Labour out-migration from the northern regions of rural India: A case study of Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract:

This paper tries to examine the economic impact of labour out-migration from the rural areas. The labour out-migration in the rural areas is a backbone for the people to sustain their livelihood. Due to the lack of employment opportunities labour migrate towards the areas where there are diverse sources of employment. Thus migration is a big aid for the rural economy. The migration helps the people in transforming their living standards and enhances their lifestyle. The study is based upon the primary data sources. The study is carried out in the northernmost state of India i.e. Jammu and Kashmir. This region has a tough topography and people are totally dependent upon the migration. Agriculture and industrial prospects are negligible in this region of India. With the help of paper efforts have been made to show the economic impact of migration on the lives of people in the rural areas and mitigating the poverty.

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1.1 Introduction

Migration is a multifaceted and worldwide phenomenon which takes place for the various reasons such as, poor health facilities, no educational facilities, and unemployment. However, the present study deals with the migration of the labour section of the society that is responsible for earning the livelihood for their respective families. Expressing briefly, migration is a movement of people from their birthplaces to other places for individual reasons. It is an integral part of the evolution process in humans. There is always a hidden force, that is, the compulsion behind migration. Not only the geographical shift takes place while experiencing the migration, but social and cultural changes also emerge out of it. It results in the amalgamation of traditions and customs, which dilute the concentrated form of the lifestyle of the migrants. Rapid transformation of societies also occurs in the lives of people across the world in general and in the targeted research sites in particular. This rapid change is the end result of the migration. Since antiquity, the mobility of masses is in practice, which is still in continuous form.

A linkage between societies and migration is a worldly experience. It contributes significantly to the transformation of the lives of people and enhances economic development. It is supported by various models and theories. Migration also has a great hand in the modification of agriculture and its commercialization (Oberai and Singh, 1983). Places of destination are also affected by migration but the origin places also experience positive results (Rao, 1981). It affects the demographic statistics inevitably. Since long, migration has been a major driving force behind the socio-economic transformation, in addressing regional discrepancies, unemployment among the youth, challenges of urbanization and slums etcetera.

As in the developing nations, there is a prevailing vicious circle of poverty, unemployment and lack of health infrastructure etc. Studies based on (Mohapatra.et.al., 2006) and the McAuliffe, M., & Ruhs, M. (2018) inevitably correlates the development process with the migration. As per the report, remittances in the developing nations significantly increased from 58 million dollars to 167 million dollars. Therefore, migration also helped to mitigate the poverty crises.

1.2. Literature review

Wondimagegnhu and Zeleke (2017)   revealed that migration in different geographical areas occurs due to different reasons. It is not confined to common causes. Migration takes place due to climatic variations, conflicts, and environmental issues. Somewhere it occurs due to wage differentials and employment opportunities. In other areas, it takes place due to attraction towards a modernized way of living preferred by people.

Madhu and Uma (2014) in their study have found that due to the prevalence of seasonal unemployment majority of the population migrate. Poverty and low earnings also lead to migration.

Gebru and Beyene (2012) in their study has discussed particularly the role of migration in enhancing the livelihood status and assets creation among rural households.

De Haas (2014) has made an attempt to discuss the trade-off between rural development and urban migration. Impoverishing poverty and hunger, lack of employment opportunities and basic infrastructure are the push factors of out-migration in rural areas.

Kundu (2013) studied that at the household level, remittances increase the family income and improve the economic and social activities of the household in a positive way.

A study made by (Mohapatra.et.al., 2006) infers that internal migration is much far effective in curbing the poverty problem than international migration, as more poor people are involved in internal migration.

1.3. Objectives

- **To find the economic impact of migration in rural areas.**

1.4. Research methodology

Keeping in view the objectives of the research, the present study is carried out in the most backward region (Chenab valley region) of the Jammu and Kashmir State in the Republic of India; and this research entirely relies on the primary data which are collected from the Heads of the households of the research field sites. Unlike the primary data, the current study did not find suffice sources of the secondary data for carrying out the research that would stand parallel to the contemporary researches in economics of migration. Thus the present study is largely based on primary data sources. However, the various sources of secondary data are comprised of government sites, reports, journals, articles and census and migration reports on the national and international level. Expressing explicitly, it is immediate requirement to state that the data were collected through field survey method using structured interviews. Data were collected from the rural area of Chenab valley region, which is the most backward region of the state. People directly depend upon the migration for earning their livelihood. The nature of the data forms the basis of both the qualitative and the quantitative techniques. In order to earn livelihood, each laborer moves from pillar to post, from nook to corner, and many more places. They migrate from their respective dwellings. In this context, certain questions were asked relating to the natural form of migration, type of migration and the possible economic effects of migration on the sample households with regard to their migration.

1.4.1. Sample design

This subsection talks about the complete sampling procedure using proper sampling methods in the current study.

1.4.2. Selection of the study area.

In this subsection, the selection of the study area has been made on the following backgrounds: firstly, the majority of the area is covered with forests and very less geography is utilized for the agriculture purposes. Agriculture prospects are exercised very little and the industrial avenues are negligible (MSME, GOI, 2011). The targeted region is a hilly region with the sloppy mountains. As per the Panchayati Raj (2006), it was categorized as one of the backward areas in India. There is a 37 percent workforce participation rate (main and marginal) which is more than the average workforce at the

state level (34 percent). Therefore, the chances of maximum earnings are least as there are no industries, and agricultural sources available to the labor force. Due to least average percentage of the earning the labor force is left with the option to move out of their native places to search for means of livelihood. Considering the tough agricultural conditions, the adverse climatic conditions like drought-prone, no irrigation, monsoon based agriculture *et cetera* have been taken into account for the realization of the present study. Rainfall in the targeted area is also very scanty as compared to the other non-targeted regions of the district. Thus the targeted research sites seem to be appropriate ones for the exploration of the research process.

1.4.3. Sampling procedure for the present study

Geographically the state of Jammu and Kashmir is divided mainly into three divisions' i.e. Pir-Panjal region, Chenab valley region and Kashmir valley region. On random basis Chenab valley region was selected. Further, the Chenab valley region is divided into three administrative units (districts) namely Doda, Ramban and Kishtwar. Using again the simple random sampling the district Doda was chosen for final sampling as given below.

Regions	Districts in the selected region
Pir-Panjal region	Doda
Chenab valley region	Ramban
Kashmir valley region	Kishtwar

The total of 120 households was chosen as the respondents with at least a single member migrant. Due to the lack of data on migration, purposively the respondent households were taken to get data on the said objective.

1.4.4. Statistical tools for data analysis

This subsection of the research methodology deals with the process of analyzing the data. Different tools and techniques have been taken into account, which are primarily the statistical in nature. The primary data obtained in the present research are edited and coded to modify the data in the quantitative form for analyzing successfully. Tabulated form of the data is done to realize the use descriptive statistics for obtaining

the possible outcomes. The regression method of analyzing the data has been adopted wherever felt necessary. In order to get the quantitative results, the various technological tools such as, SPSS, excel, have also been experienced in the present research.

1.5. Discussion and results

Table 1

Background characteristics of the sample households.

Background Characteristics		F	%
Type of Family	**Nuclear**	93	77.5%
	Joint	27	22.5%
	Total	120	100.0%
Family Size	**1 to 5**	69	57.5%
	5 to 10	50	41.7%
	Above 10	1	0.8%
	Total	120	100.0%
Religion	**Hindu**	89	74.2%
	Muslim	31	25.8%
	Total	120	100.0%
Category	**General**	101	84.2%
	SC	13	10.8%
	ST	6	5.0%
	Total	120	100.0%
Type of Ration Card	**APL**	8	6.7%
	BPL	79	65.8%
	AAY	31	25.8%
	None	2	1.7%
	Total	120	100.0%
Number of Laborer in the Household	**1 to 2**	106	88.3%
	2 to 4	14	11.7%
	Total	120	100.0%

Source: field survey

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of sample households in the study area with respect to their background characteristics. In total, 120 households were selected for collecting data on labour migration. It is found that majority of the families are nuclear i.e.77.5% and 57.5% of the families reported the maximum number of family members

up to 5. Mostly, the followers of the Hindu religion are the residents in the study area (74.2%), which comprises largely of the general caste people and Schedule Caste, were only 10.8%. Only 25.8% of the residents were found to be the Muslims. Scheduled Tribes are the least in number (5%). The large chunk of the community fall below the poverty line (BPL+AAY) comprises of 91.6%, which shows that huge people are poverty ridden. Poverty is the major push factor behind the labour migration in the study area.

88.3% of the sample households reported that the families are having maximum two workers at home and households with workers up to four are 11.7%. Mostly head of the households are the earning source for the families.

Table 2
Characteristics of the labour migration

Characteristics		F	%
Pattern of Migration	**Rural to Rural**	64	53.3%
	Rural to Urban	56	46.7%
	Total	120	100.0%
Migration with Whom	**Alone**	108	90.0%
	With family	12	10.0%
	With family and parents	-	-
	Total	120	100.0%
Type of Migration	**Permanent**	4	3.3%
	Temporary	84	70.0%
	Seasonal	32	26.7%
	Total	120	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

In the study area rural to rural migration (53.3%) is prevalent and the migration towards the regions in the urban areas is revealed 46.7% of the total. In the rural areas, they move towards the areas such as Leh and Ladakh and the valleys in Himachal Pradesh. In 90% of the respondent households, a single member of the family migrates. It was seen only in case of 10% families that whole family migrates with the working member of the family. At large, the temporary migration is the most common among the sample respondents. About 70% of the migrants leave their homes temporarily and return back after sometime. It is also reported that 32% of the total migrants move seasonally.

Table 3

Distribution showing the working conditions of sample labour migrants

Particulars		F	%
Location of Work	Within Block	1	0.8%
	Tehsil	-	-
	District	22	18.3%
	Inter-District	91	75.8%
	Out Of State	6	5.0%
	Total	120	100.0%
Basis on Which the Wages Received	Daily Wage	56	46.7%
	Weekly Wage	-	-
	Monthly Wage	64	53.3%
	Total	120	100.0%
Average Daily Earnings At Work Place	Less Than Rs. 300	28	23.3%
	Rs. 300 To 600	86	71.7%
	More Than Rs.600	6	5.0%
	Total	120	100.0%
Work Hours At Workplace	8-10 Hours	47	39.2%
	10-12 Hours	69	57.5%
	More Than 12 Hours	4	3.3%
	Total	120	100.0%
Present Occupation Satisfaction Level	Highly Satisfied	4	3.3%
	Satisfied	69	57.5%
	Unsatisfied	46	38.3%
	Highly Unsatisfied	1	0.8%
	Total	120	100.0%

Source: field survey

People measure large distances in order to get jobs. There always remains uncertainty with the people about the wages, work hours and job availability.

Table 3 states that mostly the labour migrants don't get jobs in the nearby areas and they leave their native places in search of jobs. It is found in the study area that, most of the migrant laborers find jobs outside their native districts (75.8%). They move to the other districts of the state. Only 18.3% of the laborers could be absorbed within the district itself. Mostly the wages paid on monthly basis. 46.7% of them are the daily wage earners. There has been upliftment in the earnings of the migrant labourers as 71.7% earn their daily wages in the range of Rs 300 to Rs 600. 57.5% of the total respondents complained about the more working hours to earn money. Majority (57.5%) feel satisfied with the jobs at new workplaces but also a good chunk of the respondents (38.3%) are not satisfied with the jobs at new destinations.

Table 4

Distribution showing the impact of migration on household assets among sample households

Household assets/facilities	No. of Respondents	
	Before Migration	**After Migration**
Electricity	104 (86.7%)	120 (100%)
Tap Water	61 (50.8%)	110 (91.7%)
Sanitation	5 (4.2%)	100 (83.3%)
LPG Connection	5 (4.2%)	93 (77.5%)
Television	7 (5.8%)	66 (55%)
Refrigerator	3 (2.5%)	23 (19.2%)
Two Wheeler	-	8 (6.7%)
Mobile Phone	115 (95.8%)	119 (99.2%)
Fan/Cooler	19 (15.8%)	54 (45%)
Furniture	12 (10.0%)	59 (49.2%)
Jewellery	6 (5.0%)	9 (7.5%)
Inverter	2 (1.7%)	15 (12.5%)

Source: field survey

In the table 4, it is seen that migration has shown an increment of the household assets with the respondents. There is a tremendous increase in some basic amenities with the households. It is depicted that migration has helped in ensuring the target of 100% electrification of the households, 91.7% of the sample households have tap water facility available which was only 50.8% in the pre- migration period. There is a huge increase in the LPG connections (77.5%) and sanitation facilities (83.3%) saw a great upsurge due to migration which was reported only 4.2% before migration. Tally of Television (55%) and furniture items (49.2%) also increased largely among the sample

households. also there is some increase in the percentage of the assets like cooler/fan and refrigerators.

Only in case of more expensive items such as two-wheeler and jewellery there is not that much increase noted as it was in the other basic facilities. Thus, it is obvious from the data that labour migration for sure, raise the standard of living of people and have enhance the household amenities which is visualized by the study.

Table 5

Distribution showing the impact of migration on the type of houses of sample households

Type of house	No. of respondents	
	Before Migration	After Migration
Pucca	-	27 (22.5%)
Semi-Pucca	3 (2.5%)	44 (36.7%)
Kuccha	117 (97.5%)	49 (40.8%)
Total	120 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: field survey

When it comes to the type of houses in the study area, there was not even a single pucca house among the sample households during pre-migration period as shown in the table 5. After migration the tally increased to 22.5% and semi-pucca houses were increased to 36.7% from 2.5%. In this way, the kuccha houses have reduced to 40.8% from 97.5%, which is a big big change. It is seen that, these laborers have invested more in building their residences and accumulating household assets.

Table 6

Distribution showing the impact of migration on incomes of the migrant laborers

Income	No. of Respondents	
	Before Migration	After Migration
Below 5000	90 (75.0%)	-
5000-10000	29 (24.2%)	33 (27.5%)

10000-15000	1 (0.8%)	42 (35.0%)
15000-20000	-	29 (24.2%)
Above 20000	-	16 (13.3%)
Total	120 (100.0%)	120 (100.0%)

Source: field survey

Labourers leave their homes to earn and save more. They try to increase their income level in order to meet their day to day household expenditure and to mould their standard of living. In this context migration affects the incomes of people largely.

Table 6 clearly depicts that before migration 70% of the migrant labourers were earning a meager income up to a level of Rs. 5,000 per month, which shows there were less earning avenues and low wages were offered to them at their native places. 29% of the laborers were earning up to Rs 10,000 monthly. And only a single laborer single was making his earnings up to Rs. 15,000. But after migration no one was found in the slab of Rs 5,000, and 35%, 24% and 13% of them were found in the slab of Rs.10000 to 15,000, Rs. 15,000 to 20,000 and above Rs. 20,000 respectively. Hence, it is clear that migration has affected the incomes of the laborers manifold in the study area.

In order to study the impact of migration on income of the sample respondents Paired sample 't' test is used.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the incomes the labour migrants before and after migration.

Alternate hypothesis: There is a significant difference between the income of the labour migrants before and after migration.

Paired samples 't' test for income before and after migration								
	Paired Differences					**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
Pair 1 before and after migration	**Mean**	**SD**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**				
				Lower	**Upper**			
	-1.975	.814	.074	-2.122	-1.828	-26.566	119	.000

The test shows that 't' statistics -26.566 is significant at 5 percent level of significance with 119 degrees of freedom. As, the p value is 0.000< the alpha value (0.05). Hence, the null hypothesis stands rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. **Therefore, it concludes that migration of labour in the study area has a significant effect on the incomes of the labour migrants.** It reveals that migration plays a vital role in enhancing the economic standard of the people in the study area.

Table 7

Distribution showing average monthly expenditure of households

Particulars	Before migration	After migration	% change
Food items	1725	2398	39%
Non-food items	2359	3434	45.6%
Total	4255	5832	

Source: field survey

Expenditure related question was asked from the respondents about their monthly expenses on both the food and non-food items. As per the data revealed, before migration the average monthly expenditure before migration on the food items was Rs.1725, whether the consumption expenditure on non-food items was Rs. 2359 (health, education, medicine etc.). After the migration of labour, the consumption of households was reported to be Rs.2398 for the food items and Rs. 3434 was spend on the non-food items. Also from the table it clears that with the increase in income, after migration there is a 45.6% change recorded in case of non-food items and for food items it was 39%.

Being the poorest section of the society, these people have not risen their luxury consumption, although the other non-food items most preferably the education and children were the main items for which the spending of households rose in the study area.

In order to check the significance of migration on the expenditure pattern of the respondent households, the paired sample t test was used.

Null hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the expenditure pattern before and after migration.

Alternate hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the expenditure pattern before and after migration.

Using the t test for a pair of sample, with the help of SPSS was calculated as below

Expenditure before and after migration	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
	-1584.1	608.4	55.547	-1694.25	-1474.26	-28.5	119	.000

Paired samples 't' test for expenditure pattern before and after migration

It is found that value of t statistics at 5% level of significance is -28.5 and the p value is .000< the level of significance i.e 0.05(alpha) value. It means the t statistics is significant. It is inferred that the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the expenditure pattern before and after migration stands rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. **It is concluded that migration has also a significant effect on the expenditure pattern of the households.**

1.6. Conclusion

From the above discussion, it seems that migration has a profound healing capacity in the rural areas. It acts as a backbone to the poor rural people. The image is clear that migration has impacted the standards of living of people in a positive way, helped in getting rid of poverty. It has ensured the enhanced level of incomes, increase in the household facilities and assets. Migration has helped in increase in the households' expenditures in terms of non-food items (education and health etc.). Thus migration is a great blessing for the people dwelling in the rural areas, where there are no avenues of earnings available.

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