

Migration From Uttarakhand and Developmental Implications in Rural Hill Areas

¹Namami Bansal

Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,
IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India

²Bharat Diwakar

Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences,
IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand, India

Abstract

“Migration is as natural as breathing, as eating, as sleeping. It is part of life, part of nature. So we have to find a way of establishing a proper kind of scenario for modern migration to exist. And when I say 'we,' I mean the world. We need to find ways of making that migration not forced”-Gael Garcia Bernal. We have attempted to decode the trends of migration from Uttarakhand. A certain degree of migration is considered natural and unavoidable for any economy & society. However, in view of several reports on the trends of migration in the recent decades, it becomes essential to understand this trend, underlying factors and consequences associated with it. Government has started a plethora of schemes for bringing prosperity and economic development in the rural countryside. National rural livelihoods mission is one such scheme which has really transformed the rural economic picture while also focussing on the objective of women empowerment simultaneously. By providing financial and targeted incentives to Self-help groups to ensure they take up sustainable business activities and get a steady flow of income to eventually improve their status and prosperity. NRLM empowers public sector banks to establish Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes across every district nationwide. These institutes serve as catalysts for turning unemployed rural youth into empowered self-employed entrepreneurs. Through tailored training programs and ongoing mentorship, equip individuals with the skills and confidence needed to thrive in their ventures. Banks play a pivotal role in the entire process, from candidate selection and training to providing continuous support post-training and facilitating financial linkages. All of these are targeted to improve the productivity and service-oriented knowledge for these groups primarily made up of rural hill women in case of Uttarakhand to empower them.

Keywords: Migration; NRLM; Uttarakhand; Rural Hills

1. Introduction

The State of Uttarakhand was formed from the erstwhile Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000. The premise and struggle for separate statehood was based on the topographical differences of the hilly areas with the plain land of Ganga- Jamuna doab and to combat the problems of the hills and the people living here. Uttarakhand was divided into 13 districts for the sake of administrative convenience. Out of these, three districts constituted plain areas and the remaining eleven constitute hills. Furthermore, out of these eleven hill districts, three are remote namely Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh and Chamoli. In the attempt to understand the impact of NRLM scheme, Migration happens to be a challenging factor that affects both outcomes as well as the policy decisions with respect to specific interventions in the rural hill areas of the state.

2. Scope and Significance of Study

Migration has often been quoted as a major policy challenge for the state. There are cases and reports of entire villages being abandoned due to out-migration in a very short span of time in the remote areas. Some senior citizens recollect and remark how the villages used to be self-sufficient units earlier as is no longer the case with increasing preference among the younger generation for more urbanized lifestyle (1). In the state of Uttarakhand, we have over 56000 self-help groups mostly catering to the rural remote hilly areas where there are limited avenues for taking up productive economic work. “The Rural Development and Migration Commission set up by Hon’ble Ex-Chief Minister Mr Rawat in 2017, released its report on migration in 2018. Its findings present a gloomy picture of the state of affairs. According to estimates, around 1,18,981 people from 3,946-gram panchayats migrated permanently and 3,83,726 people from 6,338 gram panchayats shifted temporarily (they visit their homes but live outside the state for work)” -on Palayan Aayog.

3. Problem Statement

Is migration at an alarming level? Most of the natives’ own land and assets in their villages but migrate outside. The

cultural bonhomie is unparalleled in the native village. It is also a source of identity for the person (2). The social, cultural and ancestral bond people have with their native village is the cost to be paid for the decision to migrate elsewhere. What factors contribute to migration and abandonment? Therefore, this paper intends to seek reasons for this choice and its background along with implications thereafter for the individuals and the economy as a whole. There have been government policies to promote self-employment and create better income opportunities for the people. However, the trend as it continues questions the established notions of migration simply being an economic phenomenon. Or it has more to it? In view of the given scenario, two key questions or themes emerge. These are stated as follows:

1. *What is the extent and the causes of outmigration from Uttarakhand?*
2. *What are the causes of this phenomenon?*

To answer the former, data from the report of migration commission has been studied and data has been taken. Also, since reasons for migration are different from family to family so a survey was conducted in all blocks of the hilly district of Uttarkashi which is severely affected by outmigration to find out the reasons for this phenomenon and its impact thereof.

4. Review of literature

The significant outflow of human capital presents a pressing developmental challenge in hilly states like Uttarakhand, which was established as a separate entity from Uttar Pradesh on November 9, 2000, amid hopes for enhanced business opportunities and livelihood prospects. The 2011 census reveals stark realities: out of 16,793 villages in Uttarakhand, 1,055 remain uninhabited, while another 405 have populations of fewer than 10 individuals, reflecting a sluggish demographic growth in many mountainous regions of the state (3). The rate of out-migration is alarming, leading to the abandonment of numerous villages, turning them into ghost settlements (4) In general, the population growth rate in the state stands at 1.74%. However, there's a noticeable contrast between mountainous areas, experiencing a lower population growth rate of 0.70%, and plain areas with a higher rate of 2.83% (5). Dehradun, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar, and Nainital exhibit the highest decadal growth rates, each surpassing 30%, followed by Champawat at 14.5% and Uttarkashi at around 12%. Conversely, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag, Bageshwar, Chamoli, and Tehri Garhwal register low growth rates of 5% or less, while Almora and Pauri show negative growth, with 17,868 fewer individuals recorded in 2011 compared to 2001. Notably, 33 villages vanished from Uttarakhand's map between 2001 and 2011. According to the 2011 census, out of 16,793 villages in Uttarakhand, 1,053 are uninhabited (6).

Migration from rural hilly areas isn't a recent trend, as inhabitants contend with various challenges in their living conditions. These difficulties often prompt them to seek better opportunities and amenities in urban centers (7). Despite Uttarakhand's commendable economic growth since its inception, governmental focus has primarily centered on plain regions (8). The dearth of essential amenities like employment, education, healthcare, and nearby markets in hilly areas propels individuals towards urban migration. Various factors influence migration patterns in rural regions (9). A significant portion of the migrating populace comprises youngsters, leading to either the abandonment of villages or their occupancy solely by the elderly and infirm. This migration poses a substantial obstacle to the state's development, despite governmental efforts to curb it and enhance local income (10).

Uttarakhand boasts rich agroecology with a diverse array of plant and grass species, along with a substantial livestock population in its hilly areas (11). However, the scarcity of job opportunities in rural regions remains a primary driver for migration to urban areas. Despite the government's introduction of numerous schemes and welfare programs aimed at stemming rural migration the Census of India 2011 indicates minimal population growth in hill districts compared to a notable increase in plain districts (12). The ineffective implementation of development schemes in backward areas and the failure to generate job opportunities for local residents have contributed significantly to rural-urban migration (13) this in turn has affected the outcome of the policy interventions such as NRLM.

5. Analysis

Table 1 specifies the situation with respect to inhabitation trends in the villages of the state and the change subsequently from 2001 to 2011.

Table 1. Distribution of number of villages according to Population size in 2001 and 2011

Population Size Class	No. Of Villages	
	2001	2011

Total No. of Inhabited Villages	1 5 7 6 1	1 5 7 4 5
Less than 200	7 7 7 5	7 8 2 3
200-499	4 9 1 2	4 6 8 4
500-999	1 8 9 0	1 8 2 6
1000-1999	7 5 2	8 2 4
2000-4999	3 5 0	4 7 1
5000-9999	6 9	9 6
10000 and above	1 3	2 1

(Source: RD &MC report)

The number of villages in the first three categories with a lesser population has declined marginally while in the remaining categories it has increased slightly. The population growth as per economic theory is a result of three factors namely: birth rate, death rate and migration. Considering the premise of positive birth rate, population declining slightly in villages with lesser population confirms to trend of significant out migration.

Table 2. District wise profile

Name of district	Population in lakhs (2011 census)	Districts share in state's population (%)	Percentage of urban population (2011 census) *	Area in sq kms.	Percentage of state's geographical area
Almora	6.22	6.15	10.02	3090	5.78
Bageshwar	2.59	2.57	3.50	2310	4.32
Chamoli	3.91	3.87	15.11	7692	14.38
Champawat	2.59	2.56	14.29	1781	3.33
Dehradun	16.99	16.79	55.90	3088	5.77
Hardwar	19.2	19.05	33.77	2360	4.41
Nainital	9.56	9.44	38.94	3853	7.20

Pauri	6.86	6.79	16.41	5348	10.17
Pithoragarh	4.86	4.80	14.31	7110	13.29
Rudraparyag	2.37	2.34	4.19	1896	3.55
Tehri	6.16	6.09	11.37	4085	7.64
Udham Singh Nagar	16.48	16.29	35.58	2912	5.44
Uttarkashi	3.29	3,26	7.35	7971	14.87

Source: Report of Migration Commission

Note: *State Urban population % is 30.55 (2011 census)

Table 3. District wise per capita income (in Rs) (DEC 2015 and 2018)

Name of district	2010-11	2012-12	2012-13	2013-14	2016-17
Almora	59,000	67701	75474	86,699	96,786
Bageshwar	46,194	54360	60646	68,730	1,00,117
Chamoli	62,269	69543	78371	90,173	1,18,448
Champawat	49,793	11.22	57990	64165	90,595
Dehradun	89,282	1,01,315	1,09,695	1,22,804	1,95,925
Hardwar	88,980	1,03,836	1,10,115	1,22,172	2,54,050
Nainital	96,950	89,102	95,227	1,05,960	1,15,117
Pauri	62,354	72,228	79,904	91,708	1,09,973
Pithoragarh	56,458	63,045	69,994	79,981	1,01,734
Rudraparyag	47,459	55,495	61,561	69,401	83,521
Tehri	58,496	68,282	75,249	85,156	83,662
Udhamsingh Nagar	85,541	1,00,058	1,05,087	1,15,543	1,87,313
Uttarkashi	42,079	47,755	52,574	59,791	89,190
Uttarakhand	73,819	85,372	92,191	1,03,349	1,61,102

(Source: RD &MC Report)

The per capita income in the hill districts is significantly less than that of the plain's districts, with the districts having lowest per capita income being Bageshwar, Champawat and Uttarkashi, where the per capita income is almost half of

that of the plain districts of Udham Singh Nagar, Hardwar and Dehradun. It is interesting to note that the contribution of the primary sector to the gross domestic product of these districts. Observing the data in the above table regarding the per capita income presents the reason for the preference for migrating to urban areas as it offers the 'pull' of higher income and therefore a better standard of living.

The overall trend of migration is alarming to the extent of 'eroding off' the natural increase in **population due to higher birth rate and decrease in death rate with advancement in health and medicine**. To answer the second question, it is critical to understand the causes of migration, following tables summarize the data obtained from field survey conducted in Uttarkashi district for migration causes. All blocks were studied and random sampling was done to reach out to families. Random selection of villages in every block was done.

Table 4. Primary data for causes of migration

Name of Village	No of People/families migrated	Type of migration	Main causes	Economic factors	Non-economic factors	Total population
Naipad	50	seasonal	social	income	Education, health	602
Neugaon	6 families	Full time	job	income	Social sector	1050
Neusari	20	permanent	job	income	Education, health	200
Sald	-(NR)	-(NR)	income	income	Animal menace	1210
Gyanja	8 families	Full time	job	income	education	750
Basunga	6 families	Full time	job	Income	-	460
Nismaur	8 families	Full time	lifestyle	income	education	1350
Tarakot	2 families	permanent	water	job	H&E	554
Suri	-(NR)	-(NR)	Water	job	H&E	263
Dargad	-(NR)	-(NR)	water	-	H&E, Irrigation	208
Syaluka	-(NR)	-(NR)	Agri	income	-	387
Raun	-(NR)	-(NR)	Agri	income	-	345
Dokhariyani	-(NR)	-(NR)	Agri	income	-	157
Liwadi	-(NR)	-(NR)	job	income	connectivity	487
Rekcha	-(NR)	-(NR)	job	income	connectivity	1002
Tian	10	Full time	job	Low wages	health	733
Tholika	19	Full time	education	Low income	Agri based	387
Bajladi	08	temporary	health	job	irrigation	660
Dharipalli	21	Full time	job	Low wages	education	374

Data analysis and findings: As can be seen above, there are a host of non-economic or other factors reported as the main cause of outmigration in the ground survey. Subsequently to cross verify and correlate data was also obtained for the social sector facilities in health and education in these areas and the table below substantiated and confirmed the findings. Block wise presence of health and education facilities is very limited as compared to the demand.

Table 5. Block- wise details of available Educational and Health facilities in the District

Block	No. of Junior basic	No. of Senior Basic	No. of Higher seconda	No. of Degree colleges	No. of PG colleges	Polyt echni	No. of IITs	No. of Anga nvari	No. of allopat hic	No. of PHCs
-------	---------------------	---------------------	-----------------------	------------------------	--------------------	-------------	-------------	-------------------	--------------------	-------------

	Schools	schools	ry schools						health centre	
Bhatwari	121	44	26	-	-	-	-	1058	5	3
Dunda	140	52	31	1	-	1	3		2	4
Chinyal isaur	121	44	23	-	-	1	1		1	2
Purola	73	21	5	1	-	-	-		2	-
Mori	130	42	15	-	-	-	1		4	2
Naugaon	179	66	27	-	-	-	-		5	1
Urban Area	6	6	14	2	2	2	4		1	-
Total	770	275	140	4	2	4	9	20	12	

Source: Statistics Booklet, District- Uttarkashi 2017⁴

6. Discussion

The traditional understanding is questioned by the survey. *Not just economic but a host of social and non-economic parameters also work towards the decision to migrate.* Apart from income, employment and basic facilities there are other non-economic reasons quoted by the natives forcing them to migrate out like animal menace, lack of irrigation and drinking water and even lifestyle preferences. Migration is not just a result of distress but aspirational too. Many case studies attached in the appendices point to preferential migration for a certain kind of lifestyle as well for high quality educational and health facilities. Lastly, about the government intervention through schemes like Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali yojana for self-employment through credit availability – sustainable employment opportunities in tourism and policies to promote women entrepreneurs through SHGs have been helpful in aiding and providing platforms to those who seek self-employment. However, the scope of the same limited by scale of operations yielding low returns and hence a setback for sustainability and economic viability.

• Relationship with gender balance and related dynamics

Gender balance implies balance in access to opportunities, resources of all kinds and representation in various sectors between genders i.e., men and women alike. In context of migration, it has been found that often the male member of the family is the first one to migrate out and find opportunities for employment or business outside. Subsequently the family is shifted as per the logistical feasibility. As per the census figures of 2001 and 2011, Uttarakhand state has registered an increase (from 85 lakhs to 1.01 crore) in population over the decade. But the sex ratio has slightly increased from 962 per thousand to 963. Male population has increased from 4325924 to 5137773 and female population from 4163425 to 4948519. The sex ratio is very high in hill areas due to migration of men for work.

This has created the following repercussions for the Gender balance:

- A. **As head of the household:** Women left behind in the hilly areas are required to assume the roles and responsibilities of the head of the household including taking important decisions in the absence of male member, maintaining social ties and representations.
- B. **Representation in powerful positions:** As per my own experience, many villages in the hills have female Gram Pradhan's, active Mahila Mangal dals, SHGs run completely by women folks etc.
- C. **Social prestige and status:** Women in hill districts have been aware and traditionally accorded much respect as opposed to their condition in lower or plain regions of the state.
- D. **Life conditions and drudgery:** However, among all these there is another underlying dimension of high drudgery and difficult life conditions for women to survive in these areas.
- E. **Preference for life elsewhere:** There are some local inputs for preference among parents to get their daughters married to plain regions preferably for ease of living. This also is a kind of preferential migration.
- F. **Mixed impact of migration:** Overall, we see that the role and contribution of men in hilly societies is very limited even otherwise without migration. Often the running of the household is left to women folks. In this

context, the drudgery and difficult life conditions due to terrain etc. are inevitable to some extent while migration in various ways helps the cause of gender balance.

7. Developmental Implications

As the above factors are working in tandem with the developmental policies some interesting trends emerge from which provide insights for the policy framework regarding promoting economic development of the rural hill areas. Migration is a result of many complex factors. The classical theory tells that there are push and pull factors. However, as per our findings, it is a mix of economic and non-economic factors leading to following implications:

1. Rural development is the main focus area to reverse migration. Gender equity and balance has to be intertwined with it to obtain higher human and social development.
2. Agriculture including horticulture and livestock rearing are main occupations with limited contribution to GSDP and small size of land holdings. There is a need to make this primary sector mainly agriculture economically viable and sustainable. Paradigm shift from production-oriented farming to market-oriented agriculture with the promotion of Agro processing industries.

Holistic policy framework to encourage business units to set up plants and factories in hilly regions providing employment and sustainable forward and backward linkages.

3. The cultural ties and social bonding are an asset for our rural units specially the role of women in it. Leveraging the same through state sponsored development fairs and festivals and creating local market for the goods made locally which will improve life conditions for women and reduce their drudgery.
4. Tourism sector is one of the most important income generating sectors in the tertiary category for the state as indicated in the table below.

Hence, it is imperative that we give prime importance to social sector i.e., education and health. As per the field survey these two have been quoted as the main reasons for migration. Human resources development has to be made a priority targeting rural youth specially the farm women and other disadvantaged groups as they are both the causal factor and affected segment of population through migration.

8. Conclusion

As we say that the history of mankind is the history of migration, it seems to be a natural phenomenon at the first look with various economic and non-economic dimensions to it. Gender balance is a social phenomenon which requires concerted efforts. Migration has a mixed impact on gender balance and related dynamics. There is a lot more to migration that presents important insights into the socio-economic scenario of a region. Not all migration is distress; some is aspirational too and cannot be avoided. Similarly, migration in various ways is good for the status of women in hills as they get to greater power in decision making and more social involvement but the difficult life conditions still remain a challenge. Policy framework including the schemes like NRLM etc. have to be fine-tuned for rural hill economies. The overall efficiency of developmental schemes is limited and one needs to look beyond the immediate income and employment paradigm. The whole idea of how life is in our rural unit needs to be understood and its contrast from the urbane lifestyle. Thereafter, we can draw a plan to secure basic minimum facilities sought by any individual irrespective of gender, at a place of residence. Then only the trend be arrested and reverse migration be registered ensuring more holistic development and gender balance.

- **Funding:** The authors declare that no funds, grants, or other financial support were received during the preparation of this manuscript.
- **Conflict of Interest:** The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interest to declare.

References

1. Dineshappa, Sreenivasa. (2014). The social impact of Migration in India, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention: Vol. 3, Issue [5].
2. Dobhal, (2020). Uttarakhand: Rural tourism to facilitate reverse migration. ETHRWorld.com. GoU (2018).

3. Uttarakhand Migration Commission Report. Rural Development and Migration Commission of Uttarakhand, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India.
4. Government of Uttarakhand, Rural Development and Migration Commission Retrieved from www.uttarakhandplayanayog.com Government of Uttarakhand, Uttarakhand Government Portal Retrieved from www.uk.gov.in.
5. Mangain RP, Reddy DN (2017) Outmigration from Hill region of Uttarakhand: Magnitude, Challenges, and Policy Options. In: Reddy D, Sarap K (eds.), Rural Labour Mobility in Times of Structural Transformation. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. pp 209- 235.
6. Manhas, Negi (2016). Destination, distance and Place Pattern of Hill Rural Out-Migration, International Journal of humanities and social studies, Vol. 4[9].
7. Naudiyal N, Arunachalam K, Kumar U (2019) The future of mountain agriculture amidst continual farm-exit, livelihood diversification and outmigration in the Central Himalayan villages. Journal of Mountain Science 16(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11629-018-5160-6>.
8. Pandey, A.C, Bhuguna, R &Sudan V. (2016) “a study on the socio-economic impact of MGNREGA on beneficiaries in Rudra Prayag District of Uttarakhand India” International Journal of management and applied science, Vol. 2 [10].
9. Prakash, M (2020, April, 28) Covid-19 Uttarakhand wants to retain returning citizens. Retrieved from <http://downtoearth.org.in> Rural Development and Migration Commission, Uttarakhand, Pauri.
10. Garhwal (2019 April) Interim Report on the Status of Migration in Gram Panchyat of Uttarakhand. Retrieved from ww.uttarakhandplayanayog.com.
11. Rural Development and Migration Commission, Uttarakhand, Pauri Garhwal (23 April 2020) Interim Report on Inputs for supporting reverse migrants after covid-19. Retrieved from www.uttarakhandplayanayog.com Sati, V.P. (2016).
12. Bansal, Mamta and Divyajyoti Singh. “Repression to Rehabilitation: Breaking-Free of the Prison-House of Language in 1984 and Animal Farm.” Turkish Journal of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, vol.32, issue 3, 2021, pp. 33134-33144.
13. Pattern and implication of Rural-Urban Migration in the Uttarakhand Himalaya, India, Annals of Natural Sciences, Vol. 2[1]: March 2016: 26-37. Shamsad, (2012). Rural to urban migration: Remedies to Control, Golden Research Thoughts, Vol. 2 [4].
14. Singh, (2020). Deserted hill villages in Uttarakhand come alive due to reverse migration, Gaon commission. Verma, (2020). In the Covid-19 crisis, Uttarakhand sees a reverse migration opportunity, The Indian Express.
15. Rural Development and Migration Commission, Uttarakhand, Pauri Garhwal (23 April 2020) Interim Report on Inputs for supporting reverse migrants after covid-19. Retrieved from www.uttarakhandplayanayog.com.