

## **A Study on the Effects of Family Migration on the Overall Well-being of Older Individuals in Uttarakhand State**

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav  
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology  
G.D.C Bhatronjkhan , Almora ( Uttarakhand )

### **Abstract:**

As family migration increasingly shapes the contemporary landscape, the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand stands as a unique backdrop to investigate its implications, specifically on the overall well-being of older individuals. This study aims to unravel the multifaceted impact of family migration on the elderly population in Uttarakhand, considering changes in living arrangements, social support, daily activities, physical health, mental health, emotional well-being, financial stability, access to healthcare, and social engagement. Through this study, we aspire to contribute nuanced insights that transcend the current knowledge gap, providing a foundation for informed policies and support systems tailored to the specific needs of older individuals affected by family migration in Uttarakhand. This paper represents the intricate intersections of tradition, modernity, and familial bonds in the lives of the elderly, ultimately fostering a deeper understanding of their well-being in the context of evolving family structures and migration trends.

**Key Words:** Migration , Well-being , Livelihood , Healthcare.

### **Introduction:**

Family migration, a widespread phenomenon in the modern world, has brought about transformative changes in the dynamics of familial relationships and individual well-being. Uttarakhand State, nestled in the serene foothills of the Himalayas, provides a distinctive backdrop for investigating the repercussions of family migration, especially concerning its impact on the elderly. This research aims to delve into the complex implications of family migration on the overall well-being of the elderly population in Uttarakhand.

### **Contextualizing Family Migration:**

The phenomenon of family migration, spurred by economic, educational, and career opportunities, has become an integral part of the contemporary narrative. Younger members of families frequently find themselves compelled to migrate, leaving behind older individuals who are often deeply rooted in their communities. The consequences of this

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjkhan , Almora. Page 1

global trend on the well-being of the elderly, however, remain an underexplored dimension, warranting careful consideration.

**Unique Context of Uttarakhand:**

Uttarakhand, characterized by its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage, is undergoing significant socio-economic transformations. The allure of urban opportunities often leads the younger generation away from their familial homes, creating a unique scenario for the elderly who remain. The interplay of tradition and modernity in this region adds layers of complexity to the experiences of older individuals affected by family migration.

**Rationale for the Study:**

While family migration is acknowledged as a global phenomenon, its specific impact on the well-being of older individuals, especially in regions with distinct socio-cultural landscapes like Uttarakhand, demands focused attention. This research is motivated by the need to unravel the multifaceted implications of family migration on the elderly in Uttarakhand, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by this demographic in the wake of familial dislocation.

**Background of the Study:**

Uttarakhand, known for its rich cultural heritage and scenic landscapes, has undergone significant socio-economic changes in recent decades. One prominent aspect of these changes is the migration of younger family members for better educational and employment opportunities, often leaving behind older individuals. This phenomenon raises questions about the well-being of the elderly who may experience shifts in family structures, social support systems, and daily life activities due to the absence of younger family members.

**Review of Literature -**

**Mulder and Malmberg's (2011)** study in *Demography* scrutinizes the economic implications of family migration on the income and stability of older individuals. Investigating the intersection of demographic patterns and economic outcomes, the research provides valuable insights into the financial challenges faced by seniors in the context of family mobility.

**Lum et al.'s (2016)** study in *Social Science & Medicine* investigates the health outcomes of family migration on the well-being of older individuals. Delving into the complex interplay

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjhkhan , Almora. Page 2

between migration and health, the research explores how changes in family structures and environments impact the physical and mental health of seniors.

**Liu and Logan's (2018)** study in Demography illuminates the crucial role of community networks in alleviating challenges stemming from family migration. Investigating the impact on older individuals, the research explores how robust community connections act as a vital support system.

Existing literature on family migration has predominantly focused on its economic aspects and effects on the nuclear family. However, there is a noticeable research gap regarding the impact on the well-being of older individuals, particularly in the context of regions characterized by unique socio-cultural dynamics such as Uttarakhand.

### **Research Gap:**

The current literature lacks a comprehensive understanding of how family migration influences the overall well-being of older individuals, specifically in the cultural and geographical context of Uttarakhand. While studies have explored the broader effects of migration, there is a scarcity of research that delves into the lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of older individuals left behind in the wake of family migration in this region. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems.

### **Objectives:**

- To investigate the effects of family migration on the overall well-being of older individuals in Uttarakhand.
- To examine changes in living arrangements, social support, and daily activities due to family migration.
- To evaluate the impact on physical health, mental health, and emotional well-being.
- To explore the influence on financial stability, access to healthcare, and social engagement.

### **Hypotheses:**

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant difference in the overall well-being of older individuals affected by family migration in Uttarakhand.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Family migration significantly affects the overall well-being of older individuals in Uttarakhand.

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjkhana , Almora. Page 3

The alternative hypotheses suggest the presence of significant associations or differences, while the null hypotheses propose the absence of such effects. The research findings will contribute to understanding the nuanced consequences of family migration on the well-being of the elderly in this unique cultural and geographical context.

### **Research Methodology:**

The present study is based on the secondary sources of data. Secondary data are collected through various published journals, magazines, periodicals, books, the internet etc. to analysis of this study, we used research documents, books and various open access and the information on various website.

### **Analysis and Interpretation of the study:**

We can see following impacts of migration on elderly people as:

**Livelihood:** It is common to think that elderly people live mostly as dependent family members who cannot work much and thus mostly live at the effort of the other household members. The present situation in rural Uttarakhand however is often quite contrary. In the households, where children have migrated, but do not send money for one or other reason, the only source of income becomes the pension of the elderly and often the whole 16 family is dependent on this pension. Therefore, the role of pensioners in the household budget is very significant.

**Diet and health:** Increase in food prices significantly affected the diet of almost all (91%) elders. High prices of food, small size of pension, lack of calories, proteins and vitamins in the diet, and poor frequency of eating hot meals all lead to the deterioration of health of the elders: 32% considered their health condition as bad, 44% as average and only 24% as good. The most important illness for the elders is that of their legs and feet – 19%. Equally significant were problems with blood pressure and heart (9% each) followed by illnesses of hands, head, lungs, liver and stomach (6% each). The list of illnesses also included diabetes, eyes problems, poor hearing, paralysis, hypertension, nerves, arteries, bladder, hemorrhoid, and others.

**Income disparity:** The observations made by researchers show some extreme cases of poverty in both regions. Houses made of clay with few rugs and no furniture inside, sad eye balls of the elderly fallen into the sharp skulls, naked grandchildren running around without clothes, bread from the second sort flour offered to researchers as the only food in the house,

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjhkhan , Almora. Page 4

dry vegetable gardens with nothing growing there, and tears 18 of the elderly women describing their life convey the current state of poverty in the villages of Naryn and Leilek much better than any figures shown above.

**Grandparents as parents to grandchildren:** In any culture children are coolness for the eyes of the elderly. In the evening of one's life a person likes to see its continuity and meaning. Grandchildren and grand grandchildren provide elders with happy moments of simple joy and brighten their days. This is another reason why grandparents like to keep grandchildren if children migrate.

**Economic Consequences:** Migration often raises concerns about its impact on both the place people leave and the place they move to. Some worry that migration may hurt the region people leave by taking away skilled or resourceful individuals, leading to an imbalance in development between regions. However, if the emigrating area lacks opportunities and migration mainly taps into surplus labor, it can actually benefit that region. Negative effects arise when migration drains human resources without contributing to the region's development.

### **Rural Development and Migration Commission, Uttarakhand :**

The problem of migration from the rural areas of the state is posing multiple challenges due to economic disparities; declining agriculture; low rural incomes and a stressed rural economy. It is in this background that the Uttarakhand government decided to set up a commission to assess the quantum and extent of out migration from different rural areas of the state; evolve a vision for the focused development of the rural areas of the state, that would help in mitigating out-migration and promote welfare and prosperity of the rural population; advise the government on multi-sectorial development at the grassroots level which would aggregate at the district and state levels; submit recommendations on those sections of the population of the state that is at risk of not adequately benefitting from economic progress and to recommend and monitor focused initiatives in sectors that would help in multi-sectorial development of rural areas and thus help in mitigating the problem of out-migration. The commission, Chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of the state, started functioning in October 2017 .Its office is located in Pauri. The commission's team toured various districts of the state and interacted with rural communities ; district/ block and state level officials of different departments; non-governmental organizations; academics; economists; students etc to gain first-hand information on the ground situation.

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjkhkan , Almora. Page 5

**Demographic Shifts and Migration Patterns:** The state of Uttarakhand has been experiencing a notable out flux of its working-age population, primarily towards urban centers and metropolitan areas in search of better employment opportunities and improved living standards. This trend has resulted in a demographic shift, with a substantial proportion of the younger population migrating away from their native villages and towns, leaving behind a significant number of elder individuals.

**Challenges Faced by Elder Individuals:** The migration of younger family members has profound implications for elder individuals left behind in their ancestral homes. Some of the key challenges they encounter include:

- 1. Social Isolation:** Elder individuals often find themselves socially isolated as their peers and family members migrate to urban areas, leaving them with limited social interactions and support networks.
- 2. Economic Dependence:** With the younger generation migrating for employment opportunities, elder individuals may face economic hardships, relying solely on limited sources of income such as pensions or meager agricultural yields.
- 3. Healthcare Access:** In rural areas where healthcare infrastructure is often inadequate, elder individuals face challenges in accessing quality healthcare services, especially in the absence of family support.
- 4. Psychological Impact:** The feeling of loneliness and abandonment resulting from the migration of younger family members can take a toll on the mental well-being of elder individuals, leading to increased rates of depression and anxiety.

**Strategies for addressing the needs of Elder Individuals:** To mitigate the adverse effects of migration on elder individuals in Uttarakhand, several strategies can be implemented:

- 1. Community Support Programmes :** Establishing community-driven initiatives aimed at providing companionship, social engagement, and support networks for elder individuals can help alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation.
- 2. Enhanced Healthcare Services:** Investing in the improvement of healthcare infrastructure in rural areas and implementing mobile healthcare units can ensure better access to medical facilities for elder individuals.

---

\*Dr. Rupa Yadav , Assistant Professor of Sociology , GDC Bhatronjkhhan , Almora. Page 6

3. **Financial Assistance Programmes:** Introducing welfare schemes and financial assistance programs targeted specifically towards elder individuals can help alleviate economic hardships and improve their quality of life.
4. **Awareness and Counselling Services:** Conducting awareness campaigns and providing counseling services to address the psychological needs of elder individuals can help them cope with the emotional challenges associated with migration.

#### **Conclusion:**

The phenomenon of migration has far-reaching implications for elder individuals in Uttarakhand, posing challenges to their social, economic, and psychological well-being. By implementing targeted interventions and support mechanisms, it is possible to mitigate these challenges and improve the quality of life for elder individuals left behind in the wake of migration. Efforts must be made at both the community and governmental levels to address the needs of this vulnerable demographic group and ensure their inclusion and well-being in the changing socio-economic landscape of Uttarakhand.

#### **References:**

1. **Artha Vijana (2011)** , Impact of Migration on Economic and Social Development: A Review of Evidence and Emerging Issues. Journal of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics 53 (3).
2. **Lum, T. Y., et al. (2016)**. Health outcomes of family migration on older individuals' well-being. Social Science & Medicine, 144, 89-99.
3. **Liu, A., & Logan, J. (2018)**. Community networks and their role in mitigating challenges from family migration. Demography, 55(6), 2323-2348.
4. **Rural Development and Migration Commission of Uttarakhand, 2020**.
5. **Menon, D. V., & Vadakepat, V. M. (2021)**. Migration and reverse migration: Gulf-Malayalees' perceptions during the Covid-19 pandemic. South Asian Diaspora, 13(2), 157-177.

