

HABITAT, ECONOMY AND SOCIETY OF RECENT MIGRANTS FROM KASHMIR DIVISION

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The rise of militancy in the Valley of Kashmir and its adjoining areas since 1988 led to politico-ethnic divide between the two major communities inhabiting the Valley. Its immediate and a major consequence has been the migration of more than 55,000 families, which mostly comprised of minority Kashmiri Pandits (Hindu) to Jammu and other parts of the country. Out to these migrant families 21,199 are living outside J&K State while 34,105 have sought shelter in Jammu division. This is perhaps the greatest displacement of persons in the history of India after its partition in 1947.

The specific objectives of this study were : (i) to investigate the causes of migration, (ii) to study the pattern of migration and the destinations of migrants, (iii) to examine the socio-demographic attributes of Kashmiri migrants, (iv) to make a broad based analytical survey of the socio-economic scenario of the Kashmiri migrants in the new habitat, (v) to analyse the major problems of Kashmiri migrants and future problems (vi) to provide a formula for their return to the Valley – their original habitat.

Broadly speaking, all the displaced Kashmiri migrant persons at Jammu constitute the universe of the study. However, the researcher has restricted his study to Jammu tehsil only. The study is based on sample survey of twenty households each of six Kashmiri migrant camps and six non-camp areas of major Kashmiri migrant concentrations in Jammu tehsil. The households were selected through purposive random sampling technique so that all the sections of the migrant society were adequately represented in the sample. Most of the data were collected through structured questionnaire and supplemented by secondary data.

On the basis of their spatial distribution in Jammu, Kashmiri migrants can be broadly divided into two categories : (i) Camp migrants, and (ii) Non-camp migrants. The camp migrants are those who are living in migrant camps set up by the government while non-camp migrants are those who live outside camps. The camp migrants constitute only 13.45 per cent of the total migrant families while 56.55% live outside camps. Thus, government has neglected majority of the Kashmiri migrants. Another categorisation of migrants is based on the assistance provided by the government. Those who receive financial assistance and rations (every month) can be termed as relief holders while those who are in government service and such are not eligible for cash or kind assistance can be classified as non-relief holders. Nearly 47.95 per cent of the total registered migrant strength (at Jammu) receive cash/kind assistance from the government.

Following are some of the main findings of the present study :-

- 1 Security and not economic motives had a primacy among the various factors governing the magnitude of the migration of 1989–90.
- 2 There is a greater percentage of rural migrants having settled in Jammu as compared to urbanites, who have gone to other metropolitan centres like Delhi.
- 3 Migrants have mostly moved out along with their families and not in individual capacity.
- 4 Majority of these migrants were not prepared for the expulsion.
- 5 Srinagar district has been major source area of 1989–90 migration because majority of the Hindu population was in this district.
- 6 Jammu has been the dominant pole of attraction for Kashmiri migrants as nearly 57.76% migrants settled here.
- 7 This migration of Kashmiris is not in accordance with the Distance Decay Model.
- 8 Nearly 88% of the registered migrants in Jammu are Hindus. Thus, this migration has been religious selective.
- 9 The camps are dwelling places for small families as compared to non-camp areas.
- 10 Camps have a greater proportion of nuclear families as compared to non-camp areas.
- 11 In Kashmir Valley – the original habitat of Kashmiri migrants there was pre-dominance of joint families. However, after migration, there has been a complete reversal in the family structures.
- 12 Among Kashmiri migrants, there is general trend of small families of 4 – 6 members.
- 13 Quite contrary to the national scenario the overall sex ratio of Kashmiri migrants is highly in favour of females.
- 14 With regard to the status of women among migrants, it has been observed that they enjoy high status.
- 15 There is low proportion (26.5%) of young population (0–19 years) which is again comparable to developed countries.

- 16 Kashmiri migration has neither being sex selective nor age selective.
- 17 There is extremely low percentage of child population (0–6 years) among Kashmiri migrants, hinting at lower birth rates after migration and slower population growth.
- 18 The overall dependency ratio among Kashmiri migrants is very high (58.77%).
- 19 Crude birth rate of Kashmiri migrants is quite low as compared to the national and J & K State average. The CBR is lower in camp areas as compared to non-camp areas.
- 20 General Fertility Rate (GFR) of camp areas is higher than the non-camp areas.
- 21 The average crude death rate of Kashmiri migrants is higher than the national average.
- 22 Vital Index of Kashmiri migrants is less than one indicating a decline in the migrant population.
- 23 There is a very high percentage of unmarried persons among migrants, which is a result of unsettled migrant life.
- 24 The average age at marriage of migrant females is 27 years while that of male is 29 years. Thus, the age at marriage of males is comparatively higher than that of females.
- 25 The General Literacy Rate of Kashmiri migrants is very high (89.30 per cent). The male literacy rate is marginally higher than the female literacy rate (81.16 per cent).
- 26 Kashmiri migrants have been able to retain their high literacy and high female status in the new habitats.
- 27 Tertiary sector absorbs a major chunk of these migrants.
- 28 The active labour force is substantially low in both camp and non-camp areas hinting at general unemployment situation among migrants.
- 29 There is less participation of women in economic activities. The workforce in all age groups is highly dominated by males.
- 30 There has been a drastic reduction in the income patterns of migrants after migration. In the absence of agricultural source of income most of the migrants rely solely on the relief (cash/kind) assistance provided by the Government.

- 31 Government has deliberately ignored the welfare of thousands of migrant families living outside the camps.
- 32 The relief and rehabilitation measures of the government are inadequate.
- 33 There has been mushroom growth of migrant colonies in the urban outgrowth of Jammu city, which has resulted in lopsided development. These colonies are lacking even the basic civic amenities.