

## **The Problem of Migration in Uttarakhand with Special Reference to District Bageshwar**

**Dr Nagendra pal<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** In the State of Uttarakhand, migration has become a major socio-economic problem, especially in the state's steep and rural areas. The migration issue in the primarily rural and hilly Bageshwar district is the main subject of this study. A number of concerns, such as a lack of job prospects, poor healthcare and education systems, insufficient connectivity, and environmental issues, are contributing to the out-migration trend in Bageshwar. Village population declines, the loss of traditional means of subsistence, and sociocultural disintegration are the results of these problems. The study looks at the trends, causes, and effects of migration in the area using both primary and secondary data collecting. Additionally, it shows government programs designed to reverse the trend and encourage sustainable development in rural regions. The findings reveal that unless comprehensive policy interventions are implemented focusing on local employment generation, tourism development, improved public services, and infrastructural support the migration trend is likely to continue, further exacerbating regional imbalance and underdevelopment. This research underscores the urgent need for strategic planning and grassroots development to address the root causes of migration and ensure socio-economic stability in Bageshwar and similar districts of Uttarakhand.

**Keywords:** Migration, Connectivity, Underdevelopment, Socio-Economic, Public Services, Environmental issues, Healthcare, Education systems

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### **Introduction**

The phenomenon of migration has been explained through various theoretical lenses. Ravenstein's Laws of Migration (1885) are among the earliest attempts to explain migration patterns, emphasizing economic factors as the primary motivators. (R.E 1885) More recent frameworks such as Harris-Todaro's Model of Rural-Urban Migration (1970) argue that migration occurs when there is a perceived gap in expected income between rural and urban areas. Todaro. H (1970). This theory has been applied to explain migration from rural regions of India, including Uttarakhand, where poor agricultural productivity and a lack of rural jobs prompt individuals to seek better economic prospects in urban areas. This theory is particularly relevant in explaining migration from Bageshwar, where push factors such as environmental degradation and limited infrastructure are prevalent. This study will explore the problem of migration in the state of Uttarakhand,

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor of Pol. Science, Govt. Degree College Kanda, Bageshwar



specifically focusing on the Bageshwar district. Uttarakhand's challenging mountain environment and dispersed population remain the main obstacles to development and eradicating poverty, with over 66% of the population living in rural areas and over 80% in hill districts. Locals in places like Tehri, Bageshwar, Chamoli, and the Garhwal region face significant challenges, according to a report by the Uttarakhand Migration Commission. Majority of the rural population in the hills either survives on subsistence agriculture or migrates for better livelihood opportunities. In terms of infrastructure development, such as roads, irrigation, and electricity, the hill districts are still lacking. The hills and the plains have a growing income and livelihood gap as a result of the inter-district inequalities in infrastructure. The region's reliance on non-farm sources of income has also increased significantly. Out-migration from rural regions of the state's hill districts has become a significant issue, leading to a sharp fall in the population of numerous hamlets and villages. Significance of this Research - Migration in Uttarakhand has been a historical process. The demography and ethnography of Hill Regions in Uttarakhand has been influenced by a large in-migration from other parts of the mainland during 11th and 12th century and later years (Atkinson, 1822-88; Walton, 1910). Natives as well as migrants cleared jungles and developed farm land for cultivation through their hard labour over centuries. Atkinson, H. (1882). With the creation of Garhwal and Kumaon army Regiments during the British rule, local youth got regular employment on a large number for the first time in the region. This necessitated outmigration of local youth for few years who generally returned to their villages after the end of their service tenure. This initial exposure to outside world had a major influence on building acceptance of livelihood based on migration. The situation has changed substantially in recent decades with a large number of population out-migrating permanently along with families from the Hill Region of the State mainly to eke out their livelihoods and better future of their children. This has become a widespread phenomenon in hill districts, resulting in absolute decrease in population in few districts such as Almora and Pauri Garhwal and very slow growth in other hilly districts during recent decade. Stagnant socio-economic conditions of the hill villages is a major challenge for tackling the problem of out migration. Strengthening rural development and rural livelihoods has been considered as one of the key drivers for change in the rural areas of Uttarakhand, particularly in the hill districts.

### **Migration in Uttarakhand**

Uttarakhand, a state with difficult terrain and a predominantly rural population, has been the focus of several migration studies. According to Mehta and Sati (2014), migration in the state is driven by a combination of environmental, economic, and social factors. The mountainous regions, where agricultural productivity is low, have particularly high rates of out-migration. Sati (2016) highlights that out-migration in Uttarakhand is exacerbated by a lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, healthcare, and schools, which



hinders local development. With a population of 10.09 million in 2011, Uttarakhand is at 20th position among Indian states. According to 2011 Population Census, nearly 70 per cent of Uttarakhand population lives in its rural areas. The ten hill districts (generally referred as Hill Region) of the State account for 48.1 per cent of its population. Population in urban areas of hill districts substantially increased during the period. Thus, much of this growth in population in plain districts of Uttarakhand is contributed by migration from hill districts. In fact, there has been an absolute decline in population in two districts of Almora and Pauri Garhwal during the period 2001-2011 (registering a negative compound annual growth of -0.13 and -0.14 respectively). Other hill districts with very low growth in their population are Tehri Garhwal, Bageshwar, Chamoli, and Pithoragarh. Overall, the share of Hill Region in the population of Uttarakhand has declined substantially by about five percentage points from nearly 53 per cent in 2001 to about 48 per cent in 2011. Mamgain and Reddy conducted a detailed study on the socio-economic impact of migration in Uttarakhand. They found that the phenomenon of ghost villages is particularly prominent in the state, where large-scale migration has led to the depopulation of rural areas. Their research indicates that while remittances from migrants provide some financial relief to rural households, they are not enough to stimulate long-term local development or offset the socio-economic and demographic impacts of migration.

### **Impact of Migration**

How have source areas been affected by out-migration? Neo-classical economics contend that migration raises the income and quality of life in the areas of origin in a number of ways. Employment and income prospects are further enhanced in the source locations by the demand for goods and services created by the remittances received there. Additionally, migrants bring new technology and information that they employ back home (Lewis, 1954; Fei and Ranis, 1964; Stark, 1991). But there are differing accounts of such favourable effects that surface from our field observations. The consumption pattern in the villages in Uttarakhand's hill region, which is primarily sourced from outside the area, has drastically changed as a result of migration. Like other parts of India, this region has switched from consuming coarse baranaja (twelve grains) to wheat and rice. Ragi and finger millet are grown by people, but their primary purpose is animal feed. Male juvenile alcoholism is pervasive and has grown to be a significant social issue. The socio-economic impacts of migration are profound and multifaceted. Studies such as Rao (2013) and Kumar et al. (2011) emphasize that the out-migration of working-age males has led to increased feminization of agriculture in rural India. In Uttarakhand, women are often left to manage both household and agricultural responsibilities, resulting in an increased workload and stress on women. Singh and Das (2017) highlight the generational gap created by migration, where younger people migrate to cities, leaving behind elderly parents who often lack the physical and financial means to maintain farms or households. This creates social



isolation for the elderly and weakens the traditional family support structures that were once integral to rural life. Migration also has a significant impact on the local economy. Pandey and Tripathi (2018) argue that remittances, while providing financial support to households, are insufficient for long-term economic development. In many cases, the money sent by migrants is spent on daily consumption rather than on productive investments such as agricultural improvements or local businesses. Negi and Joshi (2004) argue that environmental challenges such as soil erosion, deforestation, and water scarcity, combined with the fragile ecosystem of the region, have made traditional agricultural practices unsustainable. This has led to increased migration, as young people find it difficult to earn a livelihood from farming. The vulnerability of Uttarakhand's rural areas to climate change, which has led to unpredictable rainfall patterns, droughts, and landslides. These environmental risks are further compounded by the lack of adaptive agricultural practices, pushing people to seek livelihoods elsewhere. The deteriorating environmental conditions in districts like Bageshwar have led to the abandonment of farms, further diminishing local agricultural productivity and reinforcing the migration trend. This contributes to the economic stagnation of rural areas like Bageshwar. Several studies point to the role of environmental degradation in exacerbating migration from mountainous districts like Bageshwar. Almost all remittance receiving households (more than 91 per cent) spend remittance amount to meet their daily consumption requirements. More than 60 per cent of such households use remittance money for meeting education and health related expenses. Only over one-tenth of households use the remittances for paying the labour charges in their agriculture. There are about 5 per cent households who mainly use remittances for the education of their children. None of households use remittances in activities such as non-farm business development. Thus, remittances are hardly able to generate any multiplier effect at the village economy level except opening up of few grocery shops to serve the consumer demand. Moreover, the consumer items sold in grocery shops are mostly procured from outside the Hill Region.

### **Literature Gap**

Although there is a wealth of literature on migration from rural areas in Uttarakhand and India, there is still little research specifically on District Bageshwar. Previous research has mostly concentrated on migration trends, leaving gaps in our knowledge of how migration interacts with local governance, gender dynamics, and environmental sustainability. The effectiveness of policy initiatives intended to decrease migration in the particular context of hilly regions like Bageshwar has also not been thoroughly assessed in many research.

## Objective

The main objectives of the present study are-

- To educate the populace on the state's migration issue
- To educate people about the detrimental effects of migration on the preservation of their home cultures and cuisines.
- To educate the public about the government's development and employment plans through seminars and workshops.
- To disseminate knowledge at the grassroots level to encourage additional research on this issue

## Hypothesis

The information this study provides about the multi-sectoral and developmental initiative started by the Uttarakhand government would help the people in the Bageshwar district with the migration issue. It will give potential answers to this issue.

## Population Table: 1.2

Tehsil	Area(km <sup>2</sup> )	Population	Pop. Density	Sex-Ratio
Bageshwar	493.69	100103	203	1039
Kanda	293.56	26272	89	1127
Garud	373.75	68629	184	1157
Kapkot	1080	64894	60	1089

Sources: (According to 2011 Census)

## Chief Minister Migration Prevention Scheme

The Govt. aided farmers with establishing polyhouses of 50 square metre and distributed hybrid seeds of capsicum to increase their income and prevent problem of migration in the district.

(Table of Various Govt. schemes under the year 2021-22)



No.	District Name	Tree Plantation for 50% Fruit assistance	80% Government aid for Poly house construction	60% Plant Protection Work aid
1.	Bageshwar	3917	37	605.50 (area in Hector)

Sources: Bageshwar Economic Report Data (2021-2022)

**Research Methodology:** The study is going to use surveying method and previous studies done in the area to explore the problem of migration. It will be based on primary and secondary source data. The primary data will be collected primarily on the population sample and secondly thorough the help of questionnaire.

**Questionnaire: -**

- What is the reason to migrate from the district?
- Would you prefer to stay in Bageshwar if you are being provided employment opportunities?
- Would you like to move permanently out of the village?

**Relevance of the present study:**

The present study will have a positive impact on the society and policy making in the govt. initiatives. It will aware the people about the issue of migration which have a negative impact on the growth of their regional identity, unique culture and cuisine. The study on migration in Uttarakhand, with a special focus on District Bageshwar, holds significant relevance to both society and policymakers due to the following reasons:

- **The effect on rural communities:** Migration has a significant effect on rural communities, especially in hilly areas like Bageshwar. Village depopulation, human capital loss, and the disruption of traditional farming practices are all clarified by this study. Social structures in rural areas are deteriorating as a result of these changes, and community cohesion is being weakened. This study helps local communities understand the long-term effects of out-migration on family life, agricultural practices, and social interactions by gaining an understanding of these processes.
- **Preservation of Cultural and Environmental Heritage:** This paper discusses how migration has led to the loss of traditional knowledge and methods for environmentally friendly farming and conservation. This is essential for maintaining the distinctive natural and cultural legacy of areas such as Bageshwar. This study highlights the importance of reviving historic knowledge systems



and incorporating them into contemporary sustainable development models for the benefit of society as a whole.

- **Informed Policy Formulation:** This study offers insightful information and analysis on the main drivers of migration, including environmental issues, inadequate infrastructure, and economic stagnation. Policymakers can create focused policies that address the structural problems of migration by using this evidence-based approach as a guide. Developing policies that seek to increase local employment possibilities, boost agricultural output, and fund rural infrastructure requires an understanding of these issues.
- **Rural Development Strategies:** State and federal policymakers can utilize the study's results to create all-encompassing plans for rural development. In order to create sustainable rural livelihoods, the study focuses on economic diversification, which includes encouraging high-value agricultural, processing, tourism, and small-scale industries.
- **Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Management:** The study's emphasis on environmental factors that influence migration is particularly pertinent to policymakers who are responsible for managing environmental deterioration and climate change. The suggestions for encouraging reforestation, soil and water conservation, and climate-resilient agriculture can be incorporated into government initiatives for sustainable rural development.
- **Reform of Social Protection Programs:** The study's analysis of current social protection initiatives, such as MGNREGA, sheds light on how well they work to combat migration. These findings can be used by policymakers to enhance or modify social security programs so that they better meet the particular requirements of mountainous areas. These initiatives could more effectively deter migration by generating more stable and fruitful job opportunities in the community.

## **Conclusion**

The economic condition of the migrant's families is by & large better than those families in the village where from no migration has taken place. Economic, infrastructure, and environmental reasons all play a significant role in driving migration from District Bageshwar, which has significant socioeconomic and environmental effects on the area. Although remittances offer temporary financial assistance, depopulation,



agricultural degradation, and social unrest have serious long-term effects. Resolving the migration issue calls for an all-encompassing strategy that emphasizes fostering sustainable farming methods, enhancing infrastructure, and generating local job possibilities. Environmentally sustainable, inclusive, and socio-culturally appropriate rural development must be given top priority in policymaking. By tackling the root causes of migration and fostering economic diversification, Bageshwar can develop into a more resilient and self-sufficient district. A coordinated effort from the government, private sector, and local communities is essential to implement the necessary reforms and create a brighter future for the rural population of Bageshwar.

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