

Evaluating the Influence of Remittance Inflow on the Health and Education Sector for Local Households

Оцінювання впливу грошових переказів на стан сфери охорони здоров'я та освіти домогосподарств

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Purpose. The article investigates the extent to which international remittances influence household investment in education and health in Bangladesh, comparing remittance-receiving and non-receiving households. The study aims to determine whether remittances act as a catalyst for human capital development at the microeconomic level.

Method. The research adopts an explanatory mixed-method design. Primary data were collected from 400 rural households through a multistage random sampling survey in Hathazari Upazila. Econometric analysis was conducted using multiple regression and Seemingly Unrelated Regression (SUR) models to measure the impact of demographic, economic, and social variables on household investment patterns.

Findings. Results show that remittances significantly increase spending on education and health. Age, education level, and gender of the household head, household size, dependency ratio, migrant's duration abroad, and income level all shape investment decisions. Remittance-receiving households allocate more funds to improving human capital than non-receiving families, demonstrating remittances' positive welfare effect.

Theoretical implications. The study reinforces the remittance-led development hypothesis, providing micro-level evidence that migrant transfers contribute to household-level socio-economic upgrading.

Practical implications. Policy measures should focus on formalising remittance flows, integrating migrants into financial systems, and designing incentives for productive investment in education and healthcare.

Paper type. Empirical research article based on household-level econometric modelling.

Мета дослідження. Стаття присвячена аналізу впливу міжнародних грошових переказів на інвестиційну поведінку домогосподарств у сферах освіти та охорони здоров'я в Бангладеш. Дослідження порівнює домогосподарства, що отримують перекази, та ті, що їх не отримують, з метою виявлення ролі переказів у формуванні людського капіталу.

Метод дослідження. Застосовано пояснювальний змішаний підхід. Первинні дані зібрано шляхом опитування 400 сільських домогосподарств, відібраних методом багатоступеневої вибірки. Для оцінки інвестиційних рішень використано множинну регресію та модель SUR, що дає змогу врахувати взаємозалежність показників.

Результати дослідження. Перекази суттєво підвищують інвестиції в освіту та медичні послуги. На характер інвестицій впливають вік, стать та рівень освіти голови домогосподарства, розмір сім'ї, частка утриманців, тривалість перебування мігранта за кордоном та сукупний дохід. Домогосподарства, що отримують перекази, вкладають значно більше коштів у розвиток людського капіталу, ніж ті, що не отримують таких надходжень.

Теоретична цінність дослідження. Робота підтверджує гіпотезу «remittance-led development» та демонструє мікроекономічний ефект переказів як чинника соціально-економічного підвищення.

Практична цінність дослідження. Рекомендується розширення фінансових інструментів для мігрантів, заохочення інвестицій у соціальні послуги та посилення регуляції переказів через офіційні канали.

Тип статті. Емпіричне економічне дослідження на основі мікроданих домогосподарств.

Key words: remittance, household investment, remittance-receiver, remittance non-receiver households.

Ключові слова: грошові перекази, інвестиції домогосподарств, домогосподарства-отримувачі переказів, домогосподарства, що не отримують переказів.

Introduction

International migrant remittances have become an important source of external finance in developing countries. World Bank (2014) reported that officially recorded remittances to developing countries were expected to reach \$435 billion in that year, an increase of 5 per cent over 2013, and Bangladesh ranked in 8th place in remittances among developing countries. Nowadays, remittances are the lifeline of the Bangladesh economy. About 4.5 million nonresident Bangladeshis are working abroad and sending home hard-earned foreign currency. It is believed that the actual number of Bangladeshi migrants, both legal and illegal, is close to 7.5 million. The flow of remittances in Bangladesh amounted to \$11,258.31 million in the 2014–2015 fiscal year (Bangladesh Bank, 2015).

At the national level, remittances contribute significantly to GDP. Remittances can generate a positive effect on the economy through various channels such as savings, investment, consumption, capital formation, economic growth and income distribution. Yasmeen et al. (2011) stated that remittances have a positive relationship with private investment and total consumption, which results in an increase in GDP and economic growth in Pakistan. Their findings indicate that remittances improve the accumulation of physical investment in Nigeria, with a positive relationship in the presence of developed financial systems (Ojapinwa and Odekunle, 2013). Baldé (2010) investigated the macroeconomic impact of remittances on savings and investment in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and found that remittances promote savings and investment. Azam and Khan (2011) indicated that worker remittances are significant and have positive impacts on economic growth and development in Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Households use remittances mostly for consumption and investment. Castaldo and Reilly (2007) showed that remittances are generally spent on food and durables. Andersen et al. (2007) found an overall positive effect of remittances related to changes in school attendance, hours worked, savings, and consumption patterns. Ali et al. (2013) pointed out that remittances play an important role in increasing health-related investment. Households invest remittances in education, healthcare, insurance, real assets (such as machinery, land, buildings, and vehicles), and financial instruments (e.g., life insurance, deposits, or bonds).

Rivera and González (2009) studied the relationship between remittances and patrimony (additional constructions/renovations, purchases of houses and land), business (purchases of machinery or animals for the production process), savings (deposits, currencies, metals, stocks and bonds), and out-transfers (lending, debt service, insurance, inheritance, etc.). They found a positive relationship between remittances and household expenditure.

Iheke et al. (2013) examined the impact of migrant remittances on the technical efficiency of smallholder arable crop farm households in South-Eastern Nigeria. Similarly, Bangladesh has almost the same characteristics compared to the studied countries; therefore, there is a possibility to analyse the ultimate scenario of remittance-receiving households in Bangladesh. Accordingly, this paper aims to identify the impact of remittances on household investment.

Literature Review

Bangladesh is a village-based country. There are 86,000 villages in the country, and about 77 per cent of its total population lives in rural areas. Therefore, overall national development is impossible without including rural areas in the development process. As one of the largest remittance-receiving countries, remittances are the backbone of Bangladesh's fragile economy, and any shocks to this system could prove fatal for national growth. Most of the migrants are from these areas.

Although banking crises in Europe, the Arab region and elsewhere have left many major financial chains without suitable credit, causing bankruptcy in several cases, these issues have created serious problems for Bangladeshi workers, including white-collar employees. Such problems include withholding and deferring wage or salary payments, cancelling contracts, and in many cases

bargaining for lower pay. The combined effect on the migrant labour market has already been felt by both the government and workers.

Remittances can generate a positive effect on the economy through various channels such as savings, investment, economic growth, consumption, poverty reduction and income distribution. At the national level, remittances contribute significantly to GDP. Despite the challenges faced by this sector, Bangladesh holds a remarkable position among the world's largest remittance-receiving countries. The author attempts to examine the impact of remittances on household investment among remittance-receiving families.

Djiofack (2013) found that external money flows, such as remittances, are an important source of investment financing. Yasmeen et al. (2011) found that remittances have a positive relationship with private investment and total consumption, resulting in increased GDP and economic growth in Pakistan. Serino and Kim (2011) found that, holding other factors constant, a 1 per cent increase in remittances sent to developing countries through banks was associated with a 0.005 reduction in the squared poverty gap. Awan et al. (2013) concluded that the use of remittances contributes to food security, quality of life, income generation, asset formation, environmental sustainability, and the acceleration of further income and employment growth in Pakistan.

Tabuga (2008) showed that the presence of remittance income is negatively associated with expenditure shares on food and miscellaneous items, while positively correlated with spending on consumer goods, basic utilities, transportation and communication, housing, education, and medical care in the Philippines. Ali et al. (2013) found a significant and positive relationship between remittances and spending on health, housing conditions, children's education, household goods, and daily-use items in Pakistan. Ahmed et al. (2010) found that the probability of households becoming poor decreases by 12.7 per cent if they receive remittances. The poverty headcount ratio and Gini coefficient decline by 7.8 per cent and 4.8 per cent, respectively, for remittance-receiving households.

Remittances not only affect household consumption but also influence the overall economy. Simul (2013), using time-series data from 1976–2007 collected from WDI, found a positive and significant relationship between remittances and economic growth. Siddique et al. (2010) also showed a positive impact of remittances on economic development in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka using 25 years of time-series data. Yaseen (2012) showed the positive impact of remittances on economic growth, noting that remittances are used for dynamic investments where funds are deposited in local financial institutions as savings, significantly increasing available financial resources.

In the study of Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003), it was observed that both internal and external migration create large-scale impacts on economic growth and poverty reduction in many areas of India. Simiyu (2013) examined how increased remittance receipts are used in Kenya, focusing on education, health, food, and other household expenditures. Raihan et al. (2009) examined the role of remittances in increasing household consumption and investment, finding that they help rebalance economic growth and create long-term human and capital investment.

Remittances are also used as investment expenditure. In other words, households may convert remitted money into different forms of investment. Awan et al. (2013) found that remittances of migrant workers have a highly positive impact on the socio-economic conditions of migrants and their households left behind, who enjoy significantly higher incomes than in the pre-migration period. Djiofack et al. (2013) found in their empirical analysis that skilled migration has a negative impact on productivity in the host country, whereas unskilled migration has a positive impact.

Research Methodology

This study is explanatory in nature and includes both qualitative and quantitative information. To obtain answers to the research questions and the stated objectives, the study is based on a field survey as primary data collected from different households in Hathajari Upazilla, and on secondary data collected from previous works, journals, books, reports, etc.

The study is based on a multistage sampling technique. There are 64 districts in Bangladesh. Among them, the author selected Chittagong District as the study area. In the context of the number of upazillas in Bangladesh, Chittagong District holds the second position (BBS, 2014). This district consists of 14 upazilas; for the study, the author selected Hathajari Upazila. A multi-stage random sampling method was used for this study.

In the first stage, among the 64 districts, Chittagong District was chosen. In the second stage, from the 14 upazilas of Chittagong District, Hathazari Upazila was selected. In the third stage, out of 15 unions of Hathazari, the author randomly selected 4 unions (Mirzapur, Nangalmora, Katir Hat, Dhalai), where 400 households were selected (200 migrant families and 200 non-migrant families) to conduct this study.

1 Research Technique and Model

1.1 Dependent Variable

Investment in Household Education and Health in BDT

1.2 Independent Variables

Age of household head, sex of the household head, educational status of household head, age of migrant, educational status of migrant, years lived abroad by the migrant, household size, dependent household members, household income including remittance, and remittance receiver dummy were considered as independent or explanatory variables in the study.

1.3 The Multiple Regression Model

A multiple regression model was applied to examine the effect of the explanatory variables on household investment for remittance-receiving and non-receiving households.

The equation can be written with short variable names as:

$$\text{Health and Education} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{AHH} + \beta_2\text{SHH} + \beta_3\text{EHH} + \beta_4\text{HHS} + \beta_5\text{DHM} + \beta_6\text{HIR} + \beta_7\text{MLY} + \beta_8\text{MAV} + \beta_9\text{RRD} + u \dots (i)$$

Here, the author considers two dependent variables and nine independent variables to measure the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Table 1 – Variable List Identification of Independent Variables Affecting Dependent Variables
Dependent variable: Investment in Household Education and Health (measured in BDT thousands)

Explanatory variable	Description	Measurement unit	Expected	Source
			sign	
AHH	Age of household head	Years	+ or –	Adams (2005); Tabuga (2008)
SHH	Sex of household head	Dummy: Male = 1, otherwise = 0	+ or –	Rivera & González (2009)
EHH	Educational status of household head	Years of schooling	+	Rivera & González (2009)
HHS	Household size	Number of members	–	Adams (2005); Tabuga (2008)
DHM	Dependent household members	Number of members	–	Parinduri & Thangavelu (2008)
HIR	Household income including remittance	BDT (thousand)	+	Parinduri & Thangavelu (2008)
MLY	Migrant living years abroad	Years	+	Sinning (2008)
MAV	Migrant asset value	BDT (thousand)	+ or –	Udah (2011)
RRD	Remittance receiver dummy	Dummy: 1 = receiver; 0 = otherwise	+ or –	Author's compilation

Source: Author's compilation, 2025

Results

Remittance investment is a vital part of remittance earnings and is also considered a dependent variable in this research. There is a significant difference between the income that can be invested or consumed by remittance-receiving and remittance-non-receiving households. At this stage, the author aims to examine the difference in investment between remittance-receiving and nonreceiving households. People earn money to spend or invest in food, education, medical care, communication, electricity, clothing, entertainment, and other household needs.

Remittance-receiving households obtain remittances from migrants; in some cases, it is the only source of income for the family if there is only one earning member. However, remittance nonreceiving households do not have this opportunity to adequately cover their household expenditures. That is why there is likely to be variation in investment and expenditure patterns between these two groups.

The seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) model is a simplification of a linear regression model that consists of different regression equations. Each equation has its own dependent variable and a specific set of exogenous explanatory variables. Accordingly, six categories of remittance-related investment are considered as dependent variables. The SUR model is applied to these investment categories, where the explanatory variables are the same for both remittance-receiving and non-receiving households.

Table 2 – Multiple Regression Analysis Results of Independent variables on the Dependent variable

Variables	Education Investment	Health Investment
AHH	-0.226** (0.24)	0.318* (0.11)
SHH	20.910*** (8.64)	-3.374 (4.10)
EHH	-1.088*** (0.59)	-0.047 (0.27)
HHS	-7.301** (4.12)	1.113 (2.03)
DHM	11.193** (4.84)	-1.274* (2.30)
HIR	0.077 (0.01)	0.012 (0.01)
MLY	10.910 (1.64)	-3.374 (4.10)
MAV	-2.088 (0.59)	-0.147 (0.27)
RRD	5.524 (7.12)	11.235 (2.44)
Constant	-7.898 (15.03)	-10.661 (6.92)
R²	0.3401	0.2795
Observations	400	400

Significance Level: * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$

Source: Author's compilation based on field Survey, 2025

Table 2 shows the seemingly unrelated regression analysis of household investment categories for both remittance-receiving and non-receiving households. The investment categories are considered dependent variables, while several explanatory variables influence them.

When education investment is the dependent variable, the age, sex, and education level of the household head, household size, number of dependent household members, and household income excluding remittance are statistically significant. If the age of the household head decreases by one year, household investment in education increases by an average of BDT 226 per year. This indicates a negative relationship between the dependent and independent variables and is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level.

The dummy variable “sex of household head” shows that a male household head invests an average of BDT 20,910 less than a female household head in education per year, which is statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. The education level of the household head is also negatively associated with education investment. The coefficient shows that if the years of schooling of the household head increase by one year, investment in education decreases by an average of BDT 1,088 per year, statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. Conversely, when the number of dependent household members increases, investment in education increases by an average of BDT 11,193 per year, significant at the 5 per cent level.

When health investment is the dependent variable, the age of the household head and the number of dependent household members are statistically significant. If the age of the household head increases by one year, investment in health increases by an average of BDT 318 per year, significant at the 1 per cent level. When the number of dependent household members increases, investment in health decreases by an average of BDT 1,274 per year, also significant at the 1 per cent level.

Conclusion

Household investment in education is positive when household income increases. The age of the household head, education level, and household size are negatively related to investment in education. This implies that older household heads are less likely to invest in education. However, the number of dependent household members is positively associated with education investment. When the number of dependents in a household increases by one, education investment also increases.

Health investment has a positive relationship with the age of the household head. A one-year increase in the age of the household head leads to higher household expenditure on health. On the contrary, a negative relationship exists between health investment and dependent household members. An increase in the number of dependent members reduces household investment in health.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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