



A study on migration and cultural transmission with special reference to Uttarakhand

Dr Mukta Martolia

Assistant Professor

Sharda School of Media, Film & Entertainment

Sharda University

Email id: martolia.mukta@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, Uttarakhand is among the most beautiful states of India with a huge mountain range and picturesque landscape. The state is geographically divided into two major divisions Kumaon and Gharwal while both divisions are historically rich, there are remarkable differences in their custom and traditions. Formed in the year 2000, Uttarakhand is comparatively a new state with its diverse population and environmental conditions incorporating snow-clad high mountains, rivers, and the humid plain areas. For the state, migration is not a new concept and people have been migrating from the hilly areas to the cities for better job opportunities. But the notable phenomenon is that even after twenty years the situation has not improved, and the rate of migration is still high.

The major impact of migration can be seen on the cultural transmission. Migration causes hindrance in the process of cultural transmission hugely and act as a threat to the cultural transmission from one generation to the further generation. The main aim of the paper is to find out the impact of migration on cultural transmission and the level of connection the people of Uttarakhand living in NCR have with their native place. The study also tries to bring out the factors for the high rate of migration from Uttarakhand and the impact of migration on the cultural transmission on the young generation.

Keywords

Migration, culture, tradition, cultural transmission

INTRODUCTION

Due to the extreme climatic condition and economic constraints the life of people living in the Uttarakhand especially in the hilly regions is very tough. Thus, in order to improve the quality of life and in search of better employment opportunity, people generally the young men and



women migrate to big cities. Studies have revealed that due to lack of skills most of the migrants get menial jobs like in factories and hotels as waiters or cooks.

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This study aims to find out the factors responsible for the high rate of migration and the impact of migration on the cultural transmission.

LITERATURE

According to the study conducted by Mamgain and Awasthi (2005); Awasthi (2020) at least one person from a household in the hilly region of Uttarakhand has migrated for employment and better opportunity. The cause of migration can be understood by Lee's (1966) framework of *push* and *pull* factors. Since both push and pull factors of Lee's framework are applicable only for labor market related migration and thus are not most appropriate for the migration in Uttarakhand still the push factor still applies as the decision of migration is mainly pushed by the low level of income from the farm by traditional farming and absolutely none or limited opportunities apart from farming.

Study by William (1998) concludes that culture and tradition are mutative in nature and they change or modify with time. Thus, with time some custom or tradition gets weak while some grew stronger and flourish.

Kurian and Ghosh (1978) suggested in their study that educated Indian families care much about their cultural and traditional identity and emphasize more on inculcating their traditional and cultural values in their children even when they live abroad.

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study was conducted with semi-structured in-depth interviews of 12 respondents with purposive sampling technique. The collected data was further analyzed through thematic analysis and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

DISCUSSION

The respondents admitted that the pattern of the migration process is simple where the information related to vacancy or recommendation for a job is generally done by a family



member or friend who is already migrated to the cities or other places. According to Bhagwati Prasad, the young boys want to explore the exciting life of cities, as they have seen their elders working mainly in hotel industry as waiters and chefs and they also want to avoid the so called stagnated and hard life in the hilly areas. Another respondent Malti Devi says that all her four children's have migrated to cities and are working in good companies, they want to return to the villages but because of the lack of good educational institutions for their children's and the hard life they can not return to the village, though they use to spend their yearly summer holidays in the village but now since the kids have grown up and are now preparing for competitive exams they don't have much time left to visit their village. Malti Devi also raises her concern about the traditional values in her grandchildren, she says that she feels sad as none of her grandchildren have adapted their cultural and traditional values, their language, and their rituals. She accuses herself and says that since she has not spent much time with her grandchildren's she has could not transfer her rich traditions and rituals to her grandchildren, and fears that her grandchildren will never know and understand the rich traditions and culture of their forefathers. Rtd. Colonel Girish Rautela, an ex-Army personnel says that he has served the Indian Army and has been posted to many different locations around the country during his service. Rautela says that his two sons are also serving Indian Army, he has seen the quality of life in the cities and though he love his village the most but he do understand the quality of life, educational opportunities, infrastructure, health facilities that is available in the hilly area and the cities and thus, he has never expected his grandchildren to leave the comfort of the cities and live in the hilly villages.

When asked whether the elders want to go and shift with their children, Bhagwati Prasad said that it is good to be around grandchildren but the pace of life in cities is very fast and everyone is busy so its better to be in village and welcome them during their holidays or some family functions. While Malti Devi said that it very tough and suffocating to live in a small apartment of a high-rise building, while in village the environment is so good, in the cities the air is not even worth inhaling. The only thing that she regrets is not able to spend time with her grandchildren. Colonel Rautela though keeps visiting his sons multiple times a year as needed but he also admits that even he meets his grandchildren regularly the cultural transmission is missing and does his best to inculcate the values through stories and narrating life experiences. Trilok Upreti, an ex-serviceman living in Delhi said that he migrated to Delhi around forty years back and have tried his best to be connected to his roots. His family celebrate every



festival and rituals of their culture, but he also admits that the value that he inculcated in his children are not passed on to his grandchildren, for instance none of his grandchild is fluent in their own language, they do understand it but they can not speak the language and they feel ashamed to use it. He also fears that with this rate the legacy of his forefathers will be lost. When asked what is his plan to continue the cultural transmission to his younger generation, he said he has already started executing his plan as he make sure that all the local festivals are celebrated in his house with full enthusiasm and he is finding the folk dance, folk music on youtube and asking his grandchildren to watch it with him, he also admitted that in the starting his grandchildren did not paid much attention to them and made fun of the quality of the songs and dances, but slowly they started liking and enjoy them. Upreti also makes sure to bring the children to the annual cultural fest of Uttarakhand.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the migrants irrespective of the duration of their stay at different locations still feel very much connected to their roots and native place. All the respondents admitted that given proper opportunities they would love to go back to their villages, but the lack of suitable opportunities and economic constraints they can not go back.

On talking about the cultural transmission, all the respondents admitted that living in a culturally different environment definitely becomes a challenge in cultural transmission as the younger generation gets confused as they encounter differences in the cultural practices of the place they are living in with the different customs and ritual their parents are asking them to adopt and follow. This results in not a very positive flow of cultural transmission and in long run mutate the entire cultural and traditional identity.

In order to find out the factors causing the high rate of migration, the study supports the precious studies and concludes that the high rate of migration is caused mainly due to the lack of economic stability and better job opportunities. People migrate for better infrastructure and better health opportunities as well. Overall, the major cause of migration is still to get a better life.

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