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A Study of Out Migration From Rural Garhwal

Introduction

THE size of the population of a place is influenced not only by births and deaths but also by geographical movement, or migration. The study of migration is more complex than that of the other components responsible for population change, because it involves two places (origin and destination) and depends on social, economic and other characteristics of both the concerned places. It has become essential for the social scientists, administrators, and demographers to understand thoroughly the process of migration which has a bearing on social change, residential problems and changes in demographic characteristics of the population. As with births, marriages, and deaths, migratory movement varies in intensity from year to year, and from season to season and is associated with such factors as race, sex, age, occupation and geographical situation. India is a vast country comprising states which have different social customs, economic status, literacy rate, and other characteristics. Migration rates vary not only between the states but also within the states; within a particular region, the rate varies between socio-economic strata. In a rural society like India, it is natural that people move from one place to another, especially to the cities and advanced economic centres in search of jobs and other opportunities including social prestige. Such movements of large number of people to other places may affect the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of a given locality. Thus it becomes desirable to study the trend of out migration from the area. In the present paper an attempt has been made to focus upon the social and economic background of the migrants from the study region for an idea of the impact of migration on different socio-economic groups.

Study Area

The northern hill region of Uttar Pradesh is comparatively a more backward region of the state. Due to lack of livelihood and hard living conditions in remote places in the area, the people are prone to migrate to the plains for job opportunities and better living conditions. Regular remittances, usually monthly, from the out-migrants play a significant role in the economic life of the populace. That is why in common parlance it is termed as Money Order Economy. Recently, the state government has made a special provision for the speedy development of the area through the Hill Development Board, but there is no denying the fact that the outmigrants from the region have played an important role in socio-economic uplift. The study area is the nearby villages of Srinagar (Garhwal), a town of Garhwal district, where Garhwal University is situated. The town is situated on the bank of river Alaknanda, on the other side of the river is district of Tehri (Garhwal). The growing town, Srinagar (Garhwal) is connected by four motorable roads from different sides. It is connected with Rishikesh, Badri Nath, Pauri and Khirsoo development block. The villages in the hill regions can be broadly categorized into three types. Some villages are along the roads, some at higher elevation and some in the valleys. The main consideration in selecting the villages for the purpose was convenience of transportation. Thirteen selected villages comprising the study area have a total of about 600 households. These villages present a homogeneous picture demographically, representative of the entire Pauri Garhwal. The survey was conducted during the period from November 1981 to January 1982. The reference period for the survey was 15 December 1981.

Methodology

A demographic survey of the 13 villages was conducted using a schedule for obtaining information on household structure, migration record, fertility and mortality in order to study the existing trends of fertility and other components of population change. These villages fall into three categories as follows :

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|---|---|
| I. Road side villages | 4 |
| II. Remote villages at higher elevation | 5 |
| III. Remote villages in the valleys | 4 |

The migration-section of the schedule included questions on age, sex, education, *occupation*, *place of migration*, *year of migration*, reasons for migration, type of family and the occupation prior to and after the migration, for each migrant of a household. The household is defined as a group of persons who normally stay together, take food from common kitchen and also includes the outmigrants who to earn their living outside send remittances and visit the

household at regular intervals. The study is concerned with the current residential status of persons; hence it does not include information on return migration.

Migration and Type of Village

The total population of the surveyed households is 3427, out of which the total migrants are 908. The migration rates (in per cent) for three different types of villages i.e. road side villages, remote villages at higher elevation and remote villages in valleys are 23.91, 29.95 and 25.50 respectively, with the overall migration rate of 26.50. This shows that the migration rate is highest for the remote villages at high elevation and is followed by that of the remote villages in the valleys and then by that of the roadside villages. In general, there is little opportunity for jobs in the villages. Due to lack of irrigation there is hardly any scope for labour absorption in agriculture. The situation is most acute in the remote highland villages. This explains the highest migration in the remote highland villages. **In** the villages situated on the roadside there are opportunities for starting small businesses; people of these villages take the advantage of daily commuting the nearby towns for work. This explains the lower migration rate in the roadside villages.

In the following sections, out-migration has been studied taking castOj size of land holdings and economic status into consideration.

Migration and Caste

Although the government and other agencies are trying to abolish the ugly fallout of the caste system in society; in the rural set-up caste plays a dominant role in the determination of occupation, education, land ownership and economic status. Therefore, caste has been considered to be one of the most important factors in the study of migration. The surveyed households were all Hindus, consisting of 57 different subcastes. Since many of these were insignificant in number and the number of subcastes were too large to facilitate comparison, these castes were combined into four homogeneous groups on the basis of their main, caste and relative position in society. The four groups were termed as : (i) Brahmins (ii) Rajput (iii) schedules Castes (iv) others.

Table 1 presents the migration rate according to different caste groups. The analysis of the Table reveals that migration rate is highest for Brahmins and it is lowest for the Scheduled Castes. The migration rate for the four caste groups is of the following order :

Brahmins > Rajputs > Other caste groups > Schedule Castes.

This pattern of migration rate may be due to different factors such as education, land ownership, social contacts etc. The highest percentage of migration in Brahmins can be understood if one keeps in view their higher education and social contacts, which are vital for securing jobs in government and other private establishments. Relatively lower migration in Rajputs may be attributed

**TABLE 1—MIGRATION RATES IN THREE TYPES OF VILLAGES
ACCORDING TO CASTE**

<i>Caste Group</i>	<i>Type of village</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Road side</i>	<i>At Higher elevation</i>	<i>In valleys</i>	
I	40.06	38.08	38.41	38.72
II	24.04	24.07	23.57	24.23
III	11.74	14.69	7.41	12.04
IV	4.0	19.14	23.26	14.73
Total	23.91	29.95	25.50	26.50

to their business activity in addition to traditional land management. The scheduled castes are mostly artisans and are locally employed. This accounts for the lowest migration rate amongst them. Further, the level of education in scheduled castes is very low, which is also responsible for the low rate of migration. In the last category of caste groups (others), one finds mainly Giris, Puris and Naths who are traditionally engaged in the management of shrines and Dhams and they lack higher education. This may be the reason for their low migration rate.

Migration and Land Holding

In rural areas, land is a sign of social prestige and it is an important source of livelihood. Therefore, land ownership (or possession) is one of the most important factor for the study of outmigration.

The unit of land is "Nali", a local unit of measurement (1 Acre = 20 Nali). The size of land holdings has been categorised nali-wise, into six groups (i) no land (ii) upto 4 (iii) 5-9 (iv) 10-15 (v) 15-24 & (vi) 25 Nalis and above. The migration rates in three types of villages have been presented in Table 2.

As the size of land in possession increases, the migration rate also increases. The highest migration rate is for the 15-24 land group and the lowest is for 'No land' group. The maximum migration in higher land group is perhaps due to the fact that the persons belonging to this category are obviously keen for furtherance of their economic and social status through securing jobs. The land holding of the largest group (25 and above) can be looked after by family members who stay behind. It is significant to note that the male of the region confine their input into agriculture to ploughing only. The women folk manage all other activities of agriculture.

Migration and Economic Status

It is a well established principle that those, who have migrated for livelihood

TABLE 2—MIGRATION RATES IN THREE TYPES OF VILLAGES
ACCORDING TO LAND POSSESSION

<i>Land possession group</i>	<i>Type of village</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Road side</i>	<i>At Higher elevation</i>	<i>In Valleys</i>	
No land	10.70	18.82	15.63	13.25
Upto 4 Nali	24.11	28.19	4.55	24.56
5- 9 "	20.00	27.92	28.72	25.18
10-14 "	28.89	31.62	27.20	29.76
15-24 "	43.46	27.18	30.47	34.38
25 & above nali	25.31	41.09	18.69	31.41
Total	23.91	29.95	25.50	26.50

have not only improved their economic status but social status also. The economic status of a household has been estimated using the parameters of per capita income, housing condition, possession of prestigious goods and the consumption of nutritional food stuffs, by assigning appropriate weights to them. The categorization of economic status according to monthly per capita income is as follows : (i) very low—Rs. 25 (ii) low—Rs. 25-49 (iii) middle—Rs. 50-99 (iv) high—Rs. 100-199 (v) very high—Rs. 200 and above. The migration rate according to economic status is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3—MIGRATION RATES IN THREE TYPES OF VILLAGES
ACCORDING TO ECONOMIC STATUS

<i>Economic status</i>	<i>Type of Villages</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Road side</i>	<i>At Higher elevation</i>	<i>In valleys</i>	
Very low	25.00	9.09	—	14.04
Low	13.04	20.16	14.89	16.79
Middle	18.70	24.94	26.40	22.99
High	28.91	35.72	25.61	30.52
Very High	15.28	43.90	40.00	31.61
Total	23.91	29.95	25.50	26.50

There is positive association between the level of economic status and the rate of migration in all the three types of villages, except type I villages, where the migration rate for economic status group 'very high' is less than that of the high. Since the current economic status has been considered for the

study, the above data do not show whether the migration has increased the economic status of the household or higher economic status is responsible for higher migration. But one can say that the households having migrants are comparatively more prosperous in the rural society.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly explain that persons belonging to Brahmins caste group, larger land holding group, and from villages on the highlands have higher tendency to outmigrate. In the rural society of Garhwal, Brahmins have higher social and economic status than the other three caste-groups; therefore, they may be regarded as the upper strata of society, and so it can be said that the upper strata of rural Garhwal is more mobile. These findings are consistent with the results of other studies on rural urban migration in other parts of India. Narain (1972) in a study, on "Rural out-migration", reported that Brahmins are more mobile as compared to other castes. A study to estimate the differential migration rate in different socio-economic groups of a rural society, conducted by the Demographic Research Centre, Banaras Hindu University (1980) has revealed that upper-caste persons are more mobile than the persons of other groups. The households possessing more land are more mobile as they can get education away from Garhwal and they are in service in other cities of India. The same trends have been accounted for the various economic status groups. The households situated at high elevation have relatively more out-migrants followed by the households in Valleys and at road sides.

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