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SURVEY DETERMINING WILLINGNESS TO MIGRATE AMONGST THE SYLHETI STUDENTS

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Acknowledgement

Amid such a mass of small letters, it will not seem surprising that an occasional error of the press should have occurred. I trust, however, that the number of such errors is small; and I am confident that the generous, the learned, and the experienced (and it is their good opinion, and theirs only, I am anxious to obtain) will not deny me their kind indulgence.

(Forbes's Hindustani Dictionary, p.iv)

I am grateful to my friends Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman Khan, Adnan Ahmed Chowdhury, Bushra Binte Saleh, Doud and others who have helped me in preparing this paper with their encouragement and support. In particular, I would like to state my gratefulness to my supervisor, Mr. Parvez Karim Abbasi for his inexhaustible support, critical inputs and suggestions.

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to inquire about the causes and reasons behind Sylheti students wanting to migrate abroad. Based on the analysis of primary data generated from administering the structured questionnaire amongst Sylheti students, we find that the majority are not willing to migrate (55.1%). Out of those respondents who are willing to settle abroad (44.9%), we find that there is little or no gender or religious bias. Within female respondents, the percentage of students willing to migrate was nearly equal to that of their male counterpart (44.4%). In terms of respondents family income those within the 50001 to 100000 Taka range show a greater (44.6%) willingness to migrate than other income groups. Respondents whose parents have specialized education exhibit greater tendency to settle abroad (60%) than other groups with parents having general education (37.5%) or lower levels of education. Respondents are more inclined to settle abroad if their expatriate relatives are willing to sponsor them (53.3%). Students from private University are more willing to migrate than their public university counterparts (46.7% and 37.5% respectively). This tendency is more pronounced amongst students who have either completed their graduation or are pursuing Masters. This highlights the fact that mature students are willing to migrate more than those studying at lower levels.

The leading reasons behind respondents wanting to leave Bangladesh are due to a) lack of job opportunities, b) Low levels of income, c) poor law and order condition of Bangladesh, and d) Lack of quality education. This finding is in line with previous researches dealing with migratory trends from South Asia. The salient reasons as to why respondents want to migrate abroad are a) Higher Standard of Living; b) higher quality Education; c) higher Levels of Income.

Out of the respondents willing to settle abroad most prefer to obtain a student or high skilled immigrant visa to migrate. United States followed by United Kingdom and Canada are the most preferred destinations for aspiring migrants.

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SURVEY DETERMINING THE WILLINGNESS TO MIGRATE AMONGST THE SYLHETI STUDENTS

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Migration is an increasingly important strategy for sustaining livelihoods for those who migrate as well as the families and communities that they leave behind in their home countries. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the global flow of migration reached 191 million in 2005. The majority of migrants are from developing countries where their economies are in transition or experiencing stabilization and adjustment. Recent figures reveal that more than 60 percent of migrants are from the developing world.

Bangladesh has a long history of migration – both as a country of origin and as a land of destination. Historical story suggest that the ancestors of Sri Lanka's Sinhala population migrated to the island centuries ago from the territory that now constitutes Bangladesh. When the British developed the tea industry in North-east Bengal in the 18th century, they brought contracted laborers from different parts of India. Colonial policies brought about the destruction of the jute and cotton industry of Bengal, plus the market for fine Muslin and this was brought about by a large-scale migration of people from this part to Assam. People also migrated from East Bengal to Burma. However, since 1947 which saw the emergence of newly independent South Asian states, the gradual imposition of regulatory mechanisms has restricted the movement of people across state borders. Migration to the industrialized countries, especially to the West, also dates back to the colonial past of Bangladesh. During the 18th and early 19th century, sailors originating from the south-eastern parts of East Bengal (Chittagong and Noakhali), found jobs in the British merchant navy shipping goods from Kolkata to all over the world. Landless peasants from the northern Sylhet district, who had no opportunities for work in their own locality, gained employment in the dockyards of Hooghly, near Kolkata, as well as in the British merchant navy. Many seafarers from the latter group jumped ship whenever opportunities arose, landing in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Alam, 1988; Ali, 1997; Carey and Shukur, 1985). These stowaways were considered

pioneer migrants to the West. Today, Bangladeshis continue to migrate to the West through various routes: work vouchers; as students, including later acquisitions of work visas; and others through family reunification.

Among the developed economies, the UK and USA are the two major destinations. Other important destinations include: Greece, Australia, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, New Zealand, Belgium, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain and Japan. Government officials and migration experts estimate that almost 1.2 million Bangladeshis live in industrialized countries as permanent settlers, including both documented and undocumented migrants. Approximately 500,000 Bangladeshis each live in the UK and the USA. Government officials estimate that Italy, Canada, Japan, Australia and Greece each host more than 10,000 Bangladeshi migrants. (Sikder) (Siddiqui)

An increasing proportion of the migrants come from the ranks of the students who are within the 16-32 demographic age group. Bangladeshi students travel abroad for the purpose of pursuing their higher studies. Many tend to settle in the country once they have obtained their requisite degree. In several instances, students do not even complete their studies- rather they tend to use their student visa as a means to settle abroad. However, the trend may have been partially reversed, with rising hardship in developed countries, brought about by the recent global financial crises. Adverse economic conditions have forced many governments to enact tough immigration policies. The decline in the number of jobs on offer (due to worsening of the economy) and the emergence of new opportunities in Bangladesh (brought about by sustained economic growth over the past two decades) may offer a plausible explanation behind the return of so many expatriates and students (back to Bangladesh).

Sylhet division of Bangladesh has lead the way in terms of migration abroad Among the Bangladeshi Diaspora who have immigrated to or were born in another country, the number of Sylheti people are huge. Sylheti people have a tendency to settle abroad especially in the UK. The Sylhetis are known for their penchant for settling abroad. Historically, they have formed some of the earliest expatriate communities (from this part of the world) to have settled in the United Kingdom during the times of the British Raj. The records of first arrivals from the region what is known today as Bangladesh (was British India), were Sylheti cooks in London during 1873, part of the East India Company, who arrived to the UK as lascars in ships to work in

restaurants. These first few arrivals started the process of "chain migration" mainly from one region of Bangladesh—Sylhet, which led to substantial numbers of people migrating from rural areas of the region, creating links between relatives in Britain and the region.(Thapan) They mainly immigrated to the United Kingdom to find work, achieve a better living standard, and to escape conflict. In the 1970s, changes in immigration laws encouraged a new wave of Bangladeshis to come to the UK and settle. Job opportunities were initially limited to low paid sectors, with unskilled work in small factories and the textile trade being common. When the "Indian' restaurant" concept became popular, some Sylhetis started to open cafes. From these small beginnings a network of Bangladeshi restaurants, shops and banks became established in Brick Lane and surrounding areas. Sylhetis are now mainly employed in the distribution, hotel and restaurant industries.

The Sylhetis have now branched out –many are now settling in United States of America, Canada, and Australia. However, it is undeniable that the United Kingdom still retains a magnetic hold upon Sylhetis wanting to settle abroad.

Remittance has been the key element of the economic growth of the city and also the region. The money is mainly sent by expatriates of Sylhet living abroad, particularly the United Kingdom.¹ These foreign Bangladeshis are now looking to invest in the city. During the fiscal year of 2005-06, the flow of remittances increased by 25 % to \$4.8 billion, mostly from expatriates of Sylheti origin living in the United Kingdom with significant contributions from expatriates in the United States. That amount was expected to increase to \$5.5 billion in 2007, with the government's attention toward supervising and monitoring banks.² The amount of idle money lying with the commercial banks in Sylhet as deposits is about 4,000 crore taka, which is not common in the rest of Bangladesh.³

¹ BBC News (BBC). 25 December 1997. Retrieved on 2 June 2009

² Nation.ittefaq.com.http://nation.ittefaq.com/artman/publish/article_35346.shtml. Retrieved 19 May 2007

³ The Daily Star

1.2 Relevance of Study

The present study aims at enhancing understanding and knowledge-base in the area of Sylheti students wanting to migrate abroad. As Sylhetis are known for their low aversion towards migration (as attested by the far flung Sylheti Diaspora) an inquiry into Students of Sylheti origin would provide us with meaningful insight into the phenomenon of migration from Sylhet. Literatures relating to migration of Bangladeshi students falling within the demographic age group of 16 to 31 are extremely scarce; there has been little or no academic effort to assess the reasons as to why Bangladeshi students in general or Sylheti students migrate abroad. Furthermore the socio economic background of the students who do not want to go abroad has not been extensively looked into.

In addition, there has been increasing recognition that student migration can bring substantial benefits for the sending as well as the receiving country.(Anthias) This highlights the importance for Bangladesh of managing its student migration as effectively as possible. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to understand the nature of student migration in specific contexts and to evaluate the current system through which it takes place.

1.3 Objective of the study

The objective of the survey is to determine the reasons as to why Sylhetis Students want to migrate abroad (or not).

1.4 Methodology and Data Collection

The analysis presented in the study was based mainly on primary data generated through field surveys in Sylhet. Primary data was generated through (a) collation of relevant information by administering of a structured questionnaire, amongst 50 respondents. These respondents were students mostly from Sylhet city (Leading University, Metropolitan University, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology) or of Sylheti origin studying in Dhaka (North South University, East West University).

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Access to extant literature dealing with migratory trends of students of Sylhet is limited due to lack of previous studies. Hence, secondary data related to this topic is sparse. Therefore, the researcher had to rely on survey method to generate primary data. Time too has been a constraining factor. Such a vast topic cannot be extensively covered within such a short span of time.

1.6 Literature Review

Student immigration from Bangladesh to developed countries constitute a major flow (especially to Europe, America, Australia, Canada etc.) relative to other flows such as labor migration. Student migration amounts to an important part of the migration from Bangladesh to developed countries. The concept of transnationalism has entered discussions of international student migration. Others have described student migration with reference to the experiential goals of youth mobility cultures, for which transnational experience becomes a form of capital.

In 2005, with the help of the British Council and support from the British High Commission, RMMRU refugee and migratory movements research unit initiated a new project entitled ‘Transnationalism and Diaspora’, under which the issue student migration from Bangladesh to the UK was explored.

Roughly 2 million students per year study outside of their home countries and Asian students make up a large proportion of these, especially in Australia, UK and US (World Migration Report, 2005). Despite a rapid growth in student mobility and its clear importance, international student migration remains a vastly under-researched phenomenon.⁴

Student migration has huge potential benefits for both sending and receiving countries, as well as for individual students themselves. The benefits of student migration for the receiving country have long been recognized, both in terms of ‘brain gain’ and foreign income gained from overseas students, which the British Council estimates will be 13 billion GBP per year by 2020 (British Council Report, 2004).

One major motive for studying in the UK that emerged from discussions is the higher status accorded to a qualification from the UK compared to one from a Bangladeshi university.

⁴ (Anthias)

Studying in the UK is viewed both as a way of enhancing future job opportunities in Bangladesh and as a potential route towards working abroad in the future. In particular, a foreign degree or UK status is seen as a necessity for Bangladeshis to gain access to the international job market. This was a factor stressed mainly by the higher-achieving and ambitious students already pursuing postgraduate studies in the UK. These students generally had a realistic idea of the opportunities that would be open to them on completion of their studies and many of them had clear career goals. However, even for average or mediocre students who did not have specific career goals, the desire to work temporarily or settle permanently in the UK on completion of studies ranked high among the motivations for going there. For many Bangladeshis, then, student migration to the UK or other developed countries is seen as a route to short term or long term labor migration, either regular or irregular, and either highly-skilled or unskilled.⁵

In the context of Bangladesh, the shortage of literature on student migration contrasts with the extensive work done on other types of migrations, particularly labor migration. This study aims to contribute towards filling this knowledge gap in the existing literature by shedding some light on migration of students from Sylhet.

⁵ (Anthias)

SECTION 2

SAMPLE PROFILE

2.1 Gender

The Pie-Chart below shows the percentage breakdown of male and female of the respondents. 41 of the survey respondents were male while the rest were female.

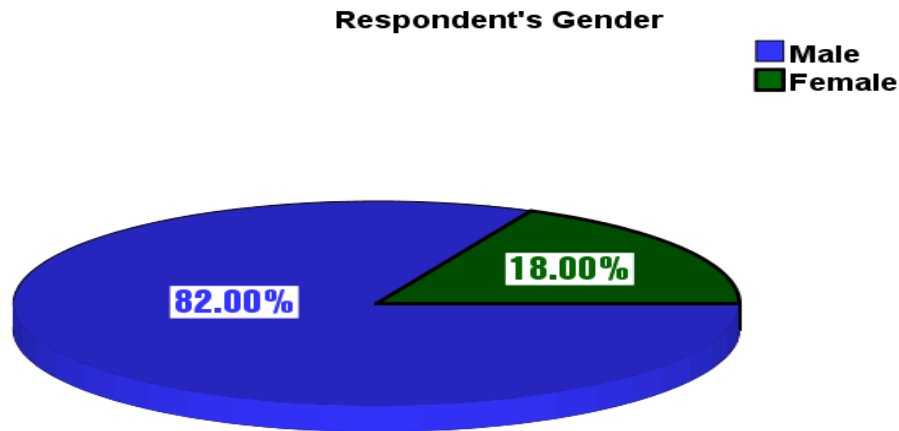


Figure 1: Respondent's Gender

2.2 Age

In terms of age breakdown, we divided the survey respondents into four distinct age groups-16 to 19; 20-23; 24 to 27 and 28 to 31. The bar chart below shows that nearly half (46%) of the respondents came from the 20 to 23 age group followed by the 24 to 27 age group(40%).

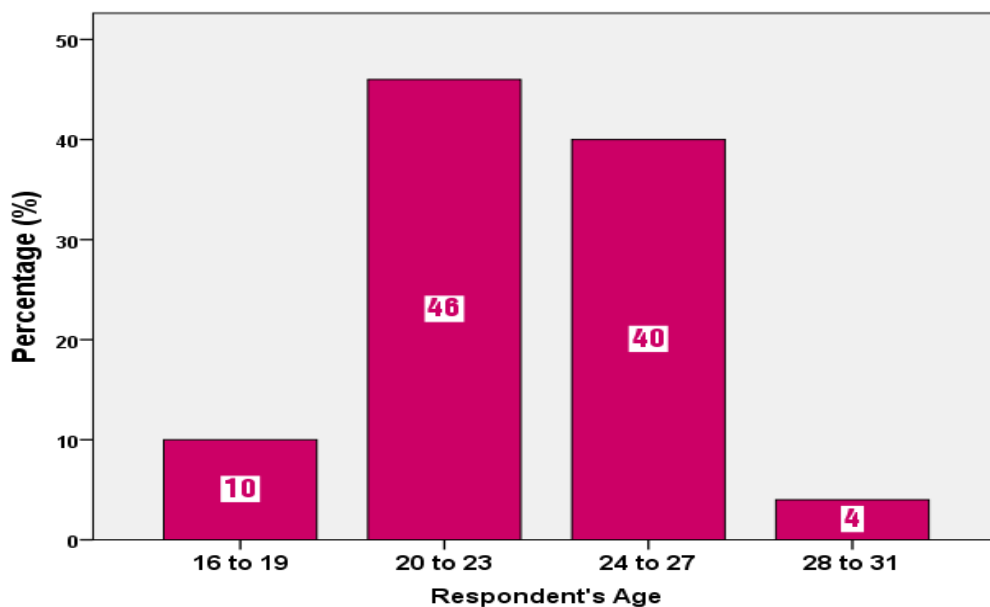


Figure 2: Respondent's Age Group

In terms of gender distribution on the basis of age group, we find that around 44 % males are to be found equally in the age groups 20 to 23 years and 24 to 27 years. In terms of female respondents, we find that slightly over 55% are to be found in the 20-23 age group followed by around 22% in the 24-27 age group.

Respondent's Gender * Respondent's Age Crosstabulation								
			Respondent's Age (in Years)				Total	
			16 to 19	20 to 23	24 to 27	28 to 31		
Respondent's Gender	Male	Count	4	18	18	1	41	
		% within Respondent's Gender	9.8%	43.9%	43.9%	2.4%	100.0%	
	Female	Count	1	5	2	1	9	
		% within Respondent's Gender	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%	100.0%	
Total		Count	5	23	20	2	50	
		% within Respondent's Gender	10.0%	46.0%	40.0%	4.0%	100.0%	

Table 1: Respondent's Gender and Age Crosstabulation

2.3 Religious Belief

82% of the Respondents were Muslims, followed by Hindus (16%) and Christians (2%). Though the survey was administered on the basis of random sampling, the religious breakdown of the respondents roughly approximates the national religious composition!

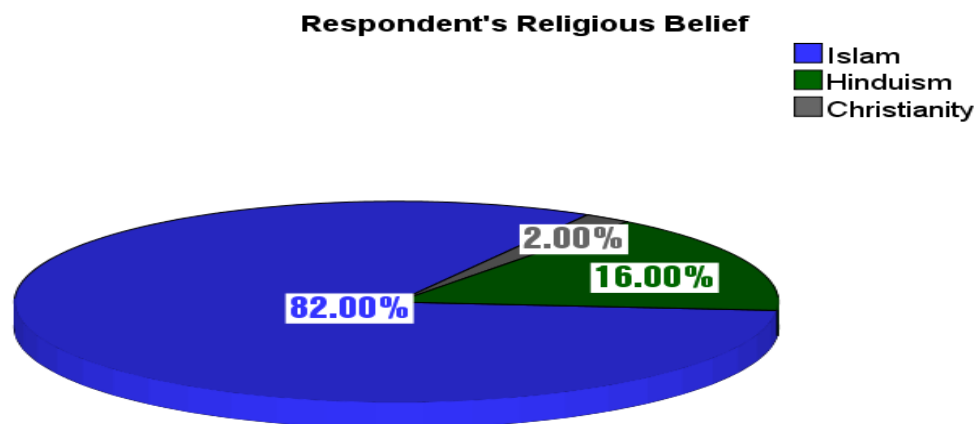


Figure 3: Respondent's Religious Belief

2.4 Marital Status

Most of the respondents of the survey are single. Few respondents are married. 94% of the respondents are single and only 6% of the respondents are married.

2.5 Educational Institution Type

The bar chart below shows that 63.83% of the respondents were from private institutions and 36.7% of the respondents were from public institutions. This is because we have collected data from only one public institution, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology and about 5 private institutions namely Metropolitan University, Leading University, North South University and East West University.

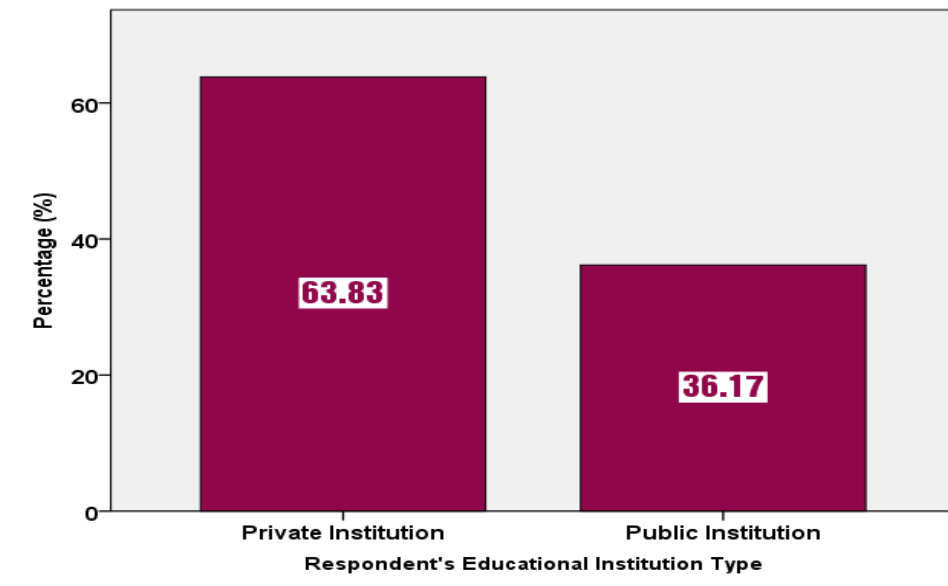


Figure 4: Respondent's Educational Institution Type

2.6 Educational Background

Students from different institutions were surveyed so their educational background is diverse. . 48% of the respondents of our survey are students who are continuing honors (out of which 28% from private universities and 20% from public university). 44% of the students surveyed have already graduated amongst whom 12% are pursuing their masters from private universities while only 4 % are enrolled in masters program at public university. Out of the respondents, 28% stated that after completing their graduation, they are not currently pursuing their Masters programme.

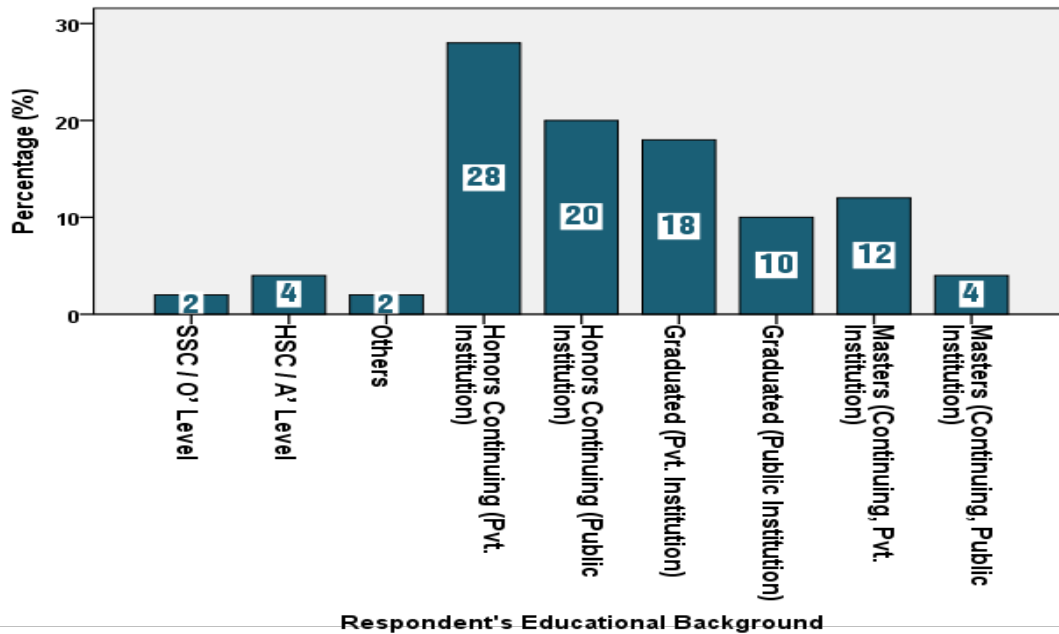


Figure 5: Respondents Educational Background

2.7 Family Income

Figure 6 below shows that a majority of the respondent's family income i.e. 43% falls between 50001 to 100000 Taka (which if converted in United State Dollars is approximately 668 to 1,336 USD). 27% of the respondent's family income is below 50,000 Taka (668 USD). 13.5% of the respondent's family income lies between 100001 to 150000 Taka (1,336 to 2,004 USD), and 10.8% have a family income above 300001 Taka (4,010 USD). 5.4% have income between 250001 to 300000 Taka (3,342 to 4,010 USD).

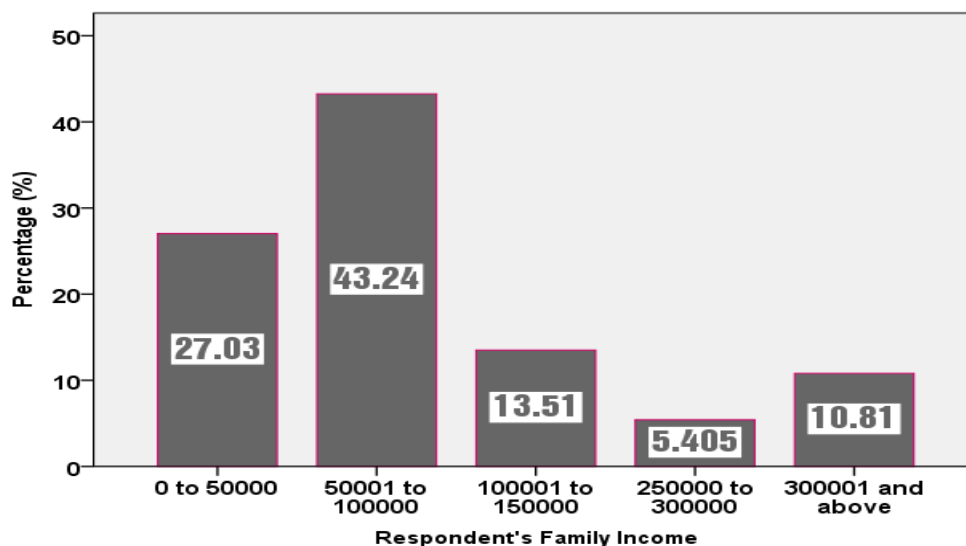


Figure 6: Respondent's Family Income

2.8 Academic Attainment of Parents

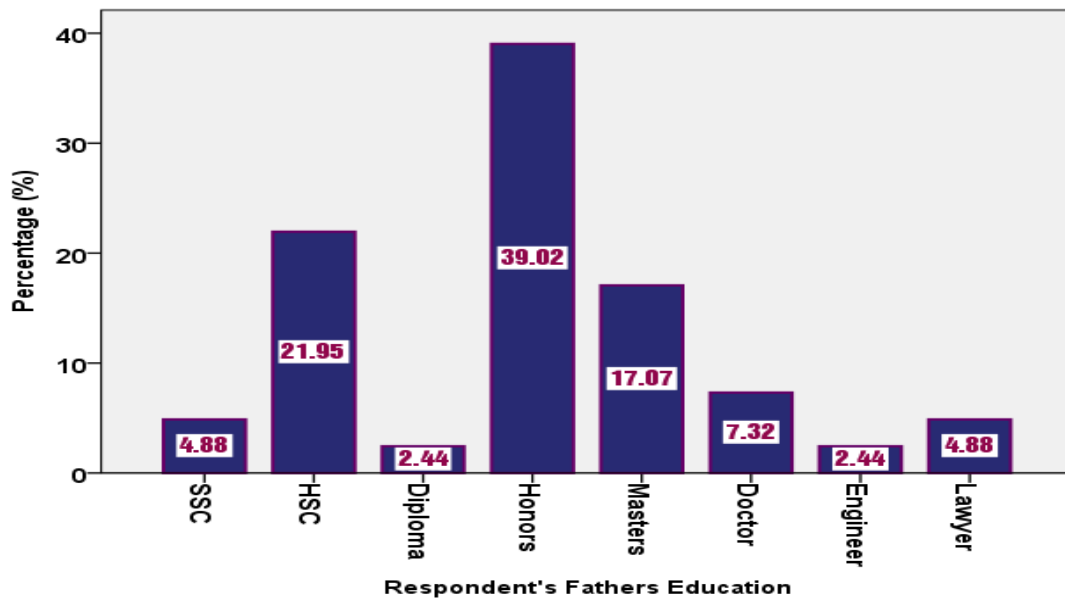


Figure 7: Academic Attainment of Parents

Around 40% of the respondent's parents are graduates, while 17% of the parents had completed masters. Around 14% of the parents had completed specialized education (Doctors 7.32%; Lawyers 4.88%; Engineers 2.44%). On the other end of the spectrum around 5% of the respondent's parents had only completed Secondary School Certificate (SSC).

2.9 Family Size

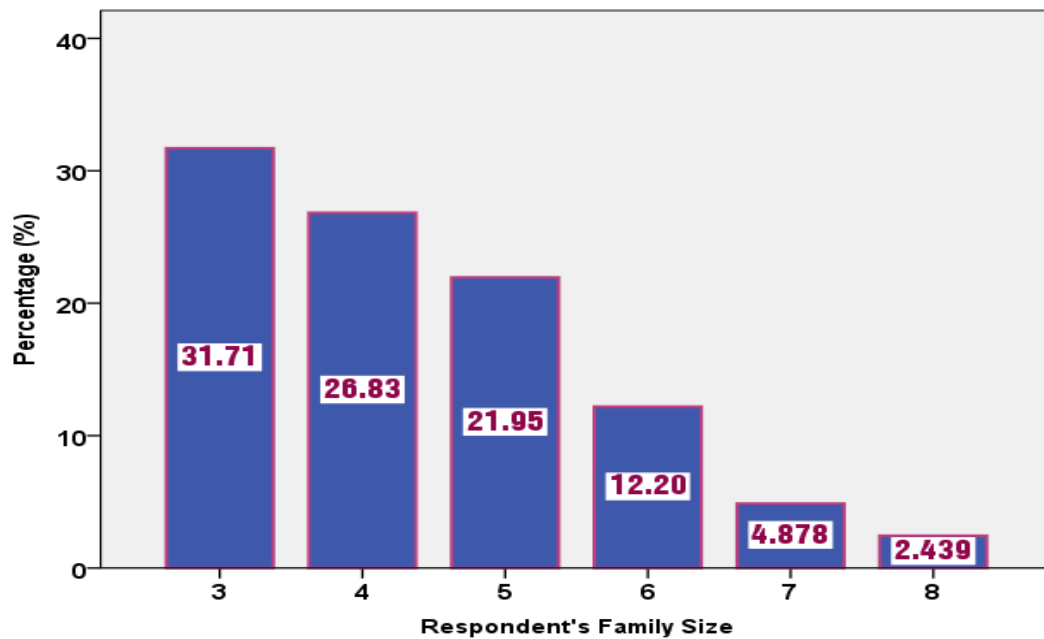


Figure 8: Respondent's Family Size

Slightly above 30% of the respondents had family consisting of three members. This was followed by family of four members (26.83%). On the other hand, representation of large families comprising of seven to eight members, in the survey sample, were quite low. This is indicative of the current trend of smaller families in Bangladesh.

SECTION 3

KEY FINDINGS

3.1 Whether Respondents want to Migrate or not

Based on the response of the sample, we find that the majority of Sylheti students (55.1%) were not willing to settle abroad. The rest (44.90%) were willing to settle abroad. This finding is contrary to the perception that most Sylhetis are willing to migrate to foreign countries.

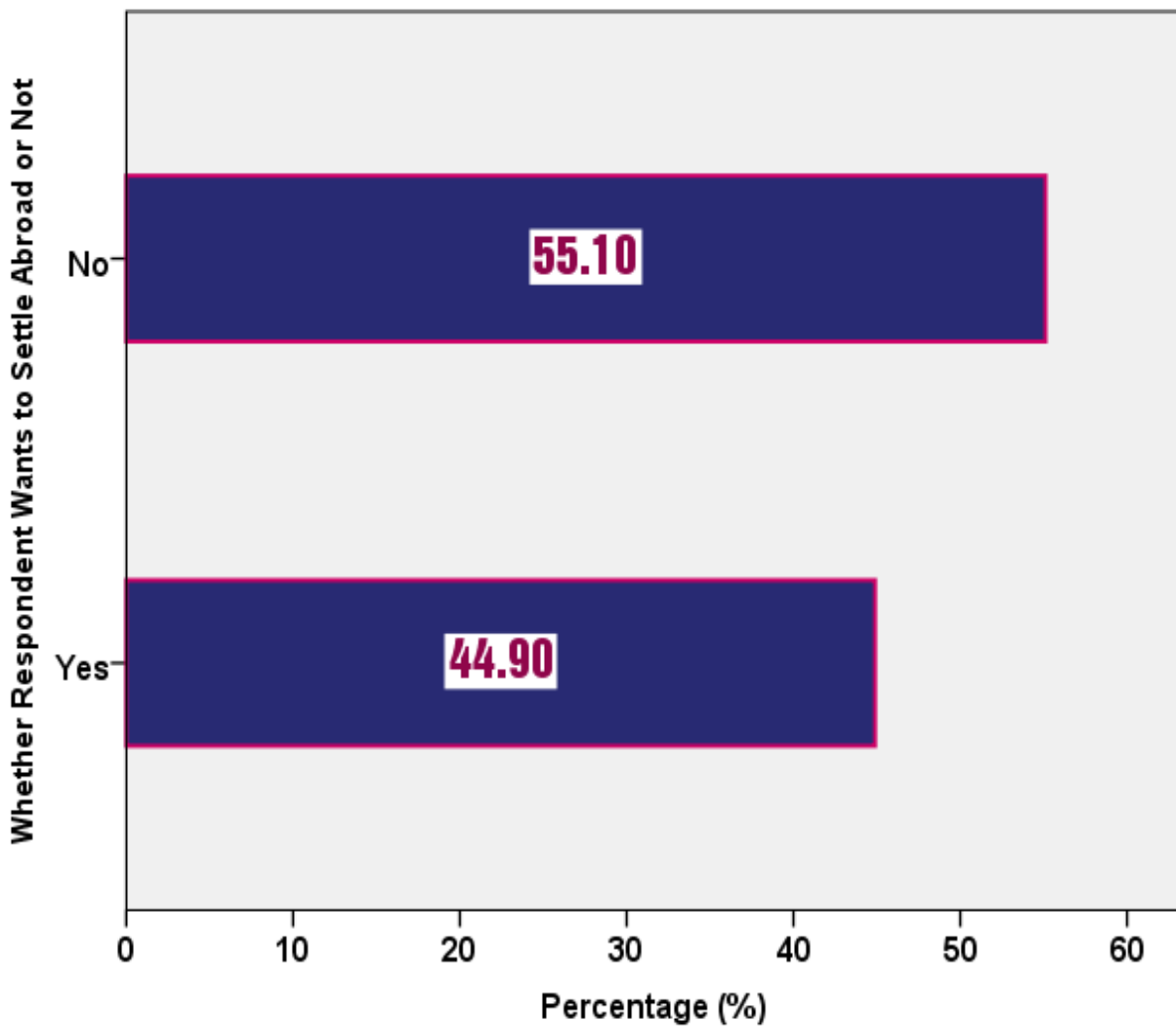


Figure 9: Respondent's Willingness to Settle Abroad

3.2 Gender and Willingness to Migrate

Analyzing willingness to migrate in terms of gender, we find that amongst the 55.1% respondents who did not want to settle abroad around 45% who are male and around 10% were female. In terms of the rest 44.9% who were willing to settle abroad, around 37% were male and slightly over 8% were female.

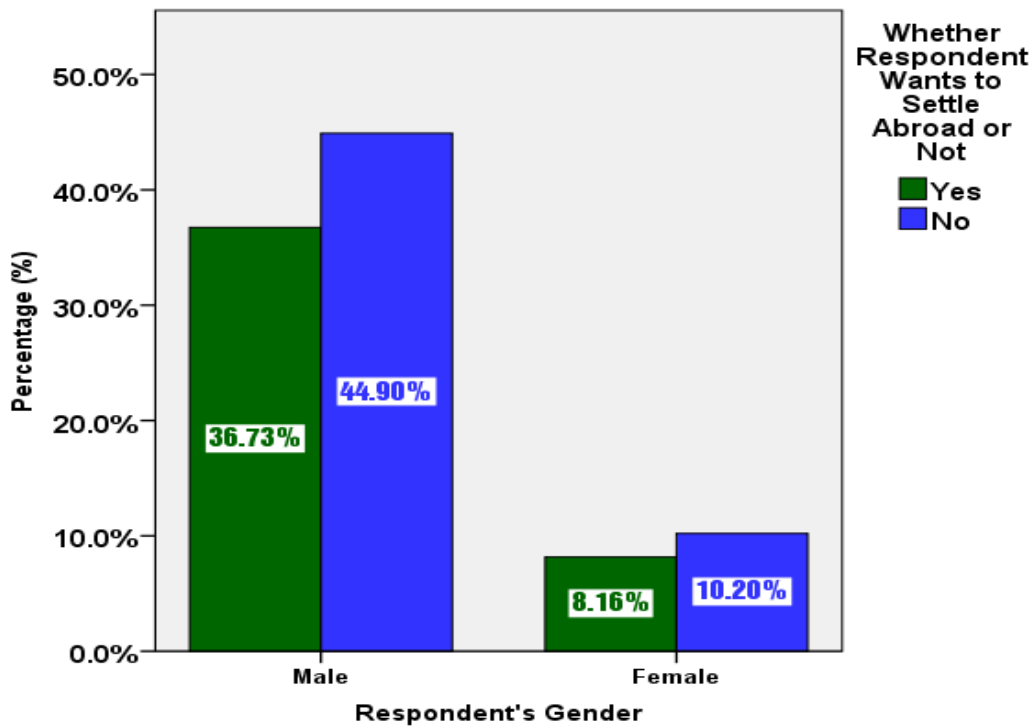


Figure 10: Respondent's Gender and their Willingness to Settle Abroad

The table below illustrates the scenario with some more details. Among the male respondents 45% are willing to settle abroad and rest of the 55% are against settling abroad. In case of the female respondents the picture is roughly alike. 44.5% female respondents want to settle abroad and the rest (55.6%) do not. This is a key finding which demolishes certain myths about women, especially of Sylheti origin. Sylheti women are as keen as their male counterparts about wanting to migrate and vice-versa. Hence we did not find any gender bias for or against migration.

Respondent's Gender * Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not Crosstabulation

			Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not		Total	
			Yes	No		
Respondent's Gender	Male	Count	18	22	40	
		% within Respondent's Gender	45.0%	55.0%	100.0%	
		% within Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not	81.8%	81.5%	81.6%	
		% of Total	36.7%	44.9%	81.6%	
	Female	Count	4	5	9	
		% within Respondent's Gender	44.4%	55.6%	100.0%	
		% within Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not	18.2%	18.5%	18.4%	
		% of Total	8.2%	10.2%	18.4%	
Total		Count	22	27	49	
		% within Respondent's Gender	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%	
		% within Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
		% of Total	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%	

Table 2: Respondent's Gender and Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not Crosstabulation

3.3 Religious Belief and Willingness to Migrate

Amongst Muslims around half (48.8%) of the respondents, want to settle abroad and the other 51.2% do not. Amongst Hindus, the overwhelming majority (71.4%) do not want to settle abroad. This finding indicates that religious beliefs do not have a marked effect on willingness to migrate. This, to some degree attests the amicable interfaith religious tolerance of Sylhet. The table below gives us the details about the willingness to settling abroad amongst different religious believers.

Respondent's Religious Belief * Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not Crosstabulation						
			Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not		Total	
			Yes	No		
Respondent's Religious Belief	Islam	Count	20	21	41	
		% within Respondent's Religious Belief	48.8%	51.2%	100.0%	
	Hinduism	Count	2	5	7	
		% within Respondent's Religious Belief	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%	
	Christianity	Count	0	1	1	
		% within Respondent's Religious Belief	.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Total		Count	22	27	49	
		% within Respondent's Religious Belief	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%	

Table 3: Respondents Religious Belief and Whether Respondent Wants To Settle Abroad or Not (Crosstabulation)

3.4 Income and Willingness to Migrate

In terms of income and willingness to migrate, we find the biggest proportion of aspiring migrants come from within the 50001 to 100000 Taka income group followed by less than 50000 Taka income group.

Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not * Respondent's Family Income Crosstabulation

			Respondent's Family Income					Total
			0 to 50000	50001 to 100000	100001 to 150000	250000 to 300000	300001 and above	
Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not	Yes	Count	5	7	1	0	2	15
		% within Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not	33.3%	46.7%	6.7%	.0%	13.3%	100.0%
		% within Respondent's Family Income	50.0%	43.8%	20.0%	.0%	66.7%	41.7%
		% of Total	13.9%	19.4%	2.8%	.0%	5.6%	41.7%
No		Count	5	9	4	2	1	21
		% within Whether Respondent Want to Settle Abroad or Not	23.8%	42.9%	19.0%	9.5%	4.8%	100.0%
		% within Respondent's Family Income	50.0%	56.3%	80.0%	100.0%	33.3%	58.3%
		% of Total	13.9%	25.0%	11.1%	5.6%	2.8%	58.3%
Total			10	16	5	2	3	36
			27.8%	44.4%	13.9%	5.6%	8.3%	100.0%
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
			%					
			27.8%	44.4%	13.9%	5.6%	8.3%	100.0%

Table 4: Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not and Respondent's Family Income (Crosstabulation)

3.5 Parents Academic Attainment and Willingness to Migrate

The respondent's parent's academic attainment can be disaggregated into three distinct groups. The first group includes respondent's whose parents are either have completed up to SSC and HSC. The Second Group includes those whose parents have completed up to Diploma, Honors and/or Masters. The Last group includes those respondents whose parents specialized in Law, Medicine or Engineering. It was observed that willingness to migrate was highest (60%) amongst the third group followed by the second group (37.5%).

3.6 Respondent's Educational Background and Willingness to Migrate

Willingness to settle abroad is more pronounced amongst the respondents who have graduated (either from public or private University) or are currently pursuing their Masters. For instance, out of nearly 45% of the respondents who are willing to go abroad 10.2% have graduated from private universities, 8.16% graduated from public University and another 8.16% are pursuing their Masters from private Universities.

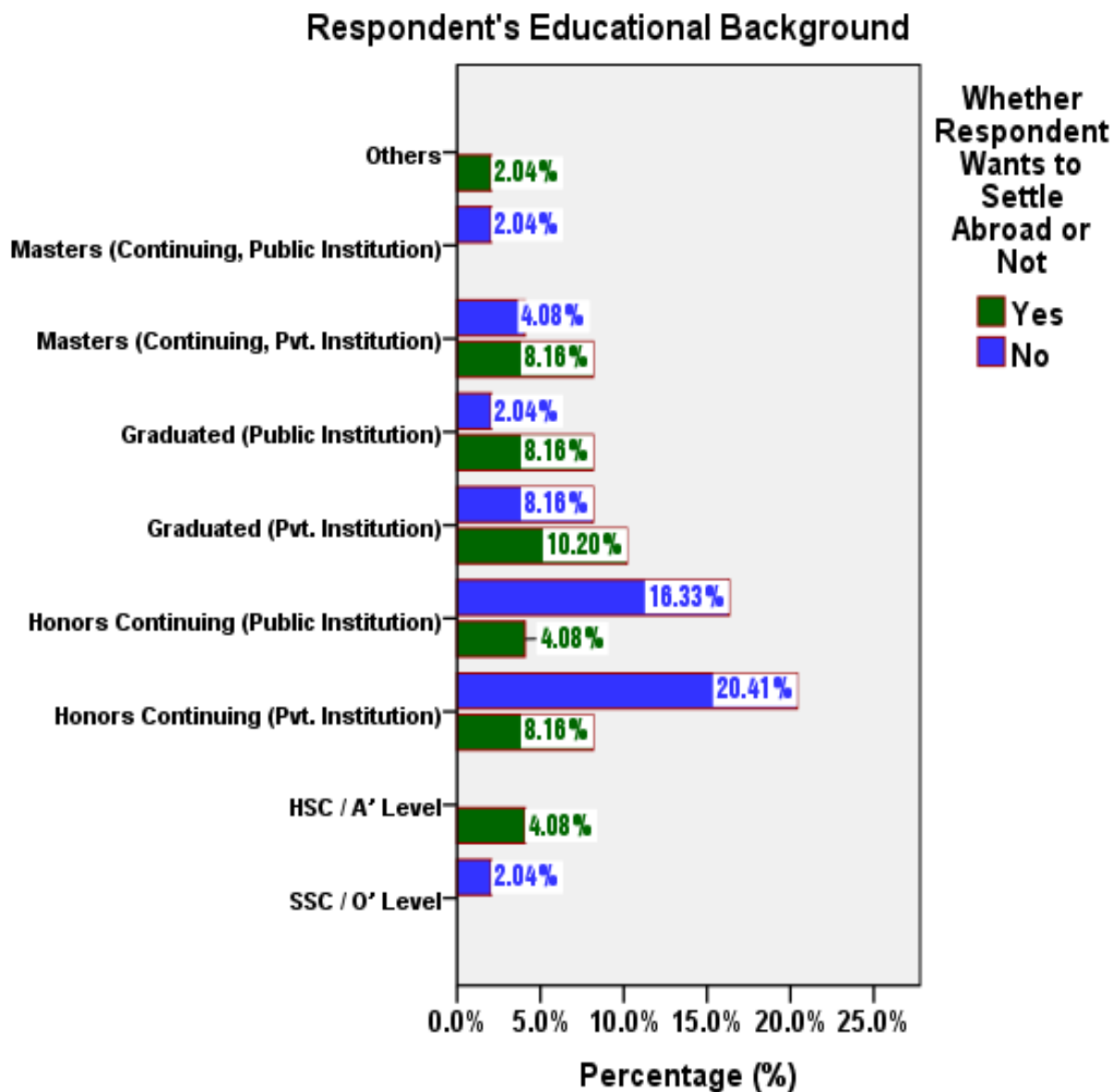


Figure 11: Respondent's Educational Background

3.7 Respondent's Educational Institution Type and Willingness to Migrate

In terms of type of educational institution and respondent's willingness to migrate, we observe that there is a greater tendency amongst Private University students (46.7%) to settle abroad as opposed to Public University students (37.5%).

Respondent's Educational Institution Type * Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not Crosstabulation						
			Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not		Total	
			Yes	No		
Respondent's Educational Institution Type	Private Institution	Count	14	16	30	
		% within Respondent's Educational Institution Type	46.7%	53.3%	100.0%	
	Public Institution	Count	6	10	16	
		% within Respondent's Educational Institution Type	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%	
Total		Count	20	26	46	
		% within Respondent's Educational Institution Type	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%	

Table 5: Respondent's Educational Institution Type and Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not (Crosstabulation)

3.8 Respondent's Family Members Living Abroad and Willingness To Migrate

The table below shows that 82% of the respondents have family members living abroad and only 18% of the respondents do not have any family members living abroad. This indicates that a good number of people from Sylhet live abroad. The bar chart below shows that 42.5% people have their immediate family members living abroad and 50% people have members from extended family living abroad. The chart also shows that 7.5 % people have both immediate family members and extended family members living abroad.

Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	41	82.0	82.0	82.0
	No	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Respondent's Family Members Living Abroad or Not

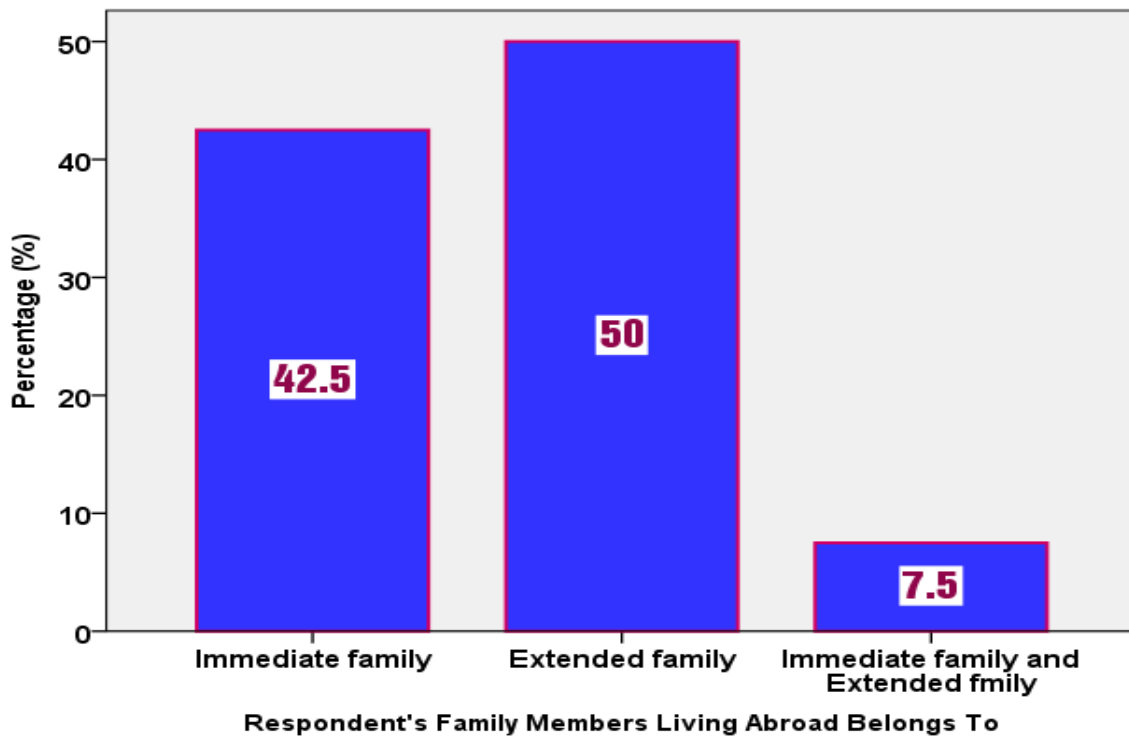


Figure 12: Respondent's Family Members Living Abroad Belongs to

The table below shows the influence of the respondent's family member living abroad on their willingness to settle abroad. Those with family members living abroad are more inclined to migrate (46.3%) as opposed to those who do not have any family members living abroad yet are inclined to migrate (37.5%).

Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not * Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not

Crosstabulation

			Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not		Total
			Yes	No	
Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not	Yes	Count	19	22	41
		% within Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not	46.3%	53.7%	100.0%
	No	Count	3	5	8
		% within Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	22	27	49
		% within Respondent's Family Member Live Abroad or Not	44.9%	55.1%	100.0%

Table 7: Respondent's Family Member Living Abroad or Not and Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not (Crosstabulation)

We want to analyze the influence of relatives living abroad acting as sponsors on responder's willingness to migrate. Respondents are more inclined to settle abroad if their expatriate relatives are willing to sponsor them (53.3%) as opposed to those respondents who want to migrate but their relatives are not willing to sponsor them (18.2%). This information is illustrated in detail by the following table.

Have They Helped Them As Sponsor * Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not Crosstabulation

			Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not		Total
			Yes	No	
Have They Helped Them As Sponsor	Yes	Count	16	14	30
		% within Have They Helped Them As Sponsor	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
	No	Count	2	9	11
		% within Have They Helped Them As Sponsor	18.2%	81.8%	100.0%
Total		Count	18	23	41
		% within Have They Helped Them As Sponsor	43.9%	56.1%	100.0%

Table 8 : Have They Helped Them as Sponsor and Whether Respondent Wants to Settle Abroad or Not (Crosstabulation)

3.9 Respondent's Preferred Country

Traditionally Sylheti people are known for veering towards Britain as the preferred country of migration. However, analyzing data obtained from the survey we find that United States of America is the most preferred country for would be migrants from Sylhet (46.15%). The UK stands at a distant second with around 27%. Canada and Australia are increasingly becoming popular choices for migration.

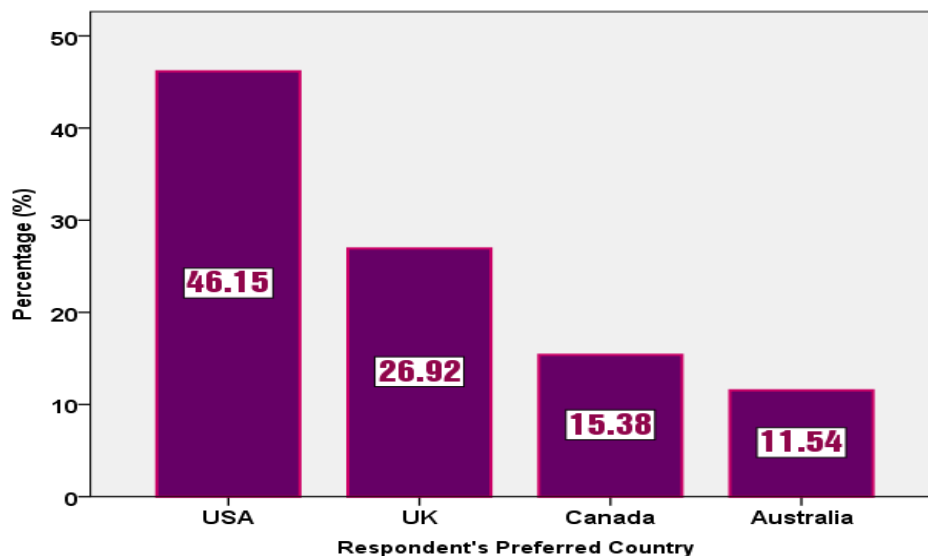


Figure 13: Respondent's Preferred Country

3.10 Why Respondents do not Want to Settle Abroad

The four leading reasons as to why respondents do not want to settle abroad are as follows-

1. Out of the respondents who do not want to settle abroad, around 23% would only want to go abroad for their higher studies. After completing their courses, they have no intention of staying back.
2. Around 15% of the respondents would only want to visit foreign countries.
3. An equal percentage of respondents want to stay with their parents.
4. Slightly over 11% of the respondents who do not want to settle abroad simply do not want to as they do not prefer migrating to a foreign country.

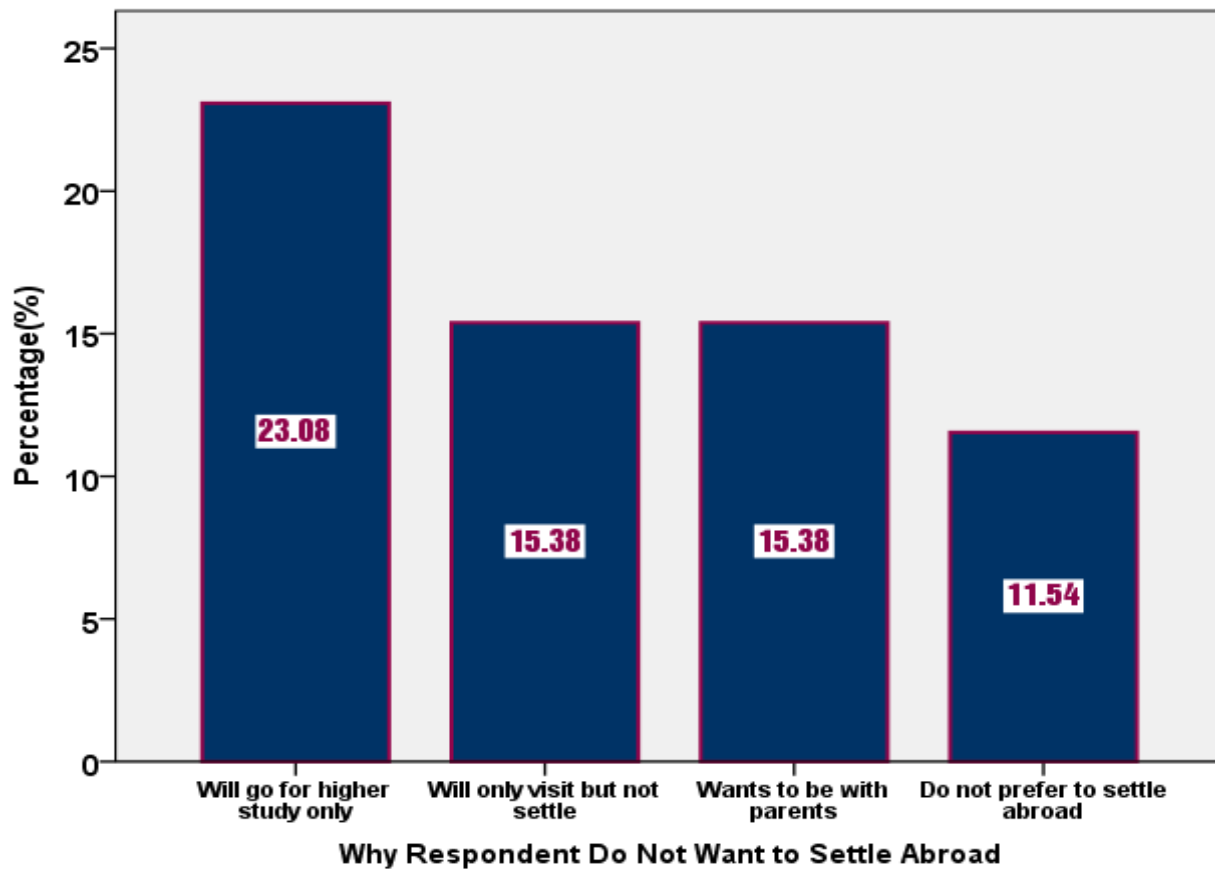


Figure 14: Why Respondents Do Not Want to Settle Abroad

3.11 Why Respondents Want to Leave Bangladesh

Out of those respondents who want to leave the country and settle abroad around 23% want to do so due to lack of job opportunities at home; 20% due to low levels of income followed by around 14% who are discouraged by the existing poor law and order condition of Bangladesh. Lack of quality education (5.71%) and limited number of seats in well reputed academic institutions in Bangladesh (2.86) were also reasons for respondents wanting to leave the country.

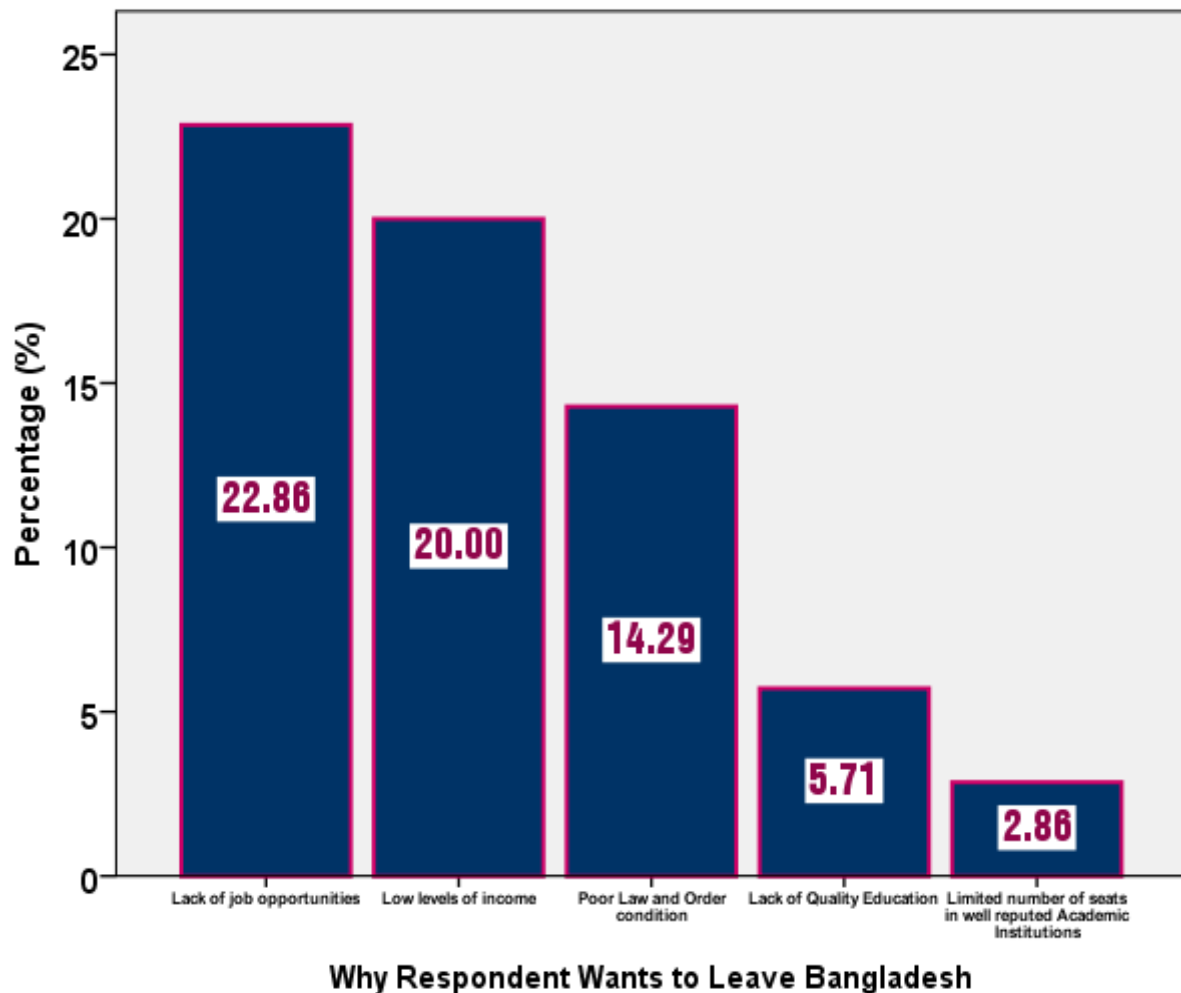


Figure 15: Why Respondents Want To Leave Bangladesh

3.12 Why Respondents Want to Migrate Abroad

The leading reasons as to why respondents are willing to migrate are as follows:

1. Higher Standard of Living (25%).
2. Higher quality Education (16.67%).
3. Higher Levels of Income (11.11%).
4. Better Prospects for Future Generation (8.33%).
5. Better Job Opportunities (5.56%).

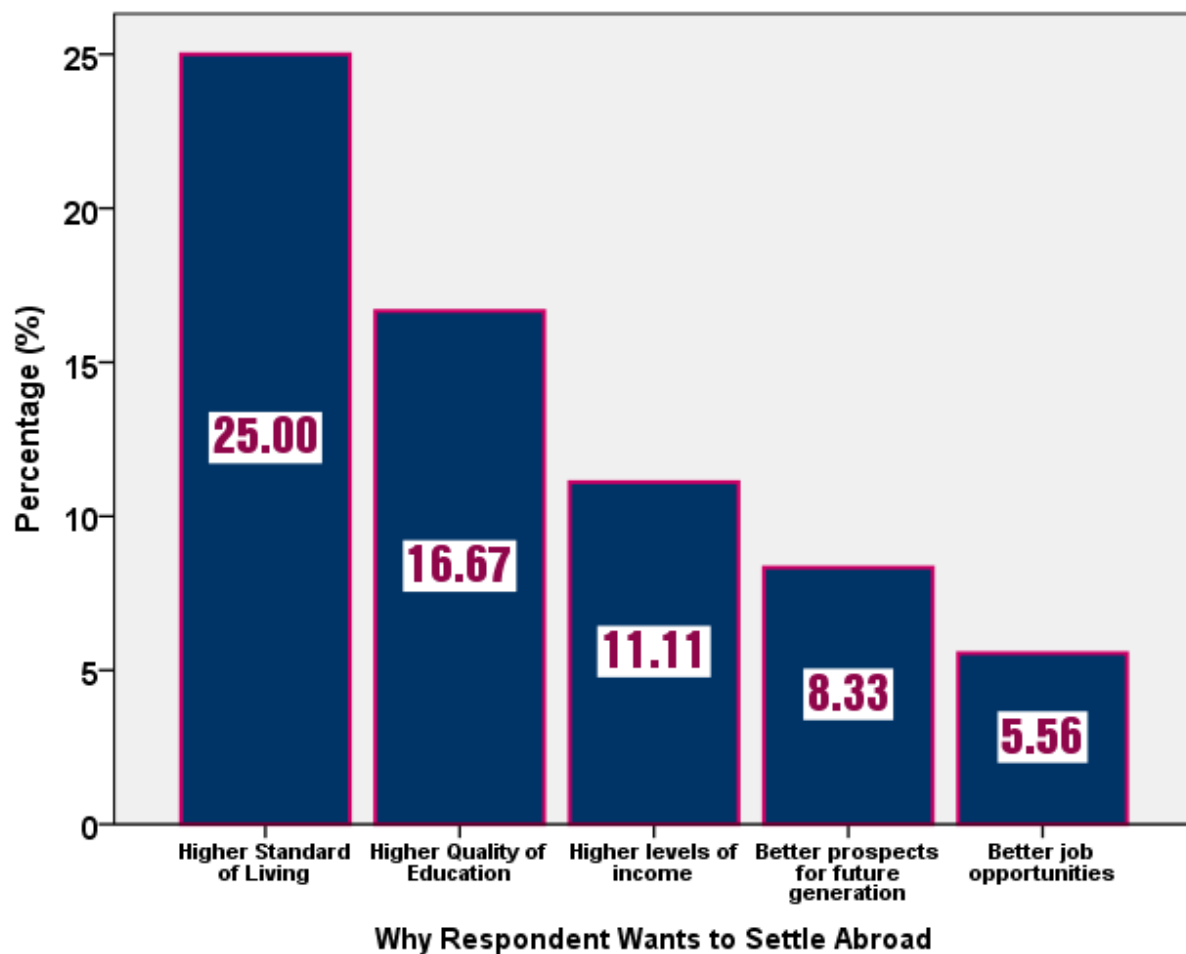


Figure 16: Why Respondents Want to Settle Abroad

3.13 The Route Respondents Would Follow

We asked our respondents about the route that they would follow to settle abroad. 38.10% respondents stated that they would obtain a student visa and then settle abroad. Roughly one third of the respondents would want to migrate abroad by obtaining high skill immigrant visa. 9.52% wants to settle through the process of going as tourists to foreign countries and staying back. The marital route is also somewhat popular.

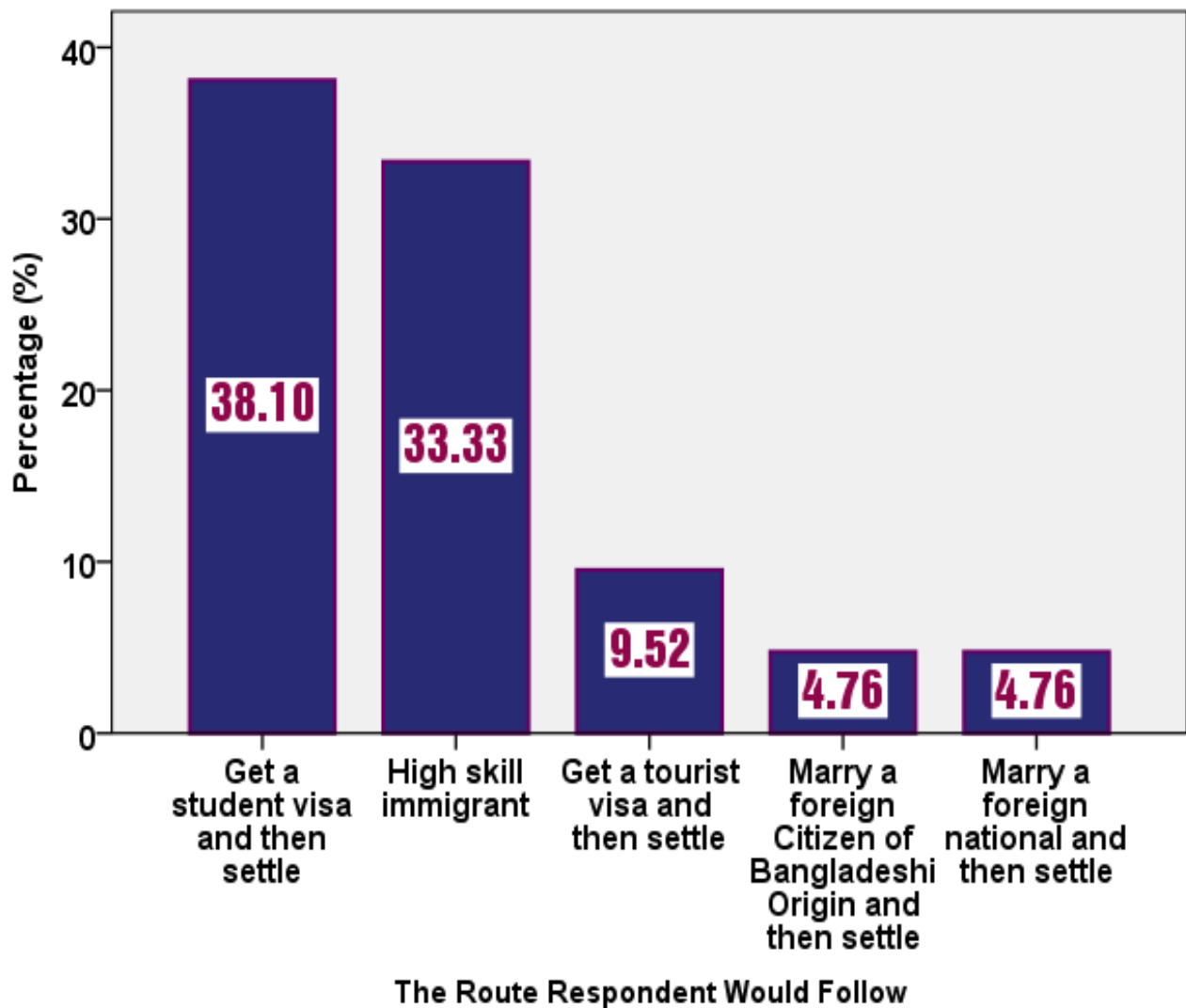


Figure 17: The Route Respondents Would Follow

3.14 Initial Accommodation Abroad

Out of the respondents who want to migrate 64.1 % would initially stay with their relatives; 28.21 % would stay alone; 7.69% would stay with their friends.

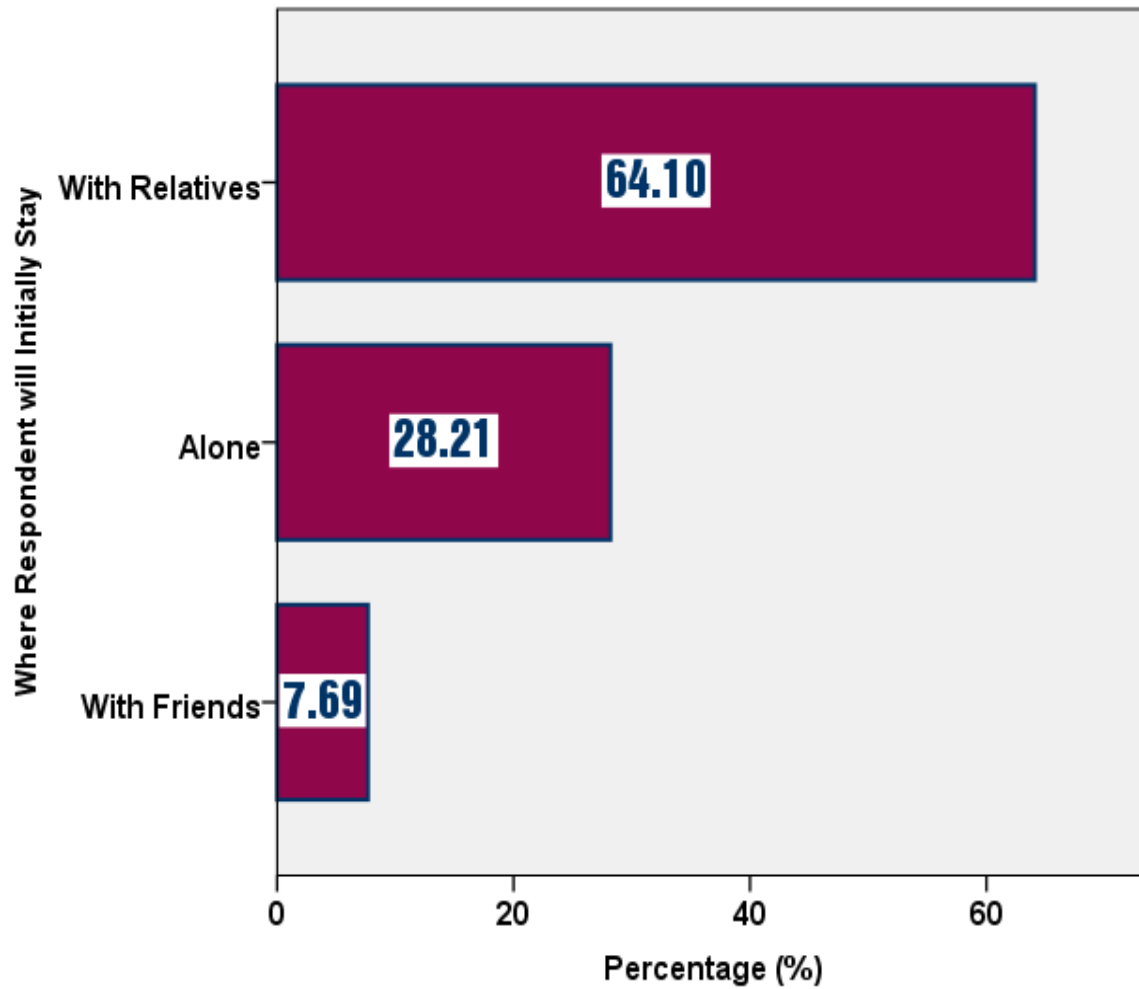


Figure 18: Respondent's Initial Stay Plan

3.15 Respondents Plan to Return to Bangladesh

Out of the respondents who want to settle abroad, around 80% would like to return to Bangladesh at a point in time as opposed to the rest 21% who will not.

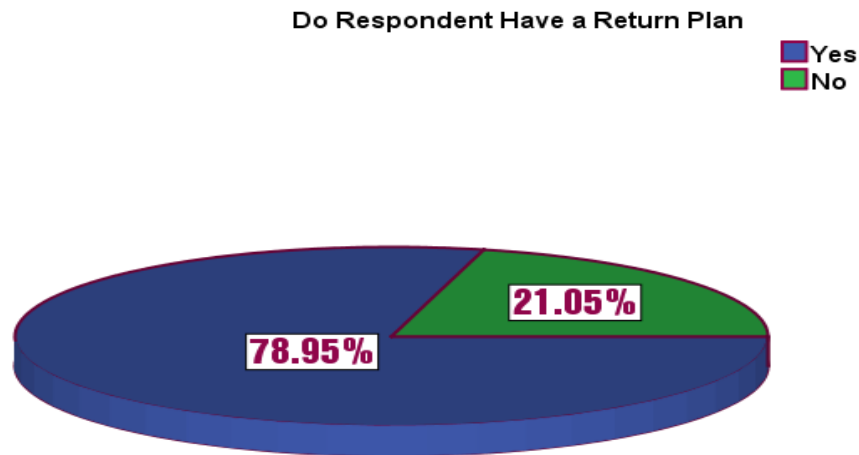


Figure 19: Respondent's Plan to Return

3.16 Respondents Willingness to Act as Sponsor

84.21% of the respondents who want to go abroad are willing to act as sponsors for their relatives, as opposed to the rest 15.79 % who refused to act as sponsors.

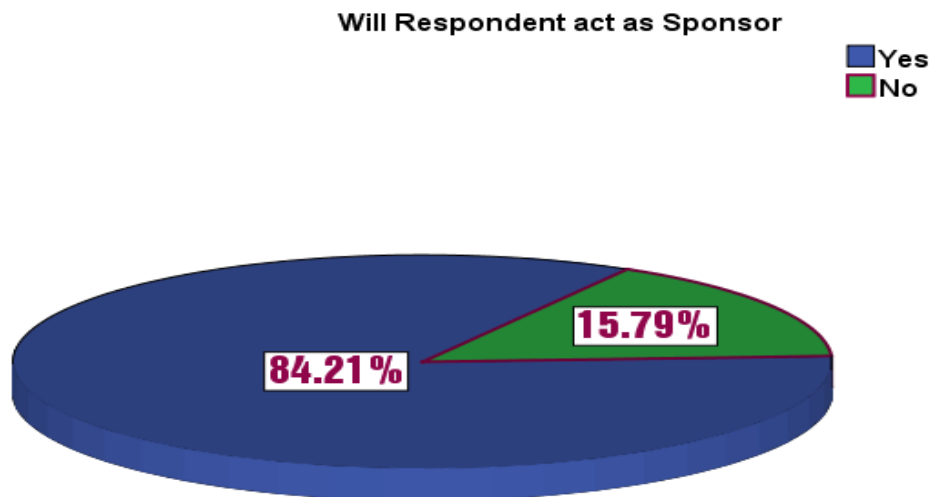


Figure 20: Respondent's Willingness to act as Sponsor

3.17 Conclusion

Based on the analysis of primary data generated from administering the structured questionnaire amongst Sylheti students, we find that the majority are not willing to migrate. This shows that at least in case of students (within the 16 to 31 age group) the popular perception of Sylhetis eager to settle abroad does not hold true. Out of those respondents who are willing to settle abroad, we find that there is little or no gender or religious bias. Within female respondents, the percentage of students willing to migrate was nearly equal to that of their male counterpart. In terms of religious affiliation and willingness to migrate we observe that there is no marked tendency amongst minorities to settle abroad. In terms of respondents family income those within the 50001 to 100000 Taka range show a greater willingness to migrate than other income groups. Respondents whose parents have specialized education exhibit greater tendency to settle abroad than other groups with parents having general education or lower levels of education. Respondents are more inclined to settle abroad if their expatriate relatives are willing to sponsor them. Students from private University are more willing to migrate than their public university counterparts. This tendency is more pronounced amongst students who have either completed their graduation or are pursuing Masters. This highlights the fact that mature students are willing to migrate more than those studying at lower levels.

The leading reasons behind respondents wanting to leave Bangladesh are due to a) lack of job opportunities, b) Low levels of income, c) poor law and order condition of Bangladesh, and d) Lack of quality education. This finding is in line with previous researches dealing with migratory trends from South Asia. The salient reasons as to why respondents want to migrate abroad are a) Higher Standard of Living; b) higher quality Education; c) higher Levels of Income.

Out of the respondents willing to settle abroad most prefer to obtain a student or high skilled immigrant visa to migrate. United States followed by United Kingdom and Canada are the most preferred destinations for aspiring migrants.

In conclusion, it is hoped that this study, despite its limited scope, would be able to shed light on the important dynamics of student migration from Bangladesh with specific reference to Sylhet.

Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire code

(Please put tick (✓) marks to answer the questions)

1) Respondent's Name _____

2) Respondent's Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female

3) Respondent's Age

☐ 16-19

☐ 20-23

☐ 24-27

☐ 28-31

4) Respondent's Religious Belief

☐ Islam

☐ Hinduism

☐ Christianity

☐ Others; Please Specify _____

5) Respondent's Marital Status

☐ Single

☐ Married

6) Respondent's Occupation

☐ Student

☐ Service

☐ Business

☐ Others; Please Specify _____

7) Respondent's Educational Background / Recent degree / Ongoing Degree / Qualifications

☐ SSC / O' Level; Grade / GPA _____ ☐ HSC / A' Level; Grade / GPA _____

☐ Honors Continuing (Pvt. Institution) ☐ Honors Continuing (Public Institution)

☐ Graduated (Pvt. Institution) ☐ Graduated (Public Institution)

☐ Masters (Continuing, Pvt. Institution) ☐ Masters (Continuing, Public Institution)

☐ Post Graduate (Pvt. Institution) ☐ Post Graduate (Public Institution)

☐ Others; Please specify _____

8)

No.	Name of Family Members	Age	Educational qualifications	Occupation	Approximate Income per month (in Taka)
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					

9) Assets your family have *(You can tick more than one option)*

☐ Apartment

☐ House

☐ Land

☐ Vehicle

☐ Savings / Deposits

☐ All of the Above

☐ Others; Please Specify _____

10) Do you have members of your family living abroad?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11) If **Yes**, they belong to your *(You can tick more than one option)*

☐ Immediate family

☐ Extended family

12) If **Yes**, indicate the country that they are residing in *(You can tick more than one option)*

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ United State of America (USA) | ☐ United Kingdom (UK) |
| ☐ Canada | ☐ Australia |
| ☐ Italy | ☐ Germany |
| ☐ United Arab Emirates (UAE) | ☐ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) |
| ☐ Kuwait | ☐ Japan |
| ☐ Malaysia | ☐ Others; Please Specify _____ |

13) How long have they been living abroad?

Year (*Approximate*)

14) Have they acted as sponsors for immigrants or helped you / your relatives to settle in their country of work or residence or will they act as sponsors for immigrants if you / your relatives want to settle abroad?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

15) Do you want to settle abroad?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

16) If **No**, please indicate the reason(s); if **Yes**, skip to the question no 17. (*You can tick more than one option*)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ I do not prefer to settle abroad | ☐ I want to be with my parents |
| ☐ I will only visit but not settle | ☐ I will go for higher study only |
| ☐ I will not get a white collar job | ☐ Others; Please Specify _____ |

17) If **Yes**, then indicate the route that you would follow (*You can tick more than one option*)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Get a tourist visa and then settle | ☐ Get a student visa and then settle |
| ☐ Get a Work Permit and then settle | ☐ Marry a foreign national and then settle |
| ☐ Marry a foreign Citizen of Bangladeshi Origin and then settle | |
| ☐ High skill immigrant | ☐ Others; Please Specify _____ |

18) If you prefer to settle abroad which country you would like to settle in? _____

19) If you want to leave Bangladesh please indicate the reason(s)

You can tick more than one option. PLEASE rank to indicate your preferences i.e. 1 (First Preference), 2 (Second Preference) and so on.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Lack of Quality Education | ☐ Limited number of seats in well reputed Academic Institutions |
| ☐ Lack of job opportunities | ☐ Low levels of income |
| ☐ Poor Law and Order condition | ☐ Others; Please specify _____ |

20) If you want to settle abroad indicate the reason(s)

You can tick more than one option. PLEASE rank to indicate your preferences i.e. 1 (First Preference), 2 (Second Preference) and so on.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Higher Quality of Education | ☐ Better job opportunities |
| ☐ Higher levels of income | ☐ Better prospects for future generation |
| ☐ Higher Standard of Living | ☐ Others; Please specify _____ |

21) If you go abroad, whom do you want to stay with initially?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Alone | ☐ With Relatives |
| ☐ With Friends | ☐ Others; Please Specify _____ |

22) If you obtain citizenship in your desired country, would you have any plan to return to Bangladesh permanently after a certain period of time?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

23) Do you want to sponsor your relatives / family members if you obtain citizenship or permanent resident status of a foreign country?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

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