

# Revisiting the Migration Trends in Uttarakhand

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**Abstract:** *This research examines the persistent issue of migration in Uttarakhand, focusing on Narendra Nagar Tehsil, and its profound socio-economic and cultural impacts on rural communities. It delves into the multifaceted causes of migration, including lack of development, job opportunities, and harsh environmental conditions, and highlights the exacerbated challenges posed by the post-COVID era, where many returned to their villages amidst job insecurities. The study also explores the historical context of migration patterns in the region, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding and more comprehensive solutions to curb this trend. By conducting a thorough analysis of over 200 villages, this research aims to uncover new trends in migration, evaluate the effectiveness of government policies, and propose sustainable solutions that could mitigate out-migration and foster development in Uttarakhand. The ultimate goal is to achieve a balanced and prosperous state where the youth can find opportunities within their communities, preserving their cultural identity while contributing to local and state-wide growth.*

**Keywords:** Uttarakhand, migration, socio-economic impact, COVID-19, sustainable development

## 1. Introduction

Migration remained an important problem in the state of Uttarakhand for a very long time. The efforts of the government are not sufficient to curb the problem because there are lack of resources, infrastructure, harsh climatic conditions, and lack of implementation of policies at the ground level. According to *Deshingkar and Akter (2009)*, migration takes place due to the search for work, to escape harsh environmental conditions / natural calamities and move away from political ethnic. Further, they also argued that the improved means of communication, transport facilities, conflict over resources and new opportunities for better standard of living has created huge mobility. As we know, that *Migration remains a security problem across the globe because it impacts the socio-economic, political and environment of a particular area.* There are four types of **domestic migration: a) rural-to-rural; b) rural-to-urban; c) urban-to-urban and; d) urban-to-rural migration.** Mitra and Murayama (2008) pointed out that rural-to-urban migration has increased drastically. In my research, I will focus on out- migration in Narendra Nagar Tehsil then, look into the various reasons for migration of youth to big cities and the impact of migration as well as come up with alternative solutions to this problem in the post-covid era. The pandemic turned out to be disastrous so many people were jobless and they moved back to the villages in order to protect themselves from insecurities. The problem of migration had a profound impact in the society such as, moving from agriculture towards tertiary sector, women and old population left behind, harsh working conditions for unskilled jobs, deteriorating condition of school's infrastructure in villages and lack of political will to change the functioning of the government. Therefore, we need to look into sustainable development goals which will create jobs for youth in rural areas.

## 2. Review of Literature

The migration in mountainous areas became more prominent due to the lack of development in hilly areas as compared to plains. Even, *Kanika Mehta and Dr R.K. Maikhuri (2018)* highlighted the fact that migration became a common

phenomenon among the Garhwal people and hardly you will find any family which did not migrate to plains. In order to understand the problem, we need to trace down the roots of migration by analyzing the historical background of **Narendra Nagar tehsils, which is situated in Tehri-Garhwal.**

According to Census 2011, **the total area of Narendra Nagar Tehsil is 501 km with at the total population of 1,05,680 and; it includes 254 villages.** In this area, the majority of the population resides in the rural areas so, the traditional agriculture becomes their main occupation and they are heavily dependent on the local resources for their living. Now, over the years the soil fertility declined, the harsh climatic conditions, the scarcity of water and the lack of infrastructure like better medical facilities, educational institutes, employment opportunities and a standard of living is not present in the villages. Another important All these factors forced the people to move out of their villages where clean air and abundance of natural resources are available for them. 1

As we know, the Uttarakhand was carved out of Uttar Pradesh because there was no development in the hilly areas and the separate statehood would provide resources, facilities and benefits of schemes should be given to the people. But, after 22 years of separate statehood, the problem remains the same remains and the welfare policies did not fully penetrate into the lower strata of the society. The poverty becomes a major concern for the families to move out of the villages in order to cater to their needs and aspirations in the globalized world. There is a widening of income in rural and urban areas so, the youth is motivated to bring extra income in their families so they migrated to cities like Delhi, Rishikesh, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar, Haldwani, Srinagar and Dehradun for better livelihood and income which connects them to small cities also. Over here, **there are two patterns of migration** taking place. The first one is **temporary settlement**, which refers to the temporary place of residing for a short duration like, the youth moving in cities for employment opportunities and for completing higher education.

1) Vibrant small cities can keep rural youth closer to home: A case study of Narendra Nagar, Tehri Garhwal, India ("Vibrant"2014)

At times, when there is no employment for them then, they move back to their villages. On the other hand, there is **permanent settlement** where the families reside permanently in plains. For example, the displacement of villages during the construction of Tehri Dam in the district forced people to settle into nearby towns and use the compensation money to re-establish their source of income and start a new life in the unknown places. Not every family received compensation so, some of them had no choice but to do menial jobs in cities for their survival.

Now, the main question arises that how will they live their life and start everything from scratch? Due to these phenomena, there is permanent settlement of people in plains. Therefore, they are not attached to their ancestral roots so, they are adopting the practices and cultural traditions of the majority in order to fit in the social sphere. For example, Garhwali and Kumauni are the most vulnerable languages because people are migrating to different places and forgetting their own culture and dialect. So, migration does have a negative impact on culture and identity of the people.

Therefore, **the main reasons for migration are low output from agriculture, lack of development in infrastructure, job opportunities, poverty and the displacement of people in Tehri Dam led to the major migration in Narendra Nagar tehsil.** All these factors led to huge impact in the area.

Let's discuss about the impacts of migration as following;

1) **Shift from agriculture to job-oriented economy:** The youth are looking for salaried job because they feel that the big firms would provide a luxurious lifestyle to them and working in the fields is a sub-standard work for after receiving degrees from renowned institutions. So, the older population don't want to leave their native places and they are looking after the agricultural activities. On the other hand, the youths don't want to live their lives with hardships and challenges like their ancestors did. So, *Bora (1996)* argued that the migration has resulted in slight increase in the standard of living, but the divide in income prevails in the rural-urban areas. Therefore, the orientation towards the salaried jobs is creating a huge loss in the local economy.

2) **Women are part of the workforce** of One of the major impacts of migration of male members to cities led to the emergence of women in agriculture because the women in villages are double-burdened with both domestic and agricultural work for their survival.

The primary motive of women working in the fields is because fields because the males' members of the household are absent so, they need to take up the responsibilities of the iron their behave in the family. Therefore, major decisions are made by the women in the family but, patriarchal set up still exists over here.

3) **To achieve education**– According to the literacy census 2011, Uttarakhand received positive growth in literacy in the literacy by achieving 78.82%. So, the increasing importance

of education among the people resulted in the search for well-paid salaried jobs in the cities. (Mamgain,2004)

Even though there are many educational hubs in Uttarakhand but, the quality of education and infrastructure degraded in the rural areas and therefore, it eventually led to the migration of the youth for better quality of education. (Nautiyal and Nauriyal,2001)

4) **Lack of implementation of government policies**– there is shortage of infrastructure for implementing the policies and there are polices for rural development in order to create jobs in the villages because no one wants to take the risk to invest in the hills. The Public Distribution System (PDS) ensured cheap ration to the marginalized sections resulting in a lazy attitude of people to cultivate in the fields. 2

Due to less populated villages, the wild animals are attacking the crops so, the farmers are becoming disinterested in agriculture. The migration also puts pressure on the resources in the plains due to overpopulation which led to poverty and working in harsh conditions for unskilled laborers. All the four major areas of impact gives us the holistic perspective of the problem in the district. 3

### 3. Central Question

*What are the impacts of out-migration in Narendra Nagar Tehsil? How can we address this problem? Why is it a major area of concern for the state?*

After reading various literature on this topic, there are some major drawbacks and gaps in it. Firstly, the survey is conducted on 4-10 villages so, there problem arises over here that the data collection and sample size is really small to draw conclusions for everyone. I want an in-depth analysis of the problem, so, that we can come up with solutions that can be applied in the hilly areas and further, I will cover more than 200 villages in Narendra Nagar tehsil.

Secondly, there is a lack of literature in this area so, my research will give a new insight to this domain of research. There are a lot of secondary sources involved in the research which is not sufficient for understanding it and the primary data work will help us to understand the patterns of migration.

2) Mehta, K. & Maikhuri, Dr R.K., (2018). Assessing reasons of outmigration from Garhwal Himalayan region. Paper Presented at the Conference on Recent Innovations in Emerging Technology & Science, April 6-7, in Dehradun

3) Grunawalt, Peter, (2012). "Why are Cities the Only Place for Dreams? Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand". Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection. 1297

**Objectives:** Some of the objectives of the research are:

- To understand the new impacts of migration in the villages and the state;
- To come up with alternative solutions for this problem
- To understand the new trends of migration post-covid in the villages.

**The scope of the research** is to address the complicated problems so that the state of Uttarakhand could prosper and this research could help us to address similar problems in the various parts of the state.

**Hypothesis:** The impacts of migration could be seen into socio-economic, political and cultural areas as well as the plausible solutions could help the government to reap long-term benefits for the development and prosperity of the state. The socio-economic sphere includes the lack of contribution of money and taxes in the state because many people migrated to different cities, and the lack of a professional skilled workforce. The health and educational facilities are declining because there are no people to raise their voices and create pressure on the government to implement the schemes of the government. Further, the government needs to come up with far-sighted industrial policies for the development of small-scale industries in the hilly areas which provide employment to them.

The political sphere includes the lack of political will of the people to indulge in the criticism against the government because they know that their voices would not be heard by the leaders. Even, till date there are many households where roads, water supply and electricity have not reached inspite of separate statehood. The lack of checks and balances of the government made them lazy to work for the people and not fulfil their personal motives and bank accounts.

The process of decentralization needs to be strong and well administered so that the schemes and benefits could trickle down in the lower strata of the society. Garhwali culture and dialect is unique and different from the others but, on the other hand, the language and culture are assimilating into the mainstream which could eventually lead to the disappearance of the Garhwali culture. So, there could be programmes and meetings among the people which including the migrants so they could engage themselves with their native people and raise problems among the local leaders.

Further, there can be Panchayats, Self Help Groups (SHG), Non -Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and volunteers who help in the implementation of the schemes and policies for the local people. The traditional methods could be used in order to improve soil fertility because the fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides reduced the productivity of the soil. Organic The organic farming could be done in order to create a market for the supply of crops which would increase the income of the rural people and the local economy.

Every area has different solutions to the problems and alone the process of modern development is not enough to face the challenges of the people. Therefore, there needs to be balance between them so, they could prosper and grow tremendously. The abundance of natural resources in Uttarakhand should be used wisely because the environment because environment essential for human development. We need to focus on the human development and infrastructure in order to cater to needs and aspirations of the people.

#### 4. Methodology

The research will be conducted in the Narendra Nagar Tehsil, which includes more than 200+ villages. The primary data

will be collected in the form of structured questionnaire and interviews which includes the name of the person, place of origin and migration, reasons for migration, educational qualifications, solution to the problem of out-migration, connectivity of roads, electricity and provided any government schemes, functioning of the Panchayati raj institutions and the hospitals nearby. The quantitative data will give statistics to supplement the arguments of the research. The secondary data like the government reports and case studies of the migration will help me to build a strong foundation for the research. The ethical code of conduct will be followed and permission will be taken from the interviewees, respecting respect the communities and the individual's privacy during the research.

However, there are some limitations to the research as follows following; firstly, the interviews are subjected to personal opinions, perception and biases which can result in the conclusion and; secondly, the research is a broad topic so, it will evolve and add new dimensions to the areas.

#### Chapterisation –

The research work will be divided into five chapters:

- 1) **Introduction:** - The foundation for understanding the problem of out-migration in Uttarakhand and the loop-holes in the research areas will be highlighted. So, this will set the base to look into the complex and patterns of migration.
- 2) **Historical Background:** The factors that were responsible for the migration in the area since the 1950s since 1950s through the use of secondary data like books, journals and articles.
- 3) **Present- Scenario:** In this chapter, I will discuss the discuss about the present problems and impacts of out-migration in the villages through the interviews and structured questionnaire.
- 4) **Long Term Sustainable Goals:** The plausible solutions to curb the out-migration in the villages.
- 5) **Conclusion:** All the arguments will be summed up briefly at the end and how will the state tackle this problem by using new industrial policies and sustainable development could be achieved in the state of Uttarakhand

Therefore, the aim of the research is to provide solutions to the major problem in Uttarakhand. However, it is subjected to variations across the state depending on the geographical factors, needs and aspirations of the people.

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