

## **Migration and Its Impact on the Political Economy of Himalayan and Sub-Himalayan States**

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### **ABSTRACT**

An Indian Himalayan Region has been spread over a range of 2500 km by 13 Indian states and union territories. Migration in these Indian Himalayan regions is not a recent occurrence. Both semi-permanent migration and permanent migration can be seen in these regions, on which various studies have already been published. The present paper has been focused on Uttarakhand Himalaya to examine migration patterns in the region along with various influencing factors in order to evaluate its political economy, social, development and economic impacts. Further, this work has also incorporated the trends in growth and decline in population in this region to exemplify the geographical component of rural migration and the effect of urbanization on it.

**Keywords:** Migration, Uttarakhand, Social, Development and Economic Impacts.

### **Introduction**

Seasonal migration is an important component of poor people's livelihood strategies in India<sup>1</sup>. In reality, migration has historically been a significant source of income in India for both the impoverished and the non-impoverished. People have moved to more developed regions in quest of work opportunities as a consequence of uneven growth, for instance from the eastern parts of Uttarakhand and Bihar, the southern part of Madhya Pradesh, west Orissa, and southern Rajasthan to states like Punjab, Gujarat, and Maharashtra<sup>2</sup>.

In 2001, 307 million people called India home, making up about 30% of the general population. Rural-to-rural migration, which made up 54.7% of all domestic migration in 2001, was the greatest of the four categories of domestic migration, including rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural, and urban-to-urban. Although rural-to-urban migration has increased from 16.5% in 1971 to 21.1% in 2001, rural-to-rural migration has decreased during the past few years.

In Northern part of India across the central Himalayan hills region, suffered from low agricultural production, pervasive rural poverty, and a significant risk of catastrophic events<sup>3-7</sup>. Considerable rural emigration has been reported in this area recently<sup>6-8</sup>. Farming continues to be the main source of income for 65% of the residents<sup>7</sup> despite its poor productivity<sup>9,3</sup>. Almost annually, minor landslides, flash floods, tremors, and forest fires have been reported in Uttarakhand over the past few decades, and the state has seen some severe disasters in the late 1990s and between 2010 and 2013<sup>7</sup>. In the popular and scientific discourse, deforestation, human interventions for construction projects, and global warming were blamed for this<sup>10</sup>. With only six cities having more than 100,000 residents, Uttarakhand's urbanization rate in 2011 was reported to be 30.55%<sup>11</sup>.

In this study, Uttarakhand has been proposed as an instance of an Indian state that has experienced significant recorded rural-urban migration from the hilly, remote rural areas. Various studies have been proposed for Uttarakhand in this regard; for example, the author of<sup>8</sup> has reported his work on the trends and consequences of migration from rural to urban areas in India's Uttarakhand Himalaya. Similarly, the author of<sup>12</sup> has discussed the remittance and migration flows in Uttarakhand. In<sup>13</sup>, the author collected the reactions of resident and migratory bird groups to human-caused changes in the Shiwalik environment of Uttarakhand, India.

A report on growth and environmental balance in Uttarakhand has been presented by<sup>14</sup>. Research in<sup>15</sup> has given a review of men who migrated to Uttarakhand. In<sup>16</sup>, the author enlisted various identified migration-related variables in Uttarakhand. The author of<sup>17</sup> presented socio-demographic factors that influence Uttarakhand's urban "in-migrants." A study on migrants in Uttarakhand has been presented in<sup>18</sup>.

Either several studies have been published previously on migration patterns in Uttarakhand, migration consequences, migration reasons in Uttarakhand, and so on, but no work has been done on the impact of migration on the political economy and development of Uttarakhand. In fact, the reasons for the region's population decline and the

geographical component of its rural migration have not been studied. The present study has incorporate all of these points in this work.

The contribution of the present research in terms of the novelty of the paper has been enumerated below.

1. The present paper has been focused on Uttrakhand Himalaya to examine migration patterns in the region along with various influencing factors in order to evaluate its political economy, social, development and economic impacts.
2. This work has also incorporated the trends in growth and decline in population in this region to exemplify the geographical component of rural migration and the effect of urbanization on it.

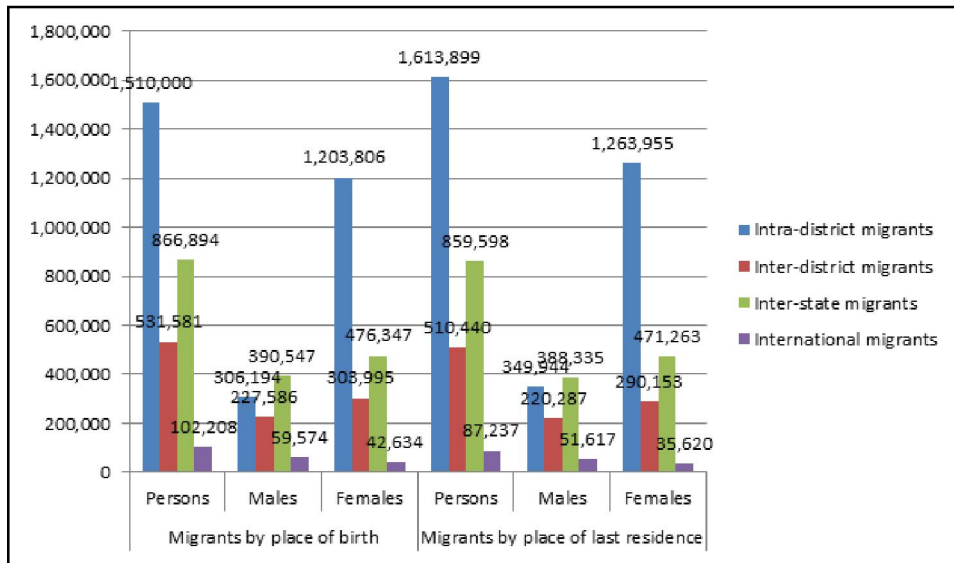
### **Migration Pattern in Uttrakhand**

For a long time, the active labour force in Uttarakhand's hill regions moved from villages to towns and cities both within and outside the state. The movement of individuals continues to be the major problem the state has in its development of society and economy, despite the fact that Uttarakhand was created more than ten years ago. People are moving from one location to another on a temporary or ongoing basis as a result of expanding business potential, improved external infrastructure and amenities, and a variety of communication methods. The socio-cultural, economical, and physical environments of both the pushing (out-migration) and pulling (in-migration) places are more affected by such human movement. Broadly the migration pattern in Uttarakhand has been classification to the following types

1. Intra-district migrants
2. Inter-district migrants
3. Inter-state migrants
4. International migrants

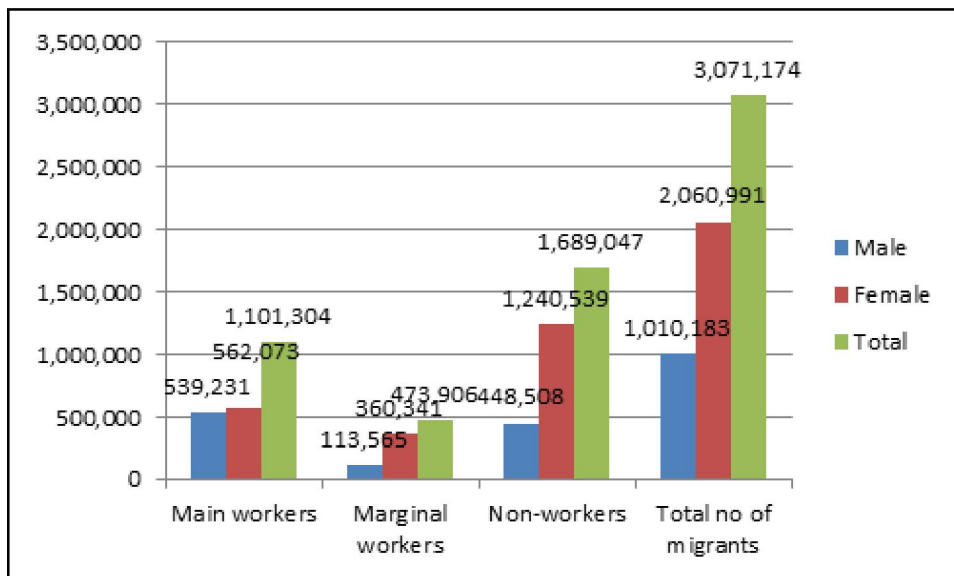
According to the 2001 Indian Census, the total number of migrants in the above-mentioned patterns is given below. The migration pattern before its classification has been considered for two categories, such as migrants by place of birth and migrants by place of last residence. In both of these two categories, distinct categories, including person, male, and female, have been given.

As per the analysis given in figure 1, Intra-district migrants are more than other category of migrants. Further out of three sub-categories of migrants , female count is reported more than male.

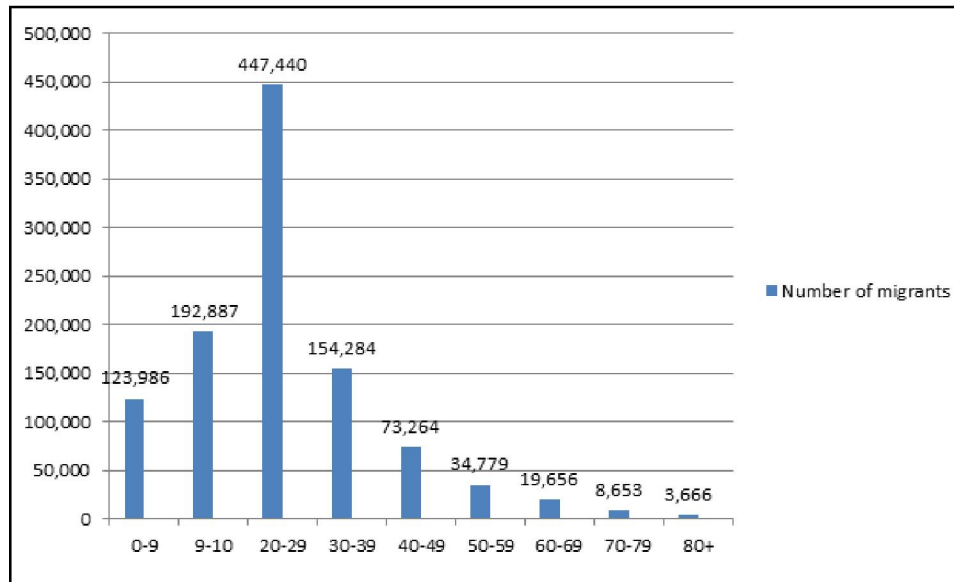


**Fig. 1: Migration pattern wise count of migrants in Uttarakhand**

Further in figure 2, migration pattern, occupation wise count of migrants in Uttarakhand has been presented. It has include, main workers, marginal workers and non-workers. It has been observed that count for female non workers is more than the male marginal and mail workers is more.



**Fig. 2: Migration pattern, occupation wise count of migrants in Uttarakhand**



**Fig. 3: Age wise migration pattern in Uttarakhand**

In Figure 3, the age-wise migration pattern in Uttarakhand has been shown. It has been discovered that people between the ages of 20 and 29 have a higher migrant count than others. People aged 9-10, on the other hand, account for the second highest number of migrants.

### **Influencing Factors Behind Uttarakhand's Migration**

The various factors behind Uttarakhand's migration have been discussed in detail in the following subsections.

#### **Poor agricultural productivity**

Poor agriculture production was indicated as one of the causes of relocation in Uttarakhand, and it was identified as a significant push factor. The researchers claimed that small, dispersed terraced fields—which are uneconomical—are used for traditional hill farming. Small landowners are also characterized by a lack of irrigation, which results in low agricultural yields and few possibilities for growing commercial crops.

The fragmentation of landholdings brought on by a rise in family size is another significant influencing factor. Farmers claim that because of family fragmentation, their already modest landholdings are getting even smaller. As a result, they can't grow enough food grain to provide for their entire family. Due to "urban influences," increased economic difficulties, and the dissolution of joint families into nuclear families,

there is a smaller workforce available for agriculture and animal husbandry. Some claimed that nuclear families lacked the manpower needed for agriculture and the number of livestock needed to produce enough manure for fertile land.

### **Poor Infrastructure development**

The hilly villages' lack of infrastructure development is evident in the absence of roads and other forms of public transportation, stable electricity and water supplies, subpar living conditions, insufficient medical services, and markets and other commercial establishments. Inadequate infrastructure development in Uttarakhand is a major driving force behind the youth's great desire to leave the villages and "experience" city life. This desire is fueled by comparisons between their communities and urban centres.

### **Educational status**

Education also became a significant driving force, as skilled youths reported having lost all interest in agriculture. Even young people who have completed their 10+2 education believe that there are greater prospects for a living outside of their communities, thus they are hesitant to pursue agriculture. These young people also strongly believe that only illiterate and uneducated individuals undertake agriculture. "Going back to agriculture is pointless after spending so much time in school."

### **Additional factors**

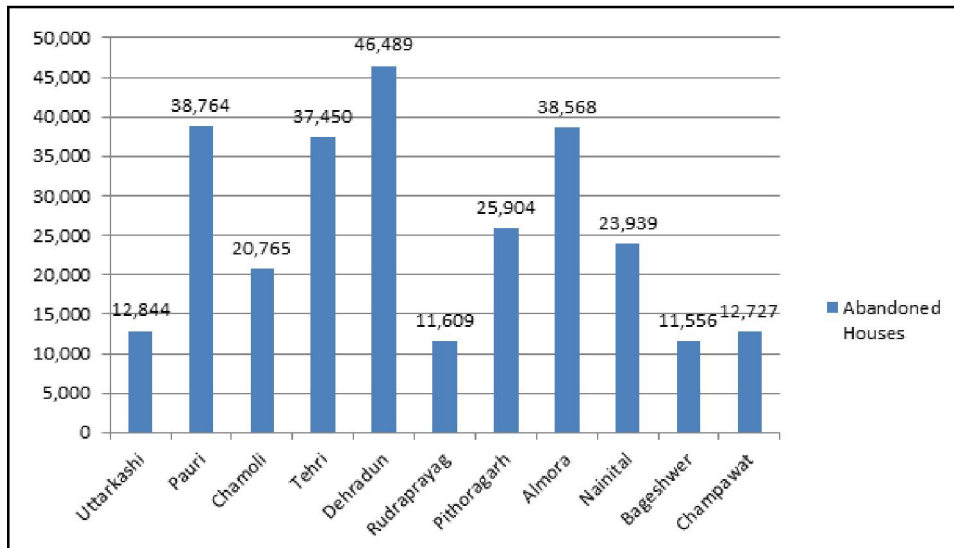
Other regional push factors are also noted, with the mining of chalkstone (khadiya) in the Bageshwar district serving as the most notable illustration. According to many researchers, people are either selling their agricultural land to contractors or using it for their own mining operations. In both situations, the money made from mining tempts farmers to move to adjacent towns or cities.

### **Development and Economic Impacts of Migration**

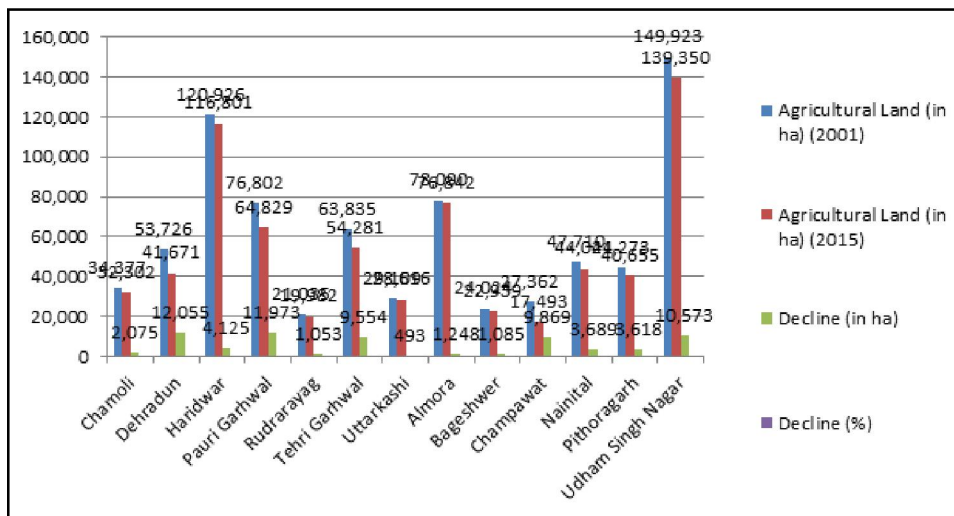
The Himalayan region's environmental restrictions severely limit the load capacity of the region's environmental assets as well as the effectiveness of its services and facilities. As a result, the primary source of food and income in rural areas is subsistence farming. Due to the limitations of the subsistence economy, a significant number of young men leave rural areas in pursuit of work and a better quality of life, which results in a shortage of farm labour. As a result, a significant amount of agricultural land and homes are now vacant, which has an impact on rural livelihood, food production, social stability, and sustainable development.

Second, the feminization of the mountainous farming system has occurred, as a result of women becoming the main resource producers and the core of the economy. Women unconsciously help ensure the long-term viability of mountain socio-ecological systems and subsistence economies. Yet, because of imbalanced power dynamics and established social and cultural standards, women only have very limited control over and access to natural resources, which further contributes to the feminization of poverty in the mountains. Rising male individual self-concept trends, on the other hand, not only stabilized the rural economy through remittance income, but also slightly increased women's ability to attend school, participate in local organizations, acquire assets, advance in their careers, engage in grassroots leadership, manage natural resources, and expand local and international markets. These developments give rural women the chance to participate in decision-making at all levels, from the household to the village, and to become more socially, economically, and politically empowered and mainstreamed. Women have also acquired crucial traditional knowledge that helps them comprehend, picture, and react to environmental changes, especially climate change. Yet, rising patterns in emigration and the loss of towns and agriculture are having negative and lasting effects on the social quality.

But the emerging trends in rural emigration have a significant impact on the region's disaster mitigation and climate change adaptation initiatives, as well as the overall process of planning and design and sustainable resource development. The intensity of the emigration can be gauged by the fact that 9% of Uttarakhand's villages are currently essentially deserted. In 2011, 1,053 of the 16,793 villages in Uttarakhand had no inhabitants, and another 405 had a population of fewer than 10 people. According to reports, the number of these abandoned towns has increased, especially since the devastating tragedy of 2013<sup>19</sup>. Between 2001 and 2015, there were up to 280,615 abandoned homes in 10 hilly regions of Uttarakhand, with a low of 11,609 homes in Rudraprayag and a maximum of 38,764 homes in Pauri Garhwal. Furthermore, between 2001 and 2015, Uttarakhand lost 10.32% of its key agricultural land. A loss of agricultural land has been reported in every district of the state, ranging from 1.60% in Almora to 36.07% in Champawat. The progress of urbanisation and industrialization has encroached on a significant percentage of the farmed land in Dehradun (22.43%), Haridwar (3.42%), and Udham Singh Nagar (7.05%), which are located in the state's foothill region.



**Fig. 4: Abandoned Houses count in various regions of Uttarakhand<sup>20</sup>**



**Fig. 5: Abandoned Land count in various regions of Uttarakhand<sup>20</sup>**

Adolescent male relocation is on the rise, which has negatively impacted rural women’s life satisfaction through resource depletion, the femininity of mountain agriculture, and poverty. It has also undermined the rich local traditions that rural communities have accumulated through their extensive experiments with nature and shifting natural conditions<sup>21</sup>.



As a consequence, it is mostly women who bear the hardship of scavenging for all essential natural resources, such as gathering propellant and fodder from diminishing forests and carrying water over longer distances, in addition to caring for agriculture, livestock, children, and elderly family members. A study found that bringing drinkable water from increasingly far distances requires a significant amount of physical effort and time from 75% of adult women and 35% of girls in the Ramgad Catchment. Furthermore, as a result of longer water fetching distances caused by declining water resources, rural women now face greater difficulties. On the other hand, there is a significant labour shortage for adult men<sup>22</sup>.

The result of all these physical, social, and cultural limitations is extreme poverty, suffering, a perpetual sense of insecurity, a sense of powerlessness, and total reliance on outside assistance. The resulting environment does not support the objectives of sustainable mountain development. Due to socially created gender roles and the sensitive alpine ecosystem, women feel these changes differently and disproportionately, and they react to them in different ways.

### **Conclusion**

In this paper, migration and its impact on the political economy and development of Uttarakhand have been studied. In addition to this, the various patterns of migration in Uttarakhand, along with various influencing factors of migration, are found in the Uttarakhand state of India. Poor agricultural productivity, poor infrastructure development, and low educational status have been found to be more influential factors behind the migration. As per the analysis, the maximum count for migration has been observed for females. Maximum migration in males has been observed between the ages of 20 and 29. Furthermore, the social and economic consequences of migration demonstrated that the region's development has been hampered; however, the social status of women has been improved.

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