

ABSTRACT

TITLE: A STUDY ON RURAL OUT-MIGRATION IN KOCH BIHAR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Human migration is the movement of peoples from one place to another place by temporarily or permanently. The process of migration is not a new phenomenon, and it is a continuous process. India is one of the oldest civilisations globally, which had a significant history of migration worldwide. After the independence, the redistribution of population and different social, economic, and demographic factors changed the migration trend. The Census of India (2011) focused that migration is two types viz., by birthplace (POB) and by place of the last residence (POLR). In 1981 Census provided employment, education, and the family moved, marriage and other reasons are the major causes of migration, while the 1991 Census added the business and natural calamities for migration causes. The Census of India (2001; 2011) also identified the causes of migration are; work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved after birth, household, etc. Otherwise, the NSSO (National Sample Survey Organisation) (1993, 1999-2000 & 2007-2008) identified five reasons for migration in rural areas.

Koch Bihar district has been selected as the study area located in the north-eastern part of West Bengal. The latitudinal and longitudinal extension of the study area approximately is $25^{\circ}57'47''$ N to $26^{\circ}36'20''$ N and $88^{\circ}47'44''$ E to $89^{\circ}54'35''$ E, respectively, and the total geographical area is approximately 3387 sq. km. The western, south-western and southern boundary of the study area is bounded by Bangladesh, while the northern border is bounded with Alipurduar district and Assam bounds the eastern part. Koch Bihar district is an agricultural district in West Bengal where approximately 70 percent of people are dependent on agriculture. Most people belong to scheduled caste and minority communities; there is no notable industry in the district. Income from the agricultural sector is very low and even erratic both for farmers and agricultural labourers.

Consequently, in search of secured job opportunities and better livelihood, people from the rural areas have migrated from their birthplace. On the other hand, the shortage of agricultural labourers during the peak agricultural season also affects its economy. The out-migration is undergoing the radical change in demographic patterns as streams in the district.

The present study is dependent on both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected through the household survey scheduled over 5 percent of the total household

at 95 percent confidence level of the selected villages in the district. The simple random sampling techniques collected the samples. The study has selected both the central and peripheral villages at every block in the district. The secondary data has been collected from different block headquarters, district headquarters, different government department publications, various journals, books, thesis, internet sources, etc. The Logistic Regression Model has been applied for determining the factors affecting rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district. The Multiple Regression Model has been applied for assessing the MGNREG Scheme for rural income and employment generation on rural out-migration. Index Satisfaction (IS) has been calculated based on different socio-economic indicators for rural out-migration.

However, there are nine chapters in the thesis. The first chapter in the thesis indicating the introductory part for the literature survey, scope of research, hypothesis, and objectives of the investigation, data sources, and methodologies selected for the study.

The second chapter reveals the introduction of the physical and socio-economic background of the study area. The district belongs to the sub-Himalayan foothill region; whereas the maximum altitude is 75 meters and the minimum altitude is 28 meters. The average height of Koch Bihar district is 60 M from MSL. Koch Bihar is generally flat topography where the general slope is North West to the south-east. Mekhliganj, Haldibari have the maximum altitude where the minimum altitude is found in Dinhata, Sitalkhuchi, and Sitai. Koch Bihar is a low lying Teesta- Torsa basin. The Koch Bihar is well-drained by several perennial and ephemeral rivers: Teesta, Torsa, Kaljani, Ghargharia, Raidak, or Sonkosh and Gadadhar. The climate of Koch Bihar is wet monsoon type. The first Census of Koch Bihar conducted from 1871 to 1872 showed the population figure 532565 persons, and the average population density was 407 persons per miles. After one decade in the 1881 Census, the population rose 13.2 percent. Feudatory rulers under the British regime are ruling another essential feature of the district Koch Bihar population. The state has attracted a considerable number of immigrants from other places, including neighbouring districts. The district having highest percentage (50.17%) of scheduled caste communities (SC) in India.

The third chapter deals with the general overview of rural out-migration in India and Koch Bihar district. The chapter represents the inter-district out-migration flow in West Bengal, the balance of rural out-migration, distribution of Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST) other rural out-migration. The 2011 Census shows the bilateral flows of migration from State/U.Ts at a 5-year interval. It is clear that a significant number of migrants coming out from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal during this period. The study

found the primary receivers of migrants are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Punjab. The NSSO 64th round 2007-2008 also shows that the male out-migration from Kerala (23.8%) was dominant followed by Haryana (20.8%), Uttarakhand (16.6%) whereas it was least in Delhi (0.1%). The female population rural out-migration was predominantly high in Haryana (33.8%), followed by Himachal Pradesh (32.4%). The district Koch Bihar comprises an overall 6.15 percent out-migration. In comparison, 4.01 percent was males, and 8.42 percent was female out-migration rate is recorded to total district population as per the Census of India, 2011. The districts from the North Bengal region, namely Koch Bihar, Maldah, and Uttar Dinajpur, are recognized as a positive balance of rural out-migration in West Bengal. The balance of male rural out-migration, the Koch Bihar district (+2.06) has the highest proportion of male rural out-migration than the other districts of West Bengal.

The fourth chapter deals with migrant and non-migrant respondents' nature and characteristics based on different socio-economic indicators. The research shows that 86.4 percent were male, and the remaining 13.6 percent were female. And out of this, 68.3 percent were overall migrant respondents, and 31.7 percent were non-migrants. The majority of the migrant respondents were male and only 8 percent were female migrant respondents in Koch Bihar district. The study hypothesized that the rural out-migration in the study area is age and gender-selective. 98.2 percent of the surveyed migrant respondents were categorised under the working age group 15-65, while 86.4 percent and 11.8 percent were male and female respondents, respectively.

The fifth chapter focuses on the trend and pattern of rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district. The study found that rural out-migration is a universal phenomenon changing from time to time and affected the overall economy and social development. The Census of India has shown that out-migration in 1951 was 2.25 percentage which increased to 2.33 percent in 1991 and 6.15 percent in 2011. It is also crucial that the out-migration flow from rural to urban areas increases, which is also called a survival strategy. The chapter has identified the migration projection for 2031 in the Koch Bihar district. The simplest method of prediction is based on algebraically. For the population projection, a different way is used, such as algebraic and component methods. Different growth rates are used in the algebraic approach, like "linear growth rate, geometric growth rate, and exponential growth rate." The growth rate is high in the linear growth model and least in the exponential growth model. For the projection of total out-migrants of the district, the linear growth model is used because of its simplicity and high rate of growth among the various growth models (Geometric and Exponential) with assuming the growth rate of 2031.

Chapter six identified the causes of rural out-migration from the secondary as well as primary data. Both the Census of India and NSSO has identified that male out-migration is dominated by work/employment-related reason. At the same time, the majority of females are migrated due to marriage-related reasons. 79.9 percent of males are migrated due to employment-related reason from one state to another state and remaining 7.8 percent for studies, 7.6 percent for movement with parents or earning member, and 3 percent for other related reason. In contrast, 83.4 percent of females are migrated due to marriage migration. Of them, 2.3 percent are females relocated due to work or employment. The Logistic Regression Model has been used for the determination of different socio-economic indicators of out-migration. The regression coefficient of the age group 0-14 years is -1.874, and the odds ratio (OR) is 0.154, which implies that the age groups 0-14 years have an 84.6 percentage lower risk of rural out-migration than the age group 15-65 years. The district is dominated by male rural out-migration with the working population age group.

Chapter seven discussed the different economic and socio-demographic consequences of rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district. The results found that rural out-migration has a significant impact on the occupation, the number of working days, income, and expenditure before and after out-migration. It is also important to note that rural out-migration helps rural people raise their living conditions after out-migration. It has been cleared that the effects of rural out-migration in both positive and negative origin and destinations. The rural out-migration has influenced the district's total population every decade, which has signed on the population growth.

Chapter eight revealed with “Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme” (MGNREGS) on the rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district. The government of India introduced MGNREGA in 2006 for enhancing the livelihood security in rural areas of India through providing employment guarantees. This programme is one of the most effective programmes in rural areas, where it aims to provide 100 days of employment for the unskilled manual work to the adult member of every family. This scheme provides income directly to the unskilled labour into the rural areas. In the FY 2017-2018, 47.83 percent of the household to the total household in the district have been provided under this scheme. The field study revealed that 83.9 percent have job cards out of all respondents, while 65.5 percent and 33.5 percent indicate migrant and non-migrant respondents. Multiple Regression Model identified that higher the family incomes, chances to earn from MGNREGS is low. The coefficient value of the number of job cards in the family indicates a positive relative

relationship to increase the scheme's wages. Another essential variable, the frequency of work in a year, is highly positively correlated with wages earned from MGNREGS.

The last chapter has summarised the significant findings of all chapters. The present research is the rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district according to the geographical perspective. As stated in the hypothesis, the rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district is age and gender-selective. The research also proved that there is a sign of seasonality in migration streams from rural areas to urban areas, which is a significant weapon to fight against unemployment. Peoples are moving from one place to another place for reducing poverty and attain better socio-economic opportunities. The trend of rural to urban destinations is an emerging trend and has significantly impacted social, economic, and demographic elements. Finally, the study has given some crucial suggestions to check the rural out-migration in Koch Bihar district.