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A Report on

Causes and Consequences of Out-Migration from Middle Ganga Plain

By

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highwages
landlessness
hunger
flood
indebteness
poverty



Chapter 4 Levels and Patterns of Migration

4.1 Key Findings

57% of households in MGP experience some form of migration whereas, 5% of migrant households have more than one form of migration.

One-third of the households are non-migrant where; none of the household members have migrated for employment.

The highest rate of migration is reported from Saran, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh & Munger which have been traditional pockets of out migration.

Higher rates of migration are also prevalent in flood affected divisions like Darbhanga, Kosi, Tirhut and Purnia in Bihar.

10% of the households in Bihar are seasonal migrant households. These appear to be concentrated in the flood affected divisions of Kosi, Tirhut and Purnia.

37% of households have internal migrants whereas 3% households have international migration.

Nuclear families and Muslim households are more likely to have migrants in MGP. The level of migration also varies across categories of landholding size and caste.

The volume and nature of migration within a given territory are influenced by the diversity of the terrain and the composition of the people who live there (Lee 1966). Data by FAO (2018) reveals that more than 1.3 billion people living in developing countries have moved internally between rural and urban areas. Empirical evidence shows a strong association between migration and economic condition. Caldwell (1968) notes that migration occurs in economically advanced localities (Caldwell 1968) while others point to high migration in economically worse-off areas (Oberai 1983; Yadava 1989; Jha 1997). Additionally, some studies have examined the associations between the caste and migration pattern (Sharma 1997).

Migration in the Middle Ganga Plain region dates back to the second quarter of the 19th century (Huge 1977). Over time, however, the nature and pattern of migration from this region have also changed. Today, Bihar and Eastern UP are known not only for a high volume of inter-state out-migration but also as two of the biggest sources of international migration.

The present chapter seeks to understand the level/intensity and patterns of migration at the household level from 68 villages across 18 administrative divisions of Bihar and Eastern UP within the Middle Ganga Plain (MGP). The data collected from 4335 households has been analysed to identify patterns of migration across the administrative divisions and socio-economic characteristics (caste categories, religion, landholding, and family type) of the respondent households. The level of migration is measured as the percent of migrant households to total households. The specific definition of different types of migrants and their households used in the study are given below.

4.2 Levels of Migration

The level of migration is defined as the proportion (in percent) of migrant households to the total number of households in a given area. Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 both provide an overview of the status and level of migration across respondent households. The data indicates that 57 percent of households have experienced migration, with at least one household member having migrated for work or business (50%) or all members having migrated and houses left locked (7%). Slightly more than one-third of the households (36%) are non-migrant household, from where no one had ever migrated in search of employment. Further, some households (7%) belong to neither the migrant nor the non-migrant category as these comprised of a household member who was a 'return migrant' which refers to a household member who had migrated for work but had returned and has been residing within the household for more than a year.

That migration is a common phenomenon among households in the Middle Ganga Plain as seen from the higher ratio of migrant households (1.5 times higher) in comparison to non-migrant households. Internal migration which accounts for 38 percent of the total migration, is the most frequently occurring form of migration, followed by seasonal migrant (9%) and international migration (3%).

Table 4.1: Distribution of households by migration status and by type of migration in Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and MGP

| Migration status of household | Bihar | | Est UP | | MGP | |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | % | No | % | No | % | No |
| Non-Migrant HH | 35.5 | 806 | 37.0 | 773 | 35.9 | 1579 |
| Migrant HH | 49.6 | 1143 | 49.7 | 1021 | 49.7 | 2164 |
| Return Migrant HH | 7.0 | 149 | 8.2 | 164 | 7.3 | 313 |
| Locked Migrant HH | 7.7 | 170 | 5.3 | 109 | 7.2 | 279 |
| Total | 100 | 2268 | 100 | 2067 | 100 | 4335 |
| Migrant households by type of migration | | | | | | |
| International M HH | 3.1 | 62 | 3.4 | 63 | 3.2 | 125 |
| Out Migrant HH | 36.7 | 846 | 42.2 | 882 | 37.9 | 1728 |
| Seasonal Migrant HH | 10.0 | 235 | 3.9 | 76 | 8.6 | 311 |
| Total migrant HH | 49.6 | 1143 | 49.7 | 1021 | 49.7 | 2164 |

Note: NM HH- household without any migrant M HH – households with any long/short term migrant (International/internal/seasonal) migrant - RM HH- households exclusively with return migrant; IM HH- Household with any international migrant; OM HH- Households with any internal migrant excluding international migrant; SM- households exclusively with seasonal migrant LM HH- Locked HH due to full family migration

As is evident from Table 4.1, the overall migration pattern does not change much across the two states of Bihar and Eastern UP. The inclusion of locked houses as part of migrant households indicates that more than 55 percent of the households in both the States/regions had experienced some form of migration. However, regional differences across Bihar, and Eastern UP are observed in relation to seasonal and internal migration. The level of internal migration is nearly six points higher in eastern UP (42%) than in Bihar (37%). On the other hand, seasonal migration is a relatively more prominent feature in Bihar, reported by 10 percent of the migrant households when compared to four percent in Eastern UP. The level of international migration is three percent in both areas.

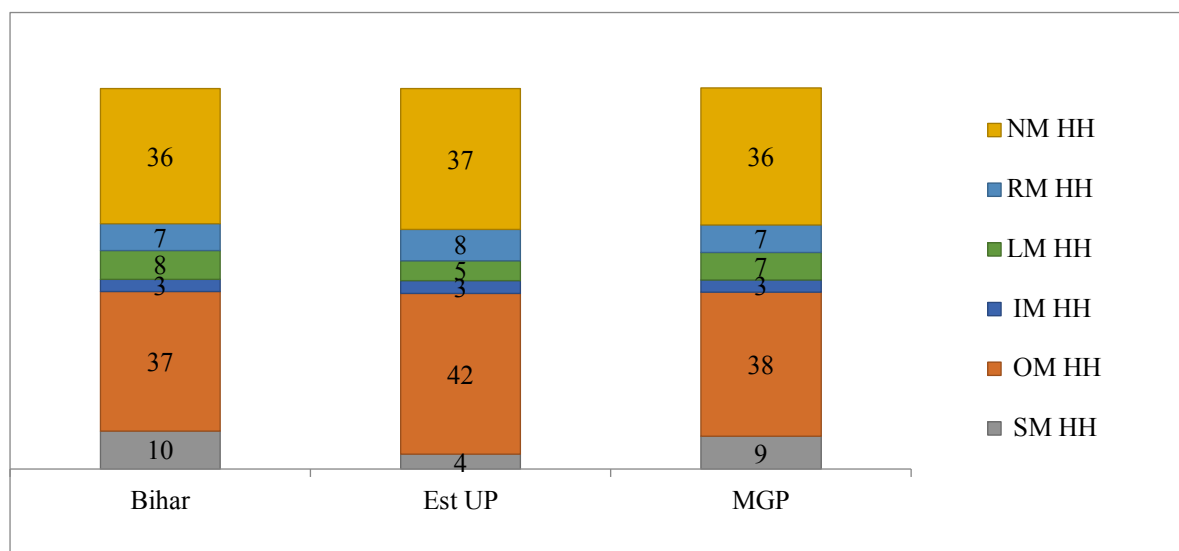


Figure 4.1: Percentage Distribution of households by migration status and forms of migration

1.3 Multiple Forms of Migration

An important feature of the Middle Ganga Plain is the fact that some households reported multiple forms of migration (seasonal, internal and international), indicating that different family members opt for diverse forms of migration to supplement the family income. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of migrant household across different forms of migration. Five percent of the migrant households in MGP report multiple modes of migrants while the rest (95%) follow a single mode of migration, be it seasonal, internal or international migration. An examination of the five percent households that reported multiple modes of migration shows that a combination of seasonal and internal migration is seen in three percent of households in both Bihar and Eastern UP. Within the five percent of households that reported multiple types of migration, three percent of the households in Bihar and Eastern UP have both seasonal and internal migrants. However, the number of households with a combination of internal and international migration is greater in Eastern UP (19 households) than in Bihar (09 households).

More than three-quarters of migrant households report exclusive internal migration (74% overall in the MGP, 72 percent in Bihar and 82 percent in Eastern UP). Exclusive seasonal migration is not as common, with this form of migration being reported by 17 percent of the migrant households overall (20% in Bihar and 8% in Eastern UP). When it comes to international migration, only one of every 20 migrant households (across both states) reported that family members opt solely for this form of migration.

Table 4.2: Distribution of migrant households by migration type and migration combination

| | Bihar | | Est. UP | | MGP | |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| | % | No | % | No | % | No |
| IM+ OM | 0.7 | 9 | 2.2 | 19 | 1.0 | 28 |
| OM+SM | 3.0 | 36 | 2.9 | 32 | 3.0 | 68 |
| IM+SM | 0.4 | 3 | 0.2 | 2 | 0.3 | 5 |
| IM+SM+OM | 0.2 | 2 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.1 | 2 |
| Only IM | 4.7 | 48 | 4.7 | 42 | 4.8 | 90 |
| Only OM | 71.5 | 810 | 82.2 | 850 | 73.9 | 1660 |
| Only SM | 19.5 | 235 | 7.8 | 76 | 16.9 | 311 |
| Total Households * | 100 | 1143 | 100 | 1021 | 100 | 2164 |

Note: * Excluding locked households

IM+OM- households with a combination of international and internal migrants; **OM+SM**- households with a combination of internal and seasonal migrants; **IM+SM**-households with a combination of international and seasonal migrants; **IM+SM+OM**-households with a combination of international, seasonal, and internal migrants

4.4 Regional Patterns of Migration

Although 55 percent of the respondent households report experiencing migration, the data reveals regional variations in terms of levels of migration (Table 4.3). The inclusion of locked houses in the migrant households in Bihar indicates that migration levels range from 68 percent in the Saran division to 47 percent in the Patna division. Moreover, regions in North Bihar

Table 4.3: Pattern of migration across the 17 commissionaires and two regions of Middle Ganga Plain

| Migration Status | Commissionaires of Bihar | | | | | | | | | Commissionaires of Est. UP | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| | Patna | Magadh | Munger | Bhagalpur | Saran | Tirhut | Darbhang | Kosi | Purnia | Mirzapur | Varanasi | Allahabad | Azamgarh | Faizabad | Basti | Gorakhpur | Devipatan Gonda |
| | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| NM HH | 44.9 | 40.2 | 36.5 | 42.6 | 22.0 | 32.5 | 31.5 | 32.4 | 39.6 | 41.2 | 40.5 | 42.1 | 28.6 | 41.7 | 40.5 | 24.1 | 40.9 |
| M HH | 35.1 | 44.6 | 57.5 | 43.0 | 62.5 | 57.0 | 43.6 | 57.7 | 51.8 | 50.2 | 44.2 | 46.6 | 59.8 | 43.6 | 46.4 | 60.9 | 41.3 |
| RM HH | 7.9 | 5.2 | 3.9 | 8.2 | 9.7 | 6.8 | 7.9 | 5.7 | 4.7 | 6.7 | 11.6 | 10.3 | 8.1 | 10.8 | 6.7 | 5.4 | 4.6 |
| LM HH | 12.1 | 10.0 | 2.1 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 3.6 | 17.0 | 4.9 | 3.9 | 1.9 | 3.9 | 1.1 | 3.6 | 3.9 | 6.3 | 9.6 | 13.1 |
| Migrant households by type of migration | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| OM HH | 30.6 | 40.6 | 45.5 | 31.1 | 46.2 | 33.3 | 39.4 | 34.0 | 35.7 | 46.8 | 41.3 | 39.1 | 47.2 | 36.3 | 40.9 | 47.1 | 38.2 |
| IM HH | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 0.8 | 3.6 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 0.0 | 0.4 | 8.9 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 10.0 | 1.9 |
| S M HH | 4.2 | 4.0 | 12.0 | 11.9 | 7.9 | 15.7 | 3.3 | 19.4 | 15.7 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 6.9 | 3.6 | 5.0 | 4.0 | 3.8 | 1.2 |
| Total (n) | 265 | 249 | 234 | 245 | 281 | 249 | 242 | 248 | 255 | 267 | 260 | 261 | 249 | 259 | 252 | 261 | 258 |

(Saran, Darbhanga, Kosi, Purnia, and Tirhut) that experience recurring and frequent floods have a higher migration intensity (greater than 55%) than the divisions of the south such as Patna, Madadh, and Bhagalpur, where the migration levels are lower (less than 40%). Munger in southern Bihar was exceptional with 60 percent migrant households. A similar trend is seen with regard to internal migration in Bihar which again varies from 46 percent in the Saran division to 30 percent in the Patna division. The intensity of international migrant households is higher than the state average (3%) in Saran, Tirhut, and Kosi divisions (8%). Although the overall percentage of entire households migrating as indicated by locked houses is low (8%), this form of migration is more common in the regions of Darbhanga (17%), Patna (12%), and Magadh (10%). The propensity for seasonal migration is higher in northern Bihar and particularly in divisions of Kosi (20 %), Tirhut, and Purnia (16% each).

The data from Eastern UP reveals that migration (inclusive of locked houses) ranges from 70 percent in Gorakhpur to 47 percent in Faizabad, Allahabad, and Varanasi divisions. Districts with high levels of migration include Azamgarh (63%) and Devipatan Gonda (54%). The prevalence of seasonal migration is low in all the divisions (5% or less) except for Allahabad (7%). The two divisions of Gorakhpur (10%) and Azamgarh (09%) have the highest rates of international migration across Eastern UP. Locked houses that are indicative of migration of entire families are seen in Devipatan Gonda (13%) and Gorakhpur (10%).

4.5 Levels of Migration across Socio-Economic Groups

Table 4.4 illustrates the level of overall migration across different socio-economic groups. An overall examination of the MGP indicates that migration tends to be higher amongst Muslims (63%), landless families (58%), those involved in marginal farming (53%), and joint families (64%). This indicates that decision to migrate is influenced by the type of family structure as this provides support to family members who stay back and enables diversification of the family income. Landholding size is another contributing factor. As the landholding size increases, the propensity for migration decreases. The data indicates that the social caste of the migrant family does not have a bearing on decisions related to migration in the MGP area. However, in Eastern UP, the propensity to migrate tends to increase with the rise in the caste hierarchy. It is equally interesting to note that unlike Bihar, where landless families and those with marginal land tend to migrate, in Eastern UP, a relatively higher proportion of land-owning households tends to migrate. This implies that migration in Bihar is more common amongst the economically and socially marginalized classes, while in eastern UP, migration is more frequent among the relatively affluent caste and class.

Table 4.4: Level of migration by socio-economic categories of household (in %)

| | Bihar | | | | Est UP | | | | MGP | | | |
|----------------------|----------|---------|----------|------|----------|---------|----------|------|----------|---------|----------|------|
| | NM HH | M HH | RM HH | No | NM HH | M HH | RM HH | No | NM HH | M HH | RM HH | No |
| Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hindu | 39.8 | 52.1 | 8.1 | 1763 | 37.6 | 53.9 | 8.5 | 1763 | 40.3 | 51.3 | 8.3 | 436 |
| Muslim | 30.1 | 64.4 | 5.6 | 425 | 29.4 | 65.6 | 5.0 | 195 | 30.8 | 63.4 | 5.8 | 620 |
| Cast Category | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ST | 40.0 | 53.3 | 6.7 | 47 | 55.0 | 40.0 | 5.0 | 61 | 44.7 | 48.9 | 6.4 | 108 |
| SC | 42.0 | 51.7 | 6.3 | 415 | 40.5 | 50.7 | 8.8 | 667 | 41.6 | 51.4 | 7.1 | 1082 |
| OBC | 38.2 | 53.3 | 8.4 | 1305 | 38.1 | 53.6 | 8.3 | 869 | 38.2 | 53.4 | 8.4 | 2174 |
| Others | 36.7 | 55.7 | 7.5 | 331 | 35.2 | 55.7 | 9.2 | 361 | 36.4 | 55.8 | 7.8 | 692 |
| Landholding | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landless | 36.2 | 57.8 | 6.0 | 1245 | 40.6 | 51.6 | 7.8 | 792 | 37.9 | 55.7 | 6.4 | 2037 |
| < 1 acre | 36.8 | 52.7 | 10.5 | 583 | 31.8 | 59.2 | 9.0 | 611 | 36.7 | 53.1 | 10.2 | 1194 |
| ≥ 1 acre | 49.8 | 40.6 | 9.6 | 270 | 37.0 | 55.5 | 7.5 | 555 | 46.0 | 45.0 | 9.0 | 825 |
| Family Type | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nuclear | 41.4 | 50.0 | 8.6 | 1471 | 45.1 | 45.6 | 9.3 | 1114 | 43 | 48.1 | 8.9 | 2585 |
| Joint | 29.9 | 65.0 | 5.1 | 627 | 26.1 | 67.3 | 6.6 | 844 | 29.9 | 64.3 | 5.8 | 1471 |
| Total (%) | 38.1 | 54.3 | 7.6 | 100 | 36.8 | 55.1 | 8.1 | 100 | 38.8 | 53.2 | 7.9 | 100 |
| Total | 806 | 1143 | 149 | 2098 | 773 | 1021 | 164 | 1958 | 1579 | 2164 | 313 | 4056 |

Households with return migrants range from 5 percent (ST households in eastern UP) to 10 percent (marginal land-owning households in Bihar). In general, such households belonging to Hindu, OBC, or the ‘other’ caste, marginal landholding, and nuclear family have a higher propensity of return migration than their counterparts.

4.6 Levels of Migration across Different Categories of Migration

The intensity of migration tends to be higher across all groups. However, the intensity is relatively more among the Muslims, others/OBC, landless/marginal, and joint family system households. It is pertinent to know how the type of migration i.e., seasonal, internal, and international migration differs across the socio-economic groups.

Table 4.5 presents the variation in the level of internal, international, and seasonal migration with the background characteristics of households. Internal migration remains constant at approximately 40 percent across households belonging to Hindu and Muslims, OBCs and ‘others’ caste group, landless and marginal farming, and joint families.

Overall, international migration occurs more frequently among Muslim households, those that own one acre of land or more, that live in joint families, and hail from other castes. However, in Bihar international migrants is common from landless and/or marginal farming households. Seasonal migrate families tend to be Hindus, ST/SCs, and landless.

Table 4.5: Levels of types/ categories of migration by socio-economic categories of household (in %)

| | Bihar | | | | Est UP | | | | MGP | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------------|
| | OM HH | IM HH | SM HH | Total M HH | OM HH | IM HH | SM HH | Total M HH | OM HH | IM HH | SM HH | Total M HH |
| Religion | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hindu | 37.8 | 3.8 | 10.5 | 52.1 | 42.6 | 7.2 | 4.1 | 53.9 | 40.0 | 2.2 | 9.2 | 51.3 |
| Muslim | 44.4 | 11.2 | 8.8 | 64.4 | 42.2 | 21.1 | 2.3 | 65.6 | 46.0 | 9.3 | 8.2 | 63.4 |
| Cast Category | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ST | 28.9 | 13.3 | 11.1 | 53.3 | 30.5 | 3.4 | 5.1 | 40.0 | 29.8 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 48.9 |
| SC | 35.9 | 0.4 | 15.4 | 51.7 | 43.2 | 1.9 | 5.5 | 50.7 | 38.1 | 1.0 | 12.3 | 51.4 |
| OBC | 41.4 | 2.1 | 9.9 | 53.3 | 45.9 | 4.2 | 3.4 | 53.6 | 42.2 | 2.5 | 8.6 | 53.4 |
| Others | 41.1 | 8.3 | 6.3 | 55.7 | 47.1 | 5.8 | 2.8 | 55.7 | 42.3 | 7.8 | 5.7 | 55.8 |
| Landholding size | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Landless | 40.0 | 5.5 | 12.4 | 57.8 | 40.1 | 7.5 | 4.0 | 51.6 | 41.1 | 3.3 | 11.3 | 55.7 |
| < 1 acre | 40.1 | 4.7 | 7.9 | 52.7 | 44.4 | 9.2 | 5.6 | 59.2 | 42.5 | 3.2 | 7.5 | 53.1 |
| ≥ 1 acre | 31.9 | 3.7 | 4.8 | 40.6 | 43.7 | 9.9 | 1.9 | 55.5 | 37.5 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 45.0 |
| Family Type | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Nuclear | 35.7 | 4.0 | 10.3 | 50.0 | 35.8 | 5.5 | 4.2 | 45.6 | 36.5 | 2.2 | 9.4 | 48.1 |
| Joint | 47.2 | 7.9 | 10.0 | 65.0 | 51.0 | 12.8 | 3.4 | 67.3 | 50.4 | 5.7 | 8.2 | 64.3 |
| Total (%) | 39.0 | 5.1 | 9.9 | 54.3 | 42.5 | 8.7 | 3.8 | 55.1 | 40.9 | 3.3 | 8.5 | 53.2 |
| Total | 846 | 62 | 235 | 1143 | 882 | 63 | 76 | 1021 | 1728 | 1255 | 311 | 2164 |

4.7 Conclusion

Migration tends to be higher in areas with a long history of migration, recurring floods, deep-rooted traditions related to migration, and social networks that promote migration. In comparison, urbanized areas that are economically advanced show low rates of migration. Although the overall pattern of migration across the divisions in Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh were similar, the propensity for internal and international migration is higher in Eastern UP while the proportion of seasonal migration was greater in Bihar. The level of international migration rises with an increase in the social and economic hierarchy in society, while seasonal migration tends to happen from the most marginalized section of the society. Migration also appears to be more common in joint families than in nuclear families, probably because better support systems are available in the former.

The next chapter describes the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the internal and international migrants and the root causes of migration.

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