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**LABOUR MIGRATION OF MUSLIM COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF  
PURULIA DISTRICT**

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**Abstract**

Labour migration is an important phenomenon for changing the socioeconomic condition of any nation or any region. It has great impact on both source & destination region. This paper is an attempt to understand the nature, causes & consequences of labour migration & to examine the socioeconomic condition of migrant family among the Muslim community in Purulia-1 block, Purulia, W.B. A total households covered 100 samples have been studied & 120 migrants were collected through a structured questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha value was calculated for the questionnaire was 0.763. The data was analyzed in SPSS & MS Excel software. Chi-square test was used to examine the variations noticed in the effect of Out-migration in the area of origin. More than half of the sample respondents (72%) argued that they got the advantageous information about migration from their friends and relatives. It is found from the analysis that the maximum migrants were in the working age group & less educated. The root causes of migration were poverty (76%), landlessness or small landholdings (52%), lack of job opportunity (82%) & low wages (48%) in the source region. Most of the migrants (58%) visit their home once for the duration of less than six month. They send the remittance through net banking after 2 or 3 months which is mainly used for household consumption & agricultural purposes. A huge percentage of migrants (43.7%) are engaged in construction labour. The main source of fuel of cooking in migrant family is wood. The left behind women give labour and take risks for collecting wood from nearby forests to save some money of LPG. They were also involved in agricultural activity on their own land at the time of paddy cultivation. The results also reveal that there was a considerable change in the lifestyle of migrants. after migration.

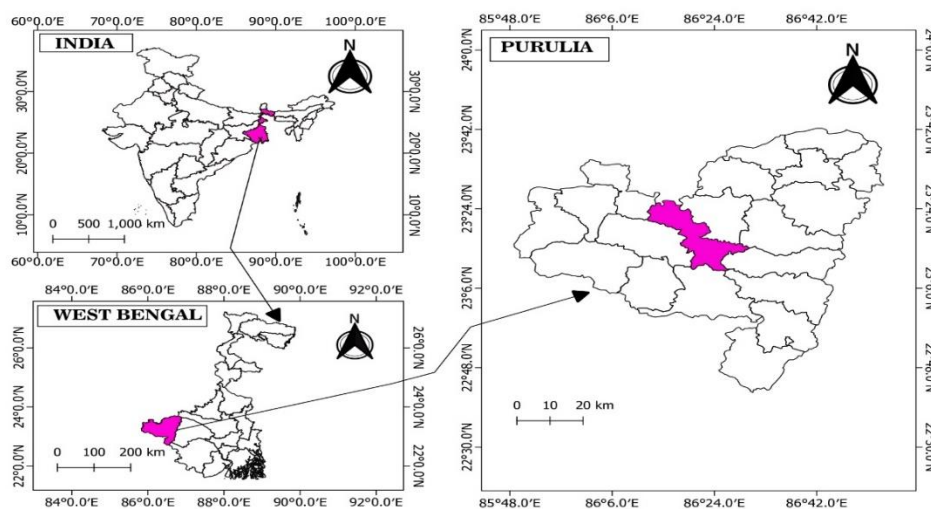
**Keywords:** *Labour Migration, Source Region, Remittance, Landlessness, Construction Labour*

**Introduction**

Migration is generally known as the movement of people from one residence to another permanent or temporary residence, for a substantial period of time. Different scholars have understood the term migration in different ways. Lee (1966) defines migration broadly as "a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration." Since man has a propensity to quit the areas in which life is difficult, he moves to the areas where life may be

easy and better. No nation in the world can demand to have stayed unchanged, or even to have always to the manifestation of population movements. It is the third pillar of population change, while two other pillar of population change are of fertility and mortality. Among the various streams of migration, rural-to-urban migration has flourished as a eminent field of investigation. This is because the migration of people from rural-to-urban areas forms an important apparatus of socio-economic change in both the areas of origin and destinations. It has great effect on economic, social, cultural and psychological life of people.(Kaur,2003). In India the labour migration is mostly affected by social structures and pattern of development. Uneven development or regional disparity is the main reason of migration along with factors like poverty, landholding system, and divide of land, lack of job opportunities, large family-size and natural calamities. The high man-land ratio, caste system, lawlessness and exploitation at native place accelerate the breakdown of consecutive socio-economic relations in the rural areas and people decide to migrate to relatively progressive areas to explore better employment and income. Out migration is greater in the poorly developed agricultural areas and particularly high among the landless farmers (Keshri and Bhagat2012). In West Bengal , there exist large scale regional disparities between the districts. So out-migration from the backward district like Purulia is a glaring factor. West Bengal has experienced male outmigration from all regions but rural areas of West Bengal have experienced higher intensity in rural male outmigration (Debnath,2018). India is a country of diversities and this could be seen by its numerous religion, culture, language, ethnicity etc. Islam is the second largest (14.23%) religion of India. Muslim community is also a substantial minority and second religious group of West Bengal. Based on the 2011 census data, the population of Muslims in West Bengal exceeds 24.6 million, accounting for 27% of the state's total population. Most of the Muslim population is found around the frontier districts of West Bengal. As per 2011 census, there are 7.76% Muslims in Purulia district which is very low compare to other district. Muslim concentrated region is experienced diverse nature of out-migration in West Bengal. Out-migration is taking place from every place in the world, every age group, caste group and every religious group in the world. Minority groups are prone to migrate from one place to another for their social and economic security. Rao (1976) observed that among the religious groups Muslims migrated more. Keeping in view all this, the present study an attempt has been formed to display the socio-economic profile of the migrant family. In this paper an attempt has been also made to arrest the reasons behind the migration of people of Muslim community from Purulia-1 block, Purulia, W.B.

**Study Area:** The Purulia-I block's geographical location is at 23°19'26'' north latitude and 86°20'44'' east longitude, situated in the central part of the district. The Kangsabati River serves as the boundary between Purulia II and Arsha, while Purulia I is bordered by Chandankiyari CD block in Jharkhand's Bokaro district, and by Purulia II, Hura, Pancha, Manbazar I, Barabazar, Arsha, and Joypur CD blocks in other directions. The total area of the Purulia I CD block is 281.50 km<sup>2</sup>.



## **Literature Review**

Within migration literature, no single theory or model comprehensively encapsulates all the factors driving migration. Various migration literatures have addressed the migration patterns based on its duration. Ravenstein's laws (1885) indicate that the principal driver of migration is the pursuit of better external economic prospects. Migration volume decreases with distance, occurring in stages rather than as a continuous movement. Population movements are bilateral, influenced by migration differentials such as gender, social class, and age, impacting an individual's mobility. Singh and Yadava (2010) emphasized the significance of internal migration in maintaining population redistribution and equilibrium. Internal migration indeed plays a vital role in shaping various aspects of a country's demographic landscape. Harpreet Singh (2016) highlighted that migration is the cause as well as effect and it leads to develop slums in urban areas for high demand of labour in cities. Lakshmanasamy (1990) reached the conclusion that migration and remittances contribute to the modernization of the rural sector, both directly and indirectly, by affecting agricultural production through the implementation of technological advancements and institutional changes. Bhagat (2010) demonstrated in his research on internal migration in India that outward migration is correlated with the household's per capita income. Additionally, the percentage of the workforce and the GDP of the non-agricultural sector also positively influence migration patterns. The examination of Rajasthan, India, conducted by Mosse et al. in 2010 unveiled that migration facilitates fresh investments in wells, diesel pumps, land (via mortgage tenure), silver, or advantageous marriages. It also fosters investments in social networks to strengthen prestige and social status. Similarly, a study carried out in Punjab, Pakistan by Azhar (2008) demonstrated a significant enhancement in the socio-economic condition of households post-migration.

**Objective:** The proposed study is designed with the following objectives:

- To examine the socio-economic profile of migrants households in the study area.
- To understand the causes and impact of rural labour migration in the study area.

**Methodology:** Purulia block have been selected for this study. The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The study is primarily based on both primary and secondary datasets which were collected with the help of predetermined questionnaire and interviews of the residents living in selected area. Cronbach Alpha value was calculated for the questionnaire was 0.763.

## **Source of Data**

**a. Source of secondary data:** The main sources of secondary data for this study are census, different article & books, District statistical Department of Purulia, Primary census abstract of Purulia.

**b. Sample Size:** A total 100 households were interviewed. The data was collected from 4 villages namely Damda, Tamna, Dunrku & Bhandarpuara of Purulia-1 block, Purulia, West Bengal.

**c. Sample Design:** Systematic random sampling technique has been obtained for choosing the villages for field survey. Further the villages are selected on the basis of the distance from highway, viz., within 5 to 10 km. No data of migrant HHs are available at village level in any offices, thus snowball sampling method was used here for selection of HHs.

**d.** The data were interpreted by tabulation, calculation, analysis by various types of statistical techniques and quantitative techniques. The data was analyzed in SPSS & MS Excel software. Chi-square test was used to examine the variations noticed in the effect of Out-migration in the area of origin.

## **Results & Discussions**

The description of the study has been carried out into the following subheads:

### **A. Socio-economic Profile of the Migrant Households:**

Most of the women and men respondents belong to the age group of 30-40 years and 60+ years respectively because a majority of the migrants went out at their age group of 25-50 years by leaving their

families behind. The data indicates that the largest segment of migrants fell within the age group of 25-50 years, accounting for 58.6 percent of the total. This group was closely followed by below 25 years of age and those above 50 years of age. The migration of individuals within the working age group has led to a scarcity of labour in the study area. According to the study, the migrants' level of education played a pivotal role in propelling migration, revealing a prevalent low educational attainment among them. A substantial majority, approximately 67.1 percent, were either illiterate or had only received primary-level education. Among migrant labourers, 19.3 percent had completed education up to the secondary level, 9.1 percent up to a higher secondary standard, and merely 4.5 percent had achieved education at an advanced level. Consequently, the migrant population is predominantly characterized by poverty, limited education, and an age group primarily within the middle range. The household members left behind also largely comprise individuals with either no education or education up to the primary level.

The accounts provided by most families revealed that the migration of male members stemmed from challenges such as low income, unemployment, and poverty in their native region. With limited earning opportunities beyond agriculture in the study area, this constrained livelihood serves as a significant push factor driving migration away from the locality. In the present study, the monthly income of 62.4 percent and 21.2% migrants were in the range of Rs. 5000-10000 & Rs 10000-15000 respectively. Only 33.9% family have their income above 15k. Near about 42.6 percent migrants have no land for cultivation or other uses.

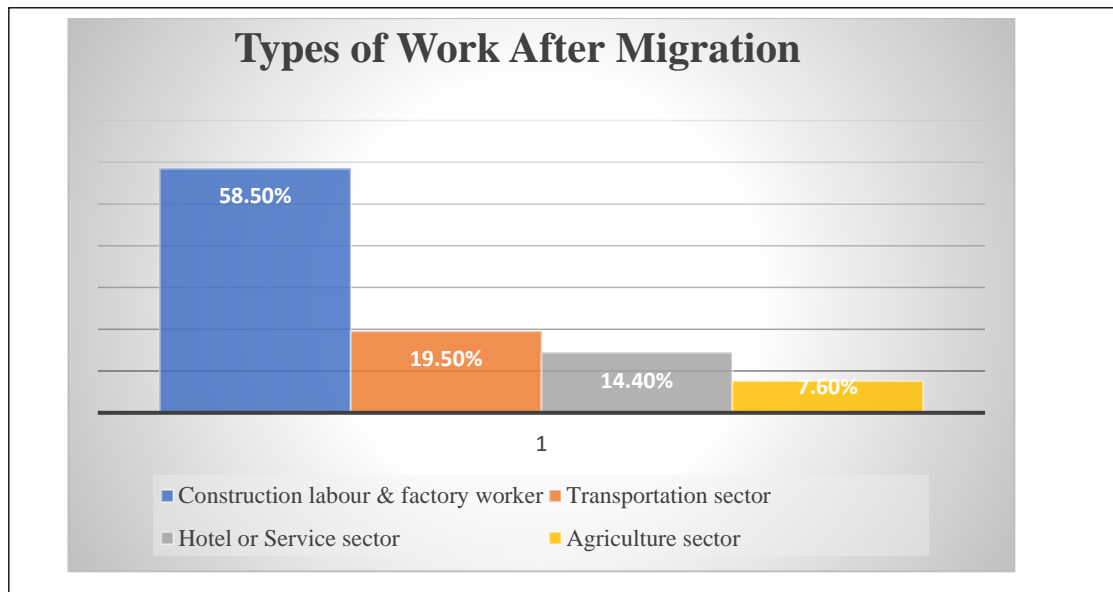
**Table:1 Socio-Economic Profile of the Migrant Households**

Variable	Migrant Labours (%)
<b>Age Group (years)</b>	
<25	35.2
25-50	58.6
>50	6.2
<b>Education</b>	
Illiterate	22.4
Up to Primary	44.7
Up to M.P	19.3
Up to H.S	9.1
B.A/B.Sc/B.Com	4.5
<b>Monthly Income</b>	
<5000	3.7
5000-10000	62.4
10000-15000	21.2
>15000	12.7

**BPL Card:** In the study area, the distribution of the migrant households by having a Below Poverty Line card reveals that BPL listed families are of 78.2 percent accordingly 21.8 percent of household don't have a BPL card.

**Type of work after migration:** It appears that the majority of the migrant population was involved in diverse occupational pursuits. According to the analysis, over half (58.5%) of the migrants were employed as a construction labour & factory worker. A significant portion, one-fifth, engaged in the

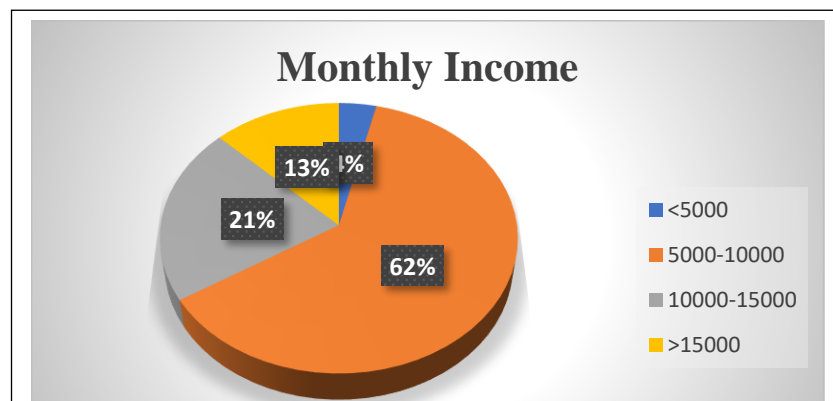
transportation sector i.e., driver, while 14.4 percent found employment in the hotel or service sector and 7.6 percent in the agriculture sector.



**Marital Status of the Migrants:** Marriage often marks a significant transition in one's life, influencing both personal and social responsibilities. It's intriguing that in the Muslim community, a notable percentage of sons choose to separate from their parents after marriage, potentially reflecting specific cultural or societal norms within the community. The sample data indicates a higher proportion (78.2%) of migrants being married at the time of migration, suggesting a potential connection between marriage and the decision to migrate. An old lady respondent said that they believe in early marriage to their children (“Amra chela-pular biha chanrei diya valo bujhi”).

**Relationship with the Head of the Household:** The fact that a significant portion of migrants are either the son or the head of their household underscores their crucial role as income providers within their families. It's notable that in a considerable number of cases, the wife of the migrant assumes the role of the household head, indicating evolving family dynamics and potentially shifting gender roles within these communities.

**Monthly Income of the Migrants:** The income distribution from the sample highlights that a majority of migrants (62.4%) earn between Rs. 5k to 10k per month, with a substantial portion also falling within the Rs. 10k to 15k range. The relatively small percentage of migrants earning less than 5k suggests that a majority of them are able to secure a certain level of financial stability through their migration. Additionally, the presence of migrants earning above Rs. 15k demonstrates the potential for upward economic mobility through migration.





**Family Structure and Household Characteristics of the Migrants:** Regarding the number of household members, the family structure and dependents illustrate both the economic reliance of families and serve as a driving force for migration. Within the sample, the majority of households (76.7%) consist of medium-sized families (4-7 members), while a smaller proportion (16.9%) are composed of small-sized families (2-3 members). The study reveals that nearly 66.4% of the sample have more than 4 dependents in their family. Additionally, 76.9% of the migrants come from nuclear families. Despite being nuclear, the number of household members remains high. Therefore, medium-sized nuclear families with 3-4 dependents are more prone to migration compared to larger families. This is attributed to the presence of only one eligible earning member in these types of nuclear families.

There are basically three type of House structure i.e.– kuccha, pakka and semi-pakka the study area. It means that the migrant families have different type of occupation structure and their source of income of the family is different . It has been seen that there are 32.1% pucca house, 54.2% semi pucca where the percentage of kachha house is lowest i.e., 13.7%. The maximum house of the migrant family is either semi pucca or pucca because of the Pradhanmantri Abash Yojona or Gitanjali scheme provided by the central or state govt mostly occupies small to medium sized houses. The quality of houses including the infrastructure such as toilet, drinking water, use of fire wood and gas (LPG) for cooking don't increase after migration. The main sources of drinking water are government hand pump (62.5%) & well (37.5%). They usually go to pond for bathing. There are very few families which have their own toilet facility.

**Table:2 Family Structure and Household Characteristics of the Migrants**

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>In %</b>
Smal (3 members)	16.9
Medium (4-7 members)	76.7
Large (>7 members)	6.4
<b>Type of Family</b>	
Nuclear	76.9
Joint	32.1
<b>Type of House</b>	
Kutchha	13.7
Pucca	32.1
Semi-Pucca	54.2
<b>Source of Drinking Water</b>	
Handpump	62.5
Well (uncoverd)	31.7
Well (Coverd)	5.8

### **Other Background Characteristics of Migration**

**Reasons for migration:** Indeed, understanding the interplay between push and pull factors is crucial in comprehending the dynamics of migration. Push factors often create a sense of urgency or necessity to leave a place, driven by circumstances like conflict, oppression, environmental challenges, or economic hardship. On the other hand, pull factors signify the allure of better opportunities, stability, and improved living standards in a new location. The complex interrelationship between these factors shapes the migration patterns seen globally. In the study area causes for migration can be framed on the basis of push ,pull & aspiration factors. Push factors are more prominent than other factors. The most influential push factors in the region are poverty (89%), followed by unemployment (81%), low wages (48%) small land holding (41%), landlessness (32.0%), and etc. Therefore, poverty along with unemployment was the

major causes of migration as expressed by the sample respondents. Pull & aspiration factors are also pronounced and thereby induce migration tendency among people. High wages & better working condition were reported as the major Pull factor behind migration. The aspiration factors are marriage burden or buying motorcycle. The study area is mainly agriculture based so most of the migrants are landless or lack of farming resources and suffering from unemployment in non-agricultural period.

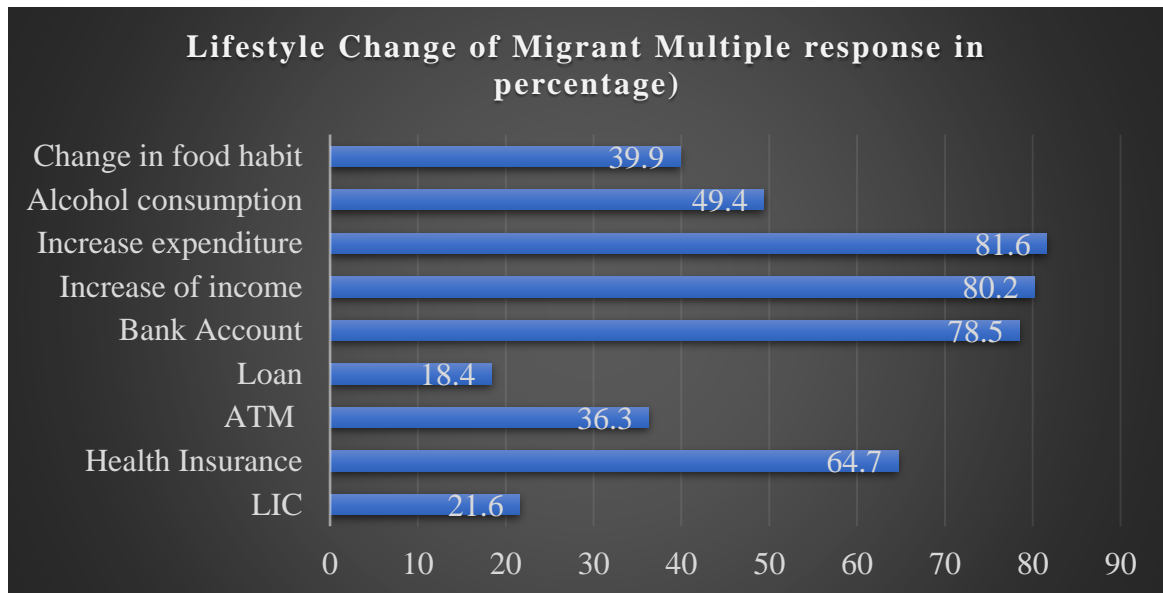
**Destination and Duration of Out-Migration:** As the study area serves as a labour-sending district, the majority of migrants are male, while females tend to engage in domestic activities. The migrant labourers' destinations include Jharkhand (39.6%), another state of W.B (26.3%), Tamil Nadu (14.7%), Odisha (11.4%), Kerala (6.2%), and other states of India (1.8%) from the study area. Most migrants tend to stay in their migrated location for a period of six months to one year or longer in a single spell. Specifically, 48.6% stay for less than 6 months, 36.2% stay for 6-12 months, and 14.2% stay for more than a year at their work place. In the study area, there is a trend of returning to their native place during religious festivals, especially during Eid, or at the time of agricultural activities. After the cultivable period ends, they typically return to their workplaces. Almost all the respondents indicated that migrants make the decision to migrate themselves, and their parents also support their decision.

**Table: 3 Reason for Labour Migration, Destination and Duration of Out-Migration**

<b>Reason for Labour Migration</b>	<b>Multiple response in %</b>
Landlessness	32
Small Landholding	41
Low Wage	48
Unemployment	81
Poverty	89
Indebtness	23
Influence by earlier migrant	17
<b>Duration of Stay at destination</b>	<b>Multiple response in %</b>
<6 months	48.6
6-12 months	36.2
>12 months	14.2
<b>Destination Place</b>	
Other District of W.B	26.3
Jharkhand	39.6
Odisha	12.4
Tamil Nadu	14.7
Kerala	9

**Impact in lifestyle of Migrants after Migration:** Following migration, migrants experienced significant changes in their employment status and subsequently in their lifestyle. According to the study, short-term migrants preferred to carry their earnings back home in person, while long-term migrants relied on online banking, sending remittances monthly or quarterly to their families in their native places. This highlights a clear positive correlation between socioeconomic changes and the migration scenario. In terms of the economic impact, 80.2 percent of labour migrants reported an increase in income due to their migration. Similarly, 81.6 percent of migrants observed an upward trend in their expenditures. About 36.3 percent of migrants possessed an ATM card, while 78.5 percent had a bank account. However, the uptake of life

insurance policies among the migrants did not show a satisfactory increase. None the less, it was observed that migrants who interacted with people outside their community through work had become more aware of life and health insurance. Specifically, 21.6 percent of migrants had life insurance policies, and 64.7 percent possessed health insurance. The higher percentage of health insurance ownership was attributed to the Swasthya Sathi card provided by the West Bengal state government. The financial improvements of labour migrants positively impacted their housing maintenance and food preferences.



## Summary & Conclusion

1. It was noticed that male migrants from the study area tended to migrate to neighbouring states or districts within the same state, such as Jharkhand, Odisha, and Kolkata.
2. The driving and attracting forces encompass various migration factors, while social, economic, and cultural elements significantly contribute to an individual's decision to migrate from their village. The study identified poverty, unemployment, and landlessness, followed by social factors, as the primary push factors.
3. Outflows of people lead to a reduced labour supply in rural areas and, considering selective migration, a decrease in the number of working-age adults.
4. This could pose a significant cost at the place of origin for families heavily reliant on labour income for their sustenance, as well as for the overall economy in terms of employment and wage adjustments.
5. The study area demonstrates significant potential as a source of labour migration. The majority of migrants belong to the working-age group, have low education and unemployment rates, struggle with poverty, bear a significant dependency burden, and lack skills during the migration period.
6. Elderly family members face difficulties when their sons, daughters-in-law, and other members relocate elsewhere for employment. Due to their advanced age, they are unable to work and lack any adult support for their care.
7. The housing and environmental conditions, characterized by temporary housing structures, poor sanitation, and a lack of access to clean cooking fuel like LPG, also impact health and overall well-being.



8. Examining their financial sources, it was found that migrants relied on a variety of sources, including family members, friends, moneylenders, and personal savings, to facilitate their migration.
9. The role of relatives or kin in migration decisions, choice of destination, cost management, and minimizing the expenses of the initial move is crucial during the migration process. This underscores the vital role of networks in motivating potential migrants to move.
10. Wives left behind or elderly parents are often less educated or illiterate, unskilled, and grappling with poverty, shouldering de facto family responsibilities and household tasks.

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