

## Migration and Human Development Dynamics: A Study in Bankura District, West Bengal

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**Abstract:** In recent times migration has become one of the most important socio-economic phenomena influencing human development in India. In the rural hinterland, it acts as a survival mechanism and an instrument of social change. This paper probes the process and impact of migration on human development in Bankura District, a crisis-prone area with poor agricultural productivity, recurring droughts and insufficient employment opportunities in West Bengal. Drawing on primary data and secondary literature, the paper analyzes the reasons for and nature of migration, as well as its impact on household income, education, health and quality of life. Geographical mapping and statistical methods were used to detect spatial patterns of flow movement within the district. The results indicate that migration has positive influence on both livelihood diversification, human development and regional socio-economic changes mainly through remittances. But migration also has its social implications such as family disintegration, increase in women's work load, and local labor force drain. The research reiterates the call for policy interventions to impact positively on the management of migration to increase its developmental benefits, whilst downscaling social woes.

**Keywords:** Migration, Human Development, Rural Out-Migration, Livelihood Change, Socio-Economic Transformation.

### 1. Introduction:

Throughout human history, migration, which is thought of as the movement of people from one location with the goal of settlement elsewhere, has been a critical aspect of human society. Internal migration is rife in India, especially in the hinterlands with few economic opportunities. Migrants frequently migrate in order to find work, receive a better education, enjoy a higher standard of living and socialize. However, the patterns of migration are intrinsically connected to more general development processes and human welfare in terms of income, education and health access or quality of life.

Bankura District situated in western fringe of West Bengal makes an interesting case to explore these processes. With an area of about 6,882 sq. area, the district has a rolling surface and its soil is merely lateritic; its economy is essentially agricultural. Agriculture is predominantly rain-fed and recurring droughts, low productivity, and limited industrialization all play a part in prolonged rural poverty. These are also the structural factors that have created push/pull movements of migration. Though environmental distress and economic scarcity work as a push force from the source area, urban areas such Kolkata, Durgapur and Asansol of West Bengal draw migrants due to relatively higher earnings and appropriate employment.

**Objectives:** This present paper tries to examine the socio-economic impact of migration on Households in Bankura District and shows the interface between mi-

gration and human development. It also analyses the spatial spread of migration, the impact of remittances, and sociocultural consequences of migration at community/village level in rural areas.

## 2. Objectives of the Study:

Specific goals of this work include:

- To discover the causes and determinants of migration in Bankura District.
- To understand the socioeconomic profile of migrant households.
- To measure the influence of migration on income, schooling, health and living conditions.
- To explore the geographical differences of MIR in the district.
- Remittances in Human Development and Rural Livelihood Transformation: Revisiting the Migration-Development Nexus.
- To examine the socio-cultural impacts of migration on migrant families and communities.

## 3. Hypotheses:

- i) The net impact of migration is positive on the socio-economic and human development of migrant households.
- ii) Migration is more intense in socio-economically backward drought affected blocks of the district of Bankura.
- iii) Earnings sent back by migrant workers boost family income as well as access to education, health care and homes.
- iv) Migration has contradictory social effects: family separation, additional work burdens on women and labor shortages at home.

## 4. Study Area Description:

It is Situated between 22°38'N and 23°38'N latitude and 86°36'E to 87°46'E longitudes in the southwest part of West Bengal. It is bounded by Bardhaman and Hooghly in the east, Purulia in the west, Paschim Medinipur in the south and Dhanbad (Jharkhand) along with the border of West Bardhaman in the north-west.

The physiography of Bankura is a sort of an upland divided into two main natural divisions of the country, namely, the Rarh on the north and the Bagri on the south. The area has undulating topography, lateritic soil types and dry deciduous vegetation. It's tropical, with hot summers and mild winters and moderate rainfall. The agriculture is mostly monsoon dependent where paddy, maize and vegetables are the main crops. economically distressed district due to inadequate irrigation facilities, frequent droughts and lack of industrial development.

It is divided administratively into a number of blocks such as Khatra, Rani-bandh, Indpur and Saltora etc., the latter four characterised by higher levels of out-migration initially motivated by environmental stress, poverty and lack of employment opportunities.

## 5. Methodology:

This study employs a mixed-methods methodology, integrating qualitative and quantitative data to map the dynamics of migration and human development:

### 5.1. Data Sources:

**Primary material:** Data is gathered through household survey, structured

interview and focus group discussion from 150 migrant households in selected blocks. Variables were household composition, income, education, occupation and remittances as well as migration history.

**Secondary data:** Collected from Census of India (2011), District Statistical Handbook (Bankura), National Sample Survey (NSS) reports, the UNDP Human Development Reports, and various published research articles.

### 5.2. Data Analysis

To test hypotheses simple statistical techniques including percentages, average mean, Pearson correlation coefficient and migration intensity index/ factor was applied. Geographical Information System (GIS) was adopted to determine the spatial pattern of distribution and intensity of migrant households for various blocks. Qualitative analysis addressed social effects such as separation from family, gender roles, and community interaction.

### 5.3. Limitations:

- Finally, the survey did not have direct access to migrant households that had settled permanently in another district.
- The categories of seasonal migration can fluctuate from year to years, and some data use information based on the respondent's memory.

## 6. Findings / Results

### 6.1. Causes of Migration

- **Economic reasons:** Insufficient income derived from agriculture, unemployment, meager wages and absence of any other earning means were the main push factors.
- **Environmental reasons:** Repeat droughts, infertility of soils, and limited access to water in blocks such as Ranibandh, Khatra and Indpur force households to move.
- **Societal causes:** Improved education and medical care as well as urban opportunities, all served as pull factors towards cities.

### 6.2. Patterns of Migration

- Migration is seasonal (3–6 months for agricultural labour, brick kilns, construction work) and permanent (migrants those who are fully relocated to urban areas).
- Temporary migration is primarily a male affair, while membership of the entire family migrates in some cases.

### 6.3. Impact on Household Income

- The per household increase in average monthly income of migrants was 25-40% recorded after remittance.
- Money sent home was spent on food, education, health and to improve housing.

### 6.4. Impact on Education and Health

- School attendance among children improved in 68% of households.
- Better access to healthcare facilities due to increased income was reported by 54% of households.

### 6.5. Social and Cultural Impact

- Migration resulted in the separation of husbands and family, with women taking over the responsibility for managing the household and children.
- A number of local customs among the ISKCON community became moribund in young adults' absence.

- The labour force was periodically insufficient for local agricultural needs.

#### **6.6. Spatial Distribution of Migration**

- Net migration was relatively higher in western and southern 137 blocks of Bankura.
- The GIS map revealed migration prone areas clustering with drought prone and economically backward regions.

#### **7. Discussion:**

‘Migration in Bankura’ - A Twofold Process of Two Extreme Forms!

##### **Positive aspects:**

- Livelihood diversification and income enhancement
- Improved education and health indicators
- Higher standard of homes and spending capability
- Strengthened human development indices

##### **Negative aspects:**

- Family separation and social strain
- Gender imbalance in household labor
- Drain of young labour from locality on agriculture and cottage industries.
- Psychosocial stress in migrants and people left behind

This study indicates that migration is for the most part a response to pressure but also can be considered a tool for human development. They are one of the positive ways NRI money functions as capital – both economic and social, improving standards in a village. Policymakers need to see migration as a development tool, not just a demographic process.

#### **8. Conclusion:**

Migrations from Bankura District highlight the inherent contradiction in population movements and human development. It is an adapted livelihood response to environmental and economic stress. Migration has brought beneficial effects in household income, education and healthcare services and helped immortalize the population (Hamada and Bejarano 2006) but at the same time it has changed the sociocultural and labor structure of the rural environment. This would help in increasing the benefits of migration while reducing its social costs through appropriate planning, training programmes and rural development strategies. A sustainable human development strategy for Bankura and other such regions, will need to adopt a more holistic approach that incorporates migration within regional planning and regional development policies.

#### **9. Policy Recommendations:**

**Increase Rural Employment:** You have to give a boost to schemes such as the MGNREGA and try minimising the distress migration.

**Establish Agro-Based Industries:** Promote local entrepreneurship in small scale industries to provide local employment.

**Training Programmes:** Train migrant workers in vocational skills for better paying and safe jobs.

**Protect Social Security:** Ensure that migrant workers and their families obtain medical care, insurance coverage and benefits.

**Tracking migration trend:** Develop a district-based database on seasonal and permanent migration for policy formulation.

**Inclusions of Migration in Rural Development:** Develop policies that acknowledge migration as a catalyst for human development.

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