THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY
IN
MIGRATION DECISION-MAKING
IN
BANGLADESH

By
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DECLARATION

Except where otherwise indicated
this thesis is my own work.

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Finally, I am indebted to my husband for his help in typing and proof-reading. His enduring my negligence and his compassion can never be repaid.
This study is concerned with the role of the family in the migration decision-making process. Since the family is the basic social unit in Bangladesh, it is likely that the migration of a family member would be decided by the family. A micro-level exploratory analysis was undertaken with the aim of formulating research hypotheses about the process of migration decision-making within the family in Bangladesh.

The research hypotheses formulated are:

(1) the decision-making process is an interaction of opinions between the migrant and family members. In most cases, the principal decision-makers are migrants themselves. Nevertheless, their decisions are influenced by the family in many different ways and actual movement occurs only after discussions with the family, particularly the parental family;

(2) reasons for migration comprise family factors and the socio-political situation of the country. The former refer to the family economic situation, the aspiration for higher education, a better job and thereby an increase of family prestige, and to maintain family integrity. The latter include economic depression or natural disasters like flood and famine which impinge on a family and act as indirect stimuli for migration. To migrate is less likely at a later stage of life when the cost and liabilities of life are greater than at an earlier stage;

(3) among migrants, both internal and international, important determinants for migration are the opportunity to earn more money and contact with known persons. Common practice among migrants is to stay with relatives at the place of destination.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The setting of the study

The purpose of this exploratory study is to elucidate the role of the family in decision-making about migration from a small town, Munshiganj, in Bangladesh (Figure 1-1) in order to develop research hypotheses, which will guide research into the migration decision-making process.

The family is the basic social unit in Bangladesh. It is also a fundamental decision-making unit, engaged in maximizing family welfare in every possible way. So, it is expected that an individual's intention to migrate would be a family concern. The family then would attempt to evaluate the prospects of the proposed migration in terms of the benefit accruing to it; and the decision to migrate, likely taking place for family well-being, is apt to influenced by family members.

The study of migration decision-making is a relatively recent field of inquiry and most such studies are concerned with a particular individual, mainly the head of the family. Study of migration based on individual evaluations cannot be more than a partial analysis. Consideration of the family of which the individual is a member should provide a more complete basis for analysis of the migration decision-making process. In a recent review on "Advances in Migration Theory", Stark (1985:1) argues that:

... the familial decision-making process leading to migration is probably one of the (if not the) most promising terrain(s) for exploration. Placing the family, rather than the individual, at the center of the migration decision (this need not imply/result in migration by the family) is a relatively new direction. This must not be interpreted to suggest that the behaviour of individuals should be ignored but, rather, that it should be analyzed in the context of a decision unit that operates as a group. And the group, here the family, should not be treated as if it were an individual, a characteristic of much of traditional ... migration theory.
Figure 1-1: The study area
1.2 Aim and scope of the study

The aim of the study is to determine the role of the family in the process of migration: how the process operates within the family; to what extent the migrant's time of departure and destination are determined by the family; and if the economic status and socio-cultural setting of the family has an impact on migration decision-making.

Although the literature implies that the family is an important element in migration decision-making processes, no schedules have been suggested to assist in the practical examination of familial influence. This study adopts the following framework of questions within which the role to the family in the migration decision-making process is explored:

(1) **HOW** the decision to migrate is made, which includes **WHO** really influences the decision;

(2) **WHY** a decision to migrate is made, which includes **WHEN** in the life cycle of the individual and the family, migration is contemplated; and

(3) **WHERE** migrants go, which includes places in both the general and particular sense.

1.3 Significance of the study

The role of the family in the process of migration has become a matter of recent focus, despite the knowledge that the family is the structural and functional context within which motivations and values are shaped, information is received and interpreted, and decisions are implemented (Harbison 1981:226). Migration studies in India (Kothari 1980; Das Gupta 1984) clearly reveal the importance of the family in migration decisions which should be a great concern for policy formulation. In Bangladesh, the study of the process of migration decision-making from the perspective of family is necessary in order to better understand the forces which result in relocations; relocations which have implications for the development strategies of Government since the success of these plans depend to a great extent on the spatial distribution of the population. Should Government wish to influence the relocation of the population (most Governments express a degree of dissatisfaction with the distribution of national populations for developmental purposes) account must be taken of family concerns which result in migration. The Government of Bangladesh has urged "the decentralization and devolution of socio-economic development activities throughout the country" (Bangladesh 1980:XIX-3); in this process, a redistribution of the population is to be expected; indeed, one of the reasons for the decentralization of development is to mitigate the great influx of population to Dhaka city. Government policies to control migration to Dhaka
include agrarian reforms, family planning programmes, rural development schemes and the encouragement of industrial growth centers (UN/UNFPA n.d.: 6) The successful implementation of such programmes, it is thought, would decrease family pressure to migrate. To successfully implement these programmes requires knowledge of how migration interacts with the processes of socio-economic change; Government needs to know how the migration decision-making process works.

In Bangladesh, since liberation in 1971, different communities have experienced a variety of development. Modern agricultural equipment, irrigation, and improved communication and transport facilities have affected local communities in different ways. The process of change is to be accelerated under the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90), which places priority on the modernization of agricultural activities, on technological improvements for traditional cottage industries and on a rural electrification programme to meet the commercial demand for energy (Bangladesh 1985:15-19). These and other proposed measures will change the employment structure in rural and urban areas, will likely lead to substitution of labour in agriculture and other rural activities and ultimately result in a decline of employment opportunities in rural areas. Out-migration from rural communities can be expected to increase. Policy makers need to undertake studies of the specific circumstances which lead people to decide to move, including the impact of this migration both on the family and on the community.

1.4 Selection of study area

The study area is a small town, Munshiganj, of some 38,000 people (Bangladesh 1982:54), located 25 kilometers southeast of Dhaka city. Reasons for selecting this place were that I had made a previous study in Munshiganj town (Nisa 1983) which provided me with useful background knowledge and ready access to informants; and that Munshiganj town is located within commuting distance of Dhaka city making it possible to investigate the forces which result in the decision to migrate rather than to commute.

The shortcomings of investigating migration decision-making processes with destination based data have been highlighted by Oberai (1975:10):

... it is difficult to trace out household characteristics of the migrant at the rural end ... [and to] identify the socio-economic structure in which the decision to migrate is made.

The importance of studying migration from the perspective of its origins has been mentioned in literature (Caldwell 1969:15; Conning 1972:148; Kothari 1980:9). Advantages of origin based studies are that variations in migration decision-making
in relation to different kinds of migration (internal, international, return migration and commuting) can be obtained; and that the consequences of migration on the family, in a particular place, can only be obtained by such study. For these reasons the approach in the present study has been to focus on the factors underlying the migration decision-making process within families in the area of origin, Munshiganj town. However, migrants in the area of destination, particularly Dhaka city, are considered in order to provide a basis for comparison of opinions regarding the decision-making process between the family and the migrant.

1.5 Operational definitions

Definitions in migration research have varied with the objective of particular studies; in fact migration researchers do not possess "a coherent system of operational definitions" (Elizaga 1972:122). In this study definitions were adopted which differ from those in traditional censuses and surveys in order to facilitate the analysis of the family as a decision-making unit:

1. Household: a group of persons, related or not, living in common residence with common eating arrangements.

2. Family: a group of persons related by blood, marriage or adoption without reference to common residence.

3. Migrant: a person who has moved from Munshiganj town between 1974 and 1984 for reasons other than education or marriage.

Students and marriage migrants are excluded in order to avoid the inclusion of instances of extreme family influence in the migration decision-making process. Students in Bangladesh are dependent on the family for financial support to continue study in Dhaka or elsewhere. Because of the social and religious system in Bangladesh, marriage migrants are females who follow their husbands. Also, the influence of the family in marriage is considerable, since marriage is negotiated by family members in most cases.

1.6 Sample size and sample population

A small scale, micro-level study of seventy families, including migrants in Munshiganj town and in Dhaka city, was undertaken to investigate the role of the family in the migration decision-making process. (The amount of time and money available for research being severely limited, it was not possible to conduct a survey which placed me far from family support.) Interviews were made mainly among households along the main road of the town (Figures 1-1, 1-2) which provided the opportunity to include family members resident elsewhere who had input to the decision-making process. Reason for selecting households instead of families is that there is no reliable information on the distribution of families in Munshiganj town.
Figure 1-2: Main road along the study area
It would have been both expensive and time consuming to collect such information; certainly, such a task was beyond my limited means. To select a statistical sample of families on which to base a statistically valid analysis of the familial role in migration decision was not possible. So, the survey was made purposively among households along the main road to provide a qualitative understanding of the migration decision-making process within families along the spectrum of educational, occupational and income groups, most efficiently (Figure 1-3 a and b). From my previous work (Nisa 1983) it was evident that households along the main road included representatives of households from the range of socio-economic status in Munshiganj. My research showed that high and medium socio-economic status groups lived nearest the river Dhaleswari, where the road starts, and low status groups were to be found at the end of the road. Indeed, had I selected my “sample” differently, the highest socio-economic status families, which live along the main road, might easily have been missed. In part, these circumstances determined that this research was to be exploratory, to provide certain fundamental information on the migration decision-making process; the “sample” is not statistically representative and no attempt will be made to infer population characteristics in a statistical sense from the survey figures.

A family may include international and internal migrants as well as regular commuters (Table 1-1). International migrants who had returned to visit their family at the time of survey were interviewed. Families which had no migrants within the decade 1974 to 1984 were interviewed to ascertain whether and if so, how decisions not to migrate had been made.

The survey was undertaken in January and February 1985. Families in Munshiganj town were interviewed during afternoons when all members were likely to be at home. Interviews with migrants in Dhaka city were conducted on holidays when they were likely to be at home. This proved an appropriate strategy.

All interviews were tape recorded. This is a rather expensive (in the Bangladesh context) and time consuming method. Moreover, problems with electrical power made the use of tape rather awkward. However, tapes permit all information to be gathered; information which might prove to be significant only during analysis. The use of tapes allowed respondents to talk as much as they wanted to about their decision-making process. Only rarely did I have to directly elicit certain features of the decision-making process needed for comparative purposes. (Guidelines to permit comparison are set out in Appendix.) Use of tapes was of great assistance in that interviews became easy, free conversations which yielded “real” information rather than rigid, formal interrogations which are apt to provide “rational” answers to articulated questions.
Figure 1-3a: Different housing types reflecting socio-economic status along the main road

Low socio-economic status families tend to occupy no-cost structures. In this case an old, no longer maintained tomb.

Lower middle socio-economic status family home. The scraps of wood on the roof are to be used in cooking fires.
Shop house residences commonly are occupied by middle socio-economic status families.

Higher socio-economic status families usually occupy rather unique structures, but all large. In this case part of the residence is leased to a semi-governmental agency.
Table 1-1: Types of migrants interviewed (based on discussions with families in Munshiganj Town)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Migrants</th>
<th>Relationship to Head of Family</th>
<th>Total Number of Migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head Himself</td>
<td>Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commuters</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Total migrants 53.

1.7 Analysis of data

The basic data for this study was in Bengali, that is the tape recorded conversations with families and migrants from those families. These discussions were translated into English and ordered so as to provide a general description of the prevailing situation as far as the decision-making process is concerned. Exact comments by respondents cited are considered fundamental and "typical" for a particular aspect of the decision-making process. Most quotations are clear in meaning, but because information on a particular topic is scattered throughout the cassettes, certain statements are arranged in the sense of being juxtaposed. Occasionally, words implied are provided in order to make the sense clear. Great care has been taken to retain the exact emphasis and tone of the responses, though it was difficult at times to convey a particular nuance in English.

The method of analysis adopted follows that of a micro-level study of fertility behaviour between two generations in Thailand (Knodel et al. 1983). That the data and the evaluation are qualitative does not mean that the analysis is subjective in the sense of being personally biased.

1.8 Limitations of the study

As with all research, there are certain shortcomings associated with this study:

(1) It was anticipated that interviews would be group discussions including most, if not all, family members. In most cases, however, family heads, mostly males, dominated the discussion (Table 1-2) which circumstance reflects the male dominated social system in Bangladesh. In some cases, the wife or other family members merely agreed with the head of the family. Where there were female heads, participation by other members of the family (even children) was common.

(2) An important shortcoming of this study is that it is based
Table 1-2: Participant family members at time of interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of families</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Excluding 20 migrants interviewed in Dhaka.

On retrospective information. The decision to migrate could have been taken any time between 1974 and 1984. Reason not for selecting years before 1974 is to mitigate recall error or rationalization as much as possible. To offset this shortcoming, respondents were encouraged to talk as much as they wished. In this regard, the tape recorder proved a necessity, not a luxury.

(3) The small size of the sample is a limitation which is "offset" to some extent by the in-depth information gathered.

(4) Much of the information collected in this study is qualitative and there are difficulties in managing such intelligence for the purpose of analysis.

Interviews required both the interest and co-operation of respondents. It proved difficult to explain the purpose of the study to respondents and to argue for the utility of such work, particularly to a little educated people. Occasionally, respondents were unwilling to answer certain questions regarding their opinions and attitudes to migration. However, the low non-response (two households) and the almost universal openness of respondents during interviews lead me to claim a veracity for the responses.
CHAPTER 2
FAMILY AND MIGRATION DECISION-MAKING IN THE LITERATURE

2.1 The family as a migration decision-making unit

2.1.1 The family in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh the *paribar* (family) is acknowledged to be the basic social unit (Zaidi 1970). Families are patrilineal and commonly male dominated; father or husband or elder brother is usually the head of the family (Jahangir 1978:81; Greenough 1982:215). The head is the prime decision-maker, which results in a mono-sexual decision process within families in Bangladesh (Adnan et al. 1977:80; Greenough 1982:220). The head is the person who gives the family status through his/her education, earnings and position in society; other members of the family are loyal to and depend on the head for family decisions (Zaidi 1970:41).

According to Zaidi (1970:41), the family in Bangladesh “provides emotional, social and financial security to its members”. At a time of economic crisis, such as unemployment or loss of job, the family is the source of support, both financial and psychological, for its members. Moreover, in the case of death, absence (due to migration or family dissolution), and illness of the head, dependants are usually looked after by other family members. The family provides economic security; people in Bangladesh do not have unemployment benefits, medical allowances, old age pensions or public welfare grants.

The family in Bangladesh is also a moral unit, not only for the training and education of pre-school aged children (Zaidi 1970:42) but because of religious norms to be observed by all members of the family (Greenough 1982:215). Parents or grandparents try to ensure that children and other family members observe religious rituals in everyday life.

The two generation family is a common feature in Bangladesh, and families of more than two generations frequently occur (Zaidi 1970:41). Elderly parents (in some cases, grandparents) traditionally co-reside with their children, mostly with sons. Indeed, it is a moral (religious) obligation for children to look after their parents, since parents, when young, devoted themselves to the welfare of their children. There is a reciprocal sharing of risks and obligations between parents and children within the family.
To maintain family integrity, marriage negotiations involve all members of both families and even family friends. This is done mainly to encourage smooth inter-family relationships as well as to maintain close inter-family ties (Bertocci 1970; Zaidi 1970:49). The marriage of cousins, common in some families, "indicates the strong familial attachment and the rigidity of the traditional practice" (Zaidi 1970:49). Marriage negotiation takes place also in order to avoid intergenerational conflict, mostly between female members of the family, and particularly between wives and mothers-in-law or the eldest brother's wife when he is head of the family. Marriage negotiations are also a means to ensure stable marital relations, through choice of a spouse from a similar family background. Even after marriage, sons may live together until the father's death (Jahangir 1979:82). Common reason for this is that sons share family liabilities with their father; for example, by providing money for the education and marriage of younger siblings as well as for the financial well-being of the family. After the father's death, most brothers disperse to individual family units with their wives and children. Separation of brothers after the father's death does not necessarily mean physical separation, however, as they may still reside in the previous family compound and, in any event, they usually maintain close contact. Members of these separate families together discuss family ceremonies (marriages, religious festivals) and crisis situations (death of any members, sickness, financial problems). Normally, the eldest brother takes on the role of the head of the extended family after the father's death.

Despite limited sociological and anthropological studies especially of the family in Bangladesh, it is evident that the maximization of family welfare is an important concern for all members of the family. The family is a decision-making unit in most aspects of life; likely, the decision to migrate in Bangladesh will be determined or at least, strongly influenced by the family. Bangladesh should provide a basis for the elucidation of the role of the family in migration decision-making.

2.1.2 Micro approaches in migration decision-making

Caldwell and his colleagues (Caldwell et al. 1984a:2) evaluate the usefulness of the micro approach as follows:

The survey has one enormous strength. It can cover huge areas and tens of thousands of people ... This yields the satisfaction that one is delineating a general phenomenon and not something that is unique or aberrant and confined to single locality. It can produce patterns and correlations, which, even at the worst, suggest where relationships might be sought. Yet the patterns of value, in the sense that they represent something that is real and not misleading, are probably largely confined to unambiguous data which are quantifiable by nature and where reported behaviour is not subject to different interpretations in different cultures.
Emphasizing the significance of the micro approach in migration studies, Hetler (1984:22) argues that it is a dynamic approach suitable to contexts of rapid social change. For the successful implementation of this approach, she suggests that more than one research method should be used and, before starting a survey, different exploratory work is needed to ascertain population characteristics, reasons for socio-economic change and also the rapidity of such change. Hugo (1984) points out that macro-level data constrain the capacity to probe decision-making processes and the contextual factors which affect family decision-making, whereas a micro approach can clarify the successive stages of decision-making (Hugo 1984:4). According to Hugo (1984:18), the complex nexus between movement and economic and social change of a particular place can be understood only through micro-data, not macro-data. Macro-data are partial in nature and it has been suggested that for long term development planning macro-data or census data "might prove more misleading than helpful" (Haberkorn 1984:2). There is a large measure of agreement among authors (Caldwell et al. 1984a and 1984b; Chen 1984, Premi 1984) that the aggregate level of information about population should be supplemented by micro-data for an understanding of the underlying process, especially the cause-effect relationship. Furthermore, in an academic context, a micro approach should be the best way of generating research hypotheses which can be complemented by macro-data for generalization to the whole population, in order to build a theory about a particular aspect of research.

A study by Das Gupta (1984) suggests that the conventional hypothesis of the low rate of rural-urban migration in India being the result, in the main, of few urban employment opportunities stemming for a highly mechanized capital intensive industrial system may, be erroneous. She demonstrates that some family level reasons - for example hereditary businesses and inheritance of property - and some community level variables are important in migration decision-making. These facts were disclosed by micro-level inquires. In India there is a long tradition of migration by a single adult family member, in which dependants are left with other family members in rural areas (Banerjee 1981). Das Gupta (1984) argues that the reason for such single migration is not because the families living in the villages are well-off and can support their family members (37 per cent to 55 per cent of rural families are either landless or marginal land holders) but because there is the opportunity to obtain free community resources and other sources of income in villages, including projects launched by Government. Moreover, single migration by adult members of wealthier joint families is made possible because other family members maintain possession of land and property in the rural area. Micro-level investigation has revealed these facts of the migration process.
Premi (1984) advocates the micro approach for migration studies from the decision-making perspective; which, he argues, is a complex process which requires detailed investigation to answer such questions as: who decides the migration; if there is family migration, how do members reach consensus about that migration; what type of contact is retained by migrants with their families in the place of origin; and what are the consequences of such migration. Premi (1984) stresses also that only micro-level investigation can produce accurate data on the spatio-temporal variations of migration decision-making and thereby provide the basis for the development of hypotheses for migration decision-making which can then be developed by subsequent micro and macro investigations.

Regarding population mobility behaviour, Hagerstrand (1970:8) postulated that "nothing truly general can be said about aggregate regularities until it has been made clear how far they remain invariant with organizational differences at the micro-level". This is mainly because no two situations in society are identical (Owen 1962:4). Although Hagerstrand's paper was published one and half decades ago, it is only recently that micro-level studies of migration behaviour have been undertaken.

DeJong and Gardener (1981) have reviewed and evaluated the existing literature on migration and advocated a micro approach in migration decision-making studies from different disciplinary perspectives. They used the concept of decision-making in its most general form to refer to the formation of an intention or disposition that results in migration behaviour (DeJong and Gardner 1981:2). From a methodological point of view, this behaviour can be studied in both micro and macro dimensions: macro studies describe broad patterns of movement for geographical areas and population aggregates; micro studies focus on the individual and/or the family as the unit of analysis in describing and explaining migration behaviour. A similar approach has been suggested by Cadwallader (1985:101) who differentiates the micro from the macro approaches in that the endeavour in the micro approach is to evaluate migration as far as the decision-making process is concerned, whereas the macro approach focuses on regional variations. It has been suggested that micro-level studies of migration could be undertaken through the evaluation of motivations, using the value-expectancy model (DeJong and Fawcett 1981). DeJong et al. (1983:476) believe that:

... the value-expectancy approach provides a viable basis for determining the cost-benefit calculations of the economic and noneconomic goals (values) and the subjective probabilities (expectancies) that underlie the decision to move ...

However, studies using the value-expectancy model (Chemers et al. 1978; Sell
and DeJong 1978; DeJong et al. 1983) note that it is based on individual migration
decision-making processes. The influence of the family on the individual must not be
ignored in the value-expectancy model if the aim is to obtain an understanding of
the decision-making process (Chemers et al. 1978:51).

Sell and DeJong (1978) present a scheme for the development of migration
theory from the motivational viewpoint. This approach sees the migration decision-
making process as the result of composite interactions of four variables: (1)
availability, (2) motive, (3) expectation and (4) incentive.

The concept of availability represents whether or not the change in
behaviour under analysis is cognitively and/or physically possible. Motive
refers to the personal and/or situational strength of the goal toward which
the decision process is directed. Expectancy refers to the decision maker's
subjective evaluation of the likelihood of goal attainment. Incentives
represent an array of goal-associated factors which variously encourage or
discourage the change in behaviour under consideration (Sell and DeJong

The problem associated with using this model for family migration decision-
making is that it is developed in the context of individual decision-making, though
Sell and DeJong (1978:329-330) indicate that there is a possibility that this model
might be altered to "fit" a family perspective.

Harbison (1981:227-231) presents a detailed scheme for using motivational
variables as intermediate variables to elucidate the family migration decision-making
process. She attempts to relate family structure and migration decision-making by
considering several aspects of the family, including its demographic and social
structure, its social networks and its different functions which logically play a
substantial role in migration decision-making. Harbison (1981) believes that the
family is too important to be counted merely another variable in the decision-
making process. For her, the family is the context in which the decision to migrate
is taken by and for individuals (Harbison 1981:229). She argues, therefore, that
studies based on individual decision-making possess a low degree of precision about
the whole process and micro-level studies in migration decision-making in the family
context could provide important insights into the migration process.

From the above discussion it is clear that a family perspective is fundamental
to an elucidation of the process of migration decision-making in Bangladesh, and
that such inquiry must be carried out at micro-level. The review of migration
literature in Bangladesh that follows shows that, as yet, not even one study has
been undertaken from the family perspective with a micro approach.
2.2 Migration and the family in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries of the world with an average of more than 600 persons per square kilometer. About 90 per cent of the population lives in villages, though urban areas, especially the big cities, have experienced rapid increases in population. The growth rate of the urban population in 1974 was about 9 per cent while the national population growth rate was 2.7 per cent; in 1981, the urban population growth had increased to about 11 per cent, whereas the national population growth rate had decreased to 2.4 per cent (Bangladesh 1981:2). Enormous increases in the population of certain Bangladesh cities occurred between 1974 and 1981. The intercensal (that is, 1974 to 1984) increase of urban population was about 15.2 per cent (Bangladesh 1984:36). In the Dhaka Statistical Metropolitan Area, this increase was about 105.9 per cent (Bangladesh 1982:54, Table 2.22); obviously, much of this increase reflected heavy net in-migration.

Despite the significance of population movement within the country, little attention has been given to the study of family level decision-making for migration. Most studies of migration are based on census data (Obaidulah 1967; Stockel et al. 1972; Haq 1974). The limitations of such data have been discussed thoroughly in the literature (see, for example, Taeuber 1971a and 1971b; Findley 1982; Goldstein and Goldstien 1981). Census data in Bangladesh do not provide information about the decision-making process; in fact, no direct questions on migration were asked in the 1974 and 1981 censuses.

Studies based on vital registration data provided by the International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research Bangladesh (Chaudhury and Curlin 1975) do not offer information about the motivations for, or the decision-making process involved in, migration. Migration studies in Bangladesh which are not based on census or vital registration data have aims other than analysing the decision-making process: Nisa (1983) analyses the demographic and socio-economic characteristics, as well as spatial and temporal processes, of migration from a small town to Dhaka city. Begum (1979) discusses the migration of rural women to Dhaka city; Islam et al. (1976 and 1977) describe the characteristics of migrant squatters and slum dwellers in Dhaka city; and two studies by the Center for Urban Studies (CUS) in 1981 and 1982 investigate the characteristics of migrants in Khulna and Dhaka city, respectively; Chaudhury (1978) attempts to describe the determinants of migration of rural people but ignores the influence of the family; and Ahsan (1979) attempts to account for intra-urban residential mobility in Dhaka city by associating mobility with life-cycle stages and other variables including economic condition, education,
westernization and satisfaction with the place of residence - the family receives no mention. Yet the family must be taken into consideration if some understanding is to be had of the constellation of forces operating in the migration process. The determinants of migration must include, for example, the demographic structure of the family, its economic condition and the presence of family members at the place of destination. Study of these and other family related factors within spatial and temporal dimensions is necessary to an understanding of the process of migration decision-making in Bangladesh.

2.3 Migration as a decision-making process

2.3.1 Introduction

Migration as a decision-making process has attracted considerable attention by researchers from different disciplinary contexts. Social-psychological and motivational aspects of migration have been developed by sociologists and psychologists, a human capital approach to migration is developed by economists and the place utility concept of migration is used by geographers and sociologists. Deriving from different disciplinary perspectives, different hypotheses and theories have been developed (see, for example, Lee 1966; Todaro 1969; Zelinsky 1971; Graves and Graves 1974; Ritchey 1976; Cases et al. 1985). According to Gwan (1976:1-2), the "discipline by discipline approach has yielded only a partial picture of this multidimensional phenomenon", which needs to be analysed in terms of the interaction of a number of variables, including family level variables.

Although most "disciplinary" studies are concerned with individuals, these can be considered indirectly relevant for analysis of the role of the family in the migration decision-making process since taking a decision and acting on it involves interaction between the individual and the family. However, studies of family decision-making in migration are rare, despite that the family is considered "the basic demographic institution" (Taeuber 1971a:317) as well as the key decision-making unit in demographic behaviour, and that the demography of the family has attracted considerable interest from researchers in different disciplines (Burch 1979:174). Taeuber (1971a:317) comments that:

The relations of family, migration, and mobility are pervasive, but intensive analysis is episodic. The difficulties that underlie neglect are simple but formidable. All aspects of family structure and functioning - historic, contemporary, and projected - are influenced by, and in turn influence, the distribution, structure, and dynamics of population.

A plethora of studies of migration have attempted to analyse the migration
decision-making process, and the authors of these studies often provide plausible explanations of their findings, yet these do not disclose adequate information about the ways the family interacts concerning an individual’s decision to migrate. If consideration of the family is necessary to an explanation of the decision-making process in migration, it is perhaps the lack of knowledge about the role of the family in migration which has prevented researchers from making acceptable generalizations about the process, either in developed or in developing countries.

2.3.2 Migration and the family in developed countries

In developed countries, studies of the migration process within the framework of decision-making has long focused on residential mobility (see, for example, Rossi 1955, Davies and Pickles 1985, Smith and Ford 1985). Such study of migration decision-making was introduced with the seminal work of Rossi (1955) which attempted to analyse the motivations underlying intra-urban residential change. This work brought a new research dimension to the study of mobility, using individual household level surveys to ascertain the nature of the decision-making process, and though published more than thirty years ago it still has considerable value. According to Rossi (1955), large families are more mobile than smaller families due to the need for space; older families are less mobile than younger families, which reflects ownership of a home by older families; and the surroundings of the family, which is termed the neighbourhood, are also important influences on mobility. So, families moved in order to achieve more dwelling space as well as better surroundings. More recently Rossi and Shlay (1982:23-24) point out that family movement usually results from housing needs which reflect changed family composition as it progresses through life-cycle stages, through individual family characteristics are also important.

Rossi’s (1955) pioneering work generated a new behavioural approach in geography (Wolpert 1965, 1966) which, in turn, provided the basis for the development of a conceptual model for the study of residential mobility from a decision-making perspective (Brown and Moore 1970). In different spatio-temporal contexts people have different perceived knowledge about different locations. Decision-making for migration - the complex psychological factors operating in an individual’s decision-making - may be simplified by the place utility concept introduced by Wolpert (1965). In a series of papers, Wolpert (1965, 1966) developed the utility concept in the geographical context in order to ascertain the human behavioural factors which influence the decision to migrate. According to Wolpert (1965:162):
Place utility, ... refers to the net composite of utilities which are derived from the individual's integration at some position in space ... Thus, place utility may be expressed as a positive or negative quantity, expressing relatively the individual's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with respect to that place.

The propensity to migrate to an alternative destination, then, is likely to be high where the expected utility is also high. This alternative destination is selected by the individual in terms of the costs and benefits involved. If the perceived utility of the alternative destination significantly exceeds that of the present location, the decision to move takes place.

Wolpert (1966) viewed migration as a result of stress between changing needs of the household and the changing needs of the environment, both social and physical. He suggests that when an individual perceives the household location to be stressful - above the level of tolerance - then movement may occur; the decision to move may be an adjustment to stress.

Following Wolpert's (1966) stress-threshold model, Speare (1974) developed a residential satisfaction model wherein the individual decides to move or to stay depending on satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the present location. Satisfaction is measured by an index which includes housing and neighbourhood characteristics; individual attributes act indirectly through this index to affect mobility. According to Speare (1974), if dissatisfaction rises above the minimum threshold level then the desire to move may arise. Ultimately, movement is likely to occur after evaluation of the costs and benefits attached to the present place of residence and alternative locations.

According to Smith and Ford (1985) dwelling need is important stimulating factor which results in the decision to move. A residentially dissatisfied family seeks an alternative location in a better neighbourhood which promises to provide such amenities as security, a more attractive physical location, the presence of friendly families, and accessibility to other facilities.

Most residential mobility studies focus on the household; that is, nuclear family households. Although discussion apparently assumes the whole family is involved, most studies (see, for example, Speare 1974; Smith and Ford 1985) depend on interviews with the head of the household or the spouse of the head or another adult member to assess the decision to change residence. What is elicited from these informants are the factors influencing the decision to move; the process of decision-making is not determined. The shortcoming of these studies, in the developed country context, is that since much of the research has been based on residential mobility the decision-making process within the family or in any other context is
limited (Lewis 1982:150). Rossi’s (1980) comment cited by Davies and Pickles (1985:199), that “little has established about the precise mechanisms which are involved”, is self-indicating with regard to such studies.

It has been suggested that human mobility is influenced by the modernization of a society (Zelinisky 1971:246): that is mobility is increased for “pleasure or self-improvement” as modernization proceeds. In the U.S.A., characterized as a society experiencing “affluence and freedom of attitude and action” (Zelinsky 1974:144) migration may be the result of,

... increasingly free exercise of individual preferences as to values, pleasures, self-improvement, social and physical habitat and general life-style in an individualistic, affluent national community ...

All these characteristics,

... may have begun to alter the spatial attributes of society and culture in the United States to a significant extent (Zelinsky 1974:144).

Such individualistic attitudes must reduce family influence in the migration decision-making process.

Still, studies of family considerations in migration decision-making in the context of a developed country, have been undertaken by DaVanzo (1976) and Mincer (1978). Considering U.S.A. families, DaVanzo (1976) reveals the importance of economic gain as well as non-economic factors in migration decisions. Her study examines how factors such as unemployment, wife’s employment and job dissatisfaction affect migration decision-making. She concludes that migration usually occurs when the gain of both spouses is maximized by relocation. Mincer (1978) argues that migration by the family, that is movement by all members, usually takes place after an evaluation of “net gain rather than personal gain”; migration takes place only if the perceived gain by the family exceeds the perceived loss. The unit of study here is the nuclear family in which both husband and wife are earning members. According to Mincer (1978), when several destinations are open for the migrant family, the intention will be to achieve the most total gain through migration; that is, a move will be made to a particular destination where individual earners will not maximize earnings, if the total gain for the family is maximized. Mincer (1978) also argues that there is a risk of family breakdown if the optimal family location decision involves gain for one spouse which far exceeds the total gain through marriage. In cases of family dissolution, each partner usually moves to places of highest expected gain. Migration, then, is seen in the first instance as a component of family welfare maximization; individual migration is a consequence of
family dissolution. Such a "model" seems inappropriate, at this time, for migration in developing countries.

2.3.3 Migration and the family in developing countries

Although migration in developing countries, particularly rural-urban migration, has attracted considerable interest because of its developmental implications (see, for example, Yap 1975; Connell et al. 1976 and Lipton 1980), the process of migration decision-making is little explored. It has been suggested that in most developing countries decisions to migrate are made for the welfare of the family and are often made by the head of the family for the individual involved (Connell et al. 1976). In fact, discussions of migration in the developing countries provide little information about the extent to which decisions are individual or familial. Taeuber (1970:377-380), referring to 1930's data for Japan, indicates that the family was the pre-eminent migration decision-making unit. This is not to be wondered at since traditional Japanese household law prohibited a change of residence without the consent of the head of the household. This law merely codified a social mechanism which facilitated movement, minimized the problems associated with adjusting to a new environment and maintained community mores (Taeuber 1970:378). In a study of Pakistani migrants in the United Kingdom, Dahya (1973) found that the head of the family strongly influenced migrants' decisions to relocate. In fact, the family head was the sole decision-maker, who not only planned but also financed the migration of young male members of the family in order to fulfil familial socio-economic goals. Even when the migrant was in the United Kingdom, his activities were governed from Pakistan (Dahya 1973:252-254). Other studies of migration in a developing country context (for example, Hunter 1967 and Hill 1972 on West Africa; Epstain 1973 on South India) have not made serious attempts to ascertain the influence of the family on an individual's decision to migrate.

DeJong and Gardner (1981) argue that in migration decision-making, whatever the academic and country perspective, the family should be acknowledged as the basic unit of decision-making. Hugo (1981a), considering the Indonesian context, has pointed out that current models of migration are inadequate to explain differential migration behaviour, and he has advocated the study of community and family ties in migration decision-making. This view also is held by Chang (1981), who speculates that consideration only of the individual as the decision-maker in developing countries is misleading.

A relatively early instance of consideration of the family in reference to migration in a developing country context is found in Caldwell's (1969) study of
Ghana. He argues that rural-urban migration in Ghana is characterised by chain migration, in which system large families predominate because they have a relatively greater chance of having at least one member in town. The presence of a relative, or friend, in town is an important stimulus to migration. Ghanian families appear to encourage the migration of members to town, though the high living costs there mean that migrants usually leave their families in the village. Commonly, the migrant is followed by immediate dependants (wife and children), but migrants are likely to retain strong contacts with the family of origin through remittances and frequent visits. In small families, with few children, there is great pressure exerted by parents on, say, an only surviving son not to migrate; and, if migration has occurred, then pressure is exerted for him to return, pressure which mounts after the death of the male head of the household. Caldwell (1969) asserts that older children, both the eldest son and the eldest daughter, are less likely to migrate than others; and if older children do migrate, then family pressure is intensified for them to return home permanently after the death of the head of the family. Caldwell (1969) indicates that the common feature of Ghanian rural society is that the greatest pressure falls on the eldest sibling not to migrate but to remain to manage the farm in the rural area. In the same way, the greater propensity for long term absence among younger siblings, as compared with the eldest sibling may be because of a relatively low responsibility for the family as well as fewer occupational opportunities in the rural area. In any event, Caldwell’s (1969) discussion reveals the considerable influence of the family in migration decision-making in Ghana.

Doubtless, expected financial gain is an important concern for migration decision-making (see, for example, Todaro 1969) but this alone is inadequate to account for migration. Non-economic factors must also be taken into consideration. A migration decision model provided by Byerlee (1974) focused attention on non-economic factors (that is, psychic costs and returns); another of his models covers both economic and non-economic factors. The proposed framework goes beyond the conventional human capital basis to introduce elements of the social system as well as the psychological costs of migration (Byerlee 1974:556-7). Thus, the decision to migrate results from the complex nexus between monetary and non-monetary variables. This framework for the study of migration decision-making is important because it provides a basis from which to develop the study from a family perspective. In fact, additional variables (see, for example, the intermediate variables suggested by Harbison (1981) and community level variables referred to by Hugo (1981a)) need to be included to elucidate family decision-making in migration.

Hugo (1981a) suggests that community level variables, traditional village norms
and social networks have a substantial impact on the decision to migrate; in addition to the evaluation of economic costs and benefits. According to Hugo (1981b) most West Javanese felt obliged to their families. The tradition in Javanese society is for the family to stay together, regardless of the economic situation. The family, than, may mitigate migration. On the other hand, there is evidences in Indonesia of the encouragement of migration where relatives are present at the place of destination. In the chain migration system noted by Hugo (1981b), family members living in the potential place of destination not only provide information about different possible opportunities there, but also provide moral, social and even financial support, if necessary. The importance of the family in the migration decision-making process in Indonesia is obvious if not explicitly documented.

In India, according to Premi (1980), out-migrants from small towns are not usually heads of families but rather the sons (or younger brothers) of heads of families. In fact, the out-migrants are mainly eldest sons, who migrate as soon as they reach an employable age, which reflects the meagre economies of these small towns. In India, eldest sons feel obliged to share parental responsibilities in caring for the family and will not hesitate to migrate if this will assist the family. Premi (1980:108) also argues that another reason for migration may lay in the materialistic needs of parents which can be better met by allowing their sons to take advantage of better opportunities elsewhere. Most of these migrants were male. Female migrants from Indian small towns are mainly wives accompanying their husbands. Since marriage in India is negotiated and controlled by the family, the influence of the family in such migrations is obvious. Although Premi (1980) does not attempt to evaluate the influence of family in the decision to migrate, this influence is clearly implied throughout (Premi 1980:88-114); and the need to evaluate family influence in migration decision-making is urged for in a subsequent paper (Premi 1984:11-12): who the migrants are, why people move, who is the decision-maker and how the decision regarding migration is arrived at should assessed in the context of the family.

Kothari (1980) argues that the decision to migrate in India is primarily a parental decision. An individual’s desire to migrate is evaluated by the family in order to obtain maximum welfare for the family. According to Kothari (1980:338):

The family in rural India continues to retain most of the primary and secondary functions. It is the family that takes decisions about who should get education and who should look after the family farm. The family provides money for education and to start a new business. ... Sometimes parents force their children to take certain occupations.
So, an individual may desire to migrate, but "his plans may not materialize without the initiative and support ... of others" (Kothari 1980:340). Most migrants in India receive financial support from the family; which support varies according to the economic situation of the family (Kothari 1980:268). Wealthier families appear to encourage younger dependants to migrate; less wealthy families appear to discourage such migration. This is because rich families are better able to provide money and to take the risk associated with migration than poor families. According to Kothari (1980:284), irrespective of the family economic situation, eldest sons are less mobile than younger sons. This is because, in Indian rural society, the eldest son is the family member obliged to look after the parents and younger siblings. Parents are likely to engage the eldest son in the family farm and to allow younger sons an education if their labour is not needed. Even after marriage the eldest son may have to stay with his parental family. Therefore, Kothari (1980:281) suggests that as an economic unit, the family in India encourages the migration of surplus labour from the place of origin in attempting to obtain an "optimal balance" of family resources. An individual's intention to migrate involves support for the parental family through remittances (Kothari 1980:398). It is not too much to say that the family is the context for migration decision-making in India.

This conclusion gains support from studies by Banerjee (1981) and Bhattacharyya (1985). Banerjee (1981) believes that current migration research in developing countries has neglected the "interdependence between family members and the existence of ties with the place of origin" (Banerjee 1981:350). He argues that, in India, the migrant is a member of a large extended family and individual migration mainly takes place with a view to maximization of family rather than individual welfare. Migration neither creates family dissolution nor breakdown of family relationships; indeed, in most cases, migration strengthens family cohesion through remittances and the regular visits of migrants (Banerjee 1981).

Bhattacharyya (1985:52) asserts that in India:

The migrant himself does not make the decision to move and he is not motivated by his own personal gain. The family or the head of the family sends some members to the urban sector if it is best for the family's interest. This is called family decision about migration ...

So, the family exerts an influence in the decision to migrate which depends on that family's situation in the place of origin and the expected opportunities at the place of destination. The family, then, would agree on migration for higher total expected gain for the whole family; the difference between an individual's welfare at origin and destination is not of primary importance. Bhattacharyya (1985:52) postulates that:
... in the case of family decision, the expected wage-differential between the urban and the rural sectors is shown to be neither necessary nor sufficient to induce migration. Thus, a fall in rural-urban wage-differential due to economic growth or direct government action may not substantially reduce the huge flow of rural-urban migration currently observed in many third world countries.

The family decision-making process in migration, then, is significant for the formulation of workable national development policies.

In the Philippines, Caces et al. (1985) assert that migration should be considered in terms of a broad social network rather than the individual's intention. Attention should be paid to the interaction between an individual's intention and ways of actualizing such an intention, because it is these interactions which are the keys to an understanding of migration in relation to development. It is postulated that the propensity to migrate is higher where potential migrants have former household members residing at the destination from whom the potential migrant has the assurance of financial, social and psychological support. It is argued that for migration analysis one must take "into account the influence of interpersonal connections" (Caces et al. 1985:21).

The discussion of migration and the family in the developing country context may be concluded with the words of Stark (1985:2):

Migration by family member(s) may be interpreted as an extremely interesting manifestation of the viability of the family ...

Family members try to obtain maximum utility in terms of general welfare from their limited resources. They provide financial support at the initial stage of migration as well as benefiting from remittances. The family provides a model of "how to share what has been obtained together through specialization (migration and non-migration) and cooperation (e.g., exchange of risk)" (Stark 1985:2). Stark (1985:2) is hopeful about the new trend of research in migration emphasizing the family and argues convincingly that:

... emphasis on the social unit - such as the family - may well generate the next most important breakthroughs in migration knowledge in particular, as it has already created fruitful advances in other areas of social sciences.
2.3.4 Conclusion

Review of the migration literature reveals two different decision-making perspectives. In developed countries, the maximization of individual welfare is an important consideration; in developing countries, family welfare is more important than individual gain. The consideration of the family in migration may have profound implications for national development planning, especially in developing countries.
CHAPTER 3

MIGRATION AND THE FAMILY IN BANGLADESH:
INFLUENCE AND INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Family influence in migration decision-making

3.1.1 Introduction

The importance of origins in the study of migration is recognized in migration literature. Caldwell (1969:15) argues that decisions on migration usually take place at the origin and, hence, "the chief effort should be put into an examination of the sending area". An attempt is made in this chapter to elucidate the family context of migration on the basis of discussions with family members living in Munshiganj town. Analysis follows the strategy proposed by Caldwell (1969:2) in which a full understanding of the family context of migration can better be obtained by "various types of inquiry" by "many detailed questions" and by an in-depth investigation of a sample of a population. In this chapter, I discuss the influence and involvement of the family in the migration decision-making process on the basis of discussions with families in Munshiganj town and with migrants, both internal and international, from these families.

Catalysts for migration from Munshiganj town are family economic well-being and the need for higher and/or better education, which ultimately leads to a good job and, thereby, increased economic status and social prestige for the family. Migration from Munshiganj town, then, occurs in the economic and social context of the family.

3.1.2 Migration and parental dependency

Evaluating the experience of some South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Cain (1983) suggests that parental dependency is a consequence of such social factors as insecurity of property rights which are dependent on having a surviving son, widespread failure of financial and insurance markets, and the absence of important extra-familial welfare institutions. Therefore, people in this part of the world regard children as the only reliable supportive agents for their later life, since they act as a "protection and insurance against inability to earn" (Datta and Nugent 1984:508, referring to India).
Considering the Indian situation of old age dependency of parents on their children, Vlassoff and Vlassoff (1980:494) note that village men willingly allow some of their sons to migrate to urban areas for work, which the authors suggest is not a worthwhile alternative form of depending on children. However, Datta and Nugent (1985:509) cogently argue that this type of migration decision by parents does not indicate any less dependency on children (especially on sons) but rather is a risk-reducing diversification strategy stimulated by dependency. Reviewing this relationship in some developing countries, Nugent (1985) argues that parental dependency is not due only to old age but may occur at any age, at any time of crisis when children can play a substantial role in assisting the family. Also, he argues that fostering the geographical mobility of children, in order to obtain higher earnings, may provide them with the ability to bear family responsibilities (Nugent 1985:85).

Most of the migrants from the interviewed families are eldest children. In Bangladesh, primogeniture is a significant characteristic which places responsibility on elder children to look after the family in the absence of the father. This is the view of the parents:

... first son is the pioneer for others and all the liabilities will be his ...

Eldest sons do not only think about the contributions made by the parents but, in most cases, are willing to migrate for the benefit of the whole family; they “feel pride and satisfaction in being able to fulfil their obligations to their parents” (Nugent 1985:78), and, accordingly, even persuade their parents:

... my son tried to convince me in such a way that ... in my absence all the responsibilities to look after his younger brothers and sisters will be on him. However, it would be very difficult for him to maintain these liabilities if he does not go abroad ...

Family heads in Munshiganj town have become dependent on eldest sons at crucial stages of financial difficulties. The literature (Cain 1977:426) suggests that a family with a grown-up son is more likely to fend for itself at a time of crisis. Parents in Munshiganj town, in most cases before old age, depend on their grown-up children for the maintenance of the family. A few examples will suffice.

A family head, at the age of 45, lost his job when most of his children were still being educated. The eldest son, aged 20 and studying for a B. Sc., immediately began to look for a job. Ultimately he got a job which required that he migrate to Comilla, more than 200 kilometers distant, travelling time about 6 hours. This son provided money for the education of his brothers and sisters, as well as for family
maintenance for nearly five years; he is still contributing to the family (though not on as regular a basis as before) though his father has regained his previous job. This kind of family happening seems the norm in Bangladesh; Khuda (1977:726-7) indicates that, "most of the respondents [in his survey] expect financial support [from children] in times of crisis and during old age".

A family head, aged 46, fractured his leg in an accident which meant financial disaster for family of nine since he was the sole earner. The eldest son, aged 19 and studying for a B. A., felt obliged to look after the family. While his father was hospitalized, he obtained permission from his mother to apply for a job in Dhaka, which he got. He decided to commute from Munshiganj to Dhaka in order to save living expenses in Dhaka and so provide more money for the family. Although his parents insisted he should live in Dhaka to avoid the risk of travelling every day, he refused. Finally, after six months, he decided to stay with one of his sisters in Dhaka while regularly remitting money to the family. After four years, these remittances become occasional but, by then, the family was no longer dependent on his remittances. Parental expectations in this case was a strong influence, as is clear from a comment by the father:

... job opportunity is limited in a small town like Munshiganj. Thus, he may go out of the family if he needs a job. If the eldest son is not provided with a job he will not be able to bear the responsibility of this large family with six younger brothers ...

The head of family, who was engaged in small trading, decided to send his second son, aged 16, to Rangpur, more than 400 kilometers distant, travelling time around 10 hours, to learn technical aspects of work in a printing press. This son had been working with his elder brother as a vegetable and fruit seller, but because of the low earnings from such an enterprise, father decided to find other work for him. In response to a question about his feelings concerning this decision, the father commented:

... we were not interested to send him Ranjpur, because he was very young at that stage, but for the sake of his future as well as family benefit, we decided to send him ...

His brother explained that the boy would benefit from his technical expertise for the rest of his life. The father implied that the remittances provided by his younger son were used as capital for his small trading business as well as for family maintenance, which suggests a large measure of dependency of the father on the son.

In Bangladesh, Adnan (1978) has found dependency on children in all socio-
economic classes; children represent an emergent source of family labour, income, security and upward social mobility. According to him, people in Bangladesh, due to their growing interest in non-agricultural activities as well as the attractions of the urban way of life, are encouraged to send their sons to the towns and cities. The achievement of education and employment in the urban sector not only promotes family social mobility but provides a substantial source of income for families at the place of origin.

Social upward movement for an individual through migration is postulated by Zelinsky (1971). In Munshiganj town, migration raises family prestige. Most parents commented that they not only benefited from their children's migration through receiving remittances but also by acquiring increased family status. They see a direct relationship between economic gain and increase of social status. Chudhury (1978) also found that remittances sent by migrants to their parental families usually supplement family income and, thereby, result in upward social movement, which would not have been possible otherwise. Contributions to the parental family in the form of remittances substantially increase family incomes, and fosters its upward social mobility (Mahmud and Osmani 1980:15-18).

According to Cain (1977), in Bangladesh, the economic contribution of children is dominant during the period when they are subordinate members of the parental family. Rahman (1978), argues that children contribute not only during their subordinate stage, but after becoming independent and especially at times of crisis. Such findings suggest the universality of parental dependency in Bangladesh.

Parental dependency is crucial in the case of female (widowed) family heads. Women are likely to anticipate a long period of widowhood, not only for the biological reason of longer life expectancy but also for social reasons which are reflected in the great age difference between husband and wife (Cain 1977, 1981, 1982). Due in great part to local Islamic practice, women in Bangladesh are engaged mainly in non-economic household activities and enjoy limited opportunities to enter the workforce. Widows then, depend on their children; and children, especially sons, feel heightened responsibility for their mother in the absence of their father, not only in terms of financial support but also in terms of respectful behaviour. An example of such behaviour will suffice.

A head of a family was killed by miscreants in 1974 when he went to visit his relatives in a village neighbouring Munshiganj town. The four children and the widowed wife of the deceased were overwhelmed by grief. Except for the eldest son, the children were very young and for some time they lived with their maternal relatives in a very poor situation as only a little money was available from the
lease of their land. After four years the eldest son graduated from college (B. A.) and took over responsibility for the family. In 1979, he applied for a job in the same office where his father had worked, a subregistrar's office in Dhaka. He got the job and decided to commute to Dhaka. After a time his mother insisted that he stay in Dhaka to avoid the risks associated with commuting. An uncle offered accommodation with his family in Dhaka and this led the son to migrate to Dhaka. Now, this migrant is the main earner of the family, but he defers to his mother as the head of the family.

Other widows in Munshiganj have sons in Dhaka who also support and regularly visit their mothers to whom they defer even in simple matters.

Vlassoff and Vlassoff (1980:494) show that, in India, if the village can provide employment and security, most fathers hesitate to allow their sons to migrate because of the fear of sons becoming disobedient when living away from home, particularly in towns. In Bangladesh, widowed mothers sometimes become anxious about their migrant sons. One such mother commented:

... usually after leaving home [that is, after migration] they become different in nature ... in such case, they do not usually look after the parents. Furthermore, they may forget the family ...

She fears that when grown-up sons migrate they become attracted to interests which lessen their sense of responsibility for the struggling family at home. Such fears may reflect the profound dependence of widows on their sons (Cain 1977:432; Khuda 1977:727). In fact, these migrant sons feel a keen sense of obligation to their parental family, which is heightened in the absence of the father. In the Bangladesh context, Khuda (1977:722) notes that after the death of a father,

... the grown up children assume responsibility for looking after their younger brothers and sisters. Children ensure the survival of lineage or family name.

In truth, this widow's three sons in Dhaka city are as loyal as other widows sons from Munshiganj town. She herself said that the sons regularly remit money and goods, which were the main source of family income, and that they visit her and the family frequently. An informant, to whom this family is well-known, disclosed that the widow's second son, who is now playing a vital role in family maintenance, had an affair but that he refused to marry the girl to please his mother who did not like her and feared she would disrupt the family. When I later spoke with the second son in Dhaka city he mentioned neither regret about nor anger toward his mother regarding the decision about his marriage. His attitude is testimony not only to the strength of his adherence to the family but to the strength of the family in Bangladesh generally.
Allegiance to the mother by children is also important in the case of family
dissolution due to separation of parents. The eldest son, 21 years of age, from one
such family, felt responsible for other siblings because of his father's reluctance to
look after these children and tried to convince his mother to agree to allow him to
go abroad. The mother explained:

... even though my husband mostly indifferent about my children
disagreed, all of us one of my brothers, a sister and a sister's husband decided that if he son stayed in Bangladesh, he might not be able to do
anything for the family which needs more money to look after his brothers
and sisters. On the other hand, if he goes abroad it will be beneficial for
the family from all respects.

Money was provided by maternal relatives for this son's migration to the United
States, where he is now a student and also remits money to support his younger
brothers and sisters.

In Bangladeshi families, there is a feeling of reciprocal obligation between all
the members and among children and parents. This relationship accords well with
the hypothesis of wealth flow, introduced by Caldwell (1977), which suggests that
the early investment by parents in their children, is later recompensed in different
ways by the children's assistance to their parents. Khuda (1977:727) demonstrates
that the system of reciprocal obligation in families is a kind of social security in
Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the proposition by Cain (1983:13) that "children are
neither a cost-less nor risk-free investment" is a consideration for parents. Yet,
despite "risks" and "costs", there are several positive reasons to depend on children
which lead most parents to make the investment involved:

(1) quality of support provided by children to parents (as well as
other family members);
(2) versatility of children as a security asset in a setting where
insecurity is rife; and
(3) insurance against property losses.

Following Cain (1983), it can be suggested that parental dependency on children
"should be viewed as an integral package - a composite of economic and non-
economic [gain]" (Cain 1983:15). Children provide not only financial support but
security, peace of mind for the family.

3.1.3 Migration and economic advancement

Evidence of receiving real assistance from children even after leaving home has
been indicated (Khuda 1977:726). Thus, most villagers in Bangladesh "hold the view
that raising children has some net economic benefit to parents" (Khuda 1977:681).
Economic advancement can be achieved through both internal and international
migration. Economic gain is enormous from international migrants compared with
internal migrants. In Bangladesh, the most important stimulus for overseas migration is expected earnings abroad which commonly are several times higher than a migrant's real income at home.

The three factors encouraging dependence on children which are elucidated by Cain (1983) can also serve to encourage their migration overseas. First, the quality of support provided by children to parents. A better quality of live can be obtained through migration, both for the migrant and the migrant's family; both, in fact, believe they can achieve economic well-being through migration. One younger son from a family in Munshiganj town went to Saudi Arabia in search of the money which would enhance the well-being of his family. In Bangladesh, he earned 1500 Taka per month; three months after his departure, he sent 15,000 Taka to the family. According to the family head, this contribution brought a hitherto unknown financial solvency to the family. Another father said that money provided by a son overseas would be used to build a new house for the family; a modern, well-equipped house.

In Munshiganj, doctors usually get a handsome salary, both from their public employment and from private practice. Their earnings are much higher than those of any other professional group. Yet, when considering the migration of his son, a doctor, to the Middle East, a father explained that the remuneration received by doctors in Bangladesh is not commensurate with their work. He encouraged his son to go abroad and in this decision he was supported by the opinion of two other heads of families who have members working as doctors in the Middle East. On average, it appears that a doctor's earnings in the Middle East is about ten times higher than in Bangladesh. Such enormous earnings - much of which is remitted - assure family of a comfortable and anxiety free life in Munshiganj town.

Apart from three doctors who migrated to the Middle East, overseas migrants from Munshiganj town are employed in a range of skilled, semi-skilled and even unskilled occupations. Most are single males and if married, leave their wives and children with parents. Nearly all intend to return, according to family heads in Munshiganj town. Their aim is to earn more money, and to provide strong financial support for a better quality of life for their parental family. This pattern is similar to the findings of Mahmud and Osmani (1980), in Bangladesh. Parents in Munshiganj town argue that migrant family members help to achieve economic well-being and an improved life style which is tantamount to social advancement.

Second, versatility of children are a security asset in a setting where insecurity is rife. Risk and uncertainty can be mitigated through migration, since migration is associated with enormous economic gain. Insecurity in family life due to financial
insolvency easily may become acute. For example, due to low earnings of most families it is difficult to achieve a proper education for children without remittances.

Table 3-1: Use of remittances sent by migrants (based on discussions with families in Munshiganj Town)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of remittances</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not remit</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings education and marriage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cure from sickness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family business</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siblings marriage</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build modern house</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional gift</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family maintenance (*)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* *) Includes dependents education and marriage too.

by migrants (Table 3-1). On the other hand, to alleviate family economic hardship, some members living abroad encourage the migration of younger siblings, by assurance of a job, shelter, and psychological support. One son, living in West Germany, commented that he was interested in bringing his younger brother to West Germany, but when the younger brother got a chance to go to Saudi Arabia, the elder migrant brother provided money for the migration.

A critical problem for many families is raised by the marriage of dependants. Marriage requires the outlay of a huge amount of money. In some cases migrants provide money for the marriages of brothers and sisters. Again, the risk of financial ruin from illness of a family member can be mitigated by obtaining money from a migrant member. One father commented that at the time of his illness, the financial contribution by the eldest son, living in Dhaka, was essential for his return to good health. Insecurity in a particular place of residence or country for a family, can be removed through the migration of a family member or two. For example, Munshiganj is a Muslim dominated town: 80 per cent of the people are followers of Islam (Nisa 1983:108). The next important group is Hindu, though few are Caste Hindus. Although there is no evidence of violence between religious groups, the
Caste Hindus try to maintain close contact with India. It is suggested, in the literature, that the tendency for Hindus to undermine the Muslims in the subcontinent is deep-rooted in political and socio-psychological terms (Anisuzzaman 1980:83-87); Hindus in Munshiganj town have a feeling they may have to leave Bangladesh because of their religion. One family head commented:

... ultimately we may need to go back to India. Thus, to have a shelter in India, at the time of crisis, I decided to send the eldest son ...

Although this family head has lived in Munshiganj for nearly 35 years and is now aged 73, he still feels insecure because he is a member of a religious minority. His eldest son in India provides a measure of security in a perceived insecure situation in Bangladesh.

Third, children serve as important means of insuring against property loss. Migrant members of a family can be seen to provide insurance against property losses and, also, a means of acquiring new property. For one father, the migration of his first son to West Germany allowed him to accumulate money which gave him the chance not only to protect his family resources but to purchase more in the form of property. For a retired father of three sons living in the Middle East, remittances permitted the elaboration of the family business. So, the migration of sons overseas not only provides security for protecting family assets, but is a strategy for enhancing those assets (see, Table 3-1).

Overseas migrants remit remarkably large amounts of money, but contributions by migrants within Bangladesh is also significant (examples cited in section 3.1.2). Most families with migrant members within Bangladesh receive remittances considered essential for the well-being of the family. Most migrants from Munshiganj town moved initially for higher or specialized education which enabled them to provide for the family after obtaining jobs in the city or overseas.

3.1.4 Migration and education

Education is considered to be an accelerant of migration. McGee (1971:54) cites Bogue's comment, referring to India, that the propensity to migrate is higher among literate and educated people. In Munshiganj town nearly 80 per cent of the population are literate (Nisa 1983:88) whereas the national literacy rate in Bangladesh is less than 25 per cent (Bangladesh 1982:4). The great difference between the national literacy rate and literacy in Munshiganj town is explained by the fact that Munshiganj is a urban area having educational facilities up to and including degree-granting institutions.

Among migrants from Munshiganj town in 1983, 62 per cent had attained
H.S.C. or higher level education; all but 7 per cent of these were male (Nisa 1983:171). This study found that one-fifth of the migrants were motivated to relocate in order to undertake higher education in universities, medical colleges or engineering faculties or specialized technical education in printing, electrical trades, welding, television and refrigeration mechanics. Migrants from Munshiganj town with H.S.C. or higher degrees are multiple migrants. Most first migrated to Dhaka for higher education, and then either obtained jobs in the city or migrated to other places (mainly overseas) to take the opportunity for more education or training or to get jobs with high salaries. In the case of less educated migrants, it is evident that their migration (and lack of education) are associated with family fortunes; that is, parents unable to provide for more than a moderate amount of education. A relatively lower chance of educational opportunity for members of large families than of small families is not unique for Munshiganj town; Blake (1985:93) discusses the situation in the U.S.A. Some migrants lost interest in further education and also become frustrated about their future when they were unable to pass to the next level of school. Of these, some decide to go abroad to earn more money and/or to pursue their education elsewhere.

Caldwell et al. (1985:31) argue that a son’s education is viewed as an essential component of family prestige, because education provides the capacity for a solvent and secure life, through a good job and earnings, both for the members of the natal family and the family of procreation. In India “parents feel particularly strongly that their children’s future, and indeed the whole family’s future, depends on the children using education as a route to secure, reasonably well-paid employment” (Caldwell et al. 1985:34). Education also promotes migration as well as the chance of obtaining urban employment (Caldwell et al. 1985:47) which can bring economic well-being for both the migrant and the family. Such views are prevalent among parents in Munshiganj.

Education provides migrants with the intellectual abilities to make decisions for themselves on the basis of their knowledge of prospects. These migrants are apt to convince their parents to agree with them within the context of traditional norms — a circumstance which is also referred to in the Indian case by Caldwell et al. (1985:36).

Behavioural differences between educated and uneducated children are evidenced in rural India (Caldwell et al. 1985:37). The sophistication of the educated child is an important aspect of the family context of decision-making. For example, in Munshiganj town certain decisions to migrate were caused by intergenerational conflicts between daughters-in-law and members of the family into which she
married which were associated with her education and consequent questioning of traditional practices (see, Keyfitz 1982:735). In such situations, educated sons attempted to remove the impasse without threatening family integrity. One such son sought a transfer to a distant place of employment in order to become physically separate from his parental family. Another son sought to relocate in the interest of a better education for his offspring. Such decision-making, that is without causing disruptions to family integrity, are possible by educated children.

Examples can be cited also of a sort of unsophisticated migration decision-making by little educated migrants. One such migrant living in Dhaka commented that he had continual conflict with his step-mother. He was in an awkward position in the family. When a student of class eight, he expressed his desire to migrate and discontinue his studies. His father, also in an awkward position between his son and new wife, decided to send the boy to Narayanganj town, around 8 kilometers distant, to learn technical work. As a result the family lost integrity.

It might be argued that level of educational attainment is associated with the sophistication of migration decision-making in the interest of maintaining family integrity more or less directly.

Educated migrants have a relatively more important role in family affairs than their non-educated counterparts. Evidence from Munshiganj town shows that if sons are more educated than their fathers, the father usually consults the migrant son in the process of decision-making. Furthermore, such parents, are prouder of their children than are parents of little educated children. For example, one widowed mother expressed her pride for her son who had obtained an M.B.B.S. in Bangladesh and migrated to become a doctor in Iran. On the other hand, the father of a little educated migrant was reluctant to disclose his son's position abroad. Another commented he did not consider that his little educated son's migration increased the family's social prestige. Families of educated migrants, freely expressed their pride and had experienced increased social prestige because migrant family members were not only educated but had good jobs.

3.1.5 Autonomy of children and migration

Nugent (1985:79) indicates that, in both developed and developing countries, "modernization and development introduce various forces that tend both to reduce the strength of the traditional norms of family and community, and to erode loyalty" in a gradual process which varies in effect depending on each particular society and culture. I find it difficult to use concepts of tradition and modernity to categorize families, because the family is a dynamic social unit which may move
between the two categories or comprise various elements of tradition and modernity at different times.

Most family heads who encourage migration from Munshiganj town and have a substantial positive impact on migration decision-making are enthusiastic for modern amenities and the urban way of life. In brief, they are generally critical of life in their small town. Some family heads are positive about conditions in Munshiganj. They are content with the existing situation and want to be in the small town environment with friends, relatives and a known landscape. For some heads, an important argument against family migration is the need to arrange marriages of dependants, especially children (and brothers and sisters) which traditionally is negotiated by relatives or neighbours (Jahangir 1979:82). The desire of these family heads to live in Munshiganj town, however, does not mitigate against the migration of dependants.

In some families in Munshiganj town, adults may make the decision to migrate. The view of traditional loyalty and obedience in these families deviates from the common attitude. However, this apparent independence does not necessarily indicate that the integrity of these families is a factor of little consequence for their members. For example, one overseas migrant did not seek advice from the head of the family regarding his decision to migrate. When all was ready, he simply asked the head for his approval. This migrant was married with two children. He left his family with the parental family. He visited his family once a year, and the family received regular remittances from this migrant. Three brothers, including the eldest brother who is the head due to their father's death (after migration of the family member), are married and each of them has at least two children. All live in the same house together with their widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters, though the eldest brother works in Dhaka city and commutes daily. Money sent by the overseas migrant is used by the eldest brother for the whole family.

The autonomous migration decision by children is not just the product of their individualism or motivated by their own economic benefit. Family mindedness or familial devotion is also a motive for migration. Reasons for autonomous decisions are numerous. In some cases, migrants are reluctant to ask permission from their parents, particularly if they feel that parents would not be able to provide money for the migration. Parents might possess a traditional view of familial loyalty and obedience, but because of straitened financial circumstances they maintain silence. This usually happens when other relatives or sponsors provide money and assurance of the necessities for migration. For example, the father of a migrant living in the U.S.A. though possessing a traditional attitude of the loyalty owed parents, had to
accept the autonomous decision of his son's migration as maternal relatives living in the U.S.A. provided the wherewithal for the move.

Although it is difficult to evaluate the degree of change promoted by autonomy within the family, it may be hypothesized that some socio-cultural change in Munshiganj town is effected thereby, though migration decision-making by young people in Munshiganj appears to be associated only with certain familial situations.

A report published by the United Nations in 1984 reveals some common characteristics of families in developing countries and suggests that a lack of adequate resources for family members, may lead to inadequate supervision of children (United Nations 1984:3). Referring to the consequences of the economic status of families in Bangladesh, Cain (1977:435) suggests that the poorer the family, the lower is the age of children migrating from home and the less the degree of control of parents over children. There is some evidence of this in Munshiganj town.

If a family has many children it becomes difficult to provide proper supervision and education for all of them. In such a situation, migration by an adult member may occur, and may be encouraged by the parents both for the economic benefit and to avoid the problems associated with many young children in the one small home. An example of this from Munshiganj concerns a father (head) with a large family including ten children. He is a small trader (having a small tea-stall) and is the only source of income for the family. Most of his older children are sons. When they entered school there was great pressure on the family's resources which led the eldest son to decide to move to Dhaka city. Later, two other sons also made the decision to move as the father was unable to maintain them economically or to control their behaviour. The third son to leave for Dhaka, did so when a boy of 13. According to his father, he had become unmanageable and so when he decided to go to Dhaka to learn a trade, the father happily agreed with this decision. In answer to a question as to whether his sons had consulted him in these decisions the father said that this had not necessarily occurred. However, he argued:

... they need to go out [migrate] to establish themselves and need to earn money ...

and he indicated that each of his sons send money and goods and sometimes visit, which is essential for the maintenance of the family. Although they did not ask their father before they decided to migrate, yet their movement is, at least to some extent, for the sake of family welfare. The brothers maintain close family ties with parents and each other as they all live in the same house in Dhaka city.
A similar situation is evident in another large family. Two elder sons were not interested in further education, perhaps as a result of the fact that the father could not provide education for all the children. These sons proposed to go to Dhaka or Narayanganj town (a town near Munshiganj town) to become electricians. The eldest son eventually returned; the other son resides in Dhaka. The father commented:

... the main motive was economic, so that they can help me. It was a bit difficult for me to maintain the family. Thus, I had to depend on them to some extent. I decided to send them with a view to aid the family as well as for their future.

However, the son living in Dhaka revealed that after the death of the first wife, who left four children including this son, his father decided to remarry as he was still young and needed someone to look after the children. He (the son) could not cope with his step-mother and decided to migrate. Conflict with his step-mother led to his decision to migrate from Munshiganj town.

Migration may also occur to avoid intergenerational conflict between a mother and a son's wife and also among brother’s wives. Marriage negotiation in Bangladesh is undertaken to avoid such conflicts, but marriage conflicts may arise and children are likely to offer other more “rational” reasons for migration; as, for example, job transfer and better education of children. One such migrant admitted that:

... my wife wished to be separated from the joint family ... I tried to be transferred and ... ultimately, I was transferred ...

A parent, while discussing with me the migration of his eldest son to Dhaka city, said that he felt the daughter-in-law was no longer interested in staying with them, though his son cited as reasons for the move the better education facilities for children in Dhaka city. This parent agreed to the move without bringing up the familial problem. This son is the main source of earnings for the family; he decided to migrate to Dhaka city not only for the sake of his family but also for the parental family; he was concerned to maintain good relationships in both families and he often visits his parents in Munshiganj town.

3.1.6 Female migration

Most female migrants in Bangladesh are dependants who accompany their husbands (Chaudhury and Curlin 1975). A study of migrants from Munshiganj town (Nisa 1983:124) reveals that in 1982, about two-fifths of the permanent migrants were female married migrants. (Since marriages in Munshiganj town are almost always negotiated by family members, “marriage” migrants are excluded from
Female migrants are mainly comprised of those now working as independent persons in Dhaka city. Study of female migrants in the Third World context is a relatively recent but significant concern, as female participation in the economy appears to be associated with profound change in the family (see, for example, Connell 1985a; Khoo et al. 1985; Träger 1985). Referring to a study undertaken in Bangladesh, Chen (1984) argues that education is the key element in women’s social identity, because educated women are self-supporting, able to undergo more stress then their uneducated counterparts and able to make use of social facilities. Their education confers a sense of the “social geography” beyond the household in a society where purdah customarily confines women to their homes (Chen 1984:11). In terms of decision-making in the family, educated daughters-in-law play a significant role as compared with their uneducated counterparts (Chen 1984). In Munshiganj town, education, in fact, appears to have provided the opportunity for wives to become family heads while husbands still live.

Socially, women in Bangladesh are dominated by men (Rahman 1977; Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1977). Despite Islamic law which gives equal rights to men and women, women’s generally lower educational attainments (women, in general, are denied their basic right to education, with consequences for occupational opportunities, income and prestige) prevents them from pursuing these legal rights. It has been suggested that greater educational attainment by women can provide the basis for a more equal society (Salahuddin 1977:27), and that an educated daughter can foster social mobility in Bangladesh (Khatun 1977:137).

Female migrants from Munshiganj town migrated in order to achieve higher education. These women persuaded their fathers to allow them to undertake higher education. Education of sons in Bangladeshi families is encouraged more so than that of daughters (Chaudhury 1977a; Chaudhury and Curlin 1975), but certain female migrants from Munshiganj obviously had the potential for obtaining higher degrees, and this convinced parents to allow their migration to the city. Parents commented that, from childhood, the educational performance of these female migrants was outstanding; and when they evidenced interest in further education, parents were amenable to their migration because of previous results. One father whose daughter received a B. Comm. and was interested in pursuing an M. Comm., decided to send his daughter to Dhaka for higher studies. He was unable to afford to keep her in a hostel, so he arranged accommodation for her with a cousin in Dhaka. Although the cousin agreed to assist, his comment, according to the father, was:
... ooh, she is a girl. What will be the benefit of educating a girl at such a higher level. B. Comm. is enough for her. Now it could be stopped ...

This is an opinion commonly held in Munshiganj town. The traditional attitude toward female higher education embodied in such comment is widespread. It is found in extreme form, for example, in Taiwan (Greenhalgh 1985) and the South Pacific (Connell 1985a). Moreover, in the migration of daughters, the serious anxiety for the parents in Munshiganj town is in providing safe and secure accommodation.

The obligation to contribute to the natal family is a moral concern for sons and daughters, and though most migrant daughters of families in Munshiganj town are married migrants, they try to contribute to their family of origin. They do this in different ways. Two daughters living overseas (one in the U.S.A. and another in Saudi Arabia) have helped brothers to migrate to the countries in which they live. More than one family, with members in Dhaka, commented that married daughters helped migration to Dhaka city, by arranging for jobs and accommodation, including stays in the homes of their married daughters. Short-term stays in the homes of married daughters (both by parents and other family members) occur for any number of reasons: medical treatment, educational admission, visits to the city, and marriages, for example. So, the obligation to the natal family is not borne just by sons, but by daughters both unmarried and working, and married and dependent.

Connell (1985a and 1985b) indicates that the impact of female migration on the family is complex and variable, as it is for the migrant herself. Migration may increase or decrease social prestige. This complexity is noted by Chaudhury (1977b) with regard to female migrants in Bangladesh. In Munshiganj town, most family heads thought they increased their social status as a result of their daughters' migration which had not only resulted in higher levels of education but also in getting good jobs in the city. Some parents evinced pride purely because of their daughter's achievement of a high level of education. Female migrants from Munshiganj town generally remitted money to their parental family and, in some cases, this support was vital for family maintenance.

For females in Bangladesh, preferred vocations are teaching, medicine and nursing (Chaudhury 1977b:183). These occupations reflect the attitudes of males in the family toward female employment, and are those which tend to preclude free mixing with males; there is, in fact, a strong "sex-segregated role relationship prevailing in the society" (Chaudhury 1977b:185). These attitudes are changing, however, in the face of increasing economic pressure within families in Bangladesh (Feldman and McCarthy 1981:23-25). Comparing the situation in the late 1970s with that of 35 years before in Bangladesh, Chaudhury (1977b) argued that these
attitudes were changing only gradually. Caldwell et al. (n.d:14) found that women in Dhaka city are "less likely to be sexually segregated" in employment. None of the family heads interviewed in this study had occupational preferences for their daughters, and female migrants working in Dhaka city were not sex-segregated. Even when daughters were transferred to new and distant places of employment, parents did not object, saying they were now grown-up and educated. In fact all but two female migrants working in Dhaka city are single and live in employed women's hostels. When they visit their families, they travel from Dhaka to Munshiganj town alone. This is not common in Bangladesh; even for such short distances, females are normally accompanied by male members of the family. It seems that educated female migrants from Munshiganj town who live in Dhaka city have a degree of freedom substantially greater than their less educated "sisters". Indeed, it appears that there is now a different attitude toward female migration from what was usual only a short time ago, though Munshiganj town may be rather more progressive than most places in Bangladesh.

Chaudhury (1977b) argues that the fathers of females working in Dhaka city come largely from lower educational and income backgrounds and the female migrants are expected to help the parental family. This study reveals that, though female migrants from Munshiganj were from family backgrounds mentioned by Chaudhury (1977b), initial migration to Dhaka city was not undertaken to assist the natal family financially but rather to achieve higher education. Despite the hardship this migration might entail, families perceived positive outcomes (both social and economic) after a period of distress. Educated female migrants are considered to be assets by parents in Munshiganj town. These migrants remit money to the natal family and try to maintain close physical contact. Regarding the Chinese family, Greenhalgh (1985:296-297) has commented that daughters are more filial than sons; this is a view proverbially expressed in Bangladesh.

Considering female migration in the South Pacific, Connell (1985a:967) argues that female migrants have the moral courage to "flout" conventional social customs and bonds. There is evidence of this in Munshiganj town. In Bangladesh, the tradition is to marry off the eldest daughter first (Jahan 1979:164). In Munshiganj town two female migrants interviewed had not married, though younger sisters had married. The fathers concerned commented that their daughters were unwilling to get married when they were so requested, and then gave their consent to the marriage of their younger sisters when a suitable groom was found. Such situations not only promote late marriages, the case also for the South Pacific, mentioned by Connell (1985a:3), but also raise questions about choice of husband. Education and
subsequent economic independence of women lessen their financial dependence on men through marriage and so heighten other more personal factors in the relationship (Ridley 1971:200). In Munshiganj town, both parents and migrant females were reluctant to provide information about choice of marriage partner, but the information gathered suggests that the choice depends primarily on the female migrants. One recently married female migrant said she chose her marriage partner. It was evident from discussions with other family members that had the marriage been arranged they would have preferred another groom, because the groom chosen was no better qualified than her, her job was better than his and more secure, and the family was economically better off than that of the groom. The family agreed to the marriage because had they disagreed the outcome would be no different. The couple could get married without family approval because they were economically independent, but approval was not withheld because this would have severely affected family prestige. The attitude evidenced by this family, with regard to a members' marriage, stands in stark contrast to that evidenced more than a decade ago, when the second son of this family married a girl who was regarded as being from a family of lesser status. The family decided not to recognize the marriage. This situation was resolved when the girl died in childbirth. It can be suggested that education and economic independence of migrant women provide for emancipation as regards decision-making, and that this may work to change family norms. Caldwell et al. (n.d:26) referring to Bangladesh, indicates that long duration Western-oriented education, and working with men in modern economic activities, make the relationship between husband and wife more egalitarian.

Morokvasic (1985:893), in a review article, comments that there is a "more egalitarian relationship in the family as a result of migration". This is evidenced in Munshiganj town where migrants are apt to have a direct role in decisions taken within the family. Indeed, one family went so far as to elicit the opinion of their educated migrant daughter living in Dhaka. For female migrants from Munshiganj town, financial independence seems to provide the possibility for a lossing of their traditional subjugated role.

Referring to the U.S.A., Davis (1984) says that the chance of dissolution of first marriage is about 50 per cent, and he believes "urbanization" and "mobility" are primarily responsible for this. With growing mobility, independence (through education and salaried jobs) and Westernization among females in Munshiganj town, a question might be asked about migration consequent on divorce. Well, such migration is rare, because divorce is rare in Munshiganj town; and divorce is rare because it is socially unacceptable and because women accept the dual role of
housewife and worker. Females will try to maintain smooth family relationships for
as long as is possible. Family breakdown is an unconventional happening.

3.2 Family involvement in the migration decision-making process

3.2.1 Introduction

In this section the focus is on family participation in migration decision-
making. Fundamental aspects of the decision-making process are who the principal
decision maker is and how the decision is made. Why a decision to migrate is
made and when, especially, in their lifetime people become migratory, is also
evaluated. Finally, where people from Munshiganj go, in general and in particular, is
described. To gain a more "two-eyed" view of the process of decision-making,
statements made by migrants and the families from which they originate are
compared; twenty migrants were interviewed in Dhaka city, as well as three
international migrants who came to Munshiganj town to visit their families.
International migrants were interviewed in Munshiganj town separately from their
families. The involvement of families in migration decisions were not different for
international than for internal migrants.

3.2.2 WHO decides: HOW the decision is made

Fifty families were interviewed in Munshiganj town; ten families did not have
a migrant member (Table 3-2). The total number of migrants from these

Table 3-2: Types of families interviewed in Munshiganj Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of families</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families with migrants at the time of interview</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(may or may not have commuters)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with commuters at the time of interview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(no migrants)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with neither migrants nor commuters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total interviewed families</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

families was fifty-three. For more than one-third of these migrants, the decision to
migrate was made by other family members; where the father being the dominant
decision-maker (Table 3-3). Decisions made by uncles and brothers are not unusual
because, as mentioned earlier, even after the development of separate family units,
the elder brother of the father may have great involvement in family decisions. This
situation is often important in the case of families with single parents, especially
Table 3-3: Principal migration decision-maker (based on discussion with families and migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision-maker</th>
<th>Number of migrants (discussion with families)</th>
<th>Number of migrants (discussion with migrants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of the parental family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

widows; indeed, in such situations, a maternal uncle's involvement in family decisions may be dominant. Decisions by uncles, when a father is alive, are indicative of a father's inability to provide financial support or other arrangements for migration. Decisions may be made by elder brothers because of their superior position in the family hierarchy (beneath the father, of course) the chance of an elder brother to become head after a fathers' death is high. Indeed, one interviewed elder brother became head before his father's death, perhaps because he was more educated than the father and was the main earning member of the family. Three migration decisions were made by sisters: two international and one internal. International migration decisions were taken by sisters living abroad. These sisters were married (dependent) migrants. Decisions by married (dependent) female migrants are unusual, because, traditionally it is believed that after marriage women become more responsible for their marital family than for the parental family. On the other hand, the internal migration decision, for a brother, was taken by an unmarried sister when she was a university student. In fact, the involvement in migration decisions of adult migrant daughters with higher education, especially university degrees, is common in Munshiganj town. Involvement of nearly all the members of the parental family in migration decision occurred in only two cases (Table 3-3). Discussions with migrants and families revealed that, in most cases, the principal decision-makers were the migrants themselves (Table 3-3), though Table 3-4 reveals few migration decisions were taken without discussion with any family members.

Most migrants discussed the situation with family members more than once,
Table 3-4: Types of discussion by migrants with families (based on discussions with both families and migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of discussions</th>
<th>Number of migrants (discussions with families)</th>
<th>Number of migrants (discussions with migrants)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No family discussion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct involvement of family members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with parental family and in-laws family</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct involvement of family members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with head and/or spouse (siblings may included)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions with parents (or mother) and maternal relatives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions taken by parental uncle, discussed later with members of parental family</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect involvement of family members and employers/sponsors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions between parental family members and correspondence with relatives in the destination</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided by migrants through correspondence with employers/sponsors discussed with family members (in-laws family may included)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head had nothing much to say, decided by migrants through correspondence either relatives or employers/sponsors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
which appears to owe something to the fact that many families are "extended" (Table 3-5).

**Table 3-5:** Types of families in Munshiganj Town (based on discussions with families in Munshiganj Town)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of families</th>
<th>Number of families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear families (husband, wife and children)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended families (in-laws, grand children)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent families (mothers, widowed/seperated)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3-4 indicates two categories of family involvement in migration decision-making: direct involvement of family members; and indirect involvement of either relatives or employers/sponsors. In the case of indirect involvement either the migrant or family members corresponded with either family members or employers/sponsors at potential destinations. More than half (29 out of 53) of the migration decisions were taken by direct participation of family members which includes members of the parental family, in-laws' family members, and maternal and paternal uncles. In two cases, decisions were taken directly by paternal uncles and later discussed with parents. Several discussions took place, but these were informal discussions. No family described scheduled formal arrangements for discussion. The reason for this may be that most family members live in Munshiganj town, so, when the need arises to contact family member not residing in the same household, he or she can be asked to come and join the discussion at short notice. Family members in Munshiganj Town commonly meet daily. In some cases, the issue was raised when the required person came to visit the migrants’ family. If the required member is living in Dhaka city, than either the potential migrants themselves or accompanied by fathers (or mothers) go there to discuss the matter. Visits by members living in Dhaka, to discuss migration is not usual. In sum, there is no ritual associated with the discussion of migration, and the topics discussed are peculiar to the particular migration being considered.

In indirect involvement of relatives and employers/sponsors, correspondence was an important media for both the potential migrants and family members. For these decisions, people at the potential destination played a vital role. For example, in three cases, the head had nothing much to say about the decision to migrate, because assistance for migration had been provided by relatives or
employers/sponsors at the destination. Though these migrants talked about their intended move with their fathers, it was a mere formality. These heads did not hesitate to reveal their non-involvement in their sons migration decisions and, in fact mentioned their inability to provide the wherewithal for these moves. Two of these migrants went overseas; one migrant became “deviant” - rather unusual circumstances. In six cases (6 out of 53) either relatives or employers/sponsors were involved in migration decisions, but migrants discussed the matter with their families in Munshiganj town, which indicates the migrants’ strong sense of “family”. Involvement of other family members living at the destination is frequent: for nearly one-sixth (9 out of 53) of the migration decisions these members figured prominently, not only as part of the decision-making process, but as providers of jobs and accommodation.

Involvement, either direct or indirect, by family members is common for migration decisions in Munshiganj Town. The extent of this involvement can be gauged from who provided money and accommodation for migration. In fact, among 53 migrants, only 11 did not receive assistance from family members: assistance without which the move could not have taken place (Table 3-6).

Table 3-6: Who provided money and accommodation for migration (based on discussions with families in Munshiganj Town)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Provided</th>
<th>Money</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternal uncle</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal uncle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother(s)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister-in-law</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Maternal uncle</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and siblings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers/sponsors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although discussions about migration usually involved several persons (Table 3-4), assistance for migration was usually given by one person, though joint contributions by family members were not rare (Table 3-6). It is clear that though a number of migrants had their own accommodation and the financial ability to migrate, still, they discussed their intention to migrate with parents; and, no discussion with family members does not necessarily indicate less family cohesion, because some migrants indicated that they did not want to discuss the matter with their parents because of a fear of strong opposition from them and decided, instead, to complete the arrangements before approaching their parents. To evaluate the decision-making process vis-à-vis the sense of family filiation by migrants is not straightforward, but there is no doubt that sense of "family" is strong.

Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980:33) mention that the decision-making in single parent families, especially mothers, is different from a situation in which both parents are present. This can be evaluated from interviews in Munshiganj town. Among the families interviewed there are eight female heads of which six are single parent (widow) families from which came eight migrants. Half of these migrants had to depend on other family members not only for monetary help but for approval. Widows usually become dependent on other family members and less likely to oppose migrating even when these moves increase their feelings of personal insecurity. They accept migration as the means by which the family may be maintained, if not prosper.

The decision to migrate in Munshiganj town is a result of compromise among family members. Family members have to reach agreement for such migration. However, once the intention to migrate is anticipated by a family member, it seems the subsequent discussions eventually result in family agreement to the migration. In not one of the families interviewed did migration not take place because of disagreement among family members. Indeed, the heads of the two families interviewed without a migrant had thought about migration but decided against it themselves for economic and familial reasons.

3.2.3 WHY and WHEN people migrate

According to Fawcett and DeJong (1982:109), reasons for migration can be assessed through direct field investigation or by theoretical approaches, but whatever the perspective:

The diversity of empirical and conceptual orientations should not obscure
a common research goal, ... which is to achieve better understanding of the factors influencing spatial movements of people.

Fawcett and DeJong (1982:112) mention some of the major criticisms of “reasons for moving” data: recall error, oversimplification, given dominant reasons without “secondary motivations”, and influence of others in decision-making may not be reflected. To reduce the effect of these shortcomings, interviews with respondents in Munshiganj town and Dhaka city were both extensive and probing rather than “efficient”. For example, to obtain higher and specialized education is a major incentive to migrate for members of families in Munshiganj town; but education is regarded as a means of obtaining a better job, which means higher monetary

Table 3-7: Reason for migration (based on discussions with families and migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Discussion with the families</th>
<th>Discussion with the migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher studies</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized/technical education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better earnings overseas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join a job</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid commuting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better sports facilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family security/prestige</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid family conflict</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

returns and enhanced family prestige. A major proportion, of the migrants went overseas to earn money (Table 3-7). Some had become frustrated because of family financial hardship and were apprehensive about obtaining jobs because of their lack of education. In these situations, the intending migrants tried to persuade the family to agree to their migration by arguing the benefits for the family. Although parents of these little educated migrants were reluctant to provide information about the migrants’ jobs, they were quick to point to the security provided from remittances. Higher earnings overseas also stimulated the migration of well-educated migrants, university graduates and doctors. Despite earning good money in Bangladesh, much higher earnings overseas, particularly the Middle East, encouraged them to migrate. Since the degree of skill is positively related to job opportunities, such migration
can be said to have vindicated the view that "the higher the skill, the better the prospect of employment" (World Bank 1981:111). All migrants obtained information before their moves from different sources: advertisements in newspapers for employment overseas, family members and friends in the potential destination and through correspondence with employers. Their migrations took place after comparison of alternatives. The comment by Khasiani (1982:14) can be supported for migrants in Munshiganj town:

... Migration is viewed as a rationally planned action resulting from a conscious decision arrived at with the help of available information.

To take up jobs in cities, especially Dhaka and Narayanganj, is a common reason for migrating from Munshiganj town (Table 3-7). Such migrants obtained jobs before migrating; to look for a job is uncommon. Migration is sometimes an alternative to commuting; commuting being a rather troublesome means of travel.

There are also idiosyncratic reasons for migrating from Munshiganj town. For example, two families had a tradition of football playing members. When sons in these families became interested in the game, their fathers encouraged them. Dhaka offers the opportunity to make football a profession. Migration to Dhaka occurred.

Migration from Munshiganj town is also encouraged for reason of family security and prestige. Activities of family members which are considered social embarrassments for the family may lead to the assisted migration of the offending members. The important motive in encouraging such migration is an awareness by the family that its prestige is at risk. Two such migration decisions had been made by families interviewed in Munshiganj town.

Migration decisions are taken also to retain family harmony. In two cases, the wives of sons were not willing to reside with his extended family. These sons themselves made the decision to migrate to avoid disharmony among female family members. Another migration decision was taken by an uncle in order to preclude conflict between a nephew and his step mother. In such situations, family members rationalize the real reasons for migrations, making the decision socially acceptable, as mentioned by Fawcett and DeJong (1982:112). It could be proposed that changes associated with the life-cycle may have an impact on the migration decision-making process.

The life-cycle scheme developed by Rowland (1979:101) tries to identify the particular time in life when migration likely to occur (Table 3-8). The steps in this schedule may not follow successively, because other factors influence migration in Munshiganj town, as family need, but the scheme seems a useful framework for understanding migration, and particularly reasons for migration.
Table 3-8: Life-cycle stages precipitating migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Independence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>Completion of secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Completion of tertiary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Completion of occupational training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Family Formation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5</td>
<td>Birth of first child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6</td>
<td>Birth of last child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 7</td>
<td>First child reaches secondary school age</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of Family Dissolution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 8</td>
<td>Last child leaves home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 9</td>
<td>Retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 10</td>
<td>Death of spouse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(after Rowland 1979:101)

Most migrations from Munshiganj town took place in the first phase, that is, the Phase of Independence (Table 3-9). In this phase, most migration took place

Table 3-9: Life-cycle stages of migrants (based on discussions with families and migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life-cycle stages</th>
<th>Discussion with families (1)</th>
<th>Discussion with migrants (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before SSC education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of Secondary education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before HSC education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of HSC education</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before completion of tertiary education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For tertiary education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion of tertiary education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After working at least 1 year</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After marriage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First child birth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job transfer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SSC = Secondary School Certificate
HSC = Higher Secondary Certificate
Tertiary Education = B. A./B. Comm./B. Sc.
after completion of the Higher Secondary Certificate and completion of tertiary education. Most migrants in this phase either got jobs or migrated for higher (university) or specialized (technical) education.

The second phase begins with marriage which does not necessarily involve migration immediately after marriage in Bangladesh because of extended family norms in the society (Table 3-5). One migration took place seven months after marriage when the migrant realised his wife was did not want to live with his family. Another such migration occurred only after three years of marriage, following the birth of the first child. Generally, migrations after child birth, took place because of the need for increased financial wherewithal to rear children. Migration in the last phase that is, *Phase of Family Dissolution* did not occur in my “sample” in Munshiganj town.

Following Rowland’s (1979:101) paradigm, in Munshiganj town the *Phase of Independence* could be considered the most mobile phase. Age and marital status of the migrants supports this conclusion (Tables 3-10 and 3-11): nearly four-fifths of the migrants were unmarried and, all but two of the twenty migrants were less than 35 years of age. A few were newly married and had left their wives either with the parental family or with the in-laws’ family. Finally, following Rowland (1979), it can be said that phase two, the *Phase of Family Formation*, leads to reduced mobility.

### Table 3-10: Present age of the migrants (based on discussions with migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3-11: Present marital status of migrants (based on discussions with migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To answer the question of when migrations occur: discussions with migrants and their families, it appears that (from 1974) the migration of people from Munshiganj town has fluctuated significantly (Table 3-12). A major stream of migration from Munshiganj occurred in 1978, especially overseas. Economic studies referring to remittances flowing into Bangladesh from overseas show the 1978-79 financial year as very significant (Mahmud and Osmani 1980:4; World Bank 1981:IV-V; Khuda 1982:2), which supports the findings in Munshiganj. It was a time after liberation (liberation occurred in 1971), when the nation was in a transitional period: the economy of the country had deteriorated due to war, and flood followed by a famine in 1974. The people were in a bad way, and the young generation was very much upset and became interested in migrating overseas, mostly to West Germany and to the Middle East. 1984 was another year in which migration from Munshiganj town was uncommonly high among the families interviewed. Five migrants went to the Middle East; three were doctors who migrated to Iran. Reason for the migration of doctors may have been the withdrawal of the Bangladesh Government regulation to restrict overseas migration by doctors in 1983.

### Table 3-12: Movement of migrants from Munshiganj Town (based on discussions with families)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of migration</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Members of one family unable to provide date.

3.2.4 WHERE migrants go in general and in particular

According to Mangalam (1968:17):

First, the migrants seek a destination where their deprivations or unmet wants can be satisfied; second, the migrants go to a place where the social organization is as closely related as possible (in their perception) to the one in their place of origin.

Findings in Munshiganj town suggest this contention.
Among interviewed migrants nearly three-fourths first migrated to Dhaka; and the majority of those who moved a second time did so in Dhaka (Table 3-13). The choice of a particular place by a migrant depends largely on their motives for moving. Migrations motivated for educational reasons usually involved Dhaka

Table 3-13: Destinations of migrants, first and second (based on discussions with migrants)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of destination</th>
<th>First migration</th>
<th>Second migration (*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rangpur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.S.R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*) 13 migrants moved once.

as a first destination: not only because of proximity, but also because of the quality of education available. One migrant cited the common belief that, "education in Dhaka University is the best in Bangladesh". Migration to Dhaka also allowed migrants the opportunity to visit family members in Munshiganj whenever they desired. Some of skilled migrants first migrated to Dhaka, and later went overseas to earn more money (Table 3-14). A major stream of such migrants was to the Middle East: Saudi Arabia (skilled and unskilled workers); Iran (doctors); Kuwait (unskilled office worker); Qatar and Oman (skilled welder and electrician, respectively).

Overseas migration for higher studies also is common from Munshiganj. One migrant went to the U.S.S.R. on scholarship; reason for his migration was an inability to continue higher studies at Dhaka University because of the financial situation of his family. Another migrant first completed his studies in Dhaka and then went to The Netherlands for higher studies through a Government Scholarship. It seems that migration for higher studies from Munshiganj can take a person anywhere.

Ritchey (1976) presented two hypotheses related to the motivation for migration: (1) the information hypothesis; and (2) the facilitating hypothesis. The information hypothesis suggests that the location of family and friends in a distant place encourages and directs migration by informing the potential migrant of
Table 3-14: Places of present destination by migrants
(based on discussions with families)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destinations</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhaka</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comilla</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munshiganj(*)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abu Dhabi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qatar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*): Two interviewed families were migrants in Munshiganj Town

conditions, particularly job opportunities, at that location. The facilitating hypothesis proposes that the distant location of family and friends encourages and directs migration by increasing the individual's potential adjustment through the availability of aid in relocation at an alternative area of residence (Ritchey 1976:389).

Referring to the first hypothesis, it is evident that some migrants from Munshiganj were provided information by friends or relatives living overseas; for example, in West Germany and in the U.S.A. Migration to West Germany mainly occurred with the help of friends; migration to the U.S.A. was stimulated by relatives. In the case of overseas migration, there is a tendency to move to places where either family members or known persons reside.

Considering the places where migrants moved to first, it is evident that the majority were accommodated at homes of either family members or known persons (Table 3-15). So, the first premise can be elaborated in that the tendency by migrants from Munshiganj town is to move to places where there are family members or known persons, as referred to in the second proposition by Ritchey (1976). Such findings are supported by Caldwell (1968:367) in Ghana and Connell et al. (1976:47) in India. Referring to family members' support of migration in India, Ishwaran (1965:83) claims that such affiliation is active irrespective of distance.
Table 3-15: Accommodation at first destination of migrants
(based on discussions with families in Munshiganj town)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodation</th>
<th>Number of migrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncles house</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers house</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisters house</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends place</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known persons house</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented house by father</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented house with friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented house with relatives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented house with colleagues</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented by himself</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation by employer</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University accommodation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of geographical location, there are two major flows of migration. First, among internal migrants the tendency to move to Dhaka city is higher than to any other place. Second, in overseas migration two important flows are remarkable. One is to the Middle East (mainly to earn money) and the other is in the U.S.A. (to seek both monetary and scholarly rewards). A flow to West Germany occurred in the 1970's, especially 1978; this later dried up because of restrictive regulations imposed by that Government. Now, migration to European countries is limited. The location of migrants from Munshiganj reflects the comment by Mangalam (1968:2):

... Whether international or internal, migration is generally assumed to be a response to new and existing opportunities ... both material and nonmaterial.

3.3 Conclusion

A major objective of this study is to formulate hypotheses on migration decision-making within families in Bangladesh. The discussion so far provides the opportunity to develop several propositions which might be tested by later investigations:
(1) Migration by children yields security for the parents not only in their old age but also at any time of risk in family life. Dependency on migrant children is pronounced by widows irrespective of the socio-economic situation of the family;

(2) Social mobility of the family is associated with the migration of children. In some cases, parents may be reluctant to disclose the nature of the work of their children, but the material gain (money and goods) which migration provides is positively related to social status;

(3) Eldest sons from Munshigonj town are more migratory than other children. This seems due, in part because the average household size in Munshigonj town is more than 6 persons, beyond the average urban household size for Bangladesh and exceeding the average for the nation, 5.9 and 5.7 respectively (Nisa 1983:93). Moreover, a high dependency ratio in Munshigonj town leads eldest sons to move to prepare themselves for family responsibilities. Due to few job opportunities in Munshigonj town, eldest sons have to migrate for work;

(4) Overseas migrants are providers of better and more secure lives for the family than internal migrants, mainly because of their enormous earnings overseas. Migrants with higher incomes remit more to the parental family than migrants with lower incomes;

(5) Independent decisions to migrate is for family welfare and to avoid disputes within the family;

(6) Family members who migrate initially for educational purposes are subsequently more mobile than other migrants;

(7) Education and economic independence gained through migration by women provide greater freedom for individual decision-making and this affects traditional family functions and norms;

(8) Female married migrants (dependents) contribute to the parental family to the best of their abilities;

(9) The decision to migrate is likely to be taken at early stage of life.
CHAPTER 4

COMMUTING AND THE FAMILY IN BANGLADESH

4.1 Commuters' Perspective

4.1.1 Introduction

Attempts to understand short-term and repetitive mobility in developing countries is a growing concern of researchers (Jones and Richter 1981). This type of movement includes seasonal migration, return migration, circulation and commuting. Circulation from a Third World perspective has been widely studied (Bedford 1981; Chapman 1981; Chapman and Prothero 1983; Prothero and Chapman 1984) but commuting remains a limited area of investigation (Hugo 1975, 1982; Mantra 1981).

Many authors have attempted to characterise the difference between different types of human mobility. Migration has been defined as the total displacement of people from one particular place to another (Roseman 1971:590). Zelinsky (1971:226) describes circulation as:

... short-term, repetitive, or cyclical in nature, but ... having in common the lack of any declared intention of a permanent or long-lasting change in residence.

Hugo (1975:314) differentiates commuting from circulation by an attribute additional to those indicated by Zelinsky (1971):

... the circular migrant's absence from home extends over full days rather than simply "working hours".

Commuting for the purpose of this study is defined (following Hugo 1975:397) as a regular reciprocal movement by individuals from and to Munshiganj town which is usually completed within the same day; but may involve several days. Figure 4-1 depicts the mobility process in Munshiganj town.

Complete data on commuting from Munshiganj town are lacking, but one study (Nisa 1983:102) has demonstrated existence of commuting from Munshiganj to Dhaka and Narayanganj, capital and main river port of Bangladesh, respectively (Figure 4-2). Of all family heads in Munshiganj town, 15 per cent work either in
Figure 4-1: Commuting and Migration by the people of Munshiganj Town
Figure 4-2: Dhaka District: Dhaka City, Narayanganj Town and Munshiganj Town
Dhaka or in Narayanganj, and the majority of these commute daily (Nisa 1983:102-6). Study of commuters from Munshiganj town is important in investigating the forces underlying decisions to commute rather than to migrate.

4.1.2 Process and purpose of commuting

Among the 12 commuters from the families interviewed in this study, ten commuted daily to Dhaka city and two commuted daily to Narayanganj town. "Private" transport in Munshiganj town is provided by rickshaw, so commuters must rise early in order to be on the first motor launch from Munshiganj to Narayanganj at 6.30 a.m. Those who commute to Dhaka city first board the motor launch to Narayanganj and then take different buses from Narayanganj to Dhaka. It takes about two hours to reach Dhaka city. Travel by road from Munshiganj to Narayanganj or Dhaka is very limited due to the poor state of the roads, the lack of an adequate number of buses, and few ferries across the Dhaleswari river. The number of people travelling by road would be higher if road transport was improved because the travelling distance would be reduced and the commuter could avoid the risk of travel on the river during the summer season which is very wet and stormy. Scheduled motor launches travelling between Munshiganj and Narayanganj frequently do not run in summer because the Inland Water Transport Authority thinks it too risky. Those who come from Dhaka city usually reach Narayanganj by bus and then take motor launches to Munshiganj. When motor launch services are cancelled, usually on short notice, commuters try to cross the river by small native boats or walk along the river bank; no other option is open to them. Improvement of the communication system from Munshiganj to Dhaka and Narayanganj would do much to ameliorate the anxiety of family members in Munshiganj town.

Despite the difficulties involved, commuting is necessary for employment. Maximization of economic welfare is an important consideration, as it is in Indonesia (Hugo 1982). However, the nature of commuting in Indonesia is different from that in Munshiganj. In Indonesia, commuting to the cities is done by villagers to supplement income during "slower" seasons (Hugo 1982:70). By contrast, work in the city is the principal source of income for most commuters from Munshiganj (Table 4-1). Eleven of the twelve commuters interviewed, had permanent jobs either in Dhaka or in Narayanganj. Only one commuter has his permanent job in Munshiganj town; he commutes to Dhaka city to work as a football coach two or three times a week. Of those who have permanent jobs and whose principal sources of income are in Dhaka or in Narayanganj, five have secondary sources of income in Munshiganj from house rent, lease of land and remittances from migrant family
Table 4-1: Occupation of commuters from Munshiganj town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Types of enterprise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit officer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal superintend</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector of Government Accounts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field officer (National Security Intelligence)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief executive</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football player</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Division Assistant (Bangladesh Power and Water Development Board)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

members. Commuting in Indonesia (Hugo 1982; Mantra 1981) is similar to that in Munshiganj in that there is a strong desire to maximize family well-being through income earned in the city.

4.1.3 Reasons for commuting rather than migrating

Reasons for commuting rather than migrating from Munshiganj town to Dhaka or Narayanganj are several (Table 4-2). These reasons may be categorised in four different groups: familial, economic, social and environmental.

Family obligations comprised a major set of reasons for commuting rather than migrating; indeed, several commuters had been migrants to Dhaka city, but family situations impelled them to return to reside in Munshiganj town. For example, one of these commuters became the only earning member of the family after his father’s death in 1971. He got a job in 1972 as a salesman in the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh; subsequently he got another job in Dhaka city and left Munshiganj town. He lived in Dhaka for 8 years from 1976-82, but returned to Munshiganj because:

... I felt that my younger brothers and sisters were becoming deviant. My mother also worried about me. To better look after my family, I decided to return and stay with them.

Another commuter who lived in Dhaka for more than 15 years, as and since he was a student, also decided to return to Munshiganj town to look after the family:
Table 4-2: Reasons for commuting rather than migrating from Munshiganj Town

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Number of responses (*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. FAMILIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To look after family members</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assistance from friends and relatives for marriage of dependents</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To keep close contact with relatives</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To take part in family discussions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Security of leaving own family with relatives in Munshiganj Town</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. ECONOMIC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Higher cost of living in Dhaka</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Higher house rent in Dhaka</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Higher cost of child education in Dhaka</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To claim birthright in Munshiganj</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Available foodstuffs from parental/leased property in rural area of Munshiganj Town</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inherited/owned house to live in Munshiganj Town</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Extra source of income in Dhaka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. SOCIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Difficult to maintain standard of living same as in Munshiganj Town</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Competition for admission in School (for children) is higher in Dhaka</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unwillingness to stay with unknown persons in mess in Dhaka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lack of communal support in Dhaka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D. ENVIRONMENTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Less crowded/less pollution</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Availability of fresh food</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Low risk of accident (for children) because of less modern transport</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* All responses by commuters are noted)
... After the death of my father I became the head of the family. I became obliged to take care of everything, the family property and the family members. I had to look after my mother, younger brothers and sisters as well as the wives and children of two other brothers living abroad.

Although there were many problems associated with commuting, he had no intention of returning to Dhaka city. The extended family system and family obligations compelled certain respondents to become commuters rather than migrants. Another familial reason for not migrating mentioned by commuters was to maintain contact with relatives. One respondent cited that commuting not only provided the opportunity to visit his elderly relatives living in rural areas surrounding Munshiganj town, but the chance to take part in family discussions (for example, the negotiation of marriage of one of his nieces) which gave him great satisfaction. Some elderly commuters mentioned that living in Munshiganj town was beneficial for them because friends and relatives provided assistance in arranging marriages of their grown-up dependants. The opportunity to leave spouses and offspring with the other family members was also cited as a great advantage by commuters.

Economic reasons surpass familial reasons for commuting rather than migrating. Several commuters noted the higher living expenses in Dhaka city, and others cited higher costs relative to their low income. Some commuters specifically mentioned higher house rent in Dhaka as compared with that in Munshiganj. For example, according to one commuter:

The rent of the house where I am living [in Munshiganj] will be at least 1500 Taka per month [in Dhaka], which is beyond my capacity. Therefore, I decided to commute. I myself could undergo the trouble of commuting without spending such an amount of money to rent a house. Even if I spend about 500 Taka per month [for commuting], it saves at least 1000 Taka to spend for the family ... I am the only earning member of the family and I must think about my family's expenses.

Another commuter and his wife sum up the situation, nicely:

Commuter: I agreed to suffer physically (troubles of everyday travel).

Wife: If we objected, the whole family would suffer; we are now used to it.

Furthermore, some commuters lived in either their own house or in parental homes which would be inherited. The opportunity to live in a parental house not only reduced their financial expenses to rent a house but provided the chance to maintain their birthright. One respondent, though citing the high cost of living in the city as reason for commuting, also revealed that following the death of his father, a sister's husband tried to occupy his father's property. He decided to return to Munshiganj from Dhaka with his family to claim his birthright.
Munshiganj is a small town, of around 11 square kilometers, surrounded by villages in which agriculture is the dominant activity. A majority of the families in the town have access to agricultural lands. They might not be directly involved with cultivation but they can get foodstuffs from these properties. Possession of land (parental/own) in adjacent rural areas usually yields a deal of assistance in the maintenance of their families by providing a variety of foodstuffs throughout the year.

For one interviewed commuter, commuting provided a supplementary source of income; in Dhaka city he coached a football team.

Commuters, from Munshiganj town, are concerned about several social and environmental facilities in the town as compared with Dhaka city. For example, the standard of living, costs and difficulties of children's education. Problems of schooling are seen as "mental pressure for parents". Due to high population density in the city, schools have heavy enrolments and the competition for admission is severe. In many cases children can gain admission only to schools far from their place of residence. Transportation then becomes a problem because of the lack of a public, or a regular alternative, transport system for school children; and not a negligible amount of money must be outlaid for their daily transport. Commuters expressed concern also about road accidents, which they need not think about in Munshiganj town. In short, respondents felt secure about leaving wives and children with relatives in Munshiganj town and commuting to, instead of residing in, the city.

Some commuters mentioned that the quiet and uncrowded town environment attracts them more than the busy, crowded capital. One commuter said he was unwilling to stay with unknown persons in Dhaka. Lack of communal support in Dhaka was also mentioned by a commuter. So, desire to commute rather than to migrate is made because of the presence, in Munshiganj town, of friends and relatives who share "common values and beliefs". Considerations of circulation in the Third World context, identified by Chapman and Prothero (1983:589) can be applied to commuting from Munshiganj town:

On the one hand is the security associated with the home or natal place through access to land and other local resources for food, housing materials and trading items; through kinship affiliation; through the presence of children and the elderly; and through common values and beliefs. There are, on the other hand, the locationally more widely spread opportunities and associated risks involving local political and religious leaders; kinsfolk; marriageable partners; items for exchange or trade; ceremonials and feasts; and the introduced goods and services of wage employment, commerce, medicine, education, religion, politics and entertainment.
All commuters interviewed are males. There are female commuters; I met several on trips to Dhaka. Most worked in Narayanganj; a few in Dhaka. On the other hand, a female migrant respondent, previously a commuter to Dhaka, gave reasons against commuting:

... To commute I would have to start very early in the morning to catch the 6.30 launch ... [to go to Narayanganj first and then by bus to go to Dhaka]. It created problems for my parents and other sisters [making breakfast, for example]. Moreover, I have to face trouble both physically and financially for such travel. ... I decided to stay in Dhaka.

4.2 Family Participation in Commuting Decision-Making

Five commuters were previously migrants. Comparing their previous migration decisions with their commuting decisions, it is seen that the influence of the family in the migration decision is stronger at early than later stages of life. Three of these five commuters were less than twenty-five years of age at the time of first migration; and they migrated singly. During the process leading to the migration decision, family members exerted a great deal of influence (Table 4-3).

When they later decided to commute, none discussed the matter with the family - neither the parental family nor members of the family of marriage - though three discussed it with their wives (Table 4-3). Evidence of less

Table 4-3: Process of decision-making of five commuters who were migrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Migration Decision</th>
<th>Later Commuting Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No discussion</td>
<td>Discussions with members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with family members</td>
<td>(2) and discussions with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family</td>
<td>members of parental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members</td>
<td>family of the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Number of commuters)</td>
<td>2 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

involvement of the family in the commuting decision process was indicated by these previous migrants. One said that at the time of his first migration in 1976, he had to discuss the matter several times with his father, father-in-law and brother-in-law. In 1981, when he decided to commute, he discussed the matter only with his wife. The influence of other members of the family gradually decreased with the advancement of his life. The same is the case for other commuters. Involvement of the family is greater in migration decision-making than in commuting decision-making. However, the fundamental concern of both commuters and migrants is to
maximise family well-being. It appears the decision to commute from Munshiganj town is likely to take place at a later stage of life, because when decision to commute was made ten out of twelve commuters were more than 30 years of age. Reasons for commuting decision are both economic and social, which might be usefully related to hypothesis of Davies and Pickles (1985:214):

... due to developing conservatism that progressively moderates mobility due to life-cycle changes. ... they may be attributed to a learning phenomenon, with the ability to realistically assess the merits and drawbacks of moving to alternative accommodation increasing with age.

4.3 Conclusion

Commuting from Munshiganj town may be characterized as follows:

(1) the decision to commute is likely to be an autonomous one, though related to family obligations;
(2) maximization of family economic gain and minimization of cost are incentives for commuting;
(3) the family of procreation is more involved in the decision to commute than the parental family;
(4) commuters are more likely males than females; and
(5) the decision to commute is more likely to be taken at later than earlier stage of life.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This thesis has been concerned with a little studied phenomenon of migration: migration decision-making within the family. Consideration of the family, rather than the individual, has provided the opportunity for a well-rounded approach to an understanding of the process of decision-making. Previous studies of migration in Bangladesh focused on macro-level causal relations which can yield only superficial intelligence about the nature of the process of decision-making. Here, a micro-level investigation of the decision-making process within the family has been attempted. The micro-approach is a promising avenue for the development of migration theory since it can provide information on who the migrants are, how they make their decisions, the timing of movement, choice of destinations and the consequences of migration.

In Bangladesh, the family is the unit of decision-making in all aspects of life including, of course, the decision to migrate. From the social point of view, the family provides security: people in Bangladesh do not have unemployment benefits, medical allowances, old age pensions or public welfare grants. In times of economic crisis, the family can provide security for its members. An individual’s education, occupation and marriage are influenced by the family in order to achieve overall welfare for the family. In the context of development planning, reliable knowledge about migration decision-making within the family is necessary if migration is to be influenced.

The aim of this thesis has been set out in three questions: who influences the decision to migrate which includes how such influence operates within the family; why a decision to migrate is made, including when in the life-cycle of the individual and the family, migration takes place; and where the migrants go. In analyzing data gathered to answer these questions, attempts have been made to compare the findings with other studies: comparison with migration studies is self-explanatory; comparison with fertility studies has been made in order to demonstrate the potential of migrants to provide security for family members as compared with the security traditionally gained through the creation of children.
In the sections following the main findings of this study are summarized and an attempt is made to point the way to further research into migration decision-making in the family context.

5.2 General features of decision-making

The significance of the family unit, in Bangladesh, has been established through studies of fertility and demonstrates a clear manifestation of parental claims for support from children at times of risk and distress (Cain 1977, 1978, 1981). Through a review of South Asian societies, Cain (1983:10) suggests that for family members the notion of family benefit takes precedence over individual benefit. Provision of welfare and insurance and the support of the elderly within the family are accomplished through implicit intergenerational contacts between parent and child. Cain (1984:10-11) speculated that in these societies the security value of children for parents is potentially high. On the basis of my study, I suggest that the desire of support from children might better be accomplished through migration than through simple reproduction.

There is a large measure of agreement about the support provided by migrant family members; the tendency to depend on migrant members appears a rational and even necessary family response in the existing socio-economic environment of Munshiganj town. Migration by members of the family did not take place for an individual migrant’s benefit. The financial assistance provided by migrant members is essential for family purposes; including, for example, siblings’ education, marriages, building a new home, and enhancing family resources. Families indicated also that migrants helped to enhance family status not only through manifest material wealth but by the very act of relocation.

In the expectation of family economic betterment, parents encourage migration to Dhaka city for education through which employment may be obtained in the city. Some of these migrants later managed to move overseas: doctors, skilled and unskilled workers. They migrated mostly to the Middle East. Migration to the U.S.A. and to some European countries also occurred, mainly for higher education.

Family well-being leads members to take part in discussions about migration. In many cases more than one family member is involved in these discussions since extended family is common in Munshiganj town. Most discussions take place among resident family members, though family members and/or friends living at particular destinations are involved indirectly. Financial as well as moral support is provided the migrant by family members. Support provided by extended family members - for example, maternal and paternal uncles - is given especially in single parent
families, but there is a little difference in the decision-making process, between single parent and two parent families.

There are examples of autonomous decisions by migrants from Munshiganj, but none was motivated for individual betterment. In certain situations family members agree with autonomous decisions to migrate in order to preserve family integrity. However, family members may react in different ways to migration, and so migration may alter traditional family relationships. This is often the case for female migration, which can lead to more egalitarian relations in decision-making in the family, participation in the modern sector of the economy, less sex-segregated employment, late marriage and also self choice of prospective groom. Male migrants' views and activities, also act to alter family norms in Munshiganj. All migrants, however, by financial contributions and visits to family members, confer benefits on parental families.

The timing of migration is a family rather than an individual concern, and appears to be "governed" by life-cycle stages, with migration in the early stages predominanting. Of course, particular events, like the runaway inflation which followed the war of independence (in 1971) and environmental disasters such as floods may override life-cycle stages and increase migration at particular times from Munshiganj town.

Two considerations have been suggested as influencing migrants' choice of destination: where a particular intention can be fulfilled; and where relatives, friends or known persons live. Referring to the first consideration, migration to Dhaka city usually takes place for higher education, and specialized technical education. Migration overseas also can occur for higher studies. Wherever the destination, however, migrants get information from family members and friends.

5.3 General features of commuting

Commuting is an alternative to migration from Munshiganj town, but the paucity of information gathered makes it risky to generalize. The endeavour here, then, is to synthesize the general features of commuting with reference to the decision-making process within the family.

Commuters from Munshiganj travel daily for work either to Dhaka city or to Narayanganj town. Commuting from Munshiganj town is neither the result of improved transport, as is the case of some developing countries, nor due to modernization of society, as in the developed world. Commuting from Munshiganj town is a response to the need to maximize wherewithal within the family, and so to minimize individual outlays such as for accommodation in the city.
Parental property, as a to-be inherited home, influenced some respondents to commute rather than to migrate. Such accommodation not only obviates the need to pay rent but provides the opportunity to enjoy a relatively low cost of living. Commuting also allows wives and children to be with other family members and this relieves worries about sickness or accident; and, when they return home, commuters have the opportunity to look after other family members. Commuting rather than migrating also enhances the opportunity to visit relatives in neighbouring villages and of taking an ongoing part in discussions of family matters. Those commuters who did not occupy a to-be inherited family home, benefited from lower house rents, living costs and child education. The decision to commute from Munshiganj town is made not only for economic benefit but also to maintain strong family ties and reciprocal family obligations. This is the case both for young and elderly commuters. Elderly commuters living in Munshiganj town also benefit from the presence of friends and relatives who can be of great assistance when the occasion demands.

The decision to commute is usually taken by the commuter-to-be without consultation, though wives are involved to some extent. Such decisions are taken for the benefit of the family: for economic gain or to care for other family members. Commuting is likely to take place at later stage of life because of family need. Common destinations for commuters from Munshiganj are two adjacent cities, Dhaka and Narayanganj.

5.4 Process of migration decision-making

Family involvement is more substantial in migration than in commuting decisions. The decision to commute is a decision by the individual involved; the decision to migrate is usually influenced by other family members and in many ways.

Decision-makers can be identified, but the process of reaching decisions was complicated. Most migrants decided themselves to migrate and then adopted one of two strategies. Those who could migrate independently can simply inform the family about their intended migration. On the other hand, an intending migrant who has to depend on the family must convince relatives of the benefit from such a move. Since most families are not well-off, to provide for such migrations is a risk and a number of family discussions are necessary to reach agreement. When the decision to migrate is made by family members - for example, father and elder brothers - there are discussions among these members about the actual migration. Concern is not only to provide wherewithal but also to maintain contact with the migrant and
relatives living at the particular destination. If a proposal for migration is initiated by relatives living at the proposed destination, especially overseas, then the family in Munshiganj must hold discussions to select or confirm the prospective migrant and to provide financial support. Friends may also be involved in the decision-making process indirectly, as agents who provide information and, in some cases, accommodation and help in acculturation of migrants in the new social environment. The decision to migrate, then, results from an interaction of opinions within the family and can be considered a compromise.

5.5 Conclusion

Important concerns of this study are to investigate the process of decision-making in migration and from this to develop hypotheses. The process of decision-making in migration has been described; it is not simple. However, several hypotheses concerning the process of decision-making in migration can be formulated:

(1) the decision-making process is an interaction of opinions between the migrant and family members. In most cases, the principal decision-makers are migrants themselves. Nevertheless, their decisions are influenced by the family in many different ways and actual movement occurs only after discussions with the family, particularly the parental family;

(2) reasons for migration comprise family factors and the socio-political situation of the country. The former refer to the family economic situation, the aspiration for higher education, a better job and thereby an increase of family prestige, and to maintain family integrity. The latter include economic depression or natural disasters like flood and famine which impinge on a family and act as indirect stimuli for migration. To migrate is less likely at a later stage of life when the cost and liabilities of life are greater than at an earlier stage;

(3) among migrants, both internal and international, important determinants for migration are the opportunity to earn more money and contact with known persons. Common practice among migrants is to stay with relatives at the place of destination.

To evaluate these first findings needs research. Whatever the outcome of such study, I firmly believe that the sharing of reciprocal risks and obligation within the family in Bangladeshi society can only be accomplished through a purposive migration strategy - not through the traditional strategy of having many children - and that families are well aware of this. Government must know how this migration strategy is implemented and what factors are significant if it would influence population relocation so as to enhance national development.
APPENDIX

GUIDE FOR INTERVIEWS

Similar questions were asked internal and international migrants, and commuters. For non-movers some supplementary questions were asked. The questions elicited responses in four major areas of concern:

(i) Open-ended questions about *HOW* the decision to migrate or commute is made and *WHO* is the principal decision-maker;

(ii) Open-ended questions about *WHY* (reasons) and *WHEN* (particular year and age, from which life-cycle stage is assessed later) the decision to migrate or commute was taken;

(iii) Open-ended questions regarding choice of place - place in general (choice of geographical location and in particular (choice to stay with friends or relatives or family members); and

(iv) Open-ended questions to non-movers regarding their reasons for not moving.

Several questions were asked informally in discussion to begin with; questions like - name, age, occupation, education and income of the family head - for which answers were noted but not recorded. After a time, permission was asked to tape the discussion and, if given, the interviewer was to include the following: *(WHO - HOW)*

- How many members migrated from your family?
- How such decisions are taken place? Was there any discussion between the migrant and the other members within the family? Please discuss in details.
- Do the migrant really had much to say?
- How the particular place is known to the migrant?
- Is there any other family member, friend or relative or at least known person in the place of destination?
- What sort of help provided by the known person, if any?
- How the particular migrant is selected among the other members in the family?
- What is the feelings of other family members about that migration?
- Who first decided this migration?
- Is it decided by the migrant first and later approved by the family member(s)? Please discuss in details.
- If the migrant had to ask some body within the family, who is the person to be asked?
- Who is the most respected man as respected by the family members?
- Is the father always asked, even if he (the father) is not the main earning member?
- Who provided the money (at first move upto becoming independent, and at the last move)?
- Who chosen the city?
- Who chosen the job?
- Who chosen the particular family to live with in the destination, if happened?
- Was there any choice of particular calendar year or age preference for migration?
- How that particular time is selected?

(WHY - WHEN)
- What was the reason for moving or commuting from Munshiganj Town (first move and successive moves, if applicable)?
- Why the particular place in chosen?
- Why not intended to migrate, if previous migrant or commuter?

(WHERE)
- Do you have any particular choice to go to a particular place?
- Please provide reasons on behalf of your reply.
- Do you have any choice to stay with relatives?
- Please provide reasons on behalf of your answer.
- If you have particular choice, why is that?
- How and who chosen that particular relative?

(General)
- Was the migrant brought up within the same family since migration?
- What was the level of education of the migrant (for first move and last move)?
- What was the migrant's occupation? What is his occupation now?
- How much the migrant earn per month?
- What type of contact do the family have with the migrant (visit correspondence and so on)?
- Do the migrant remit to the family?
- If yes, is this remittance is necessary to the family?
- Why it is necessary?

(Opinion and attitude regarding migration)
- Do you support migration?
- Please state the reasons on behalf of your opinion.
- Do you think that the mobility of a member in a family has any consequence to the economic condition and also family status on the society? Please state in brief.
- Are you happy /or unhappy in the present place?
- Please state the reasons on behalf of your answer.

(Supplementary questions for commuters and non-movers)
- Do all the members wish to stay in Munshiganj town?
- Please provide detailed answers on behalf of your reply.
- What are the reasons not for moving?
- How it effect the other members of the family?

Note: Although these questions are divided into different groups, it is quite difficult to structure them into mutually exclusive categories. Therefore the problem of analysis was great. Nevertheless, the open-ended questions and the in-depth nature of investigation provides the insight into decision-making process as well as role of the family in such process.


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