



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONSEQUENCES OF RURAL OUT MIGRATION ON AGRICULTURE, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT, BIODIVERSITY, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY OF THE STATE OF UTTARAKHAND

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ABSTRACT

Movement of people from rural areas to urban areas is very common in India. Migration has significant effects on both of the rural and urban areas as it involves the composition of societies living in these areas. This paper gives an idea about the consequences of rural out migration on the agriculture, women empowerment, biodiversity, food security and nutritional security of the rural people. It was found in the study that migration affects on agriculture was opined by the migrants low (71.67%), on women empowerment was medium (61.67%), on biodiversity was low (80%), the rural people felt often food security (75.83%) and they had medium nutritional security (65.84%).

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INTRODUCTION

Migration can be broadly defined as crossing boundaries and communities from one place to another over a period of time. Migration from the hills of Uttarakhand to the plains is a common phenomenon. Most of the rural people migrate in search of better living opportunities to the urban areas. Migration affects the social and economic structure of both of the areas. On one hand it provides the rural people with better earning opportunities and hope for better living standard and on other hand it creates the problem of overpopulation congestion and pollution in the urban areas. Rapid industrialisation and huge infrastructural development in urban areas have attracted many rural people for employment from the villages. The improved public transport system also motivated rural people to migrate to urban areas and hence many of them have migrated to urban areas. Ohajianya (2005) suggested that labour migration out of agriculture and the consequential labour shortage on the farms have negatively impacted on agricultural production. Prabakar *et al.* (2011) indicated that due to migration acute shortage of labor for agricultural works

occurred affecting the productivity levels of all crops. Meenakshisundaram and Panchanatham (2013) found that most of the respondents (75.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the movement of migrants away from the rural area decreased the labour available for farm work. Santosh (2014) revealed that majority (51%) of the respondents opined that migration cause shortage of manpower for agricultural activities in rural area. Paris *et al.* (2005) found that, when men migrate, not only do women's workloads increase, but also their participation in decisions related to farming, compared with women from households without migrants also increased. Singh *et al.* (2011) revealed that migration has empowered the female members in terms of enhancing their decision-making role in various activities. Gerard (2003) found that seasonal migrants also bring back new knowledge and new technologies (especially crop varieties) from India, and acquire new skills. On the agricultural front, 'Introduction of improved varieties due to seeds brought by the migrants' was the most perceived benefit followed by 'it helps to locate better market in town for farm products' (Anamica, 2010). The most perceived problem on the agricultural front was decreased labour force for farm work. Without the opportunity to migrate many poor people would have fallen into deeper poverty and experienced severe food insecurity and remittances sent by migrants helped in improving food security (Deshingkar, 2006).

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

To conduct the study *Ex post facto* research design was followed. The state of Uttarakhand, district Almora, blocks Dwarahat and Chaukhutiya and two villages from each block namely Barati and Kaney villages from Dwarahat block and Gangolihat and Seemapali from Chaukhutiya block were selected purposively based on the intensity of migration. Randomly thirty migrants from each village were selected and thus formed a total sample of 120 respondents for the study. The data was collected using an interview schedule.

RESULTS

1. Consequences of migration on Agriculture: It was revealed in the study that majority (71.67%) of migrants had low opinion on consequences of migration on Agriculture followed by medium (23.33%) and high (5%) (Table 1 and Figure 1). Majority of the migrants migrated for doing non agricultural work in the migrated places so they did not bring back any new crops or varieties to the villages. Respondents expressed that agriculture was non remunerative because of the low productivity of hilly lands hence very few of them were

Appendix

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on agriculture

(N=120)			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Low	86	71.67
2	Medium	28	23.33
3	High	6	5.00

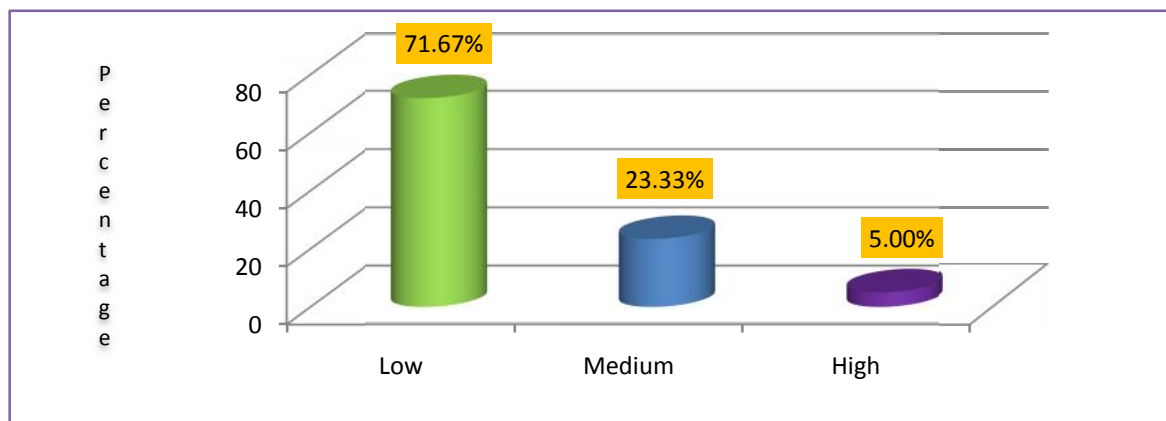


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on agriculture

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on women empowerment

(N=120)			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Low	20	16.67
2	Medium	74	61.67
3	High	26	21.66

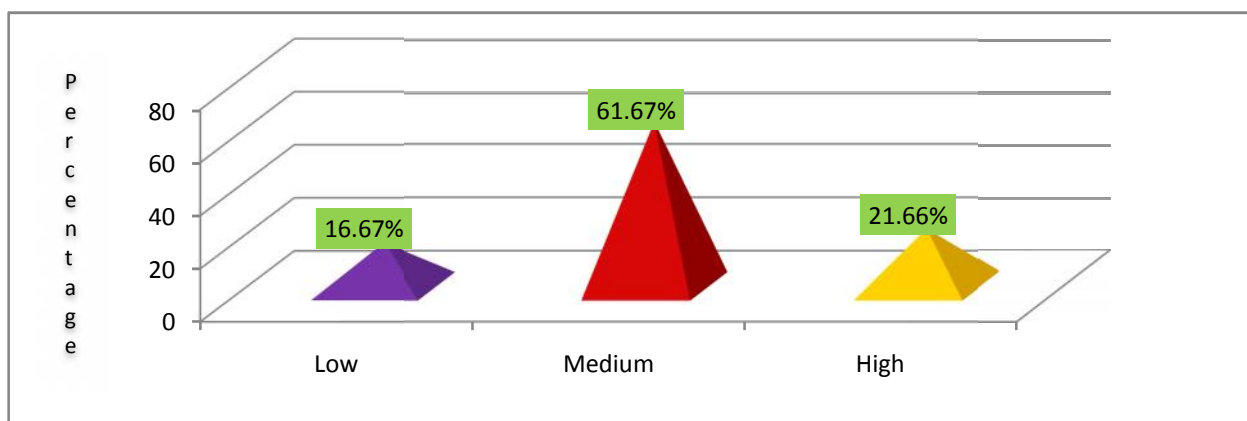


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on women empowerment

Table 3. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on biodiversity

(N=120)			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Low	96	80
2	Medium	14	11.67
3	High	10	8.33

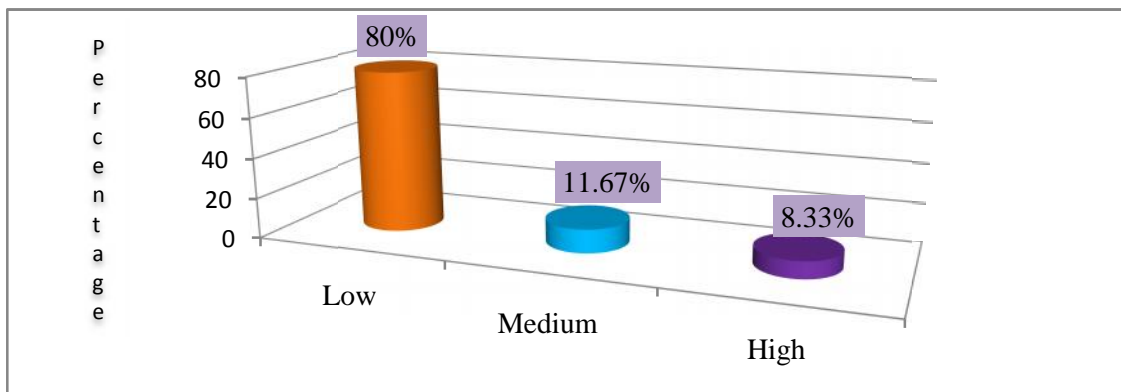


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on biodiversity

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on food security

(N=120)			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Rarely	9	7.50
2	Sometimes	20	16.67
3	Often	91	75.83

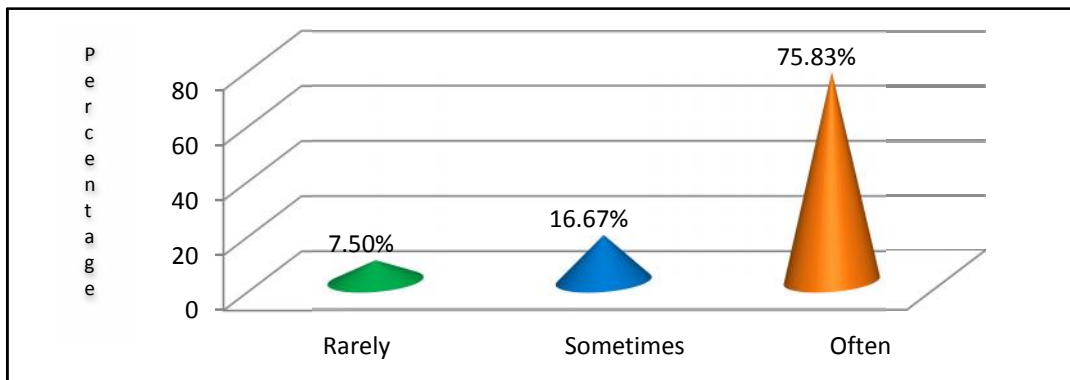


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on food security

Table 5. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on nutritional security

(N=120)			
S. No.	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Low opinion	25	20.83
2	Medium opinion	79	65.84
3	High opinion	16	13.33

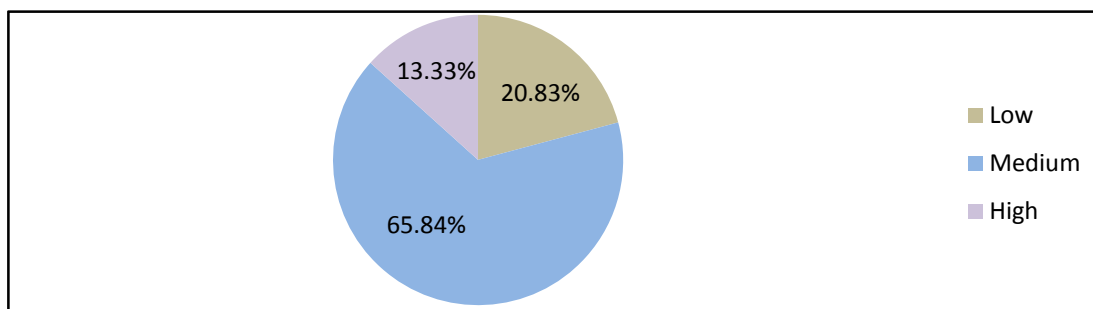


Figure 5. Distribution of respondents according to their opinion on consequences of migration on nutritional security

interested in investing the remittances earned due to migration on agriculture. Hardly they purchased other farm inputs like seeds from the remittances as they use previous year stored seeds, pesticides, implements *etc.* Hence significant changes in agriculture due to increased migration were not observed in the study. A negative consequence i.e. decreased labour availability for the agricultural work due to migration of youth led to creation of employment for seasonal migrants who came from other villages.

2. Consequences of migration on Women Empowerment:

The Table 2 and Figure 2 revealed that majority (61.67%) of the females of the family opined that there was medium women empowerment after the migration of the males of the family followed by high (21.66%) and low (16.67%) opinion respectively. The medium women empowerment was due to the fact that most of the migrants were young, they were either newly married or unmarried and had their parents with them, so most of the household decisions were taken by the father or mother (in case of death of their husbands) of the migrants. The wives of the migrants were mostly engaged in the household works and agricultural works. In the households headed by the females, the females were taking all decisions regarding households, farm management, and utilization of remittances for different purposes. They also learnt the calculation of family budget and its management. They also gained confidence and respect from the family members and prestige in the village. In some cases where the entire family of migrants was engaged in agriculture on large areas, the women felt more burden physically and mentally.

3. Consequences of migration on Biodiversity: From the Table 3 and Figure 3 it could be observed that most of the respondents were having low opinion (80%) about change in biodiversity, followed by medium opinion (11.67%) and high opinion (8.33%). Less changes in biodiversity due to migration was because of the reason that after migration, the migrants had not introduced any new variety or crop, enterprise, cattle breeds, fruit or forest trees in the villages, but were only sending back the remittances and other household goods to their families in the village. There were not much changes in the cropping pattern of the families of migrants, they were using the same crops and varieties as before. Hence majority had low opinion towards changes in biodiversity due to migration.

4. Consequences of migration on Food security: The Table 4 and Figure 4 indicated that majority of the respondents had often food security (75.83%), followed by sometimes (16.67%) and rarely (7.50%) food security as a consequence of migration. It was observed during the study that most of the households were food secure after the migration of their family member or members than earlier. The migrants were sending back enough remittances for consuming sufficient food by their family members. Very few of them were still food insecure because of the fact that those migrants were getting very low remittances and their cost of stay in the urban areas was comparatively more, so they were unable to send enough money back to their family to secure food throughout the year.

5. Consequences of migration on Nutritional security: From the Table 5 and Figure 5, it was found that majority of the respondents had medium opinion about nutritional security (65.84%), followed by low opinion (20.83%) and high opinion (13.33%). Majority of the families of the migrants had medium

level of opinion on consequences of migration on nutritional security. The probable reason might be due to the fact that after migration, the family members of the migrants were having enough money to purchase the food but they were not well aware of the concept of nutritional security. In fact they should have high nutritional security as they had high food security but due to their lack of knowledge about the composition and importance of the nutritious diet, majority of them had only medium to low opinion on nutritional security. Most of the families took the daily diet of cereals + dairy products + pulses + vegetables and sometimes taking the fruits, fleshy foods (fish, chicken, meat, egg) and rarely took dry fruits/nuts. In very few cases the family members noticed the stunting growth of their children due to lack of nutrition. It was observed during interview that the frequency of taking fleshy foods was somewhat increased as compared to the frequency of taking these food items before migration of their family member.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The consequences of rural out migration from the rural areas of Uttarakhand as opined by the migrants revealed that they had low opinion on consequences of migration on agriculture and biodiversity, medium opinion on consequences of migration on women empowerment and nutritional security and high opinion on consequences of migration on food security. The Government should provide fund for research to SAU for development of suitable farm machinery, integrated farming system, high yielding varieties suitable for organic farming in hill slopes and should extend loans for starting of small scale agro based industries like bakery industry, mushroom cultivation and value addition, floriculture production *etc.* There is need to focus on research and development of suitable light weight agricultural implements and machinery to increase the mechanization of agriculture in high hills, research on organic farming practices, millet crops and low volume, high value crops like spices, fruits, forestry *etc.* for making the agriculture as a livelihood strategy in the hilly areas of the state.

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