



Consequences of Rural Out-migration in District Pauri Garhwal Uttarakhand

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Abstract: The study was carried out in the year 2020-2022. The study examined the consequences of out-migration in the district Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand; as migration is one of the most concerned topics in the state. Data was obtained through a primary questionnaire-based surveys & secondary sources. In the study random stratified sampling is done. It examined the socio-economic characteristics of the studied area. The study found that agriculture & Allied activities like livestock, fruit & vegetable processing units or forest-based products are and may become a prime source of income in the Hill rural district. There is significant evidence that out-migration is helping rural families to improve their personal well being through remittances, but it also has an adverse impact in the form of permanent migration and workload over women. In the last decade approximately 5 lakh people migrated temporarily or permanently from the state (URDMC 2018). Out of these, 42% were of 26 to 35 years' old. Out-migration is affecting various traditional systems of rural areas. The study finds that people are migrating in search of employment from Hill areas to Plains Urban centres. The study supports the policy which may increase the income of rural people and demote migration in rural areas.

Keywords: Out-migration • Pauri Garhwal • Unemployment

Introduction

Uttarakhand, a Himalayan state in India, is renowned for its picturesque landscapes, vibrant cultural legacy, and enduring traditional lifestyle. It's noteworthy that Uttarakhand stands out among states due to its substantial hillside population, with approximately 73% of households located in rural areas, constituting around 75% of the total population (NSSO 2011-12). These hilly rural locations provide the most difficult living and working circumstances for their residents. The region does not offer favourable conditions for agriculture or other sources of employment. However, the state has been witnessing a massive migration of its population to other parts of the country for decades. According to the last Census, around 1.6 million people from Uttarakhand were living in other states, with a majority of them in Delhi,

Uttar Pradesh, and Haryana (Census 2011). This occurrence exerts a notable influence on the socio-economic and cultural structure of the state. The inexistence of industries and alternative sources of income and job opportunities in the hilly regions has consistently led the residents toward agriculture and related activities. Over the past two decades, the mounting population pressure on the land and the unfavourable condition of agriculture have given rise to substantial involuntary emigration away from these areas. The amount of movement is so great that a great amount of the state's economy depends on remittances known as a "money order economy". These highland rural communities' poor and challenging geographic surroundings have traditionally presented significant obstacles for those who labour in agriculture.



The reasons for migration in Uttarakhand are multifaceted and complex. The primary drivers of migration are economic in nature. The absence of job prospects and low wages in the state force people to relocate in other parts of the country in search of work (Hoffman et al., 2019). The agricultural sector, which employs a significant portion of the population, is largely dependent on rainfed cultivation, making it vulnerable to weather variations. Moreover, the agricultural sector in Uttarakhand is largely unorganized, with low productivity and poor access to markets (Reddy & Bhandari, 2015). This has resulted in low-income levels and increased poverty, forcing people to seek work elsewhere.

This has further contributed to the underdeveloped nature of agriculture, which is characterised by issues with outdated equipment, a lack of irrigation systems, inadequate land holdings etc. All of these have been put in place to promote agriculture as only a means of subsistence. The development of agriculture has become much more difficult as a result of the rising exodus of young people from these areas. The issues of alcoholism, domestic abuse, and the absence of male participation in these regions' economies have also constituted a serious threat to the survival of these communities and their residents.

Apart from economic factors, environmental degradation is another significant reason for migration in Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand is known for its fragile ecosystem, and the state has been facing severe environmental challenges like deforestation, soil erosion, and landslides. These issues have not only resulted in reduced agricultural productivity but have also made the region prone to natural disasters like floods and landslides (Sati, 2016). These disasters have caused significant damage to life and property and have led to the displacement of people, making migration the only viable option.

Migration has had both positive and negative consequences for Uttarakhand. On the positive side, migration has led to an increase in remittances, which has contributed significantly to the state's economy. Moreover, migration has also led to the spread of Uttarakhand's culture and traditions to other parts of the country. The diaspora community has played an essential role in promoting Uttarakhand's tourism and cultural heritage. However, migration has also had negative consequences for the state. The migration of young and able-bodied people has resulted in a significant labour shortage in Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand has a predominantly rural and patriarchal society, with limited opportunities for women and marginalized communities. The lack of education and healthcare facilities in remote areas, coupled with traditional gender roles, has led to the marginalization of women and the underprivileged sections of society. This has resulted in increased migration from these areas in search of better opportunities and social mobility. The women of these areas have contributed significantly to overcoming these challenges (Yadav et al., 2018). Their contributions have not only been limited to household duties, but have expanded in recent years to the point where they are now the foundation of these areas' economies. The dwindling economy of these remote areas has received a new lease on life because of the rising involvement of women in agriculture and other sources of income. The greater involvement of women in these regions' economies, which is largely a result of the increased youth migration, has begun the economic recovery in these areas while also acting as a catalyst for women's empowerment.

Methodology

To study the consequences of migration in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, the present



study centred on the Pauri Garhwal district. Administratively, the district was divided into 15 development blocks from which two development blocks, namely Khirsu and Pabo, were selected. The district primarily consists of rural areas characterized by predominantly hilly terrain. This study was conducted in 2020-2022. For the study, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select two blocks and 13 villages covering 130 respondents from these blocks. Stratified random sampling was employed to collect data on households within

the chosen villages in each block, utilizing questionnaires and conducting face-to-face interviews. Based on the 2011 census data, Pauri Garhwal and Almora are the only two districts in Uttarakhand that have experienced a decline in population over the past decade. The tough geographical terrain of villages, lower socio-economic conditions, small fragmented villages grow into more recognizable as compared to large villages, thus it pretends to be a significant reason for emigration. (Mamgain, Rajendra P & Reddy, D., 2015).

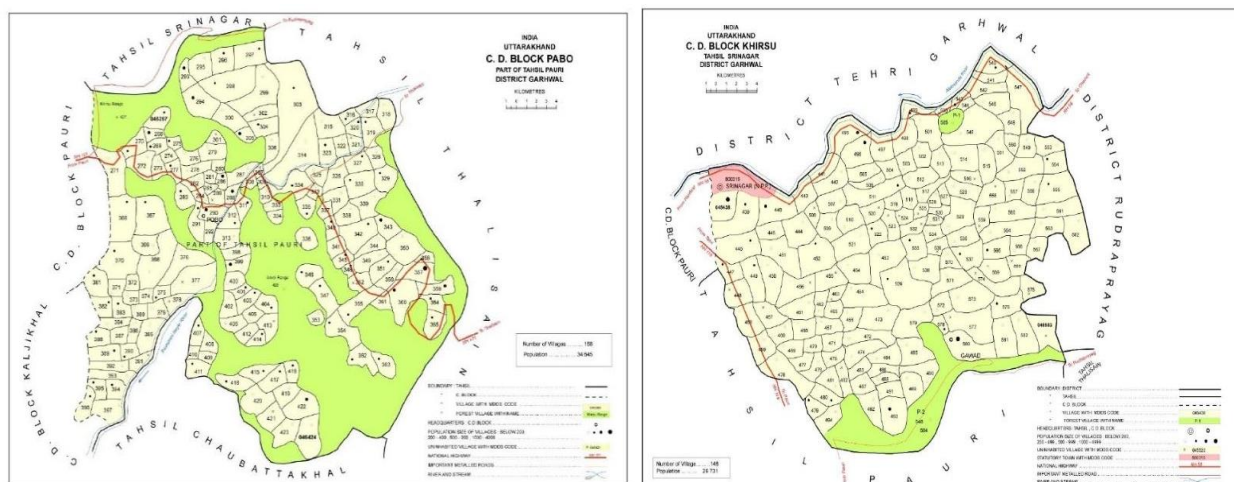


Plate 1. Block map of Pabo & Khirsu

The Census 2011 reports that the population of Pauri district experienced a decrease of 1.51%, with 83.59% of the district's total population residing in rural areas. A significant portion of

the district's population living in rural areas consists of females, with males making up 46.6 percent of the total rural population, while females constitute 53.4 percent (Census 2011).

Table 1. Growth rate of population in Uttarakhand during 1981-2011.

District	1981%	1991%	2001%	2011%
Almora	15.81	8.94	3.67	-1.73
Pauri	15.46	8.57	3.91	-1.51

Source: Census of India (1981-2011)

Table 2. Growth rate of Rural-Urban population in Uttarakhand during 2001-2011.

District	Total Population		Male		Female	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Pauri	-5.49	25.37	-5.02	19.20	24.88	41.69

Source: Census of India, 2011



The entire demographic information shows that people frequently move from the district's rural regions to its cities or to other remaining states. The data also indicates that the rural sections of the district's are predominantly populated by women, whose numbers are steadily rising. According to the Census data, in rural areas of the district, there has been a notable disparity in the growth rates between male and female child populations. This disparity is the main factor contributing to the slight rise in the population of males in rural regions. In the absence of this, the male population in rural areas has been negatively impacted by male migration from these regions.

Results and Discussion

The present study looked into the magnitude of migration and how it affected changes in the pattern of distribution. The study's findings are listed below. In the study area, migrant members (MM) are frequently distributed within the population. The research reveals that migration is a prevalent phenomenon in the rural hilly areas of Uttarakhand. Table No.1 illustrates that nearly 72 percent of households in these areas are impacted by migration, with approximately 13 percent experiencing complete migration. Furthermore, the data indicates that migration is evenly distributed across all regions within the study area.

Table 3. Number of migrants from the HH.

Block	HH with no MM	HH with Partial MM	Migrated HH	Total
Khirsu	16	34	10	60
Pabau	20	42	8	70
Total	36(27.69%)	76(58.46%)	18(13.84)	130

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

The study also investigates the dispersion of migratory patterns from the area on the gender

basis. The study's findings are displayed in the table provided below:

Table 4. Dispersion of migrants on the Gender basis.

Block	Male	Female	Total
Khirsu	54	50	104
Pabau	66	34	100
Total	120(58.82)	84(41.18%)	204

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

The study indicates that a significant proportion of migrants from rural hill regions are males. According to Table 2, 58.82 percent of migrants are male, while 41.18 percent are female. This substantial disparity in male and female migration highlights that, in most cases, females are left behind in rural areas when households

experience migration. Numerous studies have highlighted that females are often left behind to not only care for children and elderly family members but also to shoulder the responsibilities of agricultural activities, which are predominantly conducted in these regions.



Table 4. Distribution of migrants on the basis of age and purpose of migration

Purpose of migration	Age distribution of migrants			Total
	15-30 years	31 to 45 years	above 45 years	
Employment	14	52	14	80(39.22%)
Education	28	8	0	36(17.65%)
Health	2	0	8	10(4.9%)
Infrastructure	0	6	8	14(6.87%)
Others*	18	22	24	64(31.37%)
Total	62	88	54	204

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

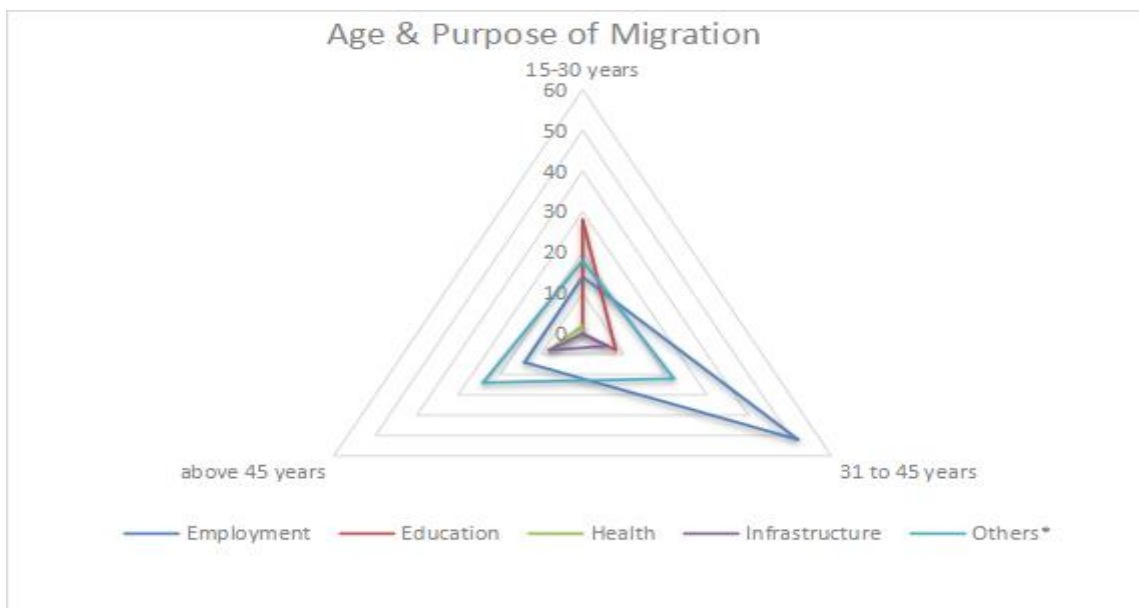


Figure 3. Dispersion of migrants on the basis of Age and purpose of migration

Others*: include migration of members along with the head of family and other major reasons like family conflicts etc.

The table above illustrates that the largest portion of migrants from these regions belongs to the age group of 31 to 45, followed by the 15 to 30-year-old age group. This indicates that a significant portion of the population, that forms the primary workforce of any community, has relocated from these areas. This migration has

resulted in a depletion of human resources, which has a detrimental impact on the economic development of these regions already grappling with various challenges. The study also reveals that the primary reason for migration from these areas is the lack of employment opportunities.



Table 5. Source of Income/Subsistence of rural families

Main source of Income/subsistence of families residing in rural areas					
	Ag & Allied	Labour	Remittances by the MM	Govt job	Others
Primary source	18	20	70	6	16
Secondary source	38	70	2	0	2
Total	56(43.08)	90(69.23)	72(55.38%)	6(4.61)	18(13.85)

Source: Field Survey 2021-22 (*Additional sources encompass earnings from pensions, supplementary employment in rural regions, and assistance from alternative government initiatives)

Conclusion

The investigation reveals that agriculture and allied activities play a crucial role in providing income and sustenance in these regions. While a significant percentage of families rely on remittances sent by migrant members as their primary source of income, approximately 70 percent of households are either primarily or secondarily dependent on labor activities (Mamgain & Reddy, 2015).

The significant male migration has prompted females to take on a more proactive role in agricultural activities and engage in other income-generating endeavors. Interestingly, the study indicates that female participation in agriculture is higher than that of males. Given the economic importance of agriculture in these regions, the contribution of women to the local economy is prominent. Apart from their involvement in agriculture, females also participate significantly in the MNREGA program. In contrast, male workers are more prevalent in other activities besides agriculture and MNREGA work. Notably, the number of male workers engaging in these alternative actions is much lower than the number of females engaging in agriculture and MNREGA work, underscoring the substantial contribution of women to the economy of rural hillside territories (Yadav & Sharma, 2016).

Data analysis suggests that females are more involved in low-wage activities and subsistence-related work, such as farming, while the male workforce is relatively more limited to higher-wage employment compared to females (Yadav & Sharma, 2016). This shift of female workers from traditional subsistence activities like farming to initiatives like MNREGA is a positive step toward the comprehensive economic empowerment of women in these areas. Women's engagement in income-generating endeavors not only nurtures self-reliance but also instills belief in oneself and motivation to pursue advanced skills and education, potentially leading to increased participation in other income-generating activities in the future (Deshingkar & Sandi, 2011).

The prolonged underdevelopment in rural hill regions of Uttarakhand has hampered their progress relative to other regions within the state and across the country. Districts like Pauri and Almora exhibit no in-migration trends, resulting in continuous out-migration of the primary workforce, predominantly young males. This has placed considerable pressure on the local economy, offset by the growing involvement of women in agriculture, alternative revenue-generating activities, and family responsibilities. This shift has significantly altered the gender



composition of the workforce, leading to higher female workforce participation, particularly in agriculture, low-income activities like MNREGA, and unpaid family labor. While agriculture and allied activities are primarily subsistence-oriented, male participation is minimal compared to females. Males tend to engage more in higher-wage employment opportunities (Yadav et al., 2018).

Despite the increasing engagement of women mainly in subsistence and low-income activities, their contribution to the local economy is substantial, given the dearth of employment opportunities and poor infrastructure in these regions. Consequently, government support has become crucial for this segment of the population. Such support should focus on skill development to enable women to access higher-paying work or embark on entrepreneurship development (Joshi, 2018; Mehta & Maikhuri, 2018).

The shifting trend of increased female workforce participation is an encouraging sign of the initiation of women's empowerment. Greater participation and its benefits not only foster economic independence for women but also contribute significantly to the overall development of these regions. Despite the government's previous policy frameworks failing to curb persistent migration, promoting small and medium industries related to agriculture and allied activities, such as food processing, dairy, meat, and herbal products, could provide opportunities for employment generation in the absence of large-scale industrialization (Sati, 2021).

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