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Migration from hilly areas of Uttarakhand: Understanding the social, economic and psychological characteristics of the migrants

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Abstract
Migration is the biggest issue that the state of Uttarakhand is facing now. There are several factors responsible for the phenomenon of migration especially youth migration from the hilly region of the state. Among which low employment and low agricultural productivity are major reasons for migration. The present study focuses on exploring the social, economic and psychological characteristics of the migrants from the hills of Uttarakhand. It was found in the study that majority (64.17%) of the respondents were below 25 years of age and completed their education up to intermediate (30.84%) had medium family size (6-8 members) (55.00%) and posses medium level of farm resources (64.16%). Nearly forty five per cent of the respondents expressed that the major source of credit was cooperative societies. Majority (57.50%) of the respondents had two occupations in their family. Equal number of migrants (61.67%) had medium level of economic motivation and medium risk orientation.

Keywords: Migration, social characteristics, economic characteristics, psychological characteristics and migrants

Introduction

A large section of the population of mountainous region depends upon agricultural activities for their livelihood, consisting of agriculture, animal husbandry and forest interlinked production system. With increasing climatic stresses, particularly erratic rainfall and global food price volatility affecting even remote mountain communities, mountain agriculture is increasingly becoming less reliable livelihood strategy, increasing the need to migrate.

In Uttarakhand, the majority of people observed that agricultural productivity is decreasing and claimed this as a major cause for migration. Traditionally, communities in these regions had evolved subsistence-oriented but stable agriculture and a diversified, livelihood strategy combining crop, livestock, and forestry along with resource recycling and collective sharing. In recent years, this equilibrium has been seriously disrupted and the virtually self-sufficient system has broken down due to the need to spread cultivation to marginal and forest lands, making food crop-based farming system unsustainable. Improved communications have also led to aspirations for vastly different lifestyles. The net result of this process has been a weakening of the sustainability of past survival systems and an accentuation of poverty.

Terraced slopes covering 85 per cent of total agricultural land are largely rainfed, while the valleys (15%) are irrigated. Agriculture in this region has been characterized by small and fragmented landholdings, lack of irrigation, shallow soil and lack of mechanization and technology; all of which contribute to limiting yield. Agricultural development is poor in the region because of lack of proper policies, inaccessibility, varied topography and extreme ecological conditions. The rapid increase in population has been accompanied by increased family size and the subdivision of landholdings. Many claims that they do not have sufficient food to support their family and agriculture fulfils their food grain requirements for 6 to 8 months a year and in some areas agriculture produce is sufficient for only 1 to 2 months of the year, whereas earlier, they could fulfil the complete annual household demand. Decreasing productivity is a cause of higher food insecurity. The inaccessibility of mountain areas hampers the spread of extension services, access to agricultural inputs, and access to markets (Rekha and Negi, 2014) [18].

Hill rural migration into plain rural area show the easy access of social services, developed infrastructure including better livelihood reinforced to leave their native palaces which were famous for natural beauty, fresh air and water depart them from the area.

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The migrants also look to access the maximum high-tech facilities and daily needs assets in the plain area. Retired persons especially ex-army person seek re-appointment throughout sourcing agencies for better livelihood. 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 (Joshi, 2013) [5].

Methodology
Ex post facto research design was followed for carrying out the present study. In the study, Almora district of Uttarakhand was selected purposively as migration is occurring at a higher rate in this district. Two blocks namely Dwarahat and Chaukhutia, were selected purposively based on intensity of migration. From the two selected blocks, two villages each from selected blocks having highest number of migrants were selected purposively. Thus a total of four villages were selected for the study. The villages selected were Barati and Kaney villages from Dwarahat block and Gangolihat and Seemapali from Chaukhutia block. From each selected village, 30 migrants were selected as respondents at random thus making a sample of 120 respondents for the study. An interview schedule was developed in consultation with the advisory committee, experts in the field of Agricultural Extension, Statistics and Mathematics, Officers of the HESCO (Non-Government Organization) working in the rural areas of Uttarakhand state.

Findings of the study
The data regarding social, economic and psychological characteristics of migrants has been presented in Table 1. From the table it is clear that majority (64.17%) of the respondents were below 25 years of age, followed by 35.83 per cent were in 25-35 years age group and none of them were found to be above 35 years age. Young people prefer to go to towns and cities for higher education, employment and business. Respondents who belonged to more than 35 years age group, prefer not to migrate as they already had crossed their age of personal development by acquiring education and skills, also they were well settled with their family in the village. Instead, they preferred their children to migrate for good education and employment. It is also evident from Table 1 that nearly thirty per cent of the respondents have completed education up to intermediate followed by high school (14.16%), middle school (13.33%), primary school (11.67%), under graduation (10.00%), illiterate (7.50%), post-graduation and above (6.67%) and functionally literate (5.83%). Intermediate was the highest level of education they can get while living in the village and for still higher education they had to move out of the village. The illiterate and functionally literate people also migrated from their villages in search of employment in the urban areas.

Majority (44.16%) of the respondents expressed that the major sources of credit were cooperative societies followed by banks (30.00%), relatives and friends (18.34%) and private money lenders (7.50%). The respondents took credit from cooperative societies because their interest rate is less. In case of informal institution, the migrants preferred to take credit from their relatives and friends because of the less interest rate. The interest rate of the cooperative societies was less than banks and also the migrants were well aware of

cooperative societies in their areas so they preferred them more. The private money lenders charged highest interest rates so very few of the migrants lend credit from them and mostly they took in case of emergency.

Further 55.00 per cent of the respondents had medium family size (6-8 members), followed by small family (4-6 members) (35.84%) and large family (8-10 members) (9.16%). It was also observed that in most of the cases migrant member of the family was the main source of income of the family and the whole family was dependent on him only. The families having 4 to 6 members were mostly nuclear families. Most of these families had at least two children with them and the family was headed by the migrant only. In case of large families having family members from 8 to 10 were also joint families with at least three siblings together, also having at least three children and parents of the migrant member. The family was headed by the parents of the migrant member.

Table 1: Social, economic and psychological characteristics of migrants

S. No.	Characteristics of migrants	Categories	F	%
1.	Age	Up to 25 years	77	64.17
		25-35 years	43	35.83
		> 35 years	0	0.00
2.	Education	Illiterate/ No schooling	9	7.50
		Functionally literate (can read and write)	7	5.83
		Primary school (upto 5th class)	14	11.67
		Middle school (upto 8th class)	16	13.33
		High school (upto 10th class)	17	14.16
		Intermediate(upto 12th class)	37	30.84
		Under graduation	12	10.00
		Post-graduation and above	8	6.67
3.	Credit availability	Relatives and friends	22	18.34
		Banks	36	30.00
		Cooperative societies	53	44.16
		Private money lenders	9	7.50
4.	Family size	Small (4-6 members)	43	35.84
		Medium (6-8 members)	66	55.00
		Large (8-10 members)	11	9.16
5.	Farm resources	Low	22	18.34
		Medium	77	64.16
		High	21	17.50
6.	No. of occupations	One	28	23.34
		Two	69	57.50
		Three	18	15.00
		Four	5	4.16
7.	Economic motivation	Low	15	12.5
		Medium	74	61.67
		High	31	25.83
8.	Risk orientation	Low	25	20.83
		Medium	74	61.67
		High	21	17.5

F = Frequency, % = Percentage

It can be inferred from Table 1 that more than sixty per cent (64.16%) of the respondents had medium level of farm resources followed by low (18.34%) and high (17.50%). The farm resources comprised of the cultivated land (in acres), irrigation facility, labour availability, number of crops grown per year, implements used in farming and other enterprises in farm of migrant respondents. It was noticed during the study that most of the migrants had enough land but they were not cultivating the whole of it as it was scattered and also the size

of their fields was less. Almost whole study area was rainfed, without any irrigation facilities and the respondents used few farm implements like sickle, spade, kudal, grass cutter and bullock cart for pulverising their fields as they could not run heavy implements like tractor in the hilly area. They grew few crops like paddy, wheat, maize, pulses, millets *etc.* throughout the year. Out of these crops, most of them preferred to grow millets and pulses because they could be cultivated with comparatively less effort and less water requirement than other field crops but the productivity was less and it was enough for only family consumption. The labours were available with medium difficulty in the study area and interestingly most of the agricultural work was done by the females of the family.

It is clearly evident from Table 1 that majority (57.50%) of the respondents had two occupations in their family followed by one (23.34%), three (15.00%) and four (4.16%). In most of the families it was observed that two members of the family were engaged in two different occupations to get income either in the migrated area or in the village itself. The family member who was engaged in seasonal occupation in villages mostly does labour work like construction works, agricultural work in other's fields, fruit harvesting and transportation, shop keeping *etc.* Some of them were also migrating seasonally to nearby villages. In some families, the members living in the villages were doing Government jobs within or nearby the villages like clerks in banks and other govt. departments. Some of them were employed as teachers, anganwadi workers and nurse in district govt. hospital and they get regular income. The families having more than two occupations were mostly engaged in seasonal work and the families having one or two occupations did some regular jobs in or outside the villages and got regular income, hence other family member did not have need to work.

Equal number of migrants (61.67%) had medium level of economic motivation and medium risk orientation. One fourth of the migrants had high level of economic motivation followed by low (12.5%) level of economic motivation. Nearly twenty per cent of the migrants had less risk orientation followed by high (17.5%). It was observed during the study that most of the migrants migrated for earning money. Migrants faced the problem of meeting their household expenses like educational expenses, medical expenses, house construction expenses, marriage expenses of family members, purchasing household goods. As they were not getting desired wages in their villages they were economically motivated to earn more money to meet these expenses. Most of the migrants were willing to take the risk of moving outside the villages in search of jobs, instead of staying back in the villages. The relatives and friends of the migrants living in the urban areas were also motivating them to migrate and some of them also arranged jobs for the migrants in the urban areas. The migrants were influenced by their peer group who they were doing good jobs in the urban areas and whom they considered to reduce the risk involved in migration. The high risk oriented migrants might be well educated and confident enough that they will get good jobs in the destination area.

The findings of the social, economic and psychological characteristics of the respondents are supported by the results of Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of farmers (2003) [22], Sivasubrahmaniyan (2003) [23], Rameshbabu and Venkataramaiah (2004) [16], Sajith (2004) [19], Suresh (2004) [24], Veeraiah *et al.* (2005) [26], Chandan (2006) [3], Deshingkar (2006) [4], Reddy *et al.* (2007) [17], Swati (2007) [25], Antara *et al.* (2009) [1], Anup *et al.* (2010) [2], Kiran and Shenoy (2010) [6], Mann *et al.* (2010) [9], MukundaRao (2011) [12], Singh *et al.* (2011) [21], Mishra and Parul (2012) [11], Meenakshisundaram and Panchanatham (2013) [10], Osondu and Ibezim (2013) [13], Pankaj and Belwal (2013) [14], Madhu and Uma (2014) [7], Mahendra (2014) [8] and Prathyusha (2014) [15].

Conclusion

Migration is ongoing phenomenon in the state of Uttarakhand and it is the main cause of decreasing the rural population in the state. There are numerous 'Ghost villages' in the state as a result of migration of rural population. Due to low agricultural productivity and less employment opportunities the rural people especially from hilly areas migrating to other places. The findings of the present study indicate that young people with education up to intermediate having medium family size with two occupations in their family, medium level of farm resources, economic motivation and risk taking orientation are more prone to migrate from the hilly areas of Uttarakhand. The farmers of hill region of the state are mainly engaged in subsistence type of farming. Now as the migration of youth increased, it suggest that the farmers are not able to fulfil their daily requirements and face difficulty in sustaining the farming as main source of income for their family. Thus, the young generation is searching for new opportunities out of their place of birth to generate more income for their families. There is a plethora of different factors such as inability to meet basic needs and different household expenses, crop failure, lack of employment, social struggle *etc.* all of which facilitate the migration process. To control the migration from the hills of Uttarakhand and to stop turning more 'Ghost villages' in the state, it is very important to understand the personal characteristics of the rural population along with the underlining causes of migration. It is the need of the hour to conduct such more rigorous and in-depth studies to understand the phenomenon of migration especially from the hilly region of the state so that the rural to urban population ratio can be maintained along with improving the life style of rural hilly areas.

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