

Impact of Internal Migration and Socioeconomic Consequences (A Case of Bharatpur Metropolitan ward no 11)

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ABSTRACT

The study explores the socio-economic impacts of migration in Bharatpur Metropolitan-11, focusing on changes in occupation, landholding patterns, and socio-cultural life. It found that migration initially started as temporary but became permanent as basic facilities were established. Primary drivers include economic opportunities, education, and improved living conditions. However, challenges like inadequate water supply and environmental pollution persist. The study recommends improving agricultural productivity, enhancing infrastructure, and ensuring equitable access to essential services for sustainable migration integration.

Keywords: socio-economic impacts, migration, socio-cultural life, education, living conditions

Introduction

Migration significantly influences the population dynamics of a region or nation and is a central focus in demographic studies. It affects population growth, composition, and distribution, alongside mortality and birth rates, which are shaped by biological, social, and cultural factors. As a critical driver of population change, migration is extensively examined. Additional factors such as poverty, inadequate healthcare, and malnutrition also contribute to demographic shifts. Unlike fertility and mortality, which are biological processes, migration is guided by individual choices and mindsets (Gurung, 2007). Despite its importance in redistributing populations, migration remains the least researched aspect of demographic dynamics in Nepal, where many socio-economic and political challenges are closely linked to both internal and international migration patterns (K.C., 2008).

Migration, primarily involving economically active individuals, significantly impacts development. In Nepal, internal migration from mountainous regions to the Terai region contributes to uneven development. Migrants' nature influences development, with skilled and economically active individuals boosting growth. Migration is complex and dependent on factors like distance, duration of stay, and social conditions. Internal migration is within a country, while emigration is across countries. Out-migration involves moving people from one district to another within a country.

Statement of problem

Nepal's Constitution allocates demographic management responsibilities to federal, state, and local levels, supported by frameworks like the Population Perspective Plan (2010-2031) and the SDGs. Key issues in this sector include inadequate implementation of demographic policies, poor coordination among various sectors, and imbalances between population growth and development due to poverty, illiteracy, and migration. Challenges include aligning demographic and economic development indicators, managing both domestic and international migration, addressing the needs of an increasing senior population, and developing integrated settlements with essential services. Opportunities lie in leveraging the Population Perspective Plan, harnessing the demographic dividend, prioritizing balanced development, and responding to growing international concern about migration management. (National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal, 2020)

The growing trend of out-migration from the hill and mountain regions of Nepal has led to significant challenges, including uneven population distribution, which complicates resource allocation and policy planning. From 1991 to 2001, the mountain region's population decreased from 7.8% to 7.29%, and the hilly region's population fell from 45.6% to 44.28%, while the Tarai region experienced a population increase from 46.6% to 48.43%. This

migration from rural to urban areas, particularly from the hills to the Tarai, exacerbates social and economic disparities, leaving rural areas underdeveloped despite substantial investment efforts. In Bharatpur Metropolitan-11, the rate of in-migration is rising due to factors like fertile land, access to facilities, and connectivity with other urban areas. This study seeks to investigate the causes and consequences of internal migration in this specific area, aiming to provide insights into the complexities and challenges faced by this locality (National Planning Commission, 2011)

Migration from rural to urban areas, particularly from Hill to Tarai, and from unprivileged to privileged areas, has been a significant issue in Nepal over the last few decades. This migration often leads to a brain drain, where qualified workers move from rural villages to urban areas, leaving behind communities trapped in poverty and underdevelopment. The rapid increase in population in developing regions like Tarai has led to various social problems, including political demands for independence and federal statehood. Despite heavy investments, rural, Hill, and Mountain areas continue to lag behind in development. Bharatpur Metropolitan, an area with fertile land, good infrastructure, and growing urban connections, is experiencing a rising rate of in-migration. This article answers the following questions:

- What are the primary causes driving in-migration?
- What were the main reasons for individuals moving out from their place of origin?
- Do the migrants feel that their current living conditions are better compared to those in their place of origin?

Objectives

The study aims to identify factors driving in-migration to Bharatpur Metropolitan-11, such as economic opportunities and social factors, and analyze reasons for out-migration, such as lack of employment and poor living conditions. It also evaluates migrants' satisfaction and well-being in their new environment.

Literature Review

Migration theories have been developed for over a century, starting with the foundational "Laws of Migration" in 1881 and later expanded on with the push-pull obstacles model. These theories have been relevant in understanding international migration in Nepal today, where Lee's migration laws also apply. Migration studies have evolved within the framework of "gravity" models, which mathematically relate the number of migrants to the forces of attraction and distance. The principle of "least effort" suggests that the easier the migration, the more likely it is to occur. Stark (2009) proposed the hypothesis of intervening opportunities, which posits that migration is directly proportional to the number of available opportunities. Todaro (2010) developed a theory of rural-to-urban migration, emphasizing that migrants are motivated by perceived differences in expected income and employment opportunities rather than actual earnings.

Migration is often seen as a social process but also a demographic one, as noted by KC (2008) and the United Nations. Migration, alongside fertility, plays a critical role in demographic change by influencing the characteristics of migrant streams and their impacts at both origin and destination points. Zelinsky (2011) introduced the hypothesis of mobility transition, akin to the demographic transition, which has become increasingly relevant in understanding the social dimensions of migration. Economically, migration is viewed as a response to distant economic opportunities, but the theory linking migration to regional income inequalities remains contested. Stark (2009) further hypothesized that rural-to-urban migration might be driven by the desire to improve relative income positions within a household or individual's reference group.

Mabogunje (2010) applied systems theory to rural-urban migration, considering the interconnectedness of economic, social, technological, and governmental factors. Bogue (2009) focused on the characteristics, causes, and consequences of migration, identifying various socio-economic and demographic factors that influence migration patterns. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 2014) highlighted poverty and unemployment as primary drivers of urbanization and migration, noting the adverse effects on human settlements in developing countries. A Technical Symposium on International Migration and Development in The Hague, Netherlands, discussed the effectiveness of migration policies, state interventions, and the implications of migration on development. Empirical studies on migration in Nepal have explored various aspects of both internal and international migra-

tion. Wiener (2010) analyzed the political implications of migration between Nepal and India, CEDA (2013) examined the economic disparities between the Hills and the Terai, Khadka (2007) conducted focused studies on migratory movements in specific areas of Nepal, New ERA (2010) explored interregional migration and rural-to-rural migration in Central Nepal, Gurung (2007) studied regional migration patterns, Shrestha (2008) focused on labor migration to India, Khatiwoda (2012) explored the causes and consequences of international migration, and World Systems Theory explains migration as a natural result of capitalist development.

Conceptual Framework

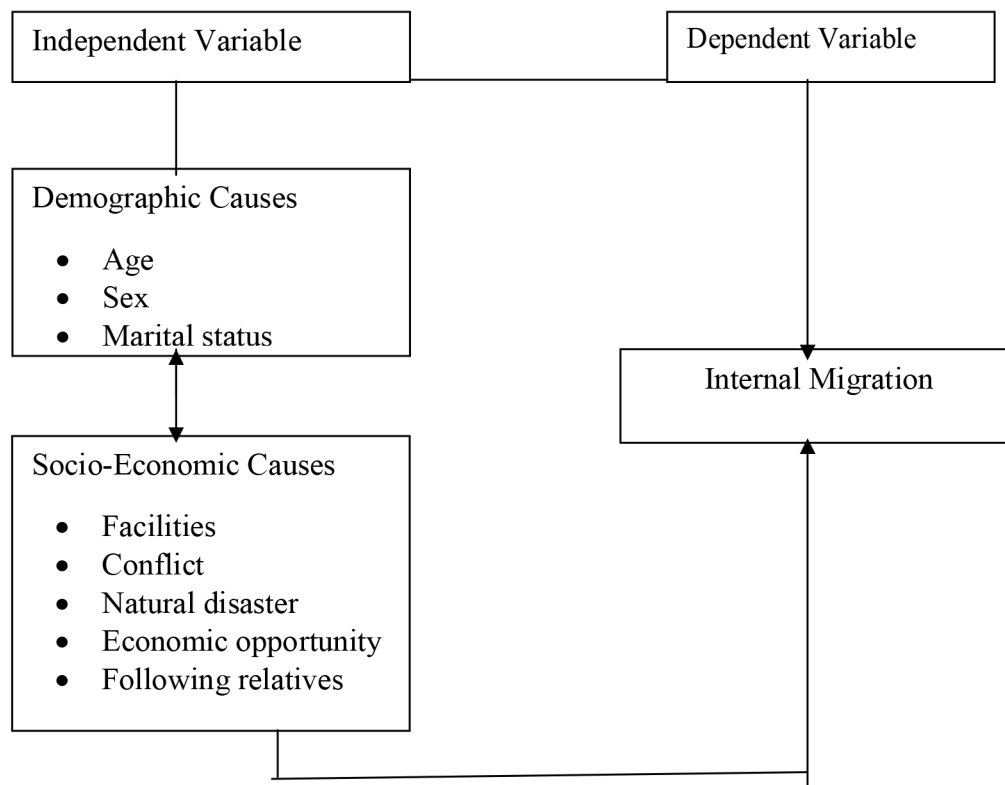


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by factors such as information availability, cost of living, social structure, demographics, modern facilities, political environment, and physical environment. It leads to economic, demographic, environmental, cultural, and social transformations in both origin and destination regions. The research framework explores why migration volume varies with changes in socio-economic conditions, highlighting the relationship between factors like age, sex, marital status, job opportunities, and physical facilities.

1.1 Research Methodology

The study investigates the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of internal migrants in Bharatpur Metropolitan, specifically Ward No. 11, a diverse area primarily engaged in agriculture and trade. A descriptive research design was used to explore the causes and effects of internal migration and identify the challenges faced by migrants. Data was collected through semi-structured questionnaire, interviews, surveys, and observations. Quantitative analysis was used to ensure accuracy.

The study surveyed 540 individuals from 105 households, revealing a young, predominantly agricultural community with a balanced gender ratio. The majority of migrants are married, suggesting family considerations might influence migration decisions.

Analysis and Results

Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics

1. **Age and Sex Composition:** The study area in Bharatpur Metropolitan had 540 persons across 105 households. The respondent was relatively young, with 43.5% (235 people) falling within the 15-35 age group, indicating that migration predominantly occurs among younger, economically productive individuals.
2. **Marital Status:** Among the in-migrants, 42.59% were single, 53.70% were married, 2.4% were widowed, and 1.3% were separated or divorced. This suggests that marital status plays a role in migration decisions.
3. **Occupational Status:** A significant portion of the population (26.85%) was engaged in agriculture, while 46.3% were students. Other occupations included trade/business (9.26%), service (8.33%), domestic work (2.78%), and foreign employment (5.56%).
4. **Educational Attainment:** The population was largely literate, with 89.8% having some form of education. Educational attainment ranged from informal education (4.6%) to master's level and above (0.9%), with a notable 22.2% having passed SLC (School Leaving Certificate) or its equivalent.
5. **Caste/Ethnicity Composition:** The majority of respondents were Brahmins (56.2%), followed by Newars (19%), Chhetris (15.2%), and Tamangs (9.5%).
6. **Religion:** Hinduism was the dominant religion, practiced by 80.9% of respondents, followed by Buddhism (8.5%), Islam (5.7%), and Christianity (4.9%).
7. **Occupational Status:** Agriculture was the main occupation for 58.1% of respondents, with others engaged in trade/business (23.8%), services (8.6%), domestic work (4.8%), and foreign employment (4.8%).
8. **Land Ownership and Use:** Most respondents (95.2%) owned land. Before migration, larger landholdings were common, but post-migration, there was a noticeable shift towards smaller land plots, indicating a move away from agriculture.
9. **Household Income:** A majority of households (76.2%) reported that their annual income was sufficient to support their families, while 23.8% indicated it was insufficient.
10. **Toilet Facilities:** All households had toilet facilities, with 66.7% using pan/flush toilets and 33.3% using pit toilets.
11. **Physical Facilities:** All households had electricity, 90.4% had TVs, 85.7% had phones/mobiles, 47.6% had radios, and 44.7% had motorcycles.
12. **Housing Materials:** The most common roofing material was RCC frames (42.9%), followed by zinc sheets (28.6%), mud tiles (14.3%), wooden roofs (9.5%), and cement tiles (4.8%).
13. **Drinking Water Source:** The primary source of drinking water was a supply system (71.4%), followed by tube wells (23.8%) and wells (4.8%).

Causes and Consequences

1. Primary Causes of Migration (Push Factors):

The study identified several key reasons behind the migration of individuals from their place of origin to the destination area. The most significant factor was low productivity of land, cited by 57.1% of respondents as the primary cause for leaving their place of origin. Insufficient land (33.3%) and lack of economic opportunities (23.8%) were also major reasons that prompted migration. Interestingly, 33.3% of respondents mentioned that better opportunities at the destination were a strong pull factor, influencing their decision to migrate. Other factors, such as conflict (14.3%) and lack of education (4.8%), were also noted as contributing factors, although to a lesser extent.

2. Education and Migration:

The data suggests that education played a crucial role in migration decisions. A significant portion (90.48%) of the migrants were literate at the time of migration, with varying levels of education, ranging from informal education to bachelor's degrees. Only 9.52% of the respondents were illiterate.

3. Age at the Time of Migration:

Migration was predominantly undertaken by individuals in the **35-49 years age group**, who made up 61.9% of the respondents. This indicates that migration is more common among younger, economically productive individuals.

4. Decision-Making and Accompaniment:

In 61.9% of cases, the decision to migrate was made by the individual migrant themselves, with 33.3% of decisions made jointly by husband and wife.

A significant majority (81%) of respondents were accompanied by their spouse or children during migration, while 14.3% were accompanied by near relatives.

5. Effects of Migration:

Migration has led to significant changes in both the origin and destination areas. In the origin areas, the population has decreased, particularly among the younger and active demographic, leading to changes in the age composition. The destination area, Bharatpur Metropolitan-11, Chitwan, has seen an influx of migrants, particularly from resource-poor regions to areas with more land and employment opportunities, leading to changes in the socio-economic and demographic structure.

6. Land Acquisition in the Destination:

A large majority (90.4%) of the respondents acquired land in the destination area through purchase, while 9.6% acquired land through rental agreements. This suggests that most migrants aimed for permanent settlement.

7. Occupational Shifts:

The migration process also brought significant changes in the occupational structure of the respondents. In their place of origin, 81% of respondents were engaged in agriculture, but this percentage decreased to 57.2% after migration to the destination area. Conversely, there was an increase in trade/business activities, from 9.5% in the origin area to 23.8% in the destination area, indicating a shift towards more diverse economic activities post-migration.

Perception towards Destination

1. Perception towards the Place of Destination:

A significant majority (90.5%) of the respondents perceived the place of destination to be better than their place of origin. Only 9.5% felt that the destination was not better than their origin. The study highlighted that most respondents felt better at the destination, particularly regarding education and business opportunities (81% each). Additionally, 38.1% of respondents felt better about the industry sector, and 100% of respondents felt better about transportation at the destination compared to their place of origin.

2. Intention of Living Permanently at the Destination:

The intention to live permanently at the destination was strong, with 81% of respondents expressing a desire to settle permanently due to the availability of modern facilities and amenities.

3. Satisfaction at the Current Place of Residence:

Satisfaction with the current place of residence was high, with 81% of respondents reporting satisfaction, while 19% were dissatisfied.

4. Main Problems Faced at the Destination:

The primary issues faced by respondents at the destination included pollution and drainage (90.5%), drinking water (47.6%), lack of socio-physical facilities (38.1%), and forest-related issues (33.3%). Other concerns included road service and communication, each affecting 9.5% of respondents.

5. Perception towards Liking the Place of Destination:

The study revealed that 61.9% of respondents found the place of destination "just satisfactory," while 19% did not find it satisfactory at all. Only 4.8% of respondents liked the destination very much, and 14.3% were not very satisfied.

6. Suggestion to Relatives to Migrate to the Destination:

When asked whether they would suggest their relatives move to the destination, 47.6% of respondents were willing to recommend it, while 28.6% suggested their relatives stay at their usual place. Additionally, 14.3% recommended going to another place, and 9.5% had no suggestion.

The analysis reflects a generally positive perception of the destination area among migrants, with most respondents finding better opportunities in education, business, and transportation. However, challenges such as pollution, lack of proper drainage, and insufficient socio-physical facilities remain significant concerns. The intention to live permanently at the destination is strong, but satisfaction levels indicate that improvements in infrastructure and facilities could further enhance the living conditions and overall satisfaction of migrants in Bharatpur Metropolitan, ward no. 11.

Conclusion

Internal migration in Nepal, particularly in the Bharatpur Metropolitan-11 area of Chitwan district, reflects broader demographic trends observed in many developing countries. The study set out to examine the causes and consequences of migration, focusing on the socio-economic conditions of migrants in Bharatpur Metropolitan-11. Key objectives included analyzing changes in economic activities, landholding patterns, and socio-cultural life, particularly in terms of education and religion. The analysis revealed that migration in the area was initially temporary and seasonal due to dense forests and the threat of malaria. However, as the area developed with basic facilities such as health centers, roads, and schools, permanent settlement became more feasible. The study employed qualitative methods, supported by tables and graphs, to analyze the nature, trends, volumes, and causes of migration. Key findings include:

Causes of Migration: The primary drivers of migration included economic opportunities, availability of physical facilities, and social networks (relatives and friends already settled in the area). A significant portion of migrants moved due to better educational opportunities and improved living conditions.

Socio-Economic Impact: The majority of migrants were engaged in agriculture both before and after migration, though there was some diversification into trade, business, and services. Migration also led to changes in landholding patterns and increased access to educational and health facilities.

Satisfaction and Intentions: Most respondents (81%) expressed satisfaction with their current place of residence, and a large proportion intended to live there permanently. However, challenges such as inadequate drinking water and environmental pollution were noted as significant issues in the area.

The study recommends interventions to enhance living standards in Bharatpur Metropolitan-11, including irrigation facilities, resource allocation, and rural development programs. It also suggests population distribution policies based on comparative benefits and new technology for increased productivity and income.

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