools utilized include SPSS and Microsoft Excel.

### ***Limitation of the Study***

Despite the scarce availability of detailed data, amongst other challenges, at least 1000 households were sampled as per the project objective. Enumerators had to overcome considerable obstacles, which included the significantly lower number of female migrants. Data available through leading data repositories like the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) was inadequate for sample generation. Moreover, in some cases, the caregivers were reluctant to share information pertaining to the migrants regarding income and savings. Questions were designed to circumvent notions that the respondents might find objectionable, and as such attempts were made to ask other questions to arrive at an answer that could be used to supplement the core questions. Surveyors found it difficult to interview children belonging to the age group of 5-10 years. Great attention was paid to "ice-breaking" and making the respondents comfortable, which eventually lead to longer interview times. It is important to note here that most children surveyed were school going children, and due to the snowball method of sampling that had been utilized, the data collected through household surveys most likely does not offer a representative picture for children who do not go to school.



## LABOUR MIGRATION IN BANGLADESH



Photo credit: IOM

Photo Credit: IOM



## LABOUR MIGRATION IN BANGLADESH

Labour migration, both internal and international, is not a recent phenomenon for Bangladesh. It has been an integral part of economic development of the country since 1980s (Siddiqui, 2016). Globalization stimulates human mobility and currently Bangladesh is the sixth largest labour exporting country in the world (Ali, 2013). Over the last four years till 2015, the rate of labour migration increased by 35 per cent (Siddiqui, 2016), although the destination may vary with time and nature of demand (Islam, 2007). Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar are receiving nearly 82 per cent of Bangladeshi migrant workers (Khairuzzaman, 2015) (Siddiqui, 2016) whereas many others migrate to Japan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, and South Korea (Khairuzzaman, 2015). In contrast with other part of the world, a very thin outflow of female migrants, i.e., only 4.5 per cent, is observed in Bangladesh because of social taboo (Ali, 2013) or even lack of flexibility in government policies (Kibria, 2011). However, the paradigm is shifting very recently (Siddiqui, 2016) due to the enhancements in the demand and salaries of Bangladeshi female workers abroad (Ranjan, 2015) especially in UAE, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Qatar and Mauritius (Siddiqui, 2016).

Geographically, the southern part of Bangladesh that includes Chittagong and the lower part of Dhaka division are more prominent for labour migration. Among the total number of migrants, 78.2 per cent are from these two divisions and rest are (around 21.2 %) from other five divisions. Islam (2007) shows that, about 40 per cent of labour migration took place from the Brahmanbaria (around 5.67 %), Chittagong (around 9.06 %), Comilla (around 11.48 %), Dhaka (around 6.48 %) and Tangail (around 6.13 %) districts, with Comilla topping the list.

In general, four skill groups of people, that is, Professional, Skilled, Semi-skilled and Less-skilled are migrating from Bangladesh. The International Labor Organization (ILO) found that migrants who do not have sufficient technical knowledge and expertise, usually perform semi-skilled and less-skilled activities and receive minimum wages between BDT 13,000 to BDT 20,000 per month. Semi- and less-skilled workers tend to be more willing to do hazardous or risky work. In the case of expenditure, Siddiqui reported that a migrant family is reluctant to spend more money for higher education purposes though they usually spend more for primary and secondary education in comparison with a non-migrant family.

Bangladesh has been facing a gradual increase of climatic stressors and sudden shocks, including water shortages, cyclones, floods and coastal/delta erosion (Maxmillan, et al., 2013). In addition, many people have come and are still coming to many urban areas of Bangladesh, especially to Dhaka for their survival from extreme poverty (Unnayan Onneshan, 2013). A combination of factors, including disasters, environmental changes, food shortages and economic pressure, could increase the vulnerability of local people (Piguet, 2008) and push them to move from the most vulnerable areas to less vulnerable areas for example, from Barisal to Dhaka.

The Labor Force Survey of Bangladesh shows a steep increase in internal migration. As the place of destination, the rate of rural to rural migration was highest in Gazipur at 18.9 per cent. Similarly, urban to urban migration was also high in Dhaka (4.3%) and Gazipur (2.7%). Rural to Urban migration is also high in Dhaka (29.8%), in Gazipur (17.5%), in Chittagong (8.4%) and in Narayanganj (7.8%). The percentage of urban to rural migration is highly limited in Bangladesh and the figures can only be obtained after extensive study. Some data were obtained, including percentages from Munshiganj at (2.1%), Gazipur at (1.7%) and Jhalakathi at (1.1 %) (Alam, 2013).

## 2.1 Causes of Migration: Bangladesh's Perspective

A combination of both push and pull factors have influenced the propensity of international and internal migration in Bangladesh (Rahman & Chowdhury, 2012). The decision of migration may be affected by some key factors that are broadly categorized as economic, demographic, socio-cultural, political and natural or environmental factors (Rahman & Chowdhury, 2012) (Farhana, Rahman, & Rahman, 2012) (Uddin & Firoj, 2013) or any combination of the above (Reuveny, 2007). Although economic drivers of migration appear to be predominant, climate change and environmental challenges also stimulate the rates of migration. During lean farming seasons, migration becomes 'critically important' for the rural poor as an alternative livelihood strategy (Afsar, 2003). Similar cases were observed for situations like employment crises, poverty, instability, economic depression, low productivity, underdevelopment as well as limited opportunity for economic advancement (Datta, 2004) (Farhana, Rahman, & Rahman, 2012) (Thet, 2014). Furthermore, political interest, political instability, remarriage, divorce, separation, and social discrimination are also considered as the determining factors of migration. Other factors that play a pivotal role in migration are changes in agricultural practice such as shifting to shrimp cultivation from traditional agriculture, and environmental and natural hazards such as river bank erosions, droughts and floods (Uddin & Firoj, 2013).

## 2.2 Effect of Migration on Children Left Behind

Migration has always been observed as an important source of financial gains for the individuals and societies at the countries of origin. Apart from that, there is also a non-monetary cost that every migrant has to pay in exchange for the benefits received (Prayitnoa, Matsushima, Jeong & Kobayashi, 2013). Migration of one or both parents substantially impacts the children left behind (Whitehead & Hashim, 2005).

In Bangladesh, previous research shows that the largest portion of migrants' remittance is used for the educational purpose of the children (Afsar, 2003) (Kuhn R., 2006). However, dropping out from school, poor academic performance, teenage pregnancy as well as suicide is often observed on the left-behind children due to parental absence (Edillon, 2008). These hardships may be more common for those families where the mother leaves the place of origin (Siddiqui, 2003). For adolescents and male children, the impact is often more intense since they are burdened with the responsibility of taking care of their siblings or household matters (Giannelli & Mangiavacchi, 2010).

The psychological, social, and educational aspects of the young children may be negatively impacted due to the absence of one or both parents (Parrenas R. S., 2015). Children aged 0-5 years are more able to cope with the separation. On the other hand, children aged 11-14 or above years are less capable of dealing with the situation and face stress, as well as anxiety. As a result of that, they may experience psychological and emotional stress, feelings of abandonment and low self-esteem, which may result in hindering their overall development and socialization skills (Rossi, 2008).

The children left behind due to the migration of parents are always at the greatest risk of different types of abuse, such as sexual or drug, especially between ages of 13 to 16 years, which are considered as critical ages for their development (Edillon, 2008). Another study explored that the children left behind in many migrant families are at risk of exploitation, especially by their relatives or caregivers (Abramovich, Cernadas, & Morlachetti, 2011). UN Women (2013) found that the absence of a mother acts as a catalyst behind the involvement of children with violence. It may craft emotional problems resulting in unfavourable behaviour among the children left behind.

Children left behind often suffer from sadness, loneliness and isolation, which have an adverse impact on their education and social lives. Due to lack of support and guidance during teenaged years, children of migrated parents are at high risk of drug addiction, sexual and physical abuse and teenage pregnancy (Cappelloni, 2011). The study reveals that in the case of abandoned households, the social costs of migration were found to be high, due to family disintegration and lack of parental care. Children of migrant parents have to depend on the caregivers to a large extent for their daily living. When fathers were left behind with their children, they take on more caregiving roles. In this case, the children often relied more on technology like mobile phones to stay in touch with their mother(s) who are abroad.

There are some mechanisms through which the negative aspects of children left behind can be minimized. For instance, recently, a new type of relation, i.e., "Transnational Families" between migrants and their families has evolved, which is replacing the face-to-face contact. This kind of relationship also expands the geographical and cultural universe of the children left behind through the use of modern communication tools such as e-mail, Skype (the Internet), and so forth (D'Emilio, et al., 2007). Another study on the Philippines showed that frequent communication with the migrant parents helps to reduce the negative impacts of migration on the children left behind (Parrenas R., 2002).

Almost all the studies have identified the data gap as a major problem and have suggested collecting more information on children left behind for evidence-based policy interventions. For example, with the increasing trend of internal and international migration in Bangladesh, the numbers of children left behind are also rising. However, because of inadequate research, the exact number and state of those children left behind is not evident. In Bangladesh, previous studies about migration have evaluated the overall impacts of migration, and rarely focused on children who are left behind. The most investigated area has been the linkage of remittance with livelihood and economic development but the well-being of children (health, education, and psychosocial status) has not been covered extensively. This study was conducted to identify the impact of parental migration (father/mother or both) on the well-being of children.

### 2.3 Migration Policies of Bangladesh

The primary drive of the national policies has been centered on the rights of migrant workers as well as their safety. However, these national documents provide limited attention to address the issue of children, as well as the family left behind.

The Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Policy 2016 of Bangladesh explicitly addresses issues related to the rights, welfare, security and protection of migrant workers and also their family members. The adoption of a holistic approach along with the participation of different stakeholders is required to ensure the children's rights, welfare, and social security, but this issue is poorly addressed in the policy. Also inter-ministerial coordination and an efficient monitoring mechanism have not been detailed in this policy, which is essential for ensuring the protection of the rights and welfare of the children of migrant workers. The Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 and the Immigration Rules (2002) highlighted the government's concern regarding the welfare of migrant workers and their families, but the types of measures or initiatives required for the children left behind due to labour migration are not mentioned clearly. The Domestic Violence Rules (2013), National Women Development Policy (2011) and Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2010), have not articulated any specifically directed strategy to prevent the domestic abuse of women and children left behind. On a similar note, the National Child Labor



Elimination Policy (2010) does not mention about the necessary steps or actions required to prohibit labour involvement of children left behind.

Specific social welfare measures for the children left behind due to their parent's migration are not highlighted in the National Labor Rules (2015). On the other hand, the Labor Welfare Foundation Law (2006) has stated the initiatives associated with the welfare of workers and their families; however, there are no direct or detailed measures to ensure the rights and social protection for the children of migrant parents. To reduce the negative consequences of labour migration on children left behind, it is essential to address their needs in the national planning documents.

The overall impact of migration on children left behind due to labour migration has been given limited attention in analysis and discussions on migration. Lack of correlation exists between the policies and social dimensions of migration-induced problems. The laws and policies in the fields of migration and children's welfare should focus on both internal and international labour migrants' children. Isolated programs without changes in national policies are unlikely to lead to significant improvements in the situation of children who are left behind. This gap analysis sheds light on the importance of policy and program interventions which need to recognize the specificity of left behind children's problems.



## IMPACT ON CHILDREN



Photo Credit: IOM

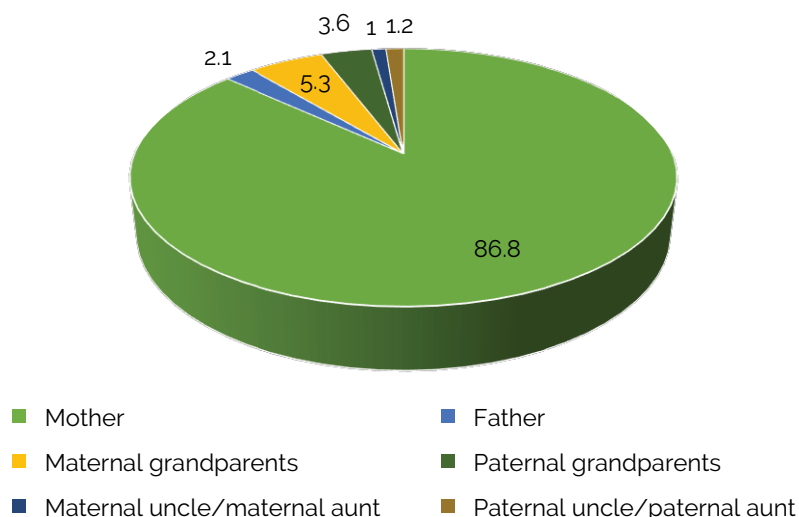
## IMPACT ON CHILDREN

### 3.1 Socio-Demographic Profile

In this study, a majority of the migrants were fathers (89%). Only 6.1 per cent of the households had both parents as migrant workers. In terms of international labour migration, the primary place of destinations were mostly the Middle Eastern region that is UAE, Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Lebanon, Libya, Qatar, Egypt and Oman. Other countries such as Singapore, South Africa, Malaysia, Maldives, and Mauritius were also mentioned as destinations for international labour migration. For internal migration, the places of destinations were Dhaka, Manikganj, Gazipur, Narayanganj, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Natore, Madaripur, Rangpur, Tangail, Comilla, Sylhet, Bagerhat, Bogra, Chittagong, Chuadanga, Faridpur, Cox's Bazar, Jamalpur, Jessore and Khulna. More than one-third of international migrant workers visited their child only once every one to three years.

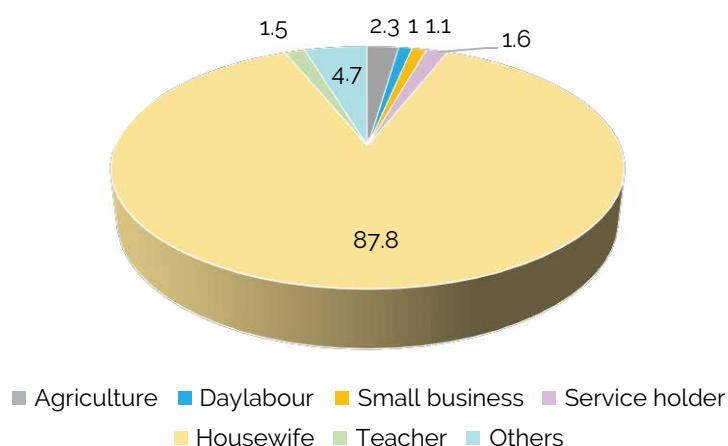
Most caregivers were mothers with only 2.1 per cent of primary caregivers being fathers (Figure 2). In terms of religion, Islam (89.7%) was the predominant religion, compared to Hinduism and Buddhism. Regarding ethnicity, all of the caregivers (99%) were Bengali. In around 26 per cent of cases, children were being looked after by caregivers of age group 35-39 years. About 0.4 per cent also had caregivers less than 20 years of age; while about 10 per cent of these children had caregivers aged 70 years and above.

*Figure 1. Relationship of Caregiver to Child*

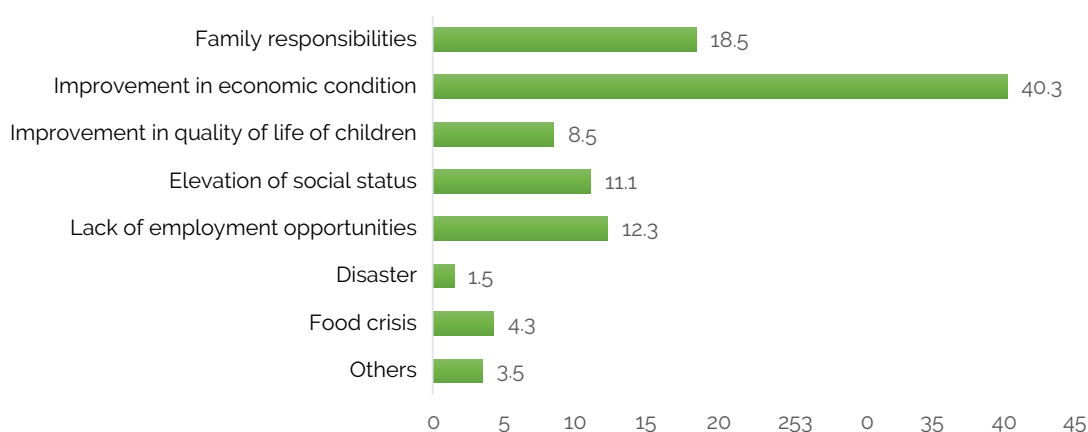


A quantitative Survey data showed that most caregivers have relatively low levels of education with 35.5 per cent having a secondary education (13.3 per cent had passed the SSC/equivalent level and 3.8 per cent, the HSC/equivalent level) and 23.3 per cent having a primary education; 10.2 per cent did not have any education at all. Only 0.6 per cent of the caregivers had baccalaureate degrees (or equivalent).

More than three-fourths of the caregivers were housewives (87.8%) followed by farmers (2.3%), service holders (1.6%), shopkeepers (2.5%), small business owners (1.1%), teachers (1.5%), and others such as day labourers, fishermen and vanpuller (4.7%).

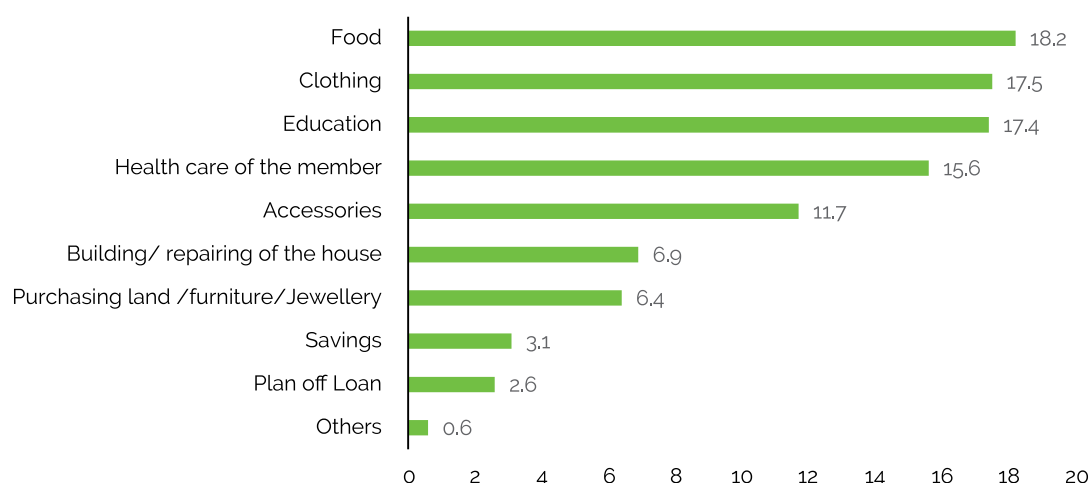
*Figure 2. Occupation of Caregivers*

Most of the caregivers mentioned that economic conditions were the leading causes for both international and internal migration. A noticeable percentage moved from the place of origin due to the burden of family responsibilities which include ensuring food security, education and other basic amenities in order to raise the standard of living for their family. Lack of employment opportunities at countries of origin, scope for improvement of social status and quality of life of children; debt, food crisis, inability of paying debts, social/political problems and so on were the other important cause mentioned by the caregiver as the reasons of migration.

*Figure 3. Reasons for Migration*

Though more than 90 per cent of the caregivers stated that they get regular remittances, many stated that they are in debt due to poverty and emergencies. Expenditure patterns of the households were investigated in the categories of food, clothing, education, house, health care, repairing households and others (discharge mortgaged property, religious ceremonies, lending money for interest). The expenditure trends revealed that remittance spending was highest for food, clothes, education and health care. The families' positive focus on their children's education is evident through their comparatively high expenditure on education. Though the previous studies have shown that the highest expenditure of remittances was on education, however, in this study, it was found that the highest expenditure is on food followed by the others. Only 3.1 per cent of caregivers mentioned having savings, indicating that in most cases, remittance received just about covered the expenses of the household.

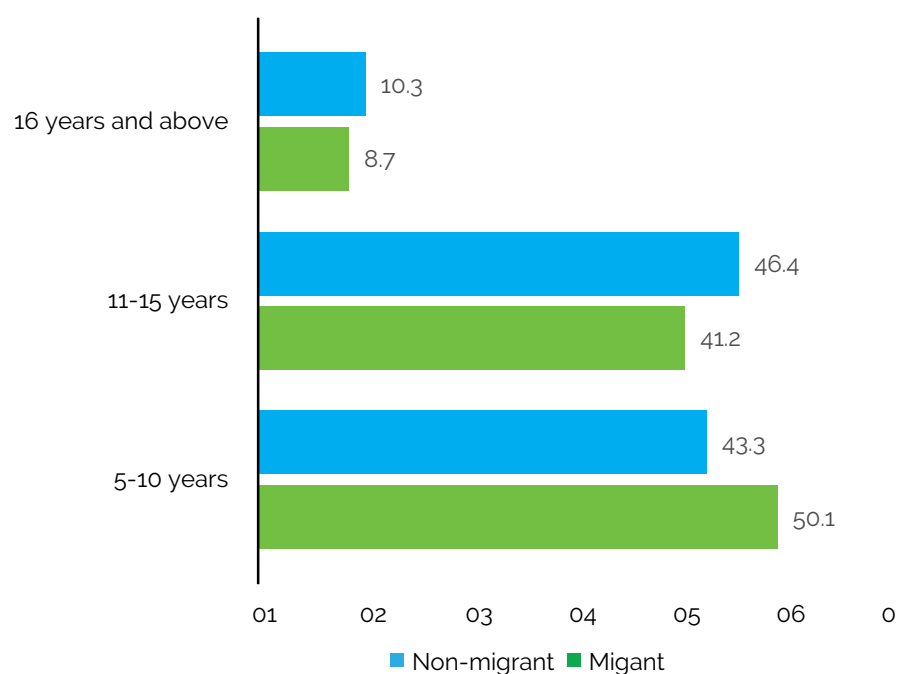


*Figure 4. Pattern of Expenditure for Remittance*

### 3.2 Well-being of Children

For the quantitative survey, 1006 children were interviewed with 803 having migrant parents who worked abroad or out of residence. Half of the 803 respondents with migrant parents were female (51.1%) while 47.8 per cent of 203 child respondents from non-migrant households were female.

A variation in the age distribution was observed between children of migrant and non-migrant parents. For households with migrant parents, half of the children were aged between 5-10 years with rest of the proportion being predominantly composed of 11-15 year olds. A reversed trend was observed for non-migrant households where the major portion consisted of the latter group. However, in both the groups a small proportion of children were in the 16 years and above range. The respondents were mostly Muslims and of Bengali descent with a majority of the children surveyed having completed primary education.

*Figure 5. Age Distribution of Child Respondents*

### Physical growth, Development and Health Status of 'left behind' Children

A statistically significant observation (Significant at  $p < 0.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )<sup>3</sup> was that children of migrants were less healthy in terms of height and weight compared to children of non-migrants. Similarly, children of internal migrants were healthier (i.e. taller with higher weight) compared to those having international migrant parents (Annex Table 2).

A number of children, with non-migrant parents, reported having less than three meals per day and this amount, though small, was found to be statistically significant chi-squared test<sup>4</sup>. Overall, these findings suggest that children of migrant parents were in a better situation than children of non-migrants in terms of having three or more meals per day. However, despite receiving three or more meals per day, children of international migrants did not get adequate food from their caregivers (in terms of calorie consumption) as observed through the study. It was found that there was no significant difference between male and female children regarding the number of meals consumed per day.

The impact of a parent's migration upon the diversity of food consumed by their children is an important indicator of health outcomes. In FGD sessions, when parents were questioned regarding the food habits of their children, most of them stated facing no difficulty whatsoever in satisfying their children's basic needs. Some of them however, expressed regrets about not being able to provide food that children wanted to eat. The following excerpt from a conversation with a caregiver expands on that:

*"I feel depressed when I cannot provide the food my son wants. Children who live with their fathers eat what is bought for them; I cannot buy those things as my husband lives away from us."*

### 3.3 Health Care Facilities and Hygiene

Children of migrants were found to avail greater support from grandparents when compared to children of non-migrants (Annex Table 3), however, in the migrant parent sub-groups, children of international migrants got more attention from the mother compared to internal migrants (in situations where the father is the migrant). When sick, male children received greater attention from the mother than female children did, implying that initiatives are required to ensure gender neutral treatment of children by caregivers with no significant variations observed between different migration groups.

Unsurprisingly, mostly mothers were reported as the person taking care of children during bouts of illnesses and a statistically insignificant number of respondents reported children receiving no care at all. A noticeable difference was that more than 30 per cent of children from non-migrant households received paternal care during periods of sickness, compared to only 4.6 per cent of children with migrant parents. It seems that children with migrant parents often show a degree of dependence upon their grandparents, as they then become the primary caregivers.

<sup>3</sup> Statistically significant is the likelihood that a relationship between two or more variables is caused by something other than random chance. The amount of error we want to allow is our significance level. Choosing a significance level of 0.05 means that if the data rejects the null hypothesis, it would be correct 95% of the time. A significance level of 0.01 means that 99% of the time we would be correct to reject the null, while 1% of the time we would be wrong to do so. Similar logic applies with any specified significance level.

<sup>4</sup> Statistical test is used to determine if there is a significant relationship between two nominal (categorical) variables.



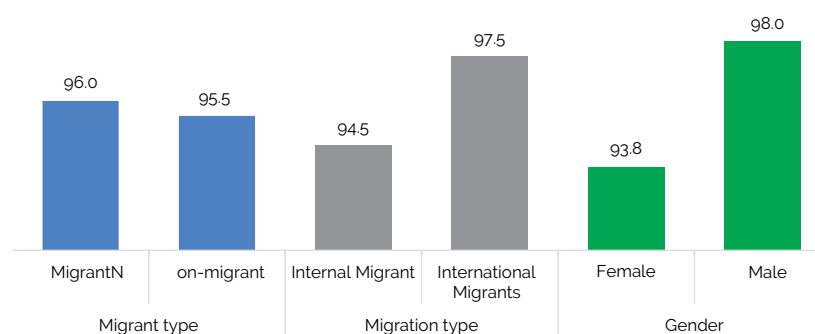
Comparing between children of migrants showed that those with internal migrant parents had 60 per cent lower probability of facing major health issues along with similarly lower likelihoods of visiting doctors compared to children of international migrants. Gender-based analysis showed that male children had a greater likelihood of being afflicted (up to three times a year) with the same disease while females were more likely to experience recurrent diseases from 3 to 5 times a year.

Estimating disease prevalence, it was found that migrant children had a higher risk of fever than non-migrant children. Comparison of disease prevalence between children of internal migrants and international migrants showed that children of internal migrants had two times the higher risks of fever than children of international migrants. However, children of internal migrants had about 55 per cent lower risk of diarrhea than children of international migrants. As for variations in the prevalence of disease, it was found that female children were half as likely to get a fever compared to male children.

An important finding of this study revealed through analyzing the responses was that, for both the children with migrant and non-migrant parents, female children of migrant parents had 66.9 per cent lower odds of getting vaccinated compared to male children of migrant parents (Annex Table 6).

More than 95 per cent of the children surveyed had been vaccinated. Evidence on vaccination did not highlight particular differences in migrant and non-migrant populations. However, one of the limitations of the study is the fact that in many of the selected families, caregivers did not correctly maintain records of the children.

**Figure 6. Proportion of Vaccinated Children (Percentage)**



An important finding of this study revealed through analyzing the responses was that, for both the children with migrant and non-migrant parents, female children of migrant parents had 66.9 per cent lower odds of getting vaccinated compared to male children of migrant parents. (Annex Table 6).

Another noteworthy observation would have to be that children of migrants had 2.65 times higher likelihood of being taken to a private hospital for treatment compared to children of non-migrants (Annex Table 4). Nevertheless, a preference for rural doctors was observed in the case of children with short-term and medium-term migrant parents. All respondents mentioned that the nearest health center was less than 5 km away from their homes.

Regarding migration type, it was found that children of internal migrants had 49.4 per cent lower odds of having sanitation facilities at home, compared to children of international migrants (Annex Table 5).

For the survey sample, tube-wells were the major source of drinking water at home. However, all respondents showed a remarkably low tendency to wash their hands after handling household waste. Female children were more likely to maintain hygienic practices like washing hands before and after eating food compared to male children with no significant differences existing across different migration classes.

### 3.4 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Regarding knowledge on basic reproductive health among the respondents, more than half of the respondents mentioned that they have basic knowledge regarding reproductive health. There were significant differences between children of internal migrants and international migrants in terms of knowledge about sexual education, taking care of the body, risks of early pregnancy, and sexual transmitted diseases. For example, children of internal migrants were likely to know more about sexual education and sexually transmitted diseases than children of international migrants. Children of internal migrants had 38.9 per cent lower odds of knowing about sexual and reproductive health than children of international migrants. Female children surveyed, however, knew significantly more about sexual education compared to males (relating to menstruation, dangers for pregnancy, tumor/cancer of the uterus, prenatal care and early motherhood; Annex Table 7 and Table 8).

The FGD findings highlight the sources of general knowledge of children on reproductive health issues. When they were asked with whom they felt most comfortable discussing issues related to puberty/sexuality, most of them said they preferred talking to friends or classmates. A majority of the boys (respondents) said that they had discussed sexual issues themselves and admitted discussing sex-related matters in classrooms and while socializing with their friends. However, almost all were quite clear in mentioning that such discussions were mostly not based on facts and carried out with the sole intention of making jokes.

A majority of the respondents mentioned that they got the information from text books, friends, classmates, teachers, TV, social media, mobile and neighbours. Friends, followed by family and television, were the major sources of information for these issues for children with internal migrant parents. In contrast, children of international migrants mentioned text books and classmates as their predominant sources of knowledge about sex education. Almost half the children of migrant workers surveyed asserted that their family members talk about the basic reproductive health issues. In these cases, it is usually the caregiving parent who discusses these issues with them. However, a small proportion (less than 5%) of children having internal migrant and international migrant parents mentioned having no one with whom to discuss reproductive health issues.

### 3.5 Education

The majority of respondents had access to school education. Only a few reported not being able to go to school because of the following reasons:

- School is far away from home
- Have to work at home/out
- No access to transportation facilities
- Did not like going to school
- Sickness/health issues

Respondents cited being sick and having to carry out household chores as the major reasons for the irregularity in attendance. However, there was no significant difference from this trend between the different migrant groups and the non-migrant group. Some of the female respondents have reportedly been victims of eve teasing on their way to school and mentioned this as a reason for their irregular attendance, but this is a common occurrence for many girls in Bangladesh, of migrant or non-migrant parents.

Local high school teachers mentioned that the student's family is contacted when the child is absent from school for a few days or requires improvement in their studies. In most cases, the father is contacted. School authorities find children with migrant fathers particularly challenging to deal with. In such cases, mothers are mostly uneducated and pay little attention to the child's educational development. In some cases, usually following puberty, the boys do not listen much to their mothers.

A mother said,

*'My son stopped listening to me after his father went abroad. He gets angry if I say something regarding his studies.'*

Amongst respondents enrolled in school, more than half went to Government-run schools and similar trends were observed for the children of internal and international migrant households. The children surveyed mostly walked to school alone. The other modes of transportation mentioned were boat, school, van, rickshaw, cycle, bus and car.

Educational performance was assessed through an assessment of subject scores at end of last semester examinations in the subjects regarded as critically important for purposes of measuring achievement (three to be specific): Bengali (First Language), Mathematics and English. Evidence from the field does not reflect that children of migrant households perform better or worse than non-migrant households. However, the qualitative findings indicate that, children of migrant households pay more attention to studies when the migrant parent comes back home. One child from an international migrant household stated,

*"When my father comes to Bangladesh, I have to pay more attention to my studies because he takes tests and checks up on my attentiveness. I don't go outside to play when he's around"*

The children of internal migrants mostly spent the scholarship money on their household items such as food (snacks) and clothes. In comparison, children of international migrants (93.3%) spent more money on household items compared to children of internal migrants (65.4%) whereas children of internal migrants spent more money for buying text books (26.9%) compared to children of international migrants (Annex Table 10).

About two-thirds of the children with migrant parents reported that they take tuitions outside school. The survey revealed that about 36.3 per cent of the children of migrants spent 400-500 BDT for availing private tuitions. Other one-third of the children stated that they spent 200-300 BDT to get private tuition. This pattern was observed to be the same across different migration types and gender (Annex Table 12).

It was found that female children had 2.4 times higher probability of going to school (Annex Table 10) and two times higher probability of getting scholarships compared to male children (Annex Table 13).

A majority of the caregivers stated that the children go to school. Amongst the few children with migrant parents (4% on average across different migration status, migration type) who were reported to be not going to school, the following were stated as the causal reasons:

- Failure to get admission in school
- Financial difficulties
- Being sick/disabled

### 3.6 Leisure and Cultural Activities

When asked about extracurricular activities, more than 75 per cent of children from migrant households mentioned sports as their additional activities followed by drawing/art (Annex Table 14).

It was found that playing was the most common activities among the children during leisure period in migrant households followed by reading books/story books/newspaper, watching movies and listening to the radio/music. Male children had higher tendencies to play during leisure period whereas female children are more inclined towards others activities like reading books, watching movies, listening to the radio compared to male children. Gender-based comparison showed that female children were more interested to play at home compared to males, whereas male children were more likely to play at a friend's home and at school.

The findings from the qualitative study indicated that Cox's Bazar and Faridpur were distinctly different from other districts. The children of these two districts did not take part in cultural activities like singing, dancing and drawing due to their conservative upbringing.

*One female child from Cox's Bazar mentioned that she does not do anything during leisure. She said, watching television or movies or playing with dolls are sins and forbidden activities. "If I do these, my prayers might be rejected by God".*

More than two-thirds of the child respondents like to play with their friends in the neighborhood, followed by siblings. However, the children of migrants showed a preference to play with the older children while children of non-migrants preferred to play with their classmates.

The children with migrant parents like to play in their homes followed by friends' houses, at schools and video games centers. In addition, about half of the migrants' children had greater interest in playing games on mobile phones in comparison with non-migrants' children. In a comparison, children of migrants had higher percentages of playing at home, friends' homes and video game centers than children of non-migrants.

### 3.7 Psychosocial Well-Being

Around 93 per cent children of international migrants reported being able to communicate with their fathers, a rate higher than for children of internal migrants. About three-fourths of migrant parents communicate with their children everyday with only 20 per cent of caregivers saying that they communicated once a week. The qualitative data pointed out a communication gap that exists between the children and their parents. This can be understood considering that some mothers reported talking to their migrant husbands every day, but the children were not allowed any

such opportunity. Despite the fact that the migrant parent maintains regular contact with the family as a whole, the children are at times not given adequate contact with the migrant parent.

Child respondents were observed to show greater attachment to the migrant parent(s). When children of migrant parents were asked about what they did once their migrant parent (the father in almost all cases surveyed) came back, the most common response was going out for trips. Some male children said they preferred to help their father do household chores while others mentioned trying to impress their father by spending more time studying and less playing when the migrant father visits. In case of the female child-respondents, when asked about what they did with their father at home, the usual response was that they enjoyed going out with their father.

For instance, a girl (of an international migrant) reported that,

*'I love to go to shopping with father when he comes home, I can buy anything I want'*

Another boy, whose father works abroad, stated the following when asked about what he did when his father was home:

*'I go to visit many places with my parents, especially to pay visit to our relatives. My mother cooks good food at home and we spend quality time with our family'*

*"My grandmother told me that my mother works in Lebanon. I talk to my mother everyday but I can't be content with that. All my friends can touch their mother, they can hug their mother... but I can't. I don't remember anything about my father. Grandma said, he lives in Dhaka and that he has married another woman. I don't have any feelings for my father. I just love my mother. I just want her here. I want to hug her, feel her presence. Is there nothing our Government can do to bring back my mother?"*

*-A 12-year-old boy in Faridpur stated*

The qualitative study findings revealed that the psychological well-being of children with parents working abroad is negatively affected when compared with children living with both the parents. The results from this study suggest that there exists a darker side to international migration when looking at the well-being of children.

Considering the psychological and emotional well-being of children, parental migration exerts observable social and emotional costs on the left-behind children. The study revealed that the long term absence of parents resulted in depression that affects the children. Separation from parents, especially mothers, affects the lives of the children to a great extent. During the field study in Cox's Bazaar, children (whose fathers stay abroad) were asked to describe what they did on Eid<sup>5</sup> or occasions/festivals. A teenage boy with a migrant father stated that his father electronically transfers money before Eid that he and his family use to purchase dresses and other items for Eid. He also said,

*"When I see my friends are going for their Eid prayer with their father and then embracing each other, that's when I miss my father the most"*

While many children of the migrant parents stated that they felt depressed especially on occasions, children living with their parents highlighted that they enjoy festivals as it brings together the whole family. However, the absence of one parent, or both, becomes more

<sup>5</sup> Major Muslim Festival

profound during festivities and triggers depression. The caregivers also observed that the lack of affection due to the absence of parents contribute to the changed behavioural patterns of the children.

When discussing the conveniences of having their migrant parent with them, children mostly talked about: less household chores, psychological well-being/satisfaction, sense of security and safety, availability of experienced advice, better advice relating to education, and so on. Parental separation seems to affect the psychological development of the child's personality and contributes to a sense of insecurity amongst children. Some of the child-respondents mentioned that they were afraid of being left alone.

Abstract concepts and emotions of loneliness, isolation, uncertainty, helplessness, insecurity, and sadness cannot be measured or analyzed through the quantitative survey but efforts have been made to capture these through the FGDs. A girl, only 15 years old and with a migrant father, stated that she has long suffered from depression and isolated herself from everyone in the last two years. Eventually she came out of her depression and mentions her mother as being very supportive throughout the process.

One important aspect of this study is family dynamics, which is created by migration. The absence of one or both parents creates a void which needs to be filled. Typically, such a responsibility falls on relatives but outcomes are different. In cases where the father is abroad, the involvement of relatives is small, as the mother, typically the one most responsible for household management, copes with the situation. Greater freedom for the child is clearly associated with: (a) more initiative and independence (except, perhaps, at school tasks); (b) better socialization and co-operation; (c) less inner hostility and more friendly feelings toward others. Since very few of the children left behind stated having more liberty at home, the absence of parents does not appear to have a decisive positive impact on the development of the aforementioned characteristics in these children. Though the child-respondents did not directly admit being unhappy, some stated that they have to concentrate more on their studies and cannot go out to play in the evening as they feel insecure. Sometimes the teenagers adjust their lifestyle in different ways and do not want to be disciplined. Consequently, this distances the child from the other family members as well.

Regarding the perception of migration, in Faridpur, women working outside the district/region seemed to be socially accepted. However, in Chandpur and Cox's Bazar, people neither addressed this phenomenon as a generalized one, nor did accept that they knew women who had migrated abroad. In these regions, the study reveals a substantial degree of negativity relating to the concept of migrant women workers.

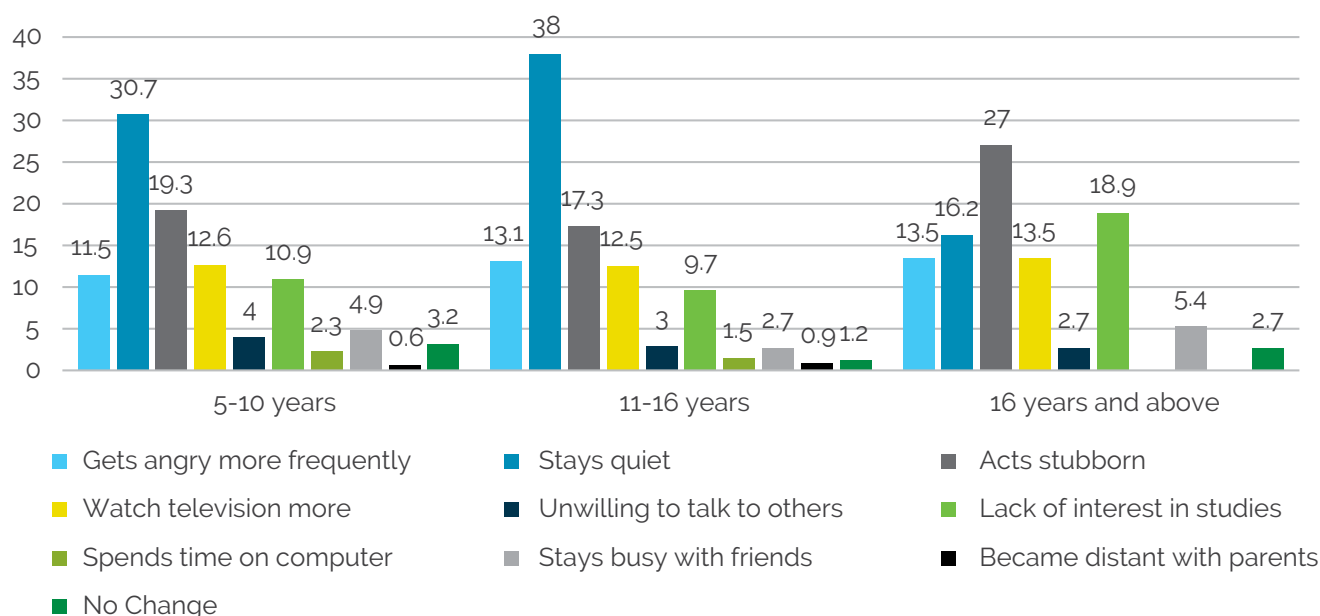
During FGD sessions, some community members highlighted the advantages and positive impacts of working outside the district as well as abroad and even mentioned that some families have gained financial stability through migration. Despite acknowledging the positive impacts of migration, when they were asked whether they wanted to send their wife or daughter away for labour migration, they responded negatively. The common belief was that women should be involved with housework. As such, the communities in the study areas seem to harbor a conservative mind set and stigmatized attitude towards women's migration.



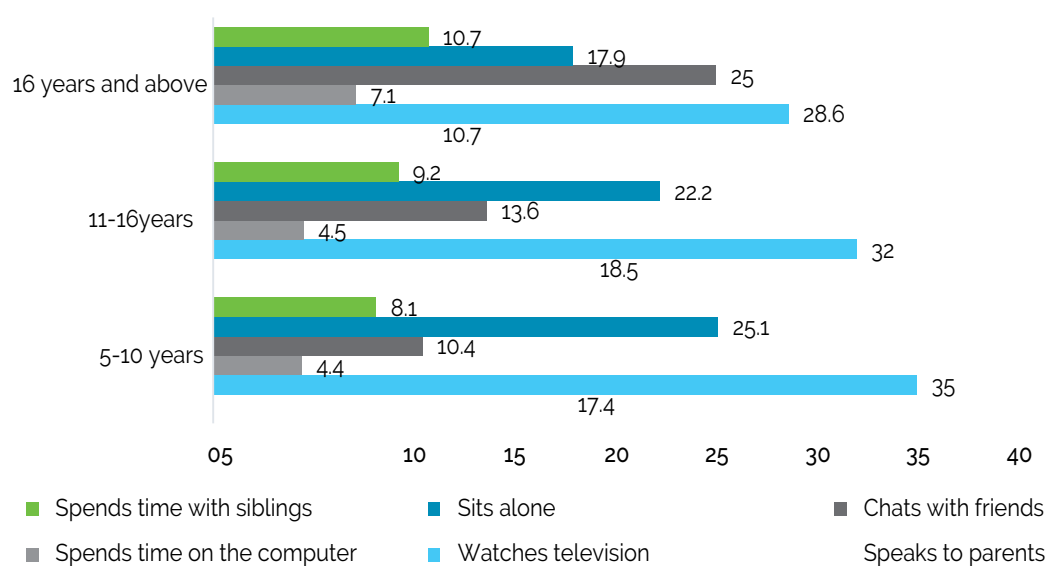
### 3.8 Emotional and Behavioural Changes in Children

Though caregivers observed certain negative behaviour in children left behind, about 30 per cent of children aged 5-10 years were reported to have become more docile following the father's departure. Temper tantrums and stubbornness were higher in the teenager groups. Around 18 per cent of older children (16 years and above) showed a lack of interest in studies. Children with migrant parents reportedly preferred watching television or sitting alone when depressed.

*Figure 7 Behavioural and Psychological Changes in Children with Migrant Parents*



*Figure 8 Response of children according to age group, when depressed*



Children of internal migrants had significantly lower likelihood of mental breakdown and addiction to harmful substances compared to children of international migrants. They also had a higher likelihood of being introverted and disobedient (2.07 times)



(Annex Table 15). Female children were reported to have a lower likelihood of being addicted to drugs and face difficulty in socializing. Nevertheless, female children had higher likelihood of experiencing mental breakdowns and becoming inattentive (Annex Table 15).

The qualitative findings also revealed that, sometimes, the migration of parents disrupts the balanced behavioural condition of the children. When asked about their child's behaviour, some of the mothers reported that changes in the child's behaviour are likely to be induced by the father's migration. The children, especially boys, became more aggressive, stubborn and sometimes rude while some reported that the child becomes more docile. During conversations with elderly caregivers, some claimed that children resented the idea of their parents moving outside the district for work.

### 3.9 Child Protection and Safety

With fathers absent from the family, children were found to be more exposed to abuse (physical as well as mental). Despite the fact that the reported rates of sexual abuse were not high, some cases of abuse emerged out of the sampled households during the FGD session. In the FGD, when the respondents were asked to draw about an incident which affected them negatively, they drew pictures representing physically and sexually abusive acts.

The personal story writing segments were noticeably useful to explore real scenarios related to the physical and mental abuse segment of the study.

One girl reported being abused by a family member and one boy complained that he had been sexually abused (perpetrator unknown). In Chandpur, a girl from the household of a migrant wrote that she had been physically and mentally abused. She reported telling her mother many times but no one believed her.

The girl wrote,

*'I wish my father was here, he would listen to me and would have protected me from this'*

Child respondents living without their parents recounted experiences of physical and sexual abuse. These incidents of abuse are detrimental to the personality and psychological development of the children. The aggressors are at times people known to the victims, for example, family members or neighbors. Victims of child abuse reported trying to share the incident with their guardians but such pleas were ignored. These incidents generate intense fear and sense of insecurity in the children's mind and they feel that they are vulnerable even while living with their close ones.

Incidences of corporal punishment were widely reported by children surveyed. A strong call for a child protection service at the community level has emerged from this study, one specific focus of which could be for physically and sexually abused children.

A 16 year old girl described an incident of sexual abuse and mentioned:

*A 35 year old man tried to abuse her when she was 5 years old. At first, he faked affection towards the girl and then suddenly tried to sexually abuse her. The girl cried and told her parents. In the end, the man was punished by the representatives of traditional village court with no legal punishment being carried out.*

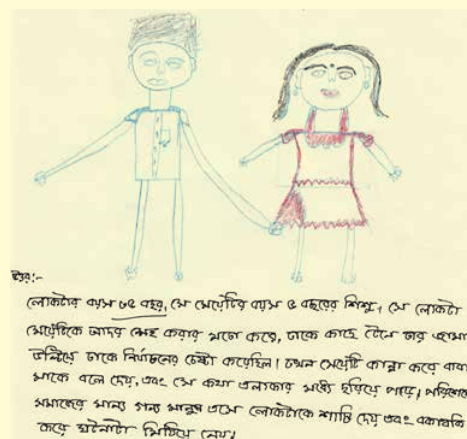


Table 1 summarizes the overall scenario of children of migrant families being the victims of physical and sexual abuse in the study areas.

Table 1 Summary on Child Abuse

	<p>About 75 per cent of the children have stated that they have been being physically abused by their family members. Some children shared that their mothers beat them if they wanted something. Some have mentioned male family members, like uncles and elder brothers also physically abuse them (such as beating). The situation is similar in almost every district.</p>
	<p>Regarding sexual abuse, 10 per cent of both boys and girls among the children have reported that they have been sexually assaulted. In Tangail district, the percentage of assaulted child ren was higher in comparison to other districts. The boys also revealed that they are at risk of abuse.</p>
	<p>Around 20 per cent of the children reported that they have to do household chores. Some of the children especially boys mentioned that, due to father's migration, they have to go to the market and do other household chores. Some of them also expressed that they do not like doing household chores but their opinion is overlooked by the family.</p>
	<p>The trend of corporal punishment was high and many said that it affected them mentally while leaving them humiliated. About 80 per cent of the children have stated that, they feel ashamed when they get punished in their schools.</p>

Images collected from Save the Children in Bangladesh

The quantitative findings indicate that the amount of corporal punishment experienced by the respondents was similar in migrant and non-migrant households. Respondents spoke about physical abuse but incidences of mental or sexual abuse were not mentioned. A majority reported being psychologically affected when subjected to corporal punishment at home. In FGD sessions, many children of migrant families stated that they felt depressed when beaten by their teachers. Corporal punishment by parents (mostly mothers in the case of children with international migrant parent/s) causes negative psychological impacts upon the children of migrant parents. It was found that female children when compared to male children had a 70.8 per cent higher tendency to be affected when their parents physically punished them. Conversely, male children had higher likelihood to be affected when their teachers beat them (39.3 %) or when they receive punishment in schools (30.4 %) (Annex Table 15).

*Figure 9 Corporal Punishment as depicted by children during Qualitative Assessment Sessions*



In regard to eve-teasing, some respondents mentioned that there were few incidents where girls were teased or harassed. The situation was similar across different respondent sub-groups (migrant, non-migrant). Some boys mentioned that in most cases harassment occurred when girls were commuting to school or going outside. Most of this harassment includes crude comments and gestures towards female genitalia and other body parts. In some cases, female children were approached with "proposals" of love and at times, also stalked.

One male respondent mentioned that he had seen a friend eve-tease a girl. He added that the friend wanted an illicit relationship with the girl, and after persistent persuasion, the girl was forced to

### **A boy with migrant parent/s described:**

"I know some boys who disturb the girls in our area. They follow the girls to home after school. They also roam around on the roadside early in the morning just to pass dreadful comments. The girls are scared so they don't say anything or protest. I have heard that one boy asked a girl to enter into a relationship with him, but the girl disagreed. The boy then took a photo of that girl and posted it to social media with derogatory comments'

drop out of school. The boys also mentioned that the eve-teasers tried to touch girls inappropriately.

In line with the patriarchal norms in Bangladesh, it appears that the presence of a father figure is considered to be a key factor for improving the security of children in migrant households.

Regarding safety and security, a young girl reported,

*'We feel safe when my father is at home. We can take his advice for anything and he also helps out with my homework'*

Another boy (whose father is an internal labour migrant) stated,

*'I feel tensed about father. As he is not at home, taking care of family members becomes hard at times. Paying tuition fees is difficult if he does not send us money on time. We feel insecure due to his absence'*

### 3.10 Early Marriage

About 10 per cent of the children surveyed reported that their family members talked to them about their marriage. Children from migrant households (40%) reported receiving a higher percentage of marriage proposals compared to children of non-migrant households (25.5%). About half the child-respondents reported that they were aware of child marriage incidences among their friends and classmates (Annex Table 17).

The qualitative part of the study found that female children are often pressured for early marriage. As the migrant parents, mostly fathers, live far away, the family left behind begins to consider the female child as a liability and plans to marry them off. The reason stated for these acts is usually "to ensure her safety".

A girl (children of international migrants) wrote,

*'I am the eldest daughter of my family, so my parents are forcing me to get married. I told them I want to study but I can't convince them. I don't know what will happen to me...'*

During interview sessions, the teachers stated the concept of "dowry" as a prime reason for children of migrants being married off. A common conception mentioned is that migrant parents have a good source of income and marrying a migrant's daughter is a method to receive considerably large amounts of dowry.

### 3.11 Economic & Material Well-Being

More than two-thirds of all the children surveyed admitted having access to pocket money. It was found that children, in both migrant and non-migrant sub-groups, spent most of their money buying food and books. Children of international migrants spent more of their money buying toys than food items. However, the study revealed equal access for children of both migrant and non-migrant parents to pornographic video clips.

A very small proportion of the children surveyed (1.6%) were engaged themselves in labour through informal occupations for example working in restaurants, as helping hands in households and selling newspaper. The money earned was said to have been spent for entertainment and family purposes.

Children of migrants had 68.2 per cent lower likelihood of being poor (wealth status) compared to children of non-migrants. On a different note, children of internal migrants had 39.7 per cent higher likelihoods of being classified as poor than children of international migrants (Annex Table 20).

Two-thirds of the caregivers for children with migrant parents, said that they had no savings whatsoever, a trend that was consistent across different migratory classes of the parents. A similar trend was observed when the caregivers were asked if they had any loans with most replying negatively. When asked about their economic status, almost three-fourths of the caregivers surveyed reported the children belonged to rich or middle class households.





## WAY FORWARD



Photo Credit: IOM



## WAY FORWARD

Bangladesh has a long history of labour migration and is one of the major labour sending countries in the world. From a different point of view, there is a large influx of migrants into the urban areas from the rural settlements each year and this brings forth a wide range of effects upon the migrant destinations and places of origin.

It should be mentioned that there were some issues which required the collection of information from both, the children and the caregiver, on issues such as health, education, communication, and child marriage. It is worthwhile to mention that all findings from children and caregivers were similar with very few exceptions, consolidating the validity and reliability of the findings in almost all cases. Qualitative findings, in several cases, provided an in-depth understanding of the extent to which the children of migrants experience an assortment of problems regarding food, health, education, psychology, safety and protection, and economic condition.

Addressing these issues requires the enactment of proper administrative measures and evidence-based policy formulation and implementation. Integration of pre-existing facilities and national plans has been given the highest priority while providing recommendations at the policy level.

Considering all these findings, the recommendations have been presented as follows:

### Children

- Creating awareness among children left behind by migrant parents and their caregivers regarding a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.
- Promotion of awareness raising programs for improved sanitary and hygiene practices amongst children.
- Counselling sessions organized in schools to compliment the reproductive health and sex education part of the curriculum.
- Promotion of interactive extracurricular activities, organized by schools, to engage children in constructive ways and foster the development of relationship building skills.
- Provision of dedicated counselling units in educational institutions to address the psycho-social problems of children left behind.
- Expanding the 1098 child helpline supported by UNICEF to ensure specific support for children of migrant workers.
- Establishment of "crisis centers" by the Government, which can be used to report and get help for cases of abuse and exploitation of children by caregivers and outsiders. Services will include: Health and Social Services, Police Assistance, Legal Advice, Psychological Counseling, Shelter, etc.

### Parents, Caregivers and Teachers

- Awareness raising campaigns to make caregivers understand the importance of maintaining continuous communication between migrant parents and the children and catering to the needs of the children.
- Ensuring continuous financial support from migrant parents to their children, and making sure that the remittance is used for the betterment of children's lives. This can be achieved through customized helpline or crisis center as

mentioned above.

- Provision of child rearing and development training to caregivers. For example, effective, nonviolent discipline techniques, the power of encouragement and successful communication skills.
- Creating space/outlet/medium for children so that they can express their views and concerns on issues concerning themselves. The National Children's Task Force (supported by Save the Children) serves a similar purpose through its role "to monitor other child rights issues, and raise concerns to hold duty bearers accountable as well as continue to create space for participation of children in decision making". Steps need to be taken so that the plights of children left behind due to migration can be addressed through this platform.
- Increase awareness among caregivers regarding Government scholarship opportunities available for children with migrant parents to reduce the number of children dropping out of schools.
- Many children reported that they were psychologically affected when subjected to corporal punishment from teachers. The prevalence of such practices despite the Supreme Court's judgment prohibiting corporal punishment in educational institutions is a matter of great concern. Legal initiatives and necessary interventions are required to address this issue.
- Teachers can play the role of counselors to address problems faced by children left behind due to migration. Maintaining a register that keeps track of parental profiles can help pre-identify.

## Community

- Establishing child and youth centers in the community which can also be used as a platform to create awareness regarding abuse and exploitation.
- Utilizing Migrant Resource Centers to sensitize about the impact of migration on left behind children.
- Community Awareness raising initiatives to prevent children's involvement in labour work so that they can continue their education.

## Policy Context

- Establishing a national database of children left behind and their migrant parents/family members. This database will be used to deliver various services designed to ensure well-being of the children.
- Include rules and regulations that address issues relevant to children left behind and incorporate them into national plans for children's rights.
- The Ministry of Education should take lead in ensuring that schools set and monitor standards for evaluation of educational performance and behavioural issues. Inclusion of measures that incorporate these ideas into the curriculum have to be considered for future revisions of the curriculum.
- Action based research should be carried out on different practices addressing various aspects of food security, health, nutrition, and poverty level of children left behind due to migration.

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## ANNEX

*Table 2. Ordinary Least Square (OLS) Regression estimates of the height and weight of children*

Variables	Height Coeff. (Std. error)	Weight Coeff. (Std. error)
Migrant Status		
Migrant	-0.193* (0.094)	-1.980** (0.698)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]
Constant	3.640** (3.08-4.20)	18.621* (2.91-34.33)
Migration Type		
Internal Migrant	0.181** (0.056)	0.757 (0.634)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]
Constant	2.674** (2.26-3.09)	15.867* (0.06-31.67)
Gender		
Female	-0.275** (0.074)	-3.127** (0.554)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]
Constant	3.515** (2.97-4.06)	16.93* (1.19-32.67)
*p,0.1 **p<0.05, ***p<0.01		

*Note: All specifications include adjustments for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence*

Table 3. Logistic regression estimate of disease prevalence and access to health care among children based on information given by caregiver<sup>1</sup>

Types of Respondents	Health condition Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Child having any major health issue Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether child suffer from disease Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Children suffered from diarrhea the last one year Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Taken to a doctor Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Taken to private hospital Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Vaccination Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>							
Migrant	1.049 (0.34-3.21) [Ref]	1.113 (0.71-1.74) [Ref]	0.968 (0.25-3.69) [Ref]	0.953 (0.46-1.99) [Ref]	1.172 (0.82-1.67) [Ref]	2.651** (1.47-4.78) [Ref]	0.466 (0.14-1.60) [Ref]
Non-Migrant							
<b>Migration Type</b>							
Internal Migrant	2.494 (0.78-7.93) [Ref]	0.594** (0.39-0.90) [Ref]	1.097 (0.29-4.16) [Ref]	1.104 (0.56-2.19) [Ref]	0.405** (0.29-0.57) [Ref]	0.544** (0.35-0.84) [Ref]	0.3900* (0.15-1.03) [Ref]
International Migrant							
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	1.225 (0.50-2.99) [Ref]	0.939 (0.66-1.33) [Ref]	1.011 (0.35-2.88) [Ref]	0.711 (0.41-1.23) [Ref]	1.103 (0.83-1.47) [Ref]	1.103 (0.76-1.60) [Ref]	0.459 (0.20-1.07) [Ref]
Male							
*p<0.1, **p<0.05, ***p<0.01							

Note: All specifications include adjustments for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 4. Logistic regression estimate of disease prevalence and access to health care among children based on information given by caregiver

Types of Respondents	Health condition Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Child having any major health issue Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether child suffer from disease Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Children suffered from diarrhea the last one year Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Taken to a doctor Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Taken to private hospital Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Vaccination Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>							
Migrant	1.049 (0.34-3.21)	1.113 (0.71-1.74)	0.968 (0.25-3.69)	0.953 (0.46-1.99)	1.172 (0.82-1.67)	2.651** (1.47-4.78)	0.466 (0.14-1.60)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>							
Internal Migrant	2.494 (0.78-7.93)	0.594** (0.39-0.90)	1.097 (0.29-4.16)	1.104 (0.56-2.19)	0.405** (0.29-0.57)	0.544** (0.35-0.84)	0.3900* (0.15-1.03)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	1.225 (0.50-2.99)	0.939 (0.66-1.33)	1.011 (0.35-2.88)	0.711 (0.41-1.23)	1.103 (0.83-1.47)	1.103 (0.76-1.60)	0.459 (0.20-1.07)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01							

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 5. Logistic regression estimate of health and hygiene practice among children based on information given by caregiver

Types of Respondents	Source of collecting drinking water at home Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Platform construction of water collection place Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Type of sanitation at home Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether used soap for hand washing at home Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>				
Migrant	0.985 (0.41-2.34)	1.256 (0.73-2.17)	1.013 (0.65-1.57)	1.471 (0.81-2.68)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>				
Internal Migrant	0.532 (0.23-1.25)	1.033 (0.61-1.75)	0.494** (0.32-0.76)	0.969 (0.52-1.79)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	0.920 (0.46-1.85)	1.600* (1.01-2.54)	1.273 (0.89-1.82)	1.219 (0.73-2.04)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01				

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 6. Logistic regression estimate of disease prevalence and access to health care among children

Respondent Type	Fever Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Diarrhea Odds Ratio (95% CI)	No treatment Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Brought Medicine Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Went to Hospital Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Vaccination Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>						
Migrant	1.939** (1.20-3.13)	1.599 (0.70-3.64)	1.267 (0.61-2.65)	0.893 (0.64-1.24)	1.080 (0.71-1.64)	1.141 (0.53-2.48)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>						
Internal Migrant	2.000** (1.17-3.41)	0.461* (0.23-0.93)	0.998 (0.55-1.81)	1.283 (0.95-1.73)	1.072 (0.74-1.56)	0.532 (0.24-1.16)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>						
Female	0.495** (0.32-0.77)	0.769 (0.43-1.38)	0.866 (0.50-1.49)	1.105 (0.85-1.43)	0.930 (0.67-1.29)	0.331** (0.16-0.69)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01						

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence



Table 7. Logistic regression estimate of sexual and reproductive health knowledge among children

Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge	Migrant Status (Model 1)		Migration Type (Model 2)		Gender (Model 3)	
	Migrant Vs Non-Migrant (Ref)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Internal Migrant vs International Migrant (Ref)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Female vs Male (Ref)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Knowledge about sexual education	1.522 (0.96-2.42)		1.750** (1.11-2.74)		1.565* (1.06-2.30)	
What to do during period	0.936 (0.49-1.77)		1.218 (0.69-2.16)		14.307** (40.99-18.76)	
Care of the body	1.433 (0.90-2.27)		2.594** (1.66-4.04)		1.901** (1.31-2.77)	
Ejaculation	1.101 (0.60-2.01)		1.026 (0.56-1.89)		0.050** (0.02-0.10)	
Wet dreams	0.945 (0.52-1.72)		1.270 (0.68-2.36)		0.041** (0.02-0.09)	
Excess bleeding during period	0.850 (0.43-1.68)		0.729 (0.38-1.41)		30.724** (9.17-102.91)	
leucorrhoea	0.839 (0.41-1.71)		1.331 (0.67-2.66)		20.351** (6.81-60.81)	
Dangers for pregnant mothers	1.119 (0.40-3.13)		0.338* (0.13-0.90)		2.976* (1.16-7.65)	
Sexual Transmission of diseases	1.053 (0.56-1.98)		1.952* (1.02-3.72)		0.749 (0.44-1.27)	
Uterus tumor/cancer	1.809 (0.59-5.54)		0.485 (0.19-1.22)		3.823** (1.45-10.10)	
Care during pregnancy	0.857 (0.28-2.59)		1.134 (0.35-3.70)		11.88** (2.38-59.18)	
Young pregnancy	0.682 (0.26-1.81)		0.629 (0.21-1.87)		12.310** (2.72-55.74)	
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01						

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

**Table 8. Logistic regression estimate of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) knowledge among children**

Respondent Type	SRH knowledge (Low=1, High=0)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>		
Migrant		0.863 (0.54-1.37)
Non-Migrant		[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>		
Internal Migrant		0.611* (0.39-0.95)
International Migrant		[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>		
Female		0.529** (0.36-0.78)
Male		[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01		

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

**Table 9. Logistic regression estimate of access to school education of children**

Types of Respondents	Whether currently going to school (Yes=1, No=0) Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether can go to school 5/6 days in the week (Yes=1, No=0) Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>		
Migrant	1.236 (0.59-2.61)	0.950 (0.43-2.12)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>		
Internal Migrant	0.931 (0.42-2.06)	1.560 (0.74-3.29)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	0.926 (0.49-1.74)	0.689 (0.36-1.29)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01		

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 10. Logistic regression estimate of access to school education of children based on information given by caregiver<sup>1</sup>

Types of Respondents	Whether currently going to school (Yes=1, No=0) Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether child started going to school in less than five years old (Yes=1, No=0) Odds Ratio (95% CI)	any difficulty to get admitted at school in absence of his/her parents (Yes=1, No=0)Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>			
Migrant	1.081 (0.48-2.42)	1.208 (0.85-1.72)	
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>			
Internal Migrant	0.473 (0.21-1.06)	0.990 (0.72-1.36)	0.739 (0.38-1.44)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	2.399** (1.20-4.80)	1.055 (0.80-1.39)	0.751 (0.39-1.43)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01			

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 11 Way of spending the cash money received from scholarship

Way of spending the cash money received from scholarship	Migration Type			Gender	
	Internal	International	Total	Female	Male
Household items	65.4	93.3	31	74.4	76.5
Food	11.5	0	3	7	11.8
Story books	3.8	0	1	7	0
Textbooks	26.9	6.7	8	23.3	11.8
Cosmetics	11.5	0	3	11.6	5.9
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>17</b>

Table 12 Taking tuitions outside school and amount needs to be spent for private tuitions

Children taking tuitions outside school	Migration Status			Migration Type			Gender	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Internal	International	Total	Female	Male
Yes	73.1	78	74.1	75.1	71	73.1	73.4	74.6
No	26.9	22	25.9	24.9	29	26.9	26.6	25.4
Total (N)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Amount needs to be spent to avail private tuitions								
200-300 BDT	29.3	28.6	29.1	34.2	24	29.3	30.4	28
400-500 BDT	36.3	36.8	36.3	38.7	38.5	38.6	34.7	37.7
600-700 BDT	7.9	10.2	8.4	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.4	9.4
800-900 BDT	6.1	6.8	6.2	5.1	7.1	6.1	6.3	6.2
More than 1000 BDT	20.4	17.7	19.8	14	22.5	18.1	21.3	18.6
Total (N)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 13. Logistic regression estimate of having grade (highest and lowest) and scholarship of children (Yes=1, No=0)

Respondent Type	Whether obtained highest Grade (A+) Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether received Lowest Grade (F) Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether was awarded any Scholarship Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether received government scholarship for the reason of father/mother working abroad Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Whether taking tuition outside school Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>					
Migrant	0.940 (0.65-1.36)	1.971 (0.68-5.75)	0.804 (0.51-1.26)	2.057 (0.25-17.24)	0.795 (0.54-1.18)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>					
Internal Migrant	0.778 (0.55-1.11)	0.503 (0.22-1.13)	1.312 (0.83-2.07)	0.259 (0.04-1.64)	1.125 (0.80-1.59)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	1.105 (0.81-1.50)	1.629 (0.78-3.39)	2.019** (1.37-2.98)	0.409 (0.08-2.09)	0.885 (0.65-1.20)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]

\*Significant at p&lt;0.05, p&lt;0.01

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 14. Extracurricular activities of children (%)

Other extracurricular activities	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Internal Migration	International Migration	Total
Drawing	45.5	46.9	414	46.6	44.4	330
Dancing/singing	12.8	14.5	119	15.3	10.1	93
Acting	1	0.6	8	1.1	0.9	7
Recitation	5.5	9.5	57	5.8	5.2	40
Scout/ girls guide	1.8	2.2	17	2.6	0.9	13
Voluntary work	2.5	2.8	23	3.4	1.4	18
Sports	78.3	83.2	717	79.9	76.7	568
Arabic studies	40.4	34.1	354	34.4	47	293
<b>Total</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>725</b>



Table 15. Annex Table 9. Logistic regression estimates of psycho-social/mental health status of children

Mental Health Status (Yes = 1 No = 0)	Migration Status (Model 1)		Migration Type (Model 2)		Gender (Model 3)
	Migrants Non-Migrant (Ref)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Internal Migrant (1) vs International Migrant (Ref)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	
Mental Breakdown	0.562*	(0.33-0.95)	0.289**	(0.17-0.49)	1.825** (1.21-2.74)
Loneliness	0.677	(0.44-1.04)	0.298**	(0.20-0.45)	0.960 (0.69-1.32)
Temperament	1.540*	(1.06-2.24)	1.156	(0.78-1.70)	0.954 (0.69-1.31)
Addiction to harmful substances	0.087**	(0.03-0.28)	0.337**	(0.21-0.53)	0.508** (0.34-0.76)
Attacking/Violent	0.425**	(0.27-0.68)	0.885	(0.62-1.26)	0.803 (0.58-1.11)
Lack of interest in participatory activities	0.543**	(0.37-0.80)	1.258	(0.90-1.76)	0.894 (0.67-1.20)
Faces difficulties in mingling with contemporaries	0.189**	(0.10-0.34)	0.648*	(0.45-0.94)	0.718* (0.52-1.00)
Reserved nature	0.562**	(0.38-0.83)	1.580**	(1.14-2.20)	0.875 (0.66-1.17)
Inattentive	0.656*	(0.45-0.95)	1.015	(0.73-1.42)	1.390* (1.04-1.86)
Not obeying anyone	0.514**	(0.32-0.82)	2.070**	(1.40-3.07)	1.112 (0.79-1.56)
Addiction to food from outside	0.617**	(0.41-0.92)	0.774	(0.55-1.09)	1.075 (0.80-1.45)
Excessive sleep	1.427	(0.88-2.32)	0.830	(0.50-1.37)	1.285 (0.84-1.96)
Sleeplessness	4.613*	(1.14-18.75)	2.667	(0.77-9.27)	1.521 (0.55-4.19)
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01					

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 16. Psychological incidents which affected the children most (%).

Incidents which psychologically affected the children most	Migration Status			Migration Type			Gender	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Internal	International	Total	Female	Male
When mother/father beats	59.1	56.5	71	65.8	55.6	58	70.8	44.6
When teacher beats	20.4	52.2	32	20	20.6	20	15.4	39.3
Punishment in schools	25.5	13	28	20	28.6	25	16.9	30.4
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>56</b>

Table 17. Family members talking about children's marriage

Family members talking about child's marriage	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Yes	10.1	8.9	9.8
No	89.9	91.1	90.2
Total (N)	100	100	100
If any marriage proposal has arrived			
No proposals	63.8	74.6	65.6
Arrived once or twice	19.8	10.1	19.3
Arrived 3-4 times	9.5	15.3	10.8
Arrived more than 5 times	6.9	0	4.3
Total (N)	100	100	100
Number of adolescent girls married of before the age of 18			
1-2 persons	23.8	22.9	23.2
3-4 persons	16.6	16.7	16.3
5-6 persons	3.6	6.2	4.8
Don't know	56	54.2	55.7
Total (N)	100	100	100

Table 18. Logistic regression estimate of child safety (Yes=1, No=0) based on information given by caregiver<sup>1</sup>

Respondent Type	Parents create any pressure on the girl child for marriage Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Talking about marriage Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Got married before 16 Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Provide dowry with the girl Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Any kind of pressure for the marriage Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>					
Migrant	1.174 (0.55-2.50) [Ref]	2.077 (0.93-4.63) [Ref]	0.891 (0.39-2.05) [Ref]	0.557 (0.23-1.34) [Ref]	1.156 (0.38-3.52) [Ref]
Non-Migrant					
<b>Migration Type</b>					
Internal Migrant	0.652 (0.37-1.16) [Ref]	0.765 (0.42-1.40) [Ref]	0.629 (0.30-1.34) [Ref]	0.649 (0.26-1.60) [Ref]	0.852 (0.34-2.14) [Ref]
International Migrant					
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	4.409** (2.04-9.52) [Ref]	41.289** (5.65-301.55) [Ref]	2.200* (1.01-4.79) [Ref]	2.107 (0.87-5.11) [Ref]	1.036 (0.43-2.47) [Ref]
Male					
*Significant at p<0.05, <0.01					

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 19. Logistic regression estimate of economic activities of children (Yes=1, No=0)

Types of respondents	Child's involvement in household work	Children helping parents when they stayed with them	Access to any pocket money	Children involved in any labour outside
	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>				
Migrant	1.019 (0.69-1.50)	0.063** (0.03-0.12)	0.930 (0.66-1.31)	***
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>				
Internal Migrant	1.134 (0.79-1.62)	1.059 (0.76-1.47)	0.723* (0.53-0.99)	1.664 (0.41-6.80)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	1.539** (1.13-2.10)	1.471** (1.11-1.95)	1.041 (0.79-1.36)	1.185 (0.35-4.07)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01				

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 20. Logistic regression estimates of wealth status of children

Variables	Wealth Status (Poor=1, Rich=0); Odds Ratio (95% CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>	
Migrant	0.312** (0.22-0.44)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>	
Internal Migrant	1.397* (1.04-1.88)
International Migrant	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	0.836 (0.65-1.08)
Male	[Ref]
*Significant at p<0.05, p<0.01	

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence

Table 21. Logistic regression estimate of economic condition of children (based on information given by caregiver)

Variables	Whether the economic status of the household is poor	Ultra poor	Overall condition of the house
	Odds Ratio (CI)	Odds Ratio (CI)	Odds Ratio (CI)
<b>Migrant Status</b>			
Migrant	0.891 (0.63-1.27)	0.702 (0.36-1.37)	1.643** (1.10-2.45)
Non-Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Migration Type</b>			
Internal Migrant	2.011** (1.44-2.81)	2.782** (1.27-6.11)	0.563** (0.40-0.78)
International Migrant	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	0.713** (0.54-0.95)	0.803 (0.45-1.42)	1.044 (0.78-1.39)
Male	[Ref]	[Ref]	[Ref]

\*Significant at p&lt;0.05, p&lt;0.01

Note: All models are adjusted for age, education, ethnicity, religion, gender, place of residence







