

MALE OUT-MIGRATION IN UTTARAKHAND- A REVIEW

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Abstract

Migration of people from one region to another has influenced economic status of communities throughout the world. Migration is influenced by the social, cultural, economic and political factors associated with people. The issue of migration and human development is intimately related both within the national boundaries and across the national borders. Migration in India is mostly influenced by social structures and pattern of development. The development policies by all the governments since independence have accelerated the process of migration. Migration from Uttarakhand is almost exclusively that of the male population and is embedded in the lives and life choices of the people. The livelihood strategies of rural peoples in Uttarakhand are in transition. Migration is not just a livelihood strategy but a way of life in the state. The mountain districts of Uttarakhand are well known for male out-migration in search of employment. Migration can however increase vulnerability especially when households become dependent on remittance revenues that result from unstable or unreliable employment. Meanwhile those staying in the villages also face several problems and the vulnerability of women and children increase drastically when men migrate. As migration has its impact on various aspects of rural areas of Uttarakhand, this paper makes an attempt to draw attention on out-migration from rural areas of Uttarakhand.

Keywords: Employment; Livelihood; Migration; Vulnerability; Uttarakhand.

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Introduction

The history of migration is the history of people's struggle to survive and to prosper, to escape insecurity and poverty, and to move in response to opportunity. Migration in developing countries like India is still viewed as a survival strategy. In India internal mobility is critical to the livelihoods of many people, especially for people from rural areas. Migration is the barometer of changing socio-economic and political conditions at the national and international levels. It is also a sign of wide disparities in economic and social conditions between the origin and destination. Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihoods is a key feature of human history. While some regions and sectors fall behind in their capacity to support populations, others move ahead and people migrate to access these emerging opportunities. Industrialization widens the gap between rural and urban areas, inducing a shift of the workforce towards industrializing areas. There is extensive debate on the factors that cause population shift, from those that emphasize individual rationality and household behaviour to those that cite the structural logic of capitalist development (de Haan and Rogaly, 2002). Migration in India is both a historical and present phenomenon. "People have always moved in search of work, in response to environmental shocks and stresses, to escape religious persecution and political conflict. However, improved communications, transport networks, conflicts over natural resources and new economic opportunities have created unprecedented levels of mobility" (Deshingkar and Akter, 2009). Migration comes as a boon for several people who get better opportunities and send remittances home. Large numbers of people, mostly young are moving away from rural areas to urban centers because there are fewer employment opportunities back home.

The subject of migration has been classified based on its typology. The first type of migrations is, Internal migration which means – moving to a new home within a state, country or continent. The second is the External migration which means - moving to a new home in a different state, country, or continent. Third is, Emigration which means leaving one country to move to another (e.g., the Pilgrims emigrated from England). Fourth type is Immigration: Moving into a new country (e.g., the Pilgrims immigrated to America). Population Transfer is fifth type of migration which happens when a government forces a large group of people out of a region, usually based on ethnicity or religion. This is also known as an involuntary or forced migration. Another

category of migration is Impelled Migration (also called “reluctant” or “imposed” migration): Individuals are not forced out of their country, but leave because of unfavorable situations such as warfare, political problems, or religious persecution. Seventh type of migration is Step Migration in which a series of shorter, less extreme migrations from a person’s place of origin to final destination—such as moving from a farm, to a village, to a town, and finally to a city. Chain Migration is another type of migration which is a series of migrations within a family or defined group of people. A chain migration often begins with one family member who sends money to bring other family members to the new location. Chain migration results in migration fields—the clustering of people from a specific region into certain neighborhoods or small towns. One of the types of migration is return migration in which the voluntary movements of immigrants back to their place of origin. This is also known as circular migration. Seasonal Migration is also a type of migration which is the process of moving for a period of time in response to labor or climate conditions (farm workers following crop harvests or working in cities off-season; “snowbirds” moving to the southern and southwestern United States during winter). Recent economic growth and faster industrial development along with the growth of urbanization is the major magnetic effect at work that draws people from rural to urban areas. The scope of better employment opportunities, better standard of living and provisions of improved amenities of these cities also add to the cause. Besides, migration is the natural outcome of deprivation, inequality, poverty and unemployment especially in the rural areas. Various socio-economic dynamics and a range of causes unlock the way for rural to urban migration. Milukaet *al.* (2010) indicated that rural households use migration as a strategy to move out of agriculture with remaining family members working significantly fewer hours in farm production activities, both in total and on a per capita basis found out that the majority 82 per cent of the respondents opined that migration helped to enhance the economic conditions of the family.

Dynamics of migration

Rural migration is the phenomenon that describes the movement of people from their villages to urban areas, usually in search of a better livelihood. The phenomenon of migration is believed to have taken roots in the aftermath of severe drought of the 1960s. Today, every year thousands of people across the length and breadth of the region leave their native villages in search of food

and employment. Most end up as bonded labourers being paid minimal daily wages. Alienation of land, labour and produce is the driving force for migration. Migration primarily occurs due to disparities in regional development. The causes of migration are usually explained by using two broad categories, namely, push and pull factors. The push arising out of lack of livelihood options in the village and indebtedness and crop loss leads to the pull factors such as the attraction of livelihood in the lean seasons.

India's total population as recorded in census 2011, stands at 1.21 billion. Internal migrants in India constitute a large population – 309 million internal migrants or 30 per cent of the population (census of India 2001) and by more recent estimates 326 million or 28.5 per cent of the population National Sample Survey Office (NSSO 2007-2008). Migration is caused due to various reasons which may vary from country to country and it can vary from place to place, state to state within a country on the basis of socio-economic and cultural status of the demography. The factors which largely contribute to rural to urban migration are poverty and starvation, unemployment, low agricultural productivity, failure of crop, landlessness, poor education & medical care, lack of credit facilities mainly found in rural areas in one hand and better scope of employment, better gender equality, prospect for better life (education, health & drinking water etc), wage differentials, bright city lights cause attraction in the urban areas on other hand. These factors can be segregated as push and pull factors for better understanding of the nature of causes and consequences of the migration. There were two types of purpose of migration namely labour market and non labour related purposes of migration. Labour market related migration included movement in search of employment, in search of better employment, and to take up employment. Non labour market-related purposes of migration included movements for reasons such as transfer of service/contract, housing problems, proximity to place of work, social and political problems, acquisition of a house/flat, marriage, displacement by development projects, etc. (Jayaraj, 2013). Traditionally, agriculture and related cottage industries were the only major professions in the rural areas. These professions could not absorb the ever increasing population in the rural areas. Migrants constitute a floating and invisible population, alternating between source and destination areas and remaining on the periphery of society.

Migration scenario in uttarakhand

Migration becomes more pronounced in the case of hilly states like Uttarakhand because of their inaccessibility, fragility and limited resources and opportunities. Subsistence nature of agriculture and lack of industries further aggravates it. As reported by the census 2011, out of the eleven hill districts, except two, all others have shown very low growth rate of population, around 5 per cent as against national average of 17 per cent. In Uttarakhand, migration is one of the major contributors to urban growth, because of limited opportunities of economic development within the region, frustrated youth are migrating in large numbers to the urban and industrial areas in the plains in search of employment. The livelihood strategies of rural peoples in Uttarakhand are in transition. Migration generates financial and human capital (skills and knowledge) which, if leveraged for development, can reduce poverty. Socio-economic and development changes are taking place across the hilly areas, including increase in the extent and severity of natural disasters, declining crop yields and availability of mountain products, a reduction in diversity of mountain agriculture, a decline in water flow from local springs and growing food insecurity and poverty. The specific characteristics of hilly areas such as poor accessibility, fragility and marginality have contributed to the impact of the changes. Rapid economic development in the urban areas has increased the demand for cheap and flexible labour. Increased awareness of opportunities elsewhere, better communication technologies and falling transportation costs have enabled previously immobile mountain people to migrate at record high rates. According to National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2007-08, estimate, from rural areas of Uttarakhand 381 persons out of 1000, migrate for employment. Most of the people migrate to the plain areas of the state because of the wide disparity between hills and plains. According to a report of the Planning Commission, 2011, no major industry exists in the hills, 5,000 villages (almost 58 per cent of villages) in Uttarakhand remain cut off from proper roads and in the state's 11 mountain districts, a mere 18 per cent of land remains irrigated, compared to over 95 per cent in the plain districts of Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar.

More than a decade ago, after a bitter power struggle saw mountainous Uttarakhand seceding from Uttar Pradesh as a new state, the dominance of people from the plains over their mountain counterparts was seen as history. Uttarakhand was billed to be a state that would serve the interests of mountain people only. Words like employment, development, industrialization and healthcare formed the bedrock of political slogans of all the successive governments. However, a

decade later, an old phrase, *Uttarakhandke Pahadon kapaniaur jawanikisikeykaamna hiatey* (Mountains of Uttarakhand seldom hold its waters and young men) is gaining currency. Sekhar (2007) found that women's participation in the rural economy is significant.

Usually, the male member of the household migrates outside for work and sends remittances back home which serves as a major source of income for the family left behind. Very few migrants succeed in taking their entire family along with themselves, but in majority of the cases it is a distributed family in which wife, children and parents are left behind in the villages. The family depends almost entirely on the remittances for their consumption needs and other expenditure because of which the economy of the region is often mentioned as "post office/ money order economy". Consequent to male out-migration, responsibility of the farm and agriculture gets automatically transferred to the women along with other household and outside work. Thus, male out-migration not only affects the economy but also influences the social fabric of the hill region, besides increasing workload of womenfolk in the family.

Livelihood resources in rural (mountain) areas in Uttarakhand are more vulnerable to income insecurity than in other parts of the country. Risk element is high in local land-based income generating activities owing to larger frequency of floods, natural calamities and non-availability of protective measures. Maintenance costs of livelihood resources, particularly land is exceptionally high. Access to markets is again affected by high incidence of natural risks (Papola, 2002). Also, the risk of cut back in remittances from out-migrants can further add to the vulnerability of livelihoods of rural households in Uttarakhand. It is ever more apparent that no state finds it easy to control migration single-handedly. At the regional level, discussion and even cooperation on migration is increasingly common. It seems likely that the pressures on global organizations to take up migration issues will grow along with the attention to this prominent aspect of globalization.

Livelihoods and migration

The livelihood activities of rural families are no longer confined to farming and are increasingly being diversified through rural-to-urban and international migration. Migration decisions have been viewed variously as a 'coping mechanism' for poor households and as an 'accumulation

strategy' for the better-off households. Research on the effects of migration on areas of origin is relatively scarce, but it is clear that out-migration usually does not radically transform poor areas (Srivastava, 1998). Rather, it may retard the overall development process and impair the whole social fabric as the able bodied male out-migrate in large numbers in search of their livelihoods. This has also been observed in the hill region of Uttaranchal where the net benefits from out-migration turn to be negative (Bora, 1996). Since in most of the cases migration is considered as a distress induced strategy for survival, rather than for affecting a qualitative change in livelihoods. In the rural areas, sluggish agricultural growth and limited development of the rural non-farm sector raises the incidence of rural poverty, unemployment and underemployment. Given the fact that most of the high productivity activities are located in the urban areas – people from rural areas move towards town or cities with a hope to grab diversified livelihood opportunities as the rural poor still consider migration as one of the significant as well as reliable livelihood coping strategy.

Conceptual model of migration

Ravenstein's Law of Migration. Ravenstein proposed a theory about human migration during the time frame of 1834 to 1913. Ravenstein's laws of migration are as follows: First, every migration flow generates a return or counter migration. Second, the majority of migrants move a short distance. Third, migrants who move longer distances tend to choose big city destinations. Fourth, urban residents are less migratory than inhabitants of rural areas. Fifth, families are less likely to make international moves than young adults. Sixth, the major causes of migration are economic. Some have conceived migration as a system in which migration is viewed as circular inter – dependent and self – modifying system in which the effects of changes in one part has a ripple effect through the whole system. Mabogunje, after his study of rural – urban migration in Africa has presented a paper 'A System Approach to a Theory of Rural – urban Migration' (1970). According to him migration system is made up of three basic element; Firstly, the migrant who is urged to leave the rural sector by incentives from the surroundings. Secondly, there are certain institutions that control and direct the degree of migration flow. Thirdly, various social, economic and political forces which plays major role in the process. Although Mabogunje's study is concerned with rural – urban migration in Africa, the conceptualization has a wider application.

Government initiatives to reduce migration

Rural migration is still largely a survival or subsistence strategy. Survival strategy indicates that the prevalent economic and social conditions force the rural peoples to migrate for a long time in order to stay alive. The second reason for migration is a short term measure and it is mainly due to need to supplement income in order to fill the gaps of seasonal employment. Therefore following strategies can be employed effectively to check migration:

The policy response to mitigate migration has been to discourage migration by increasing rural employment opportunities through livelihoods intervention programmes, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India. This livelihood intervention programme usually guarantees wage employment to one adult member of every rural household for 100 days in a year for local development. The MGNREGA allows unskilled and less educated youth to earn by working in the vicinity of their village, while at the same time supplementing family income through agriculture and animal husbandry; together, the benefits of staying in the village are often higher than earnings generated through migration. This programme has encouraged some people, who otherwise would have migrated, to stay in their villages but it may not necessarily reduce migration. So, this programme may be an option to minimize the migration of less educated youth from the villages as labour migration.

MGNREGA has fetched magnetic changes in the rural life - economically and socially. It has made sure that each adult member of a family, male or female is provided with 100 days of work in year. Mahendra (2014) suggested that redesigning MGNREGA works so as not to coincide with the peak period in cereal centric agriculture can moderate labour scarcity, a remunerative price policy can make agriculture economically lucrative and promotion of rural infrastructure can provide the much needed linkage for accelerating the pace of agricultural development in the rural areas. Santosh (2014) suggested that in order to reduce the rural-urban migration the government should strive to provide basic facilities in rural areas to create employment opportunities to strengthen the implementation process of the major government programmes such as MGNREGA, Aajeevika etc. to minimize seasonal rural-urban migration. Although the MGNREGA has started with best of intentions but real benefits is not being shared by the target

demography. There is lot of loopholes at the stage of implementation and accounting process. Bringing rigor and transparency in implementation and furthermore community involvement may certainly control migration in large scale. Another approach to contain rural out-migration is the programme called – Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA). Suggested by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the objectives of the programme were proposed to be achieved under the framework of Public Private Partnerships involving Gram Panchayat. The activities under PURA were also supported by state government. The amenities earmarked for the development of rural infrastructure include drinking water facilities, sanitation, sewerage, village streets, drainage, solid waste management, skill development etc.

Strategy for mitigating rural male out-migration

Rural population, if provided with suitable livelihood opportunities will not go for migration. Gerard (2003) suggested that to reduce the push factors by encouraging the emergence of alternative local livelihood opportunities in food insecure areas and the key informant base should go beyond the public sector and bring in representatives of NGOs and the commercial private sector. Anmol (2010) recommended that the focus and orientation in education should be changed in order to instill the importance of agriculture as a viable and respectable occupation, even for the literate, into the young. To make rural youth competitive in urban job markets, there is an urgent need to introduce specific vocational training in schools such as training in computers, television repairs, motor mechanics, air-conditioner and refrigerator repairs, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, and so forth. Policy changes are recommended to extend the outreach and institutional credit mechanisms of nationalized banks in the hill state of Uttarakhand. The need for banks to increase their outreach through more rural branches, the introduction of soft loans for migration purposes, and introduction of alternatives to collateral are suggested to support migrants. The Uttarakhand government must realise the important financial contribution being made by its out-migrant population to the State and provide risk cover to the families of migrants through special migrant insurance schemes. Under these schemes, the State should provide life and accident insurance covers to migrants either free of cost or at subsidized rates. Such an initiative would provide greater financial security to the dependents of migrants in case of death or accident. Formulate a policy and clear-cut guidelines for issuing identity cards to migrants, in order to give them official recognition as bonafide residents of Uttarakhand. An

identity card would not only prevent police harassment, but also help migrants in case of emergencies or accidents. Joshi (2013) stressed that the government has need to develop maximum infrastructures and jobs to keep people residing in hill villages and make cogitative plan with immigrants to resources consolidation in their native villages for forestry and agro forestry and other resources generating.

Rural India remains the focus of policymakers. The issues and challenges of rural to urban migration and its economic impact and social consequences have overriding effects on the socio-economic conditions of these people and hence significantly draw the attention of policy makers and planners to address such issues. The need of the hour is a lateral approach and need of different perspective to address and understand this social flux. To control rural-urban migration, there is need of policy interventions; and among many, few interventions have been elaborated categorically by addressing the problems at the place of origin. As the migration by far assumed to be distressed one therefore, policy focus has been clustered around the distressed factors which are enlisted as push factors in the model (Mohapatra, A.K. 2014)

- Provisioning of better and adequate education and health facilities in the rural area is one of the essentials to control the pace and magnitude of migration. Beside, vocational education should be added to the curriculum and especially for rural colleges so as to give a practical exposure to the rural students to get their livelihood. The government should give importance to social sector development especially on housing, drinking water, medical facilities and education too.
- Increase in agricultural productivity may deter the migration process. The government should promote sustainable agricultural practices in general and at the areas where migration is dominant in particular through special provisioning of irrigation, high yield variety seeds, fertilizer in subsidized rate. Beside, provision of agricultural credit facility at large and crop insurance may add to the effort.
- Dairying has become the secondary source of income among many families in rural areas. The government should give more emphasis to the National Dairy Plan to increase milk production and thereby creating avenues to keep hold the people to their indigenous

occupations. Similarly focus should be given on fisheries and poultry as a source of income and employment to revamp the rural economy.

- The government should encourage other allied sectors to enhance job creation in the village through high value agriculture like horticulture, floriculture and etc.
- To increase income and employment, the government should ensure development of non-farm rural activity, beside its farm counterpart.
- Village Entrepreneurship Program should be initiated and incentives should be provided to the rural youth to start their new venture with the help of available rural resources. To make it more successful, the government should provide training and teach them necessary skills for excellence.
- Indian agriculture is a major support base of our economy and there is need to make it more productive so that more employment opportunities are created.
- **Need to Engage Agricultural Graduates in Rural Areas:** The Central Government has launched various schemes to engage the unemployed agricultural graduates in setting up of such ventures in agriculture sector which will not only accelerate the agricultural production with the dissemination of latest technical know-how to the farmers but also provide employment opportunities to lakhs of other unemployed youth of this country. In such ventures, agri-clinics and agri-business centres are the most important. The training is open for graduates in agriculture and any subject allied to agriculture like horticulture, sericulture, veterinary sciences, forestry, dairy, poultry farming, fisheries, etc. Now the facility has been extended to the youth with agriculture diploma of one year after 10+2 examination. After the training, these graduates and diploma holders can start different agri-businesses and loan up to Rs. 20 lakh is provided by the NABARD and other nationalized banks out of which around 40 per cent is financial assistance.
- **Need for Non-farm Employment Opportunities:** Productivity and profitability in the non-farm sector is generally higher than in the farm sector and thus there is need for a combination of farm and non-farm income at the household level which will provide resilience against adverse situations in either of the sectors, though agriculture is known for more frequent adversity.

- **Agro- Food Processing:** Food processing and value addition are other major grey areas which can create a boom in the employment. Our country has not utilized this huge untapped potential.

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Conclusion

India lives in rural areas and there is need to do every effort to make the lives comfortable and lucrative. There is need to develop some more rural centric schemes to enhance the rural infrastructure in terms of manpower and facilities so that the dream of Mahatma Gandhi of Gram Swaraj is realized in every village of the country. Rural to urban migration seems to be an important factor in the social & economic development of the rural areas. Almost all the migrants contribute to the development of the rural areas either economically or socially or both. The economic condition of the migrants families is by & large better than those families in the village where from no migration has taken place.

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