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### Strategy to reduce the migration from hilly areas of Uttarakhand

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#### Abstract

The issue of migration is becoming more and more alarming especially for the farming community of hilly region. In Uttarakhand, due to increased migration many villages have turned into 'Ghost Villages' and many more are on the verge of turning into 'Ghost Villages'. The present study is an attempt to purpose a strategy to reduce the migration by combined efforts of all the government and non-government stakeholders of the development efforts. On basis of the findings of the study some strategies are proposed for the government organizations, state agricultural universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, NGOs, extension personnel and farmers to address the issue of rural-out migration from the hilly areas of the state.

**Keywords:** Ghost Villages, Uttarakhand, migration, alarming especially, extension personnel and farmers, increased migration

#### Introduction

In Uttarakhand state more than 90 per cent of the state is in the mountains, only a small part lies in the plains. The state is largely rural in character and partly urban. Due to the harsh topography it is a migration prone state. The villages in the State, where 70 per cent (1.01 crore) of the population resides, are devoid of basic necessities like healthcare and education. This is causing large-scale migration (Census of India, 2011). The State's 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan document says: 'Migration reflects the absence of livelihood opportunities in the hills and yearning for a better quality of life. Dissatisfaction with jobs/lack of opportunities are creating demographic substitution in the hill region.'

As per the Census of India data, 2011 the decadal rate of population growth has been exceptionally high in four districts: Over 30 per cent in Dehradun, Hardwar and Udham Singh Nagar and over 25 per cent in Nainital, and moderately high in Champawat (14.5%) and Uttarkashi (about 12%). In the remaining seven districts, population growth has been rather low, being about 5 per cent or less. In two of these districts, Pauri Garhwal and Almora, it is negative. Except Nainital and Uttarakashi, the high population growth districts are fully situated in the plains (Udham Singh Nagar and Hardwar).

In simpler terms, even though the mountain districts of Uttarakhand were already well known for male-out migration in search of employment, the rate of out migration has accelerated to such an extent that while all mountain districts exhibit substantial decline in population growth, two erstwhile 'capital' districts of Pauri Garhwal and Almora have shown a negative growth rate. The only mitigating factor seems to be that the migration has taken place to the

plains regions of the state itself. The other indicators suggest that not only there is considerable migration from the mountain districts, in contrast to the earlier pattern of only men going out, now whole families are migrating. The other disturbing area of concern, which emerges from these early results, relates to a rather sharp decline in the child sex ratio, in the mountain districts. To what extent it mirrors the phenomenon of 'women drudgery', feminization of agriculture and increased poverty levels of mountain regions, deserves to be investigated through micro-investigations (Pankaj and Belwal, 2013) [16]. It needs to be noted that the subject of migration has been treated as a secondary subject of the surveys on employment and unemployment and on household amenities and other characteristics in India. There are extremely limited empirical studies, which are truly based on small sample surveys on family migration in India.

Over migration from rural to urban areas creates the problem of overcrowding in urban areas, which affects the living standard of the migrants in the urban areas as they have to stay in slums and they are mostly deprived of social and political benefits in the destination areas. In case of migrant sending areas, they face shortage of skilled people because most of skilled and semiskilled people migrate to urban areas. On the other hand, internal migration can play an important role in poverty reduction and economic development. It should therefore not be controlled or actively discouraged. Policy should instead attempt to maximize the potential benefits of migration to individual migrants and to society at large (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004) [3]. In the rural areas, male selective out migration leaving their wives behind puts extra physical as well

mental pressure on the women which increases their vulnerability. There is a need to conduct many more micro and macro level surveys and studies, specifically designed to record and document the trends of migration and the motivating and forcing reasons for migration in India. This will provide the opportunities to observe the real gap in the rural-urban development and help in policy formation to fulfill this gap. The villages of the state of Uttarakhand was quoted as 'Ghost Villages' by the reputed newspaper Hindustan Times (7 May, 2015)<sup>[11]</sup>, as the state is facing the increasing problem of migration from the villages to the cities and leaving behind only elders to guard these villages. A study conducted by Directorate of Economics and Statistics in 2011-12 revealed that nearly 1100 villages do not have a single person left over.

The present study is a small effort to find out the realities of the situation in hilly areas of Uttarakhand regarding the increasing trend of migration. This study has been taken with the main objective to reduce the rural out migration from the rural areas to other places and formulate the required strategy and suggest some initiatives to be taken by the government to reduce the problem of increasing rural out migration in the state.

### Review of literature

There is an urgent need for sound macro-economic policies, political stability and improvements in the investment climate in many parts of the developing world, in order to foster remittance flows, and innovative measures to improve migrants' access to the formal financial sector through mechanisms such as strengthening of financial infrastructures, promoting cost efficiency and transparency of transfer services, and increasing outreach to underserved communities (FAO, 2008)<sup>[8]</sup>. The government needs to intervene in credit markets by reforming the formal rural credit system or encouraging development of informal credit institutions. Such measures would increase households' self-employed production efficiency and lessen the imperative to send migrants out into the labor force primarily to finance these activities (Edward and Ureta, 2003)<sup>[6]</sup>. In addition to this Idris (2010)<sup>[12]</sup> also suggested to improve the credit accessibility in rural areas and develop awareness of agricultural insurance among small-scale farmers and strengthen the ability of agricultural insurance institutions to carry out their mandates will lower the risk faced by financial institutions in lending to small-scale farmers.

Deshingkar (2006)<sup>[4]</sup> suggested that policy needs to recognize that rural livelihoods in marginal areas were strongly linked to urban development and manufacturing and reallocate resources accordingly. New policies must be implemented to secure the status of the migrant workers and ensure benefits were distributed evenly. The policy needed to become more flexible to provide services to people who were on the move. The existing laws that have been designed to protect poor workers need to be better enforced through the involvement of civil society organizations (Priya and Edward, 2004)<sup>[17]</sup>. Multiple options such as vocational training, increasing information flows regarding rural investment opportunities, the provision of loans from financial institutions, developing market linkages for at least some selected non-farm products and services need to be explored by Government and non-governmental agencies.

The development of entrepreneurial competence would definitely enhance investment in productive activities that can generate a return. Proactive thinking and action on the part of different agencies would go a long way to not only making migration a livelihood option but also to creating viable and sustainable investment opportunities (Chandan, 2006)<sup>[2]</sup>.

Wiggins and Deshingkar (2007)<sup>[20]</sup> suggested that priorities should include reducing the costs and risks faced by migrants, ensuring that entitlements to state services were portable, facilitating migration through transport and information policies; facilitating remittances; improving accountability and transparency in labour markets; and raising awareness of and enforcing labour rights. Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation & Poverty (2009)<sup>[5]</sup> recommended implementation of programmes and teacher training and ensuring funding for children from poor families. These measures will ensure that rural youth have a wider array of opportunities. Policies to promote social protection and rights for both internal and international migrants are also necessary to ensure migrants a better return from their migration.

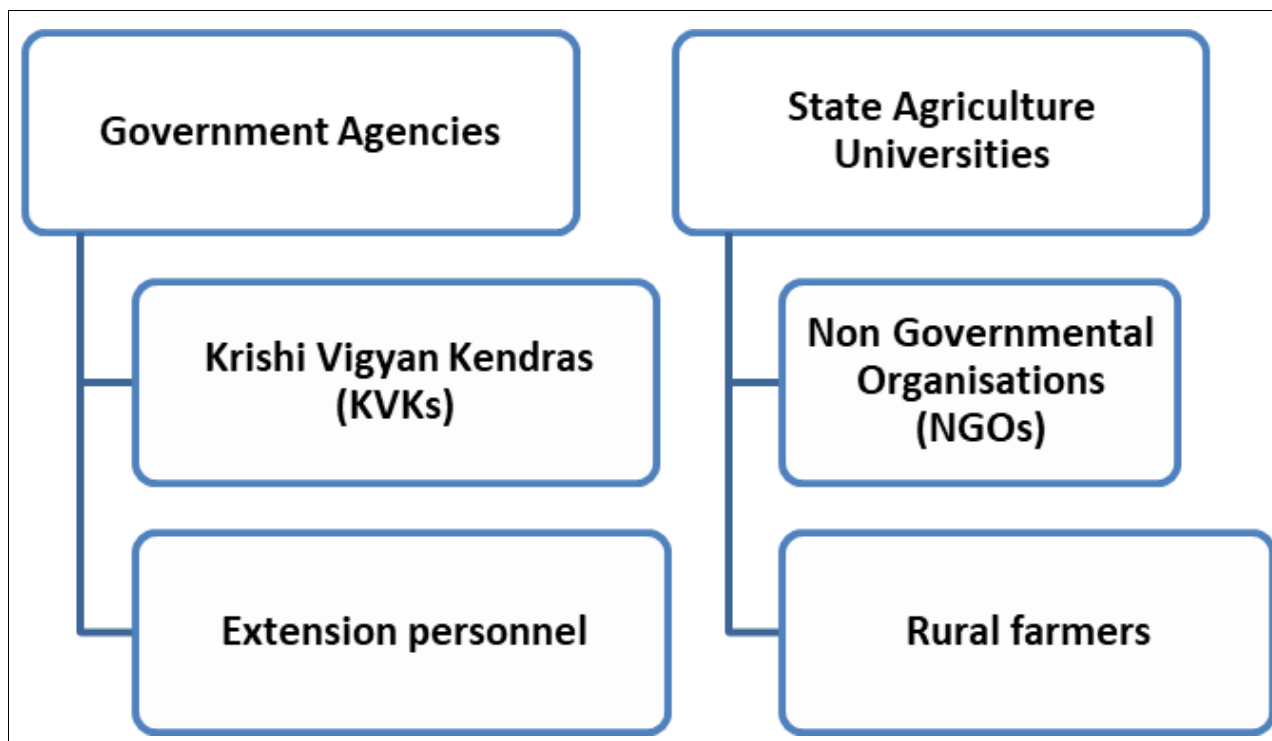
The focus and orientation in education should be changed in order to instill the importance of agriculture as a viable and respectable occupation, even for the literate, into the young. To make rural youths competitive in urban job markets, there is an urgent need to introduce specific vocational training in schools such as training in computers, television repairs, motor mechanics, air-conditioner and refrigerator repairs, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, and so forth. The nationalized banks need to increase their outreach through more rural branches, the introduction of soft loans for migration purposes, and introduction of alternatives to collateral are suggested to support migrants (Anmol, 2010)<sup>[1]</sup>. Better basic infrastructure and good governance will attract huge private investment in farm as well as non-farm sectors. Appropriate government policies in this direction would help in arresting labour out-migration. Emphasis needed to be accorded to identify the decision-making capability and knowledge level of women by giving thrust on girl's education and organizing various training programmes involving trained and qualified women extension workers (Singh *et al.*, 2011)<sup>[19]</sup>. With the help of the development strategies put in place by the Government Organizations and NGOs, the community and other development stakeholders working in the area would have to design interventions contributing to reducing poverty and technological constraints (backwardness) which are the main causes for illegal outmigration (Gebrehiwot and Fekadu, 2012)<sup>[9]</sup>. The farmers and farmer groups should be educated on the essence of record keeping, operating a bank account, and credit management and repayment. There is the need to promote the concept of nucleus farmer or out-grower systems where a farmer works with many other farmers and fronts for them. There is also the need to coach farmers and farmer groups on good agricultural practices that can enable them to increase their productivity and subsequently wellbeing (Etwire *et al.*, 2013)<sup>[7]</sup>.

The agricultural labourers who were with multi skills can be engaged locally by giving special preferences according to their knowledge and experience in their known area. Also the agricultural laborers who had good educational

background can be motivated and trained to start agro industries with financial support from Nationalized Banks (Meenakshisundaram and Panchanatham, 2013) <sup>[15]</sup>.

To reduce the push factors by encouraging the emergence of alternative local livelihood opportunities in food insecure areas and the key informant base should go beyond the public sector and bring in representatives of NGOs and the commercial private sector (Gerard, 2003) <sup>[10]</sup>. The government needs to develop maximum infrastructures and jobs to keep people residing in hill villages and make cogitative plan with immigrants to resources consolidation in their native villages for forestry and agro forestry and other resources generating (Joshi, 2013) <sup>[13]</sup>. In order to

reduce the rural-urban migration the government should strive to provide basic facilities in rural areas to create employment opportunities to strengthen the implementation process of the major government programmes such as MGNREGA, Aajeevika etc. to minimize seasonal rural-urban migration (Santosh, 2014) <sup>[18]</sup>. It is also suggested to redesign MGNREGS works so as not to coincide with the peak period in cereal centric agriculture can moderate labour scarcity, a remunerative price policy can make agriculture economically lucrative and promotion of rural infrastructure can provide the much needed linkage for accelerating the pace of agricultural development in the rural areas (Mahendra, 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>.



**Strategy for reducing out migration**

### 1. Strategies for Government Agencies

1. Making the formal education farmer friendly: The curriculum of formal education systems must support the values of traditional hill agriculture. Create open dialogue between curriculum creators, teachers, and village communities.
2. Educate youth about the consequences of migration: Create awareness about the consequences of migration among the rural youth and involve migrants in the discussion of retention of youths, for they are passive and active shapers of youth aspirations as well.
3. Provide infrastructure for higher educational institutes in hilly areas to reduce migration for education among the youth.
4. Developed new social infrastructures like roads, feeder roads (to ease the transport of agricultural raw materials to processing industries), construction of schools and medical services in rural areas.
5. Promote agri-industries in rural villages: Develop plans for agricultural labourers in each village to motivate and train the people to start agro industries with financial support from nationalized banks.
6. Support financially the cottage industries in the villages like carpet making, handlooms and crafts making, pickle, jam and jelly making through financial institutions.
7. Provide funds for opening of new nurseries, green houses and poly houses for transplanted crops, fruits, vegetables and floricultural crops.
8. Motivate the farming communities to invest remittances in farms, build assets and establish savings/credit groups to reduce the need to borrow money and provide access to appropriate financial services.
9. Open new ventures in the villages like poultry units, dairy units, piggery units, etc. so that farmers can get extra income with farming.
10. Ensure proper implementation of government schemes like MGNREGA and PURA to ensure the income for the local peoples and to provide all basic infrastructures.
11. Communication of information related to labour requirement using modern ICTs
12. Develop urban service centers for rural areas: Develop an urban service center for a cluster of rural villages

nearby them to provide access to basic facilities.

13. Organize villages in groups: Regroup small villages into larger viable economic units to facilitate easy delivery of infrastructure, agricultural inputs, and other services. This form of organization should be based on cooperative effort and self-management. The new units should be established in areas with high agricultural potential so there will be scope for improvement in agriculture sector also.
14. Provide ample credit facilities in or nearby the rural areas to finance for agricultural purposes and establishing new rural production units.
15. Establish effective marketing system in rural areas: on a cooperative basis to distribute inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and equipment's and to sell the produce.
16. Development of contingent plans: Preference may be given to the agricultural labourers in lean period when no agricultural activity is carried out and increase the wage days for these agricultural labourers under the scheme of MGNREGA.
17. Decentralize the authorities to the community to give local governments and communities more control over their situation and bureaucrats in far-away from these places will no longer take decisions that directly affect the lives and livelihoods of populations in small towns, villages and rural areas.
18. Promotion of non-farm income sectors in rural areas.
19. Provide affordable basic facilities to agricultural labourers and their family members get admission in schools, colleges and provide free medical treatment and house sites to the agricultural labourers in rural areas on priority basis.
20. Focus on establishing micro-enterprises, developing microfinance in rural areas.
21. Develop a socio-political framework within which women can be empowered with the relevant skills and technologies to undertake the new role of head of the households and promote the involvement of women in the economic sphere.

## 2. Strategies for State Agriculture Universities

1. Location specific technology development.
2. Develop suitable light weighted agricultural implements and machinery to assist and increase the mechanization of agriculture in high hills of the state.
3. Propose diversified farming system based on the locality as most of the farmer had included only dairy units along with the agriculture.
4. Provide the required extension services to the rural areas by using the ICTs tools to empower the rural farmers with knowledge and information.
5. Research on possible cropping pattern which include cultivation of several crops throughout the year without leaving the land fallow, which will increase the availability of food for the family consumption and ensure for food security of the family.
6. Research on possible and productive competent components of mixed farming for hilly areas to sustain the adverse climatic conditions.
7. In-depth research on migration of local people as a part of post-graduation by the students to explore more facts about migration and propose a suitable strategy to

reduce it.

8. Arrange exposure visits for farmers, women and rural youth to the areas of greater prosperity where SAU has done significant efforts to help farmers in generating more income through proper resource utilization.

## 3. Strategies for Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs)

1. As the KVKs in the state are funded by SAU (11 KVKs out of 13) and state government (2 KVKs out of 13), both SAU and government should take steps to establish more than one KVK for each district as their coverage area is very large, which hinders their activity in rural areas.
2. Explore the possibilities of engaging self-help groups to create a social fund, which would provide loans with lower interest rates and develop access to institutional credit to lessen the debt burden of households.
3. Multiple options such as vocational training, increasing information flows regarding rural investment opportunities, the provision of loans from financial institutions, developing market linkages for at least some selected farm and non-farm products and services need to be explored by non-governmental organizations and agencies.
4. The KVKs should focus on development of entrepreneurial competence of rural youth by providing them vocational training.

## 4. Strategies for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

1. The NGOs should come forward to work in rural areas for the development of these areas as there are very few NGOs like HESCO is working in rural hilly areas.
2. Organization of training programmes, demonstrations on use and importance of improved agricultural practices and technology to encourage the involvement of youth in agriculture.
3. Identify the innovative farmer in the villages and motivate and help them to develop location specific farm machineries and implements
4. NGOs should take steps in constitution of a committee comprising of farmers, NGO officials, Government officials, financial institution officials and local leaders for development of the working plans to solve the employment related problems in the area. Additionally, many village youths and parents still saw outmigration as a solution to economic insecurity.
5. NGOs should encourage the private investment in rural village to enhance the employment opportunities in the villages by attracting the private investors in developing business opportunities and industries in villages.

## 5. Strategies for Extension personnel

1. Regular visits to the rural hilly villages: The hilly areas are generally deprived of extension services as there is very less commercial production of agricultural crops and it is difficult to travel and reach all villages. The extension personnel should visit the villages on regular basis to deliver the information and knowledge about improved agricultural practices and technologies.
2. The extension personnel should provide information and knowledge on the use of seeds of new and

improved varieties, as the farmers are using the seeds from previous harvest, this is the one of the main reasons of low agricultural production in rural areas.

3. The extension personnel should critically identified the local leader who is trusted by the villagers and deliver the knowledge about improved agricultural practices and technologies through him/her as the rural farmers have very less faith on the extension personnel.
4. There are very good scopes of organic farming in the hilly areas as the most of the farmers do not use chemicals for agricultural production, so the knowledge about the organic cultivation of crops should be deliver to the villages of hilly region by the extension personnel.
5. The extension personnel should use the result and method demonstration to gain the trust of farmers and should use the follow up after delivering the messages to the farmers.

### 6. Strategies for rural farmers

1. Taking risks on small scale: Take initiative to experiment new technologies in their farm to reap maximum profits from those technologies.
2. Cultivating low volume high value crops: Grow crops like spices, fruits, forestry to generate additional income along with cultivation of agricultural field crops.
3. Chemical free improvement in the fertility status of the soil: Decompose the farm wastes in scientific manner by properly digging the pits and putting the farm wastes in these pits and decomposing for four to six months.
4. Be aware of possible consequences of migration: Think about the future impact of migration on the places of origin and future generations.
5. Be an empowered farmer: Educate yourself with the use of various mass media channels and social media platforms about the new advances in agricultural production system and actively participate in training programmes, group discussions to acquire the characteristics like risk taking ability, innovativeness, self-confidence to cope up the aberrations in climate variability.
6. Imbibe the spirit of group dynamics, team spirit, thrust and saving to participate in the self-help groups to acquire needed financial support.
7. Practice diversified agricultural production system by including different enterprises in their farms which will increase their production and family income.

### Conclusion

A collaborative effort of all the stakeholders is necessary to address the issue of migration in the hilly areas of the state. More in-depth research studies need to be done to explore various untouched dimensions of migration and its impact on the population of both the in and out migration areas. The decentralized government structures need to be more open to adapt according to the local situations and challenges and support in finding the solutions for better quality of lives of rural households. The rural youth should be educated about the issues and consequences of migrating from their native places to the new unknown locations so

that they can make suitable decision for their future. Migration has both positive and negative impact on the population and economies of the areas where it occurs. The process of migration needs to be controlled in a manner that both the locations of sending and receiving the migrants should prosper and have economic and social benefits for the people.

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