



The Role Of Social Networks In Urban Out-Migration: A Study Of Neighbourhood Ties And Community Resilience

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ABSTRACT

Urban out-migration, particularly in developing countries like India, has gained significant attention due to its socio-economic and demographic consequences. Migration is largely influenced by "push and pull" factors, where lack of employment, limited infrastructure and economic stagnation push people out, while better opportunities in cities pull them in. This study is based on primary study using a structured interview schedule is conducted in two Class-IV towns of Dharwad district—Alnavar and Kundgol—examines the role of social networks and neighborhood ties in migration patterns. The major highlights of the study is that out-migration significantly impacts both the towns people leave and the cities they move to. While it offers economic benefits to migrants, it also creates imbalances in regional development. Understanding these migration patterns can help policymakers implement strategies for balanced urban growth and sustainable development in small towns.

Keywords: Urban Out-Migration, Neighbourhood Resilience and social networks

INTRODUCTION:

The recent decades of twentieth century have seen a fact urban out-migration and its intensity is more felt in developing countries like India. Especially people in the smaller urban units are fast abandoning their lands and are moving to big cities in search of better livelihood. The big cities appear to them as "Twinkling Stars" which with their allurements attract people as light attract worms.

Migration and its effects on socio-economic, demographic and cultural factors has recently attracted increasing attention from administrators, planners, social scientists and researchers who are trying to understand the process of population movement.

The sociologists are interested in the phenomenon of migration for the consequences it has on the interactions or the social relationships among the people under supervision. Out of the whole gamut of relationships we mark out some institutionalized relationships for observation. We observe people at two ends, the place from which they migrate and the place to where they migrate. We enquire what differences can be observed in the behaviour of individuals with reference to particular relationships in the aspirations and ambitions of individuals and their expectations. While observing the migrants this way we are observing them in relation with the people of the place to, which they migrate and from where they migrate and enquire how the other in respective areas of relationships affects each. If we find differences between both these people before and after migration, we attribute them to migration. If there are no differences, we say that migration has no effect. Thus we evaluate migration as a factor of social change. (Desai I.P. 1964)

However, is it not surprising that migration has become a vexed social issue and the favorite research topic in all the countries.

Concept of urban out-migration

According to M.K. Premi (1980) "a town will have net in-migration of population from other areas during a particular period if its natural population growth rate (birth rate-death rate) in the same period is less than the census growth rate, on the other hand if the natural increase rate of the concerned place is more than the census growth rate there will be net out-migration of population to other areas

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING OUT-MIGRATION TOWNS

Migration has been an essential aspect of human civilization, shaping societies, economies and cultures. While migration to urban centers and developed regions is often celebrated as a sign of progress and opportunity, the towns that experience out-migration often face numerous challenges that go unnoticed. Out-migration towns are those where a significant portion of the population leaves in search of better economic opportunities, higher education, or improved living conditions. The study of such towns is crucial for understanding the impact of migration on both the places people leave and the destinations they move to. A deeper exploration of out-migration towns helps in recognizing the economic, social and cultural transformations that occur due to population shifts.

a) Understanding Population Decline and Its Consequences

One of the most visible effects of out-migration is a decline in population. As people leave a town in large numbers, the overall population shrinks, leading to a reduced workforce and an imbalance in the demographic structure. Many out-migration towns experience aging populations, as younger and more productive individuals tend to migrate in search of jobs and educational opportunities. The departure of young people results in a dwindling labor force, school closures due to fewer students and decreased demand for goods and services, which affects local businesses. The study of out-migration towns enables policymakers to analyze these demographic changes and develop solutions to prevent economic stagnation and social decline.

b) Economic Impact and Workforce Shifts

A primary driver of migration is the search for better economic opportunities. Many towns suffer from unemployment, low wages, lack of industrial growth and poor infrastructure, pushing residents to move to cities or foreign countries in search of better livelihoods. As a result, out-migration leads to workforce depletion, causing businesses to struggle due to a lack of skilled labor and consumers. Small towns, in particular, suffer from economic decline, as the local economy depends on the spending power of residents. Understanding these economic impacts helps in formulating policies that encourage local investment, improve employment opportunities, and promote economic diversification to reduce excessive migration.

c) Social and Cultural Transformations

Migration does not just affect the economy; it also brings significant changes to the social fabric of a town. Traditional communities, which once thrived on close-knit relationships and cultural values, often weaken due to population decline. Festivals, local traditions and cultural practices may slowly fade away as younger generations leave and older populations remain. Additionally, out-migration often results in families being separated, with children growing up away from one or both parents. On the other hand, migration can bring benefits, such as financial support from migrants who send money back to their hometowns. This financial assistance, known as remittances, can improve the living standards of families and fund community development projects. By studying out-migration towns, sociologists and policymakers can find ways to preserve cultural heritage while embracing the benefits that migration brings.

d) Urbanization and Regional Imbalances

Out-migration contributes to urbanization, as people move from rural and small towns to larger cities in search of better opportunities. While this shift benefits urban centers by supplying them with labor and talent, it also creates regional imbalances. Many out-migration towns suffer from "brain drain," where educated and skilled individuals leave, reducing the town's ability to develop further. Meanwhile, cities face the challenge of accommodating large numbers of migrants, leading to overcrowding, rising housing costs, pressure on infrastructure and increased competition for jobs. Understanding these imbalances helps in creating strategies for balanced regional development, ensuring that small towns also receive investments and opportunities to thrive.

e) Policy Formulation and Sustainable Development

One of the most important reasons for studying out-migration towns is to design policies that address their challenges and promote sustainable development. Governments and development organizations can use insights from migration studies to implement strategies that improve local employment opportunities, enhance infrastructure, and boost industries that support local economies. Encouraging entrepreneurship, improving access to quality education and healthcare, and promoting tourism or agriculture-based industries can create jobs and attract people to stay in their hometowns. A well-planned approach to regional development can prevent mass migration and ensure that towns remain vibrant and self-sufficient.

f) The Role of Out-Migration Studies in Migration Planning

Migration is a global phenomenon and understanding its patterns is essential for long-term planning. By studying out-migration towns, researchers can predict future migration trends, assess the effectiveness of migration policies, and find solutions for both sending and receiving regions. Data from such studies can help governments develop programs that address the challenges of depopulation in towns and prevent excessive strain on urban centers. Additionally, it provides valuable insights into how migration affects different sectors, including education, healthcare, labor markets, and housing.

Research Methodology

The main objective of the paper is to analyse the role of neighbourhood in urban out migration. The research is conducted in the 2 Class-IV towns of Dharwad district namely Alnawar and Kundgol and the data is collected through structured interview schedule. Based on Multi-stage random sampling method the sample size is limited to 158.

When the researcher contacted the Heads of the Households, many described life in these towns as “Arakke Erolla Murakke Elleyalla” that means they can neither reach highest peak nor they come down to the bottom of life. Thus economic development in these types of small towns is very limited. Moreover whenever the bigger cities exist adjacent to these smaller towns the former retard the balanced development of the latter.

The appalling lack of employment opportunities, inability of the land to bear proper yield both in terms of agriculture and industries, the dreary life style, erratic economic growth, limited specialization in terms of higher education etc., are some of the basic causes for out-migration from one urban unit to another.

Centuries back solely seasonal factors were the cause of migration, but now various impelling factors force the people to abandon their lands. It is rather difficult to assert any one factor that influence urban out-migration and this fact varies from one urban unit to another.

Thus in the process of out-migration two main aspects “Push and Pull” play an important role. The people in the towns of Kundgol and Alnavar Alleged that the existence of adjacent cities like Hubli-Dharwad, Gadag, Belgaum etc have made people to move freely to these areas.

Thus bigger cities are like an octopus in the oceans preventing and engulfing the growth of these small urban units. Thus the “Glowing Lights” of the cities have pulled people from all its surroundings.

Out – Migrated Area

Whenever people move to outside areas many aspects play an important role like good economic opportunities, better social contacts, availability of all infra-structural facilities and also the distance of the place and its transportation facilities.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table No – 1

Table showing the place of in-migration

Sl. No.	Place of In-Migration	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Village	11	10.89	7	12.28	18	11.39
2	Towns	12	11.88	14	24.57	26	16.45
3	City	51	50.50	33	57.89	84	53.17
4	Metro city	27	26.73	3	5.26	30	18.99
	Total	101	100	57	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

From the above Table No. 1 it is found that majority of the males who have moved to cities account to be 50.50 per cent followed by those who have gone to Metropolitan city with 26.73 per cent. However those who have gone to village and towns account to be more or less the same. It was found during the study that those people moving into village were either in government service or those having ancestral property went for the sake of agriculture. Thus an instance of reverse migration can be seen here.

In case of females majority have gone to cities amounted to 57.89 per cent which is followed by those who have gone to towns are with 24.57 per cent, to villages (12.28 per cent) and to metropolitan cities amounted to 5.26 per cent. The reasons for such a low percentage of females going to metropolitan cities are that their parents were reluctant to send them the parents did not want to take any risks in their daughter's life.

Thus from the Table we find that majority of the migrants have moved to cities (53.17 per cent) followed by those who have moved to metropolitan cities (18.99 per cent) and while those going to towns are accounted to 16.45 per cent. By this we can assert that majority of the out-migrants have moved into urban units as these areas tend to possess good qualities in many ways like employment, good social contacts, better transportation facilities, educational facilities etc. however those moving to villages are 11.39 per cent as life there is just not only limited to agriculture and agro-based works but also it has limited activities and facilities in many other aspects.

Neighbors In The Out-Migrated Area

Society is a web of social relationships wherein the relationships vary from simpler to complex and permanent to temporary. Man being a social animal has to mingle with other members in the society to fulfill his need. These social relations lead to mutual understanding, love and affection. Thus the life style of neighbors in the surrounding area has a deep influence on the activities of the migrants. Normally people prefer to live close to their own ethnic neighborhood as this provides them a sense of belongingness but however, this also has negative effects such as peoples' reluctance to adopt the local cultural pattern. This type of proximity to ones' neighbors develops common feelings, mutual interest in understanding and helping one another, providing sympathy etc. therefore a behavioral pattern of help during the initial settlement in an out-migrated area is required.

Out-Migrants and their Residence

Housing is one of the three basic requirements of a better living. Home, sweet home is the dream of all people.

From the below Table no.2 it is found that majority of the male migrants are in rented or leased houses (48.51 per cent) while 14.86 per cent have their own houses. Those staying in Quarters (9.90 per cent) are either Government employees or working in private sectors. Students are staying either in the hostels or in relatives' houses.

Table No. 2

Table showing Out-Migrants Residence

Sl. No.	Place of Stay	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Hostel	8	7.92	4	7.03	12	7.59
2	Relatives House	14	13.86	8	14.03	22	13.92
3	Paying guest	5	4.95	1	1.75	06	3.80
4	Own House	15	14.86	16	28.07	31	19.62
5	Rented/Leased	45	48.51	28	49.12	77	48.74
6	Quarters	10	9.90	0	0.00	10	6.33
	Total	101	100	57	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

Among females majority are with their husbands in rented houses (49.12 per cent) and own houses (28.07 per cent). While those who are unmarried and are studying or working stay in hostels (7.03 per cent) while 14.03 per cent are with their relatives.

Thus on the whole, majority of the migrants are staying in rented houses (48.74 per cent) next to them (19.62 per cent) possess own houses. Nearly 13.92 per cent are in relatives houses and 7.59 per cent are in the hostels. The cases of paying guests are found high in cities and metropolitan cities with 3.80 per cent.

Thus from the above data we find that majority of the migrants are well settled in life.

Prior Idea Of The Out-Migrated Area

Usually when a person thinks of abandoning his land, he prefers to go to those areas where he can lead a better life. Hence before going to any place he makes enquiries. Thus Table No. 3 gives a clear picture of migrant's knowledge of out-migrated area before migration.

Table No. 3

Table showing the Existence Of Prior Idea of destinaion

Sl. No.	Existence of Prior Idea	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Definite Idea	23	22.77	08	14.04	31	19.62
2	Some Vague Idea	57	56.44	30	52.63	87	55.06
3	Do not know	18	17.82	12	21.05	30	18.99
4	No Idea	3	2.97	7	12.28	10	6.33
	Total	101	100	57	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

Majority of the males had some rough idea (56.44 per cent) regarding the out-migrated place before migration. While 22.77 per cent had definite idea about the out-migrated area and left the place only after having a full knowledge of that place. However 2.97 per cent did not have any idea regarding the destination. 17.82 per cent of the respondents have expressed that they do not know.

Among females also majority had some vague idea (52.63 per cent) while 14.04 per cent were definite and 12.28 per cent had no idea regarding the land of destination.

Thus we find that majority of the migrants had some vague idea (55.06 per cent) and 19.62 per cent had a definite idea. However hardly 6.33 per cent had any idea about the land of destination.

Thus people usually migrate to those areas about which he has some prior idea otherwise they try to gather information and then seeing the pros and cons, go to that area.

Source Of Information Regarding the Out-Migrated Place

It is a known fact that before making a decision for out-migrating to any area person enquires through various sources. A sort of opinion is sought from various types of medias like friends, newspapers etc.

Majority of the male migrants gathered information by visiting the place themselves. They constitute 29.70 per cent. Friends and relatives were the important person in providing the information to them. They amount to 18.81 per cent. Books and journals were also a source of information for 15.84 per cent of migrants.

Table No- 4

Table showing Sources Of Information First Gathered

Sl. No.	Information Gathered	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Family Members	09	8.91	34	59.65	43	27.22
2	Books and Journal	16	15.84	04	7.02	20	12.66
3	Friends	19	18.81	02	3.51	21	13.29
4	Relatives	19	18.81	03	5.26	22	13.92
5	Self	30	29.70	12	21.05	42	26.58
6	Others	08	7.93	02	3.51	10	6.33
	Total	101	100	57	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

Among females, family members were the major source of information (59.65 per cent). 21.05 per cent collected the information of their own accord. Friends and relatives also helped them in getting information. They constitute 3.51 per cent and 5.26 per cent respectively.

Thus a few of the migrants third for themselves in collecting the information (26.58 per cent) while their family members also gave some information to 27.22 per cent, friends and relatives assisted to 13.29 per cent and 13.92 per cent respectively.

Help Received in the Beginning

Man is a social animal and so he cannot live alone and do all his work for himself. Instead he required other members to assist him. Similarly when a person goes to a new place he may not suddenly get any help or many times he must have gone to such a place where he has none to rely upon. In such an event he slowly adjusts to the existing environment both physically and socially and makes friends with his neighbors. Thus in the initial stages of migration he has to struggle for his survival, though in course of time, some help may come to him.

Table No.-5

Table showing the form of assistance sought .

Sl. No.	Assistance Received	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Friends	19	18.81	02	8.70	21	16.94
2	Relatives	27	26.74	06	26.08	33	26.61
3	Teachers	05	4.95	01	4.35	06	4.84
4	Self	42	41.58	12	52.17	54	43.55
5	Others	08	7.95	02	8.70	10	8.06
	Total	101	100	23	100	124	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

It is evident from the above Table No. -5 that 41.58 per cent of the male migrants received no help, while relatives helped 26.74 per cent. 18.81 per cent were helped by friends and by their teachers (4.95 per cent).

In case of females 34.00 per cent are married and are housewives. Therefore they are not included in this data. However 52.17 per cent took no help from anyone while 20.80 per cent were helped by relatives and 17.4 per cent by friends and others helped 20.08 per cent.

Thus on the whole majority of the migrants have helped themselves (43.55 per cent). "Self help is the best help" holds good here also. In a new place where there is no acquaintance, a migrant feels that he is just a stranger and has to adjust with the existing local conditions. However the presence of friends and relatives at the land of destination have encouraged for settling.

Type Of Assistance Sought

In every society man wishes to stand on his legs and be on par with his fellow beings, in order to be recognized and respected. 'Peace and plenty' is his motto to carry out those activities with which he is concerned.

Table No. 6

Table showing Type Of Assistance sought

Assistance sought		Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
Providing Food	Yes	14	13.86	13	56.52	27	21.77
	No	87	86.14	10	43.48	97	78.23
	Total	101	100	23	100	124	100
Providing Shelter	Yes	14	13.86	13	56.52	27	21.77
	No	87	86.14	10	43.48	97	78.23
	Total	101	100	23	100	123	100
Financial Help	Yes	29	28.71	09	39.13	38	30.65
	No	72	7.29	14	60.87	86	69.39
	Total	101	100	23	100	123	100
Encouragement	Yes	40	39.60	13	56.52	53	42.74
	No	61	60.40	10	43.48	71	57.26
	Total	101	100	23	100	123	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

Therefore he migrates to other places where he can get a suitable remuneration for his dexterity. When he goes to a new place all of a sudden he needs some time to acquaint with the existing local conditions. If he has friends or relatives there they would certainly assist him in many ways.

Thus the above Table No.- 6 shows the type of assistance received from various people at the land of destination. Here the married females who migrated along with their husbands have not been taken into consideration as they went along with the other family members. However here we find that majority of the migrants received no such major help from the localities but "self help was the best help". Among males and females 13.86 per cent and 56.52 per cent were provided with food and shelter respectively by others, while 28.71 per cent males and 39.13 per cent females received some monetary help from others, while 39.60 per cent males and 56.52 per cent females were encouraged by others to settle at the land of destination.

Table No. 7

Table showing Neighbors resilience In The Out-Migrated Area

Sl. No.	Types of Neighbor's	Males		Females		Total	
		F	Per cent	F	Per cent	F	Per cent
1	Co-operative and friendly	61	60.40	50	87.72	111	70.25
2	Never bothers	24	23.76	05	8.77	29	18.35
3	Don't know	16	15.84	02	3.51	18	11.39
	Total	101	100	57	100	158	100

Source: Fieldwork Survey

From the above Table No. 7 we find majority of the migrants have cooperative and friendly neighbors who constitute 70.25 per cent. Among males 60.40 per cent and females 87.72 per cent have a friendly relations with the neighbors. However a few alleged that the neighbors never, cared for them (18.35 per cent), while males having such types of neighbors amounted to 23.76 per cent and females with 8.77 per cent. However during the field work many of the respondents alleged that those who were staying in metropolitan cities had such type of neighbors who never bothered for others. Usually it so happens that in cities and metropolitan cities majority of couples that are working hardly find time to interact and care for their neighbors.

When we say the relationship with the neighbors it does not merely refers to "Hay and Bye" but also to exchange of opinions and commodities, financial assistance and actively participation in day-to-day life.

Summary and Conclusion

The study of out-migration towns is essential for understanding how migration affects local communities, economies, and cultural identities. The study concludes that migrants rely on personal networks for information about their destination, with family members (27.22%) and self-exploration (26.58%) being the primary sources. Ethnic neighborhoods provide a sense of belonging but may hinder cultural integration. It provides valuable insights into the causes and consequences of population decline and helps in developing policies that promote balanced development. By addressing economic stagnation, social challenges, and regional disparities, governments and policymakers can create opportunities that allow people to build their

futures within their hometowns rather than being forced to leave. Studying out-migration is not just about analyzing population loss—it is about finding ways to create sustainable, prosperous, and resilient communities.

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