Chapter 4: Migration as a source of challenges and opportunities for the schooling of children in Jalpara

We have seen in chapter (2) before that migration can affect school education of children both positively and negatively. But studies tend to claim that this effect is either positive or negative. This chapter discusses whether migration from Jalpara affects education of children in the similar ways or both positively and negatively. This sets out with the discussion of why people of Jalpara desire education for their children.

Why parents want their children to acquire education

Eighty percent of parents in the sampled households in 2005 were illiterate. Life histories suggest that poverty, lack of awareness among the parents and inadequate government effort were among the main reasons behind this illiteracy. Regarding education of her children the mother of JB, an illiterate male and aged about mid-fifties, said, “There was no school at that time. None of three children ever went to school. I could not send them to school. How could I give them education? We were living hand to mouth. I could not send them to school. They roamed from house to house to get some work. They worked and lived.” For many children along with poverty the lack of government effort was held to be responsible behind this massive illiteracy. One of them was Samsed Sheikh, who was in his mid-forty in the year 2005 and told,
I never went to school when I was a child. Now both the government and parents provide a lot of initiatives to get children to go to school. In our days there weren’t any such initiative. In fact there was hardly any school at all, neither government nor private ones. There was no school either in or anywhere around our village.

The life history of Azad Sheikh, a male and 67 years old in the year 2005, reveals how children from many poor households would spend their childhood.

When I was around seven or eight, I started to work. I used to feed cows and shepherd them. Each household used to have 14 or 15 cows. Not so many goats, may be between five and seven. There are not sheep around nowadays, but there used to be then. The owners would look for young children to take care of their animals. I had to go to employer’s house very early in the morning and would come back home after eating at six, seven or eight in the evening. I would get my meals and Rs 5 as my wage every month. I did shepherding for two to three years. I gradually learnt to do other jobs – ploughing and so on. I was around 14 or 15 then. My wage was Rs 20 a month – money and food. Nothing else. I used to plough, look after the land, did all the farm work, including harvesting the rice and jute, feeding the cows and so on. Everything.

Therefore, many households would not only reduce their household budget by way of attaching a child with an employer but also would make sure to increase their household income from their early childhood. On the other hand, the children would get the opportunity
to learn farming activities from early childhood and at the early teenage they would make
themselves competent for the local labour market.

But the situation has changed over time. As indicated by the narrative of Samsed Sheikh, on
the one hand the government has introduced several programmes\(^\text{13}\) intending to bring all
children into school, and on the other hand people have become more conscious in educating
their children. Perhaps owing to these changes the child labour like Azad Sheikh is no more
available in Jalpara. This change has been reflected in the enrolment of children in school. In
the year 2008 out of total 429 children, belonging to 7 – 18 years of age group, 97 percent
was enrolled in school when they were of the age appropriate for grade 1. The specific
reasons about why parents want their children to be educated vary from person to person and
they can be revealed from the words given in the box below.

\(^{13}\) One of such programmes is Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (a special drive for education for all) introduced in 2001.
Box 4.1: Various reasons that drive parents to educate their children

This would open their eyes. We would not get them job but make their eyes open. We are blind but they would not be [blind]. ----- Hamidul Sheikh, an illiterate male.

If [they] study, there are many benefits. They can move around and handle paperwork. They can also help to improve the condition of their own families. May be give some private tuition too. And if they have studied well and if Allah wishes, may be they could even run a pharmacy. ------ Anwar Sheikh, labourer and father of daughters only.

We would be happy if we knew how to read and write. Educated people get more respect. They behave not like us, the clodhoppers. Our way of speaking is different. The way of speaking of an educated person is different [decent]. It is good. The educated environment would make her [referring to his daughter] different. ----- Ajinul Sah, an illiterate male.

“Amra garib manus, parate parchhi na. Ekhan manus karai muskil. [Tobu] Yug hisabe mayeder parate hachchhe. Naile biye habe na. (we are poor, unable to afford. It is difficult to get them educated. [Still] to keep pace with the time we have to educate them. Otherwise they wont get married.).” ---- a mother of four daughters in Jalpara.

Although I don’t have a daughter I feel that girls, just like boys, need to learn everything they can. When the girls go off to other houses [owing to marriage], and if something needs to be signed, they should be able to do it or do the accounts. [For example], if my wife had been educated, my children would be two classes ahead. I am illiterate. I mostly work in bidesh. She could have gone through their studies, whilst cooking. ---- Monirul Sheikh

Nowadays when I get stuck reading a paper, I think how this mistake will never be rectified; that’s why I send my children to school. I have four children. When they reach my age, they will realize that their father was right to send them to school. ---- Rakib Sheikh, a vendor who was enrolled in school in his childhood but did not continue because of his own fault.

Contd….
As the instances in the box above show, parents realized the benefit of education from their own perspectives. All the speakers understand their limitations that they would not give their children education such that it would bring them job but they realize that it would help in other ways. An illiterate person is likely to face difficulties and there is large possibility of increasing this difficulty when the horizon of interaction expands. Migration can play important role in expanding this horizon.

The benefit of education is felt so strongly by the parents of the school going children in Jalpara that they do not think that their responsibility is finished after they have enrolled their children. Rather many of them, if not all, keep close eye on the regularity of children in attendance in school. From the life histories and participant observation it reveals that in spite
of enrollment many children don’t attend school regularly. In that case many parents, if not all, particularly fathers take strong stand and give punishments that includes mostly scolding and even hitting to make them to go school regularly. In one instance, where children ignored the order of parents in going to school were given a violent corporal punishment. They were bound with an electric pillar and beaten severely.

Thus it appears that the aspiration of parents to have education for their children is high. Migration may contribute to this aspiration since it leads the migrants to interact with wider horizon. The following section focuses on the discussion how migration can make positive contribution.

**Migration as a source of influencing parents’ aspiration for education of their children.**

People of Jalpara have very limited opportunity to interact with learned person since there is no such person in the village. To some extent migration can help in this regard. One such example is given below.

> Once I went ot a place called Kaitan………The house we stayed in used to blong to a Maulvi, who used to teach Bengali. He had an MA degree in Bengali. He used to tell us a lot of fables. It was nice to listen to him. I used to sit there during my free time and enjoy it. The teacher used to love us as his own children.

---- Rakib Sheikh, who migrated for several times.
This example indicates that migration has some possibility to interact with people, whose education may influence the migrants to value it. When Rakib said about the educational degree (MA) of the person there were some reflections of proud in him, which was because they were able to come in touch with such person. The same Rakib felt helpless when he could not read a newspaper properly in another occasion because of his illiteracy it is mostly likely that he would feel sorry and would not let it happen the same things with his nearest and dearest ones that includes his children. He did so and admitted that he had made an incorrigible mistake. And as a result he took such a stand that he would even beat if his children do not want to go to school.

Migration may contribute to the aspiration of a migrant for higher education. When a migrant works in the destination he may find other people also working around him. Many of these workers may be found doing better job only due to their higher education, which he could afford for himself. For example, Sabir Mia migrated to higher out labour as security guard after he completed his higher secondary education. But he did not like his job and realized that he needed higher level of education to make him eligible for the job he liked. Consequently he left the job of security guard and started to pursue his Bachelor degree.

Many people of Jalpara earn their livelihood largely or only from petty business. Whereas some of them do not migrate for this many others do. Even it can be safely said that migration was the only option to survive their business. For these people migration not only expands the world of their interaction but also it is most likely that they would experience the importance of education in course of managing the business. For example, business requires to make and keep accounts which is likely to be difficult for a person who do not have
education. As an instance Sajed experienced many hardships in running his business due to his illiteracy. He did not want his children to suffer the same fate.

My parents died in childhood. They were not able to send me to school. Being an illiterate person today I am facing lots of difficulty. I cannot maintain the accounts of my business properly. I do not want my children to be like this in the future. They will get a good future. At least after getting education they will live happily by doing some [respectable] job.

In another instance, the words of Monirul, a trader migrant, show that his experience of migration has influenced his attitude towards sending his children to acquire education. He said,

We are traveling outside. We are moving around with blind eyes. We don’t know what is this and what is that. We are experiencing that – without education one can do nothing. We have intelligence. Somehow, we manage the things in this way or in that way. That’s why I would educate them as far as possible. Suppose they went to place as we are going for trading. We have to ask what station is it. they don’t have to ask. They would read that this is that station. Suppose keeping accounts. Look there is a calculator with me. I did not know what could happen with what key. I am learning something from this person, something from that person. If they have education they would not have that kind of problem, am I right?

Such experience would have not happen unless there was option of migration for earning livelihood. Only migration enabled many people to carry on business round the year as in the case of Monirul, who said,

I’ve stuck to my business well. now sell date jagery when it is in season. During mango season in Jaistho and Ashar, I sell mangoes. Sometimes I sell palm jagerry too. I buy that at Sealdah station and then sell it at Raiganj,
Kishanganj, Purnea, Dalkhla and the surrounding areas. And during three months of Bhadra, Aswin and Kartik, I sell [fruit] tree saplings. So I have to spend most of my time away from my village. The jaggery business season lasts for four months – Aghran, Pous, Magh and Falgun. After that I work on sundries for about a month and then it is time for palm jaggery in Boishakh. That lasts for a month or two. Then it’s the mangoes again, which start around the end of Jaishto, and go on for about two months, till the beginning of Srabon. Which means my business runs throughout the year and I am always away from home.

**Migration and affordability of parents to educate their children**

Arguably, the affordability and the cost of education are closely related. The affordability is likely to decrease with the increase of cost for a family, particularly from the poorer section of the society. The cost of education falls in two domains: the private and public domains or in other words individual and institutional domains (Tilak 1985). The former includes “cost of education incurred by the pupils and/ or by their parents or guardians, such as on books, stationery, fees, hostel, uniforms, transports etc.” (ibid, p 11). The latter includes the recurring costs e.g. expenditure on teacher salaries, salaries of non-teaching staff, scholarships, stipends, buildings, furniture, equipments etc. The concern for this thesis is limited to individual cost only. This may further be divided into two categories: monetary and opportunity costs. The money required to pay for school fees, books, stationery goods, uniforms, transports are considered as monetary or visible cost. Many children, particularly from the poorer households, would be involved with earning activities and would be able to contribute to the family income unless they were made free for education. Such cost is considered to be opportunity or invisible cost. The remittance from migration can improve
the economic condition of a family and therefore the affordability. Thus it is likely that the family would be able to pay the monetary cost, on the one hand, and make the children free for education for longer years. This is confirmed by many studies (e.g. Mansuri 2006). The rest of this section explores whether the evidences in Jalpara also confirms the same or something else.

It is already said before that though poverty is widespread, the children in Jalpara are no more available to work as rakhal. On the other hand, almost all of the children were enrolled in school when they reached the appropriate age, i.e. five years. But to acquire some education a child needs to be in school for some time, often a couple of years. Since, it requires meeting some costs for education, it is likely to be difficult to acquire it unless the child and/or its guardian is able to afford it. The examples given in the box below reveal that these costs largely limited the opportunity of education for the children in Jalpara in the past. As the box shows due to the lack of affordability of parents many children were not enrolled at all, whereas though many others were enrolled they were not able to continue their study much far.

Box 4.2: Poverty as barrier to education

| When we were young, our parents fed us with whatever they could get hold of. And I used to shepherd the few goats that we owned. I started shepherding from the age of five or six. We never got proper meals then. Our parents had a lot of trouble running the household. In fact I sometimes had to resort to eating rice starch from the neighbours to survive. Our parents did not have enough money to put us in school. | -------- Monirul Sheikh |
My parents died when I was very young. They could not educate me -------Sajed Sheikh

We did not get to eat properly. No one told me to go to school, and I too did not make the effort.

------------- Anwar Sheikh

I have been suffering since my childhood. My parents put me in school when I was around seven years old. I did not have any shorts to wear to school. So I started to work to buy a pair of shorts. --------- Mobin Sheikh

I’ve not studied much. I used to go to school in my childhood. I think I started school when I was ………[a]round six or seven. I studied upto class 4 and then was admitted into class 5, but did not complete the year …… We had serious money problem then. The school fees of Rs 4 had to be paid every month. But we could not run the household at that time, so how were we supposed to pat the school fees? --------- Lobu Sheikh.

The cost of education is still high, if not higher, particularly in relation to the economic condition of most of the households and the income opportunity in the local employment market. It could be very difficult, to raise this cost, for many households in Jalpara if they depended only on the local employment market. We can draw two examples from life histories to understand the situation.
My family is not big. It consists of my wife and my two sons and a daughter. The children are in class IX, VI and III. The girl is in class III. My two sons are studying in Talpara, my daughter goes to school in this village. My parents died when I was very young. They couldn’t educate me. I find it difficult to cope with the outside world – these are the difficulties of illiteracy – I can’t do my own accounts for example. I don’t want my children to suffer the same fate. I want them to understand everything when they’re working – this is my wish. But I don’t know how they’ll sustain their education. The eldest boy goes to school regularly but the younger one is quite naughty. Sometimes he doesn’t go to school for a month, sometimes for ten days. He doesn’t study properly. If I scold him then he goes off to his grandmother’s house. If I’m at home, then I smack him and then he goes to school. His mother can’t control him; he needs to study to keep up with the times.

At the high school the fee is only Rs. 70 per student, at the time of promotion. No other fees are required. But it’s quite expensive to send the younger ones to school. That’s why I haven’t been able to succeed in life, because I couldn’t go to school. After working so hard, I still have debts.

I’ve spent around Rs. 1000 on books for the eldest one and Rs. 200 for the youngest one. I didn’t have to buy any books for my daughter. The
government provided those. She’s in class III. She also has private tuition. But I can’t pay her tutor regularly. For the three children, it costs about Rs. 100 per month. My two sons used to go to Topdanga but left and started again at Parvatinagar. The private tuition for them has stopped, because I can’t afford it. It’s the same with my daughter. Actually village tutors are not very reliable.

Besides I have to buy their clothes. For the boys you need one uniform each. Without the uniform, they wouldn’t be allowed in school. It cost me around Rs. 400 per son. Stitching charges were Rs. 80 each in addition to the cost of the fabric. So the uniforms for both the boys came to around Rs. 800. On top of that you have to give them Rs. 2, Rs. 5 pocket money every day. If you don’t they won’t go to school. The school is quite far. From Jalpara to Talpara -Topdanga. They can’t walk it. So I had to buy a cycle for each of the boys.

— Sajed Sheikh

Case 2

Working here does not bring in enough money to provide for my family. So I go to bidesh to harvest and transplant paddy. I go to work in brick kilns, or sometimes to sell mangoes. I went to Kolkata once…… People go to bidesh because things are difficult here. There is not enough work. We’re all poor. The poor here don’t get work everyday. Not even ten days [at a stretch]. We have just come back from labouring in bidesh and have no work [here]. Who will employ us? The wages are also low. It is only when someone is in trouble. For example, if its been raining, a couple of us might
get hired [to harvest the crop faster]. If you have only one day of urgent work, then you’ll hire me with slightly higher wages. But if you have ten days of continuous work, obviously you are not going to pay me that much. So the wages fall too.

----- Anwar Sheikh, a small landholder as well as labourer.

The Case 1 shows that there is a substantial amount of cost, one has to bear, to educate a child. The amount of cost tends to increase with the grade of study. Furthermore, it also shows that a family may have more than one child and thus the total amount of cost for education of all the children is quite high. Still the family is continuing education of all of its children.

The Case 2 demonstrates that the income opportunity in the local employment market for various reasons – mostly due to the high labour pressure on land leading to low wage rate, and the nature of employment market, which is very seasonal that lasts for very short period. Under this circumstance it would be very difficult to maintain the basic expenditures, such as food and health services, leave alone the education of children, particularly if they depended only on the local employment market. But still almost all of the families make attempts to send their children to school and parents often wished to educate them as long as they can do. That is they are not only willing to pay the monetary cost but also willing to sacrifice the income that their children could earn unless they were studying. This indicates that affordability to acquire education for their children has improved substantially.

Many children in Jalpara believed that migration helped their education a lot, and for some it was so important that if there was no opportunity of migration they could not continue their study at the secondary or higher levels. For many households, only migration of family
members allows children to receive education. There were many instances where families were fighting hard against poverty and still sending their children to school. It is migration that allowed doing so. Even, this not only allowed children to continue their schooling but also to purchase additional support i.e. private tuition, which is expected to help performing better in school examinations. Azad Sheikh is one of such example. He was a beggar and the amount of his earning is meager. His economic condition is like hand to mouth. Still he sends his daughter not only to school, but also for private tuition, which costs Rs 35 per month, which is expected to help performing better in examinations. Owing to his poverty he could not pay the tuition fee regularly. When the due was amounted to be of three months he thought he should not let it increase further and was planning to migrate out to collect money to make this payment.

I haven’t been able to pay for the last three months. So I need to pay Rs 105. I’ll pay that up. For that I’ll have to go to bidesh.

Another instance is Mobin Sheikh whose economic condition is miserable. To describe his situation he said,

I have been suffering since my childhood and still do now. I am penniless. I’ve branches and leaves, as they say, which you don’t have to buy. ……… I never had proper clothes to wear in my childhood. And it’s still the same nowadays. I still wear torn clothes, it’s my fate. I never got any better.
In spite of this distressed economic condition Mobin admitted his daughter into a secondary school after she completed the primary level. Perhaps the migration that he resorts frequently helped him to gather confidence, so that he could be able to provide the cost of education for his daughter. This confidence allowed his wife pawing their only bicycle to collect money for admission of their daughter in high school. She was confident that they could redeem the bicycle after Mobin returns from migration.

**Coping the absence of family members and the schooling of left-behind children**

A lot of problems occur when we are in *bidesh*. – Badsha Ali.

Most of the families in Jalpara are nuclear. They are composed of husband, wife and their children. In almost all the cases husbands are mainly responsible for earning income for their respective families. The other roles that they are supposed to play in the family are discipline making and looking after the activities that mostly takes place outside home, such as taking sick person to doctor, managing to have credit if required for the family, looking after cultivation if they have some land, ensuring security of the family and so on. The women are supposed to take care of the activities such as rearing children if any, cooking food, washing clothes, and cleaning house and like that, which are taken place mostly in and around their household complex.
Therefore, there is great possibility of disruption of family life if the husband migrates out. The life histories and observation suggests that the left behind families may face some challenges and the degree of challenges may vary. The most important challenges were related to – food securities, psychology, family labour, physical security and discipline making. There were many instances suggesting that these challenges may affect education of children in some ways.

Migrants try to make some arrangements, before they migrate, so that the left behind families do not face problems, particularly with regard to food. They try to leave some money with the family. Many fail to do so and for many others the amount of money left is insufficient to cover the period of absence, particularly when the return of migrant is delayed. This leads the left behind members to face some food insecurities. Assuming this insecurity the families take some strategies so that they can cover a longer period with the smaller amount of food stock. One of such strategy is the consumption of lesser quantity of food. The family of Anwar Sheikh is one of many such instances.

They find getting hold of food difficult…. In my house cooking is done twice if the days are short and three times if the days are long….. When I go to bidesh, I leave enough behind for my family to have two meals a day, but not for the third one. How do they cope? Maybe they ate only in the mornings and evenings and skip the afternoon meal. If they eat three meals a day, the food won’t last long. So they eat twice a day.
Even in some cases no food is cooked at all in some days. Badsha Ali claimed that sometimes his wife did not cook at all and the intake of less amount of food led his children to suffer from illness, which further led them to miss school. The problem of less food intake tended to decrease, to some extent, with the increase of age of children. Anwar Sheikh claimed that his family did not suffer as much as before, when they were younger than now. Now her children can take care of many responsibilities at home, such as, helping their mother in cooking, bringing grass from field for their goats and so on. Sometimes the children contributed to the family income by hiring out labour. The children of Mobin Sheikh, who were of nine and six years old, hired out labour, particularly in the chilly field. When he migrated, the family felt more compulsion to hire out labour and consequently they do so more frequently. Mobin claimed that such hiring out labour sometimes led his children to miss school.

The absence of husbands was a cause of physical insecurity for the wives, particularly for those who are young. To cope with this situation the wives, along with children, moved to their natal places. Sometimes the distance between natal and own places was quite long. Sometimes this may be too long to travel for children of school going age, particularly for those who are studying at lower levels. So, such movement may affect attendance in school of some children. For instance, Samser Sheikh had two school going children of age nine and ten years, who were enrolled in their home village. When he migrated to Mumbai his wife moved to her natal village, along with her children. The distance between two villages was more than two kilometers. Regular attendance of children in school was affected due to this increase of distance. Often they refused to go to school.
Migration from Jalpara meant separation of family members into two or more parts, as in many other places. Due to this separation often the members of one part worry about the others. Sometimes the degree of worry reaches to its height causing some negative impact. In an instance a wife reported that she felt unwell when her migrated. Often this caused her premature menstruation with heavy bleeding. Condition sometimes turns to be too critical to take care of the activities that she was supposed to do. The children of her family were found to take care of these activities. As a consequence, sometimes the children could not attend school.

Though the psychological problem with the left behind women was available, there was no such report as far as the children were concerned. Perhaps, the major reason behind this is the length of absence at a stretch, which was not too long, compared to many other studies, such as Gulati (1983), where migrants stayed away for a couple of years leading to psychological disturbances among the children.

The absence is likely to increase the workload on those, who stay behind at home, which includes the children. But the workload would increase only when there was some work that would be performed by the person who migrated. In Jalpara the main source of work for male was land. But the households, having a person migrated out, tend to have very little amount of land, if at all, including leased in land. Those, who had land, tend to finish their work before migration. This was largely possible because the lands had assured irrigation facility, with the help of ground water, lifted by pump sets, which are run according to the need. Since migration trips are often short, it allowed the migrants to do the remaining work after their return.
But, there were some households where part of work does not get completed before migration. Sabir Mia claimed if there is any work left at all it was not more than one-quarter of the entire work. But the extent of such household was very less. The size of landholding of this household was also very small. There were only one (Samser Sheikh) out of 35 sampled households where the left behind members were responsible for the entire work to grow crop on their 18 kathas of leased in land. In such cases too, the cultivation may not depend entirely on home labour. With the help of remittances they can hire in labour, at least partly, required to cultivate the land. In the case of Samser Sheikh, the cultivation was done partly, particularly the harder part, by hired in labour and other part by home labour. As far as home labour is concerned, most of the work was done by two children including one, who was continuing his study. But it cannot be claimed that the work led him to miss his school. Rather, when the child did not like to go to school, which occurred frequently, he was asked to go to the field to do some work or they worked on the part of the day when they were supposed not to be in school, either after or before it. Moreover, the younger boys and girl children are less likely to be involved in such activities – the former being less likely to be able to do work and the latter being restricted by the local cultural tradition.

Apart from land, the other major source of work was livestock – cows and goats. But the households having cows were not as common as the households having goats. Only three out of 35 sampled households had cows, whereas most of the households had one or two goats. The number of cow in a household was not more than two. The major work, related to cow rearing, was making food, feeding them with it for several times a day and cleaning the cowshed. They were largely done by the adult males. In their absence the adult females were found to do most of these work. Sometimes the grown up children joined their hands with it.
On the other hand, the major work related to rearing of goats was bringing grass from field or green leaves from trees, and tending them in the field. They are mostly done by children, particularly those who were in their early teenage or younger than that, but not too young, such as five or six years old. Since the adults are not much involved in taking care of the goats even if they are at home, there was very little possibility of increase of workload on the left behind children, when the adults, particularly fathers migrate. Therefore, it indicates that migration did not increase the workload, as far as livestock rearing is concerned, so that it can affect education of children. If the education is affected at all, because of livestock rearing, then migration had very little to do with it.

● Discipline making and education

‘You too have to chastise.’ I said, ‘I cannot do in that way [because I am illiterate].’ But the teacher said, ‘Ta bolle ki hobe (would it happen if you say so)? You have to see, you have to sit with her and if necessary you have to chastise.’

The above conversation was between Hamidul Sheikh and teachers of local primary school when the former visited the latter to inquire about the learning of the daughter of the former. This suggests that parents have to play some role to play, at home, for education of their children even if they go to school regularly. Between father and mother, the former was likely to have greater control over their children. Musa claimed that children feared their father more than their mother. Therefore, in absence of their fathers many children may neglect their study, i.e. they may be irregular in attending school or sitting with lesson at home. This is confirmed by the narration of Monirul Sheikh. He told:

I have three sons. The oldest is 16 years old, the middle one is 13 and the youngest one is eight. The eldest one studies in class 8, the middle one is in 4
and the youngest on in 1…. I have a wish…..to let my children study as much as possible……[But they]……are not really interested in studying. We are forcing them and they are going out of fear. The oldest one will not walk to school. He uses by bicycle when I’m not around. But he doesn’t go regularly. Sometimes he doesn’t go for five days at a stretch. He doesn’t listen to his mother.

The negligence of children is perhaps reflected in the attendance in school. Average attendance of children in primary school in Jalpara is given by month below in Table (no.4.1).

Table 4.1: Average attendance of children in local primary school across the year 2005-06.

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<td>49.4</td>
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</table>

Source: Student register of the primary school in Jalpara.

The second row in the table above states the average attendance in the working day and the bottom row tells the percentage of attendance out of 263 children. It shows that attendance fluctuates through the year. Attendance was among the lowest in the months when the extent of migration was greater, i.e. in April (when the migration for summer rice harvest takes place) and in November-December (when winter rice harvest takes place). Lack of control over the children, due to absence of father, may be one of the reasons that influence this low attendance rate.

If a single reason, as mentioned above, is taken into account, it may seem that there are very few children whose education are suffered by the migration. But if all the reasons are taken
together it may appear that education of a substantial proportion of children is being suffered by the absence of father from home.