

## **ABSTRACT**

### **STRUCTURE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF MIGRANT POPULATION IN EAST AND SOUTH DISTRICTS OF SIKKIM SINCE 1975: A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

Migration of population is a global phenomenon. It poses serious problems both for the migrants as well as the areas to which the people come and settle down. The economic and social aspects of migration are a challenging one, especially at a time of debate about the future direction of migration policies in Sikkim. Sikkim is a state with a varied physical phenomenon. The geographical and climatic features of the State have extremely influenced its economic as well as social development. Human settlements and economic activities have been built around differential topography, ecology and environmental areas. The impact of climatic change, terrain characteristics and other factors has to be considered for the rate of migration and also for the socio-economic conditions of the migrant population. Migrants are usually influenced by social disparity and may have diverse range of experiences in the migration process that reflect their physical, mental and social status. Therefore, it is necessary to study the perception of migrants so that migrants can have equal social value in the community.

#### **The area of study**

The study area is bounded by the north district of Sikkim in the north; West district of Sikkim in the west; the state of West Bengal in the south and Tibet and Bhutan in the east. The study area extends from 27° 4' to 27°31' north latitudes and 88°20' to 88°55'25" east longitudes. According to Census, 2011 total population of the study area is 430433, which is 70.50% of the total state population out of which 228102 are males and 202331 are females. The total area of the study area is 1704 sq. km. which constitutes 24.01% of the total geographical area of the state. The density of population of the study area is 253 persons per sq. km. The sex ratio of the study area is 888 females per one thousand males. The study area has five urban centres, which are Gangtok, Singtham and Rongpo in the East district and Namchi and Jorethang in the South district. The study area has total 271 numbers of villages.

## **Objectives**

1. To analyse the factors and pattern of the migrant population after 1975 in the study area.
2. To measure the structure and composition of the migrant population in the study area.
3. To evaluate the socio-economic conditions of the migrant people in the study area.
4. To analyse the satisfaction levels of the migrants in the study area.

## **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant mean difference between Social status and economic status of in-migrants in the area of destination.
2. The socio-economic status of migrants is not dependent on demographic characteristics in the area of destination.
3. There is no significant relationship in satisfaction levels of in-migrants in the area of destination.
4. The satisfaction level of in-migrants is not dependent on demographic characteristics in the area of destination.

## **Database and Methodology**

Both Primary and secondary sources of the database have been collected to conduct this study. Different primary and secondary data have been analysed, examined and represented both graphically and statistically. The secondary sources of data have been collected from the census reports, Sikkim gazetteers, statistical journal, meteorological centre, annual reports published by the Govt. of Sikkim, different departments of Govt. of Sikkim and NDVI maps, DEM maps and related literature. Primary data were collected through the household field survey with the help of a structured questionnaire using stratified random sampling design without replacement of a significant number of 340 respondents. Moreover, SPSS package version 26.0 has been used for statistical analysis, maps have been prepared with the help of Arc GIS software version 10.3 and Global Mapper 25.0. Finally, Microsoft Office 2019 was used to calculate and to prepare the different cartographic techniques and documentation pertaining the study.

## **Brief outline of the study**

The whole study is comprising into seven chapters. Chapter – I addresses the brief conceptual framework, statement of the problem, review of literature, rationale of the study, objectives, hypotheses, database and methodology, sample design and size, tools and techniques and profile of the area of study. Chapter – II highlights the brief historical background of Sikkim, different physical aspects and socio-cultural characteristics and economic features of the study area. Chapter – III deals with the factors and patterns responsible for the in-migration in the study area. Chapter – IV focusses the rate of migration, structure and composition of in-migrants in the study area. Chapter – V discusses the socio-economic conditions including demographic profile, economic profile, household status of in-migrants in the study area. Chapter – VI analyse the perception of in-migrants about their level of satisfaction and level of adaptation in the study area. In Chapter – VII, summary and major findings of the study and policy implications have been presented.

## **Major Findings**

- Distribution, density and growth of the population are very high in the study area as compared to the other districts of the state. All these have accelerated the different facilities like health, transport and communication, energy resources as well as different economic activities. Availability of these facilities is the main reason for the faster in-migration rate. The pleasant climatic condition with the mild summer season and scenic beauties is another factor for the acceleration of the in-migration. A healthier educational infrastructure has also attracted the migrant students. Lack of available labour force in the study area is another reason as to why labourers from the neighbouring states have migrated for working in different types of agricultural and other economic activities. Power infrastructure of the area is mainly based on hydropower projects, which have attracted labourers for in-migration. But, factors like unavailability of heavy mineral resources, rigid lifestyle due to mountainous terrain, citizenship Act of 1954 and land laws of the state also have forbidden them to settled down in the study area. These negative aspects gave a tremendous impediment on in-migration process.
- Result of push and pull factors indicated that forces of push factors due to the reverse circumstances in the originating place are more responsible for in-

migration, the migrants representing 52.33% and 51.33% for East and South districts respectively. Large family size, small landholding and inadequate job facilities in the homeland of in-migrants are the principal reasons of push factor for both the districts., the share of migrants for the above being 10.57%, 11.83% and 10.28% for East district and 11.09%, 12.12% and 10.74% for South district, respectively. Main pull factor of in-migration is higher income opportunities in the study area, the migrants representing 13.48% for East district and 14.43% for South district. So, it can be said that push factors are more responsible for in-migration than pull factors. The study revealed that West Bengal and Bihar are the prime sources of in-migration. West Bengal is responsible for 43.10% and 43.01% of in-migration in East and South districts, whereas Bihar is the source of 19.44% and 14.83% of in-migration in East and South districts respectively. So, it is revealed from the above study that the patterns of in-migration in the study area mainly depend on short length migration for both the internal and inter-state migration.

- The rate of in-migration has been declining since the census of 1991. East district has experienced a decline rate of migration from 27.73 in 2001 to 22.13 in 2011 and South district also has experienced a rapid decline from 16.63 in 2001 to 5.14 in 2011. In both of the districts, the rate of migration is much higher in rural areas than the urban areas. Sex ratio among the in-migrants in East district (1096 females/1000 males) and South district (1472 females/1000 males) are much higher than state and national level average, which means that females are more migrated than male. The main reason is not only marriage, but they also worked as the cultivators and agricultural labourers in the study area. East district has the maximum proportion of other workers (67.72 % in 1991 and 64.66% in 2001) among the in-migrants followed by cultivators (23.49% in 1991 and 23.54% in 2001); on the other hand, South district has the maximum proportion of cultivators (54.9% in 1991 and 51.58% in 2001) followed by others workers (37.66% in 1991 and 40.78% in 2001). It indicates that the in-migrants in the study area mainly depend on cultivations and other service activities.
- Hinduism is the dominating religion (67.89%) in East district and South district is dominated by the Muslim community (52%). General and OBC-A categories

are the dominating caste composition. In East district Bhojpuri is the prime mother tongue (45.79%) and in South district Bengali (58.67%) is the main language spoken by respondents. In East district 65.26% are married whereas in South district 57.33% are unmarried. Both the districts are dominated by nuclear family (83.68% in East and 85.33% in South districts) due to costly and toiled life in the mountainous area. Though, 84.21% and 82% respondents are literates but, 64.74% and 68.67% are having only high school education in East and South districts respectively. So, there is a lack of skilled workers in different sectors of the economy. Most of the respondents are self-employed and others mainly work in the private sectors. The main occupations are daily work (25.79%) and business (16.84%) in East district and daily work, mason and constructional work (62.33%) in South district.

Average monthly income of the respondent migrants is higher in East district than South district but the average expenditure is higher in South district. The mean annual remittance sent by migrants is also higher in South district. But average annual savings of respondents is slightly higher in East district (₹ 19147) than South district (₹ 18923).

About 24% and 30% respondents of East and South districts have borrowed loan. The average loan borrowed by the respondents is considerably higher in South district (₹ 166822) than East district (₹ 76041.67). In East district, 58.95% and 41.05% respondents have been working in urban and rural areas respectively, whereas, in South district, it is 60% for urban and 40% for rural. Average working time of respondents is 6.29 days per week and 9.89 hours per day in East district; however, in South district, it is 6.51 days per week and 9.07 hours per day. About 69.47% and 70% respondents live in a rented house in East and South districts out of which 47.16% and 58.67% live in pucca house. Electricity is highly developed in the area. But there were desiderated in the drinking water and sanitation facilities. The household status also revealed that most of the respondents did not have a healthier work environment which would affect their social life. SEI of the respondents revealed that maximum numbers of in-migrants in the district are belonging to the medium to low level of socio-economic conditions for their livelihood. So, it is revealed that the socio-economic status of the in-migrants in the study area is not in a privileged situation. In the context of the hypothesis, it shows that *there is a significant*

*mean difference between social status and economic status of in-migrants in the East district of Sikkim and there is no significant mean difference between social status and economic status of in-migrants in the South district of Sikkim; the socio-economic status of in-migrants is dependent on demographic characteristics of the East district of Sikkim and the socio-economic status of in-migrants is dependent on demographic characteristics of the South district of Sikkim.*

- Most of the respondents in East and South districts were devastatingly positive about their level of satisfaction including job, remittance, savings, physical and mental health, sleeping pattern, happiness, calmness, blueness, cheerfulness and nervousness. The negative perception of in-migrants specify that they have to face their impoverishment, underdevelopment in their area of origin and have also been confronted with difficulties. Though, most of the in-migrants are pleased with their different level of satisfaction means they have to live in a healthier socio-economic condition, but, most of them have denied adapting the novel aspects in the migration field. It indicates that in-migrants of the study area have acclimatized themselves by their essentiality not by their bosom. In the context of the hypothesis of *there is no significant relationship in satisfaction levels of in-migrants between East and South districts of Sikkim* indicated that job satisfaction, satisfaction with remittance, physical and mental health, satisfaction level for the sleeping pattern, happiness and calmness is statistically not significant, but saving pattern, blueness, cheerless and nervousness is statistically significant. It is revealed from the hypothesis that *the satisfaction level of in-migrants is dependent on demographic characteristics in the East district and the satisfaction level of in-migrants is not dependent on demographic characteristics in the South district.*

- **Policy Implication**

There are some recommendations that have been made to solving the problems

- Government has to initiate skill-based education for in-migrants.
- Government has taken some initiative to get extra overtime wages beyond their working time.
- Government should ensure in-migrants under the insurance policy or Group Insurance Scheme under the National Insurance Scheme.

- Government and labour department should conduct awareness programme for in-migrants.
- Government should conduct a state-level survey on migration to develop an extensive database on in-migrants
- To eradicate wage disparities in a different segment of society Government should pass an inclusive law and implement it immediately
- Government or other non-governmental organizations providing standardize quality of life to in-migrants
- Government should take initiative to provide the banking facilities to the in-migrants
- Government should ensure basic facilities to in-migrants for their livelihood.

### **Conclusion**

It may be pointed out that the in-migrants in the study area have several varied phenomena. The researcher tries to examine the present study in different dimensions. Further research in future may reveal the other dimensions of in-migrants in the study area. The conditions of in-migrants varied time to time-related to changing society and economy. Thus, suitable strategies should be initiated to eradicate the issues mentioned by the researcher.