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A Case Study of Rural-Urban Migration of a Young Male: Causes, Experiences, and Socio-Economic Impacts

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Abstract: Rural-urban migration has become a significant livelihood strategy for youth in Mizoram due to limited employment opportunities in rural areas. This paper presents a case study of a 25-year-old male migrant from Champhai District, who migrated to Aizawl, the only city in Mizoram, in search of better economic prospects. The study explores the causes, migration experiences, and socio-economic impacts of migration on both the migrant and his household. The findings reveal that lack of local jobs, low agricultural income, and aspiration for a better life were the major push and pull factors. While migration has resulted in increased household income, improved education and health facilities, and skill development, it has also led to family separation, emotional stress, and labour shortages in the village. The study concludes that migration provides economic benefits but also poses social challenges. It suggests that promoting rural entrepreneurship and skill development programs is essential to reduce distress migration and ensure sustainable rural development in Mizoram.

Keywords: Rural-Urban, Migration, Remittance, Youth, Socio-Economic Impact

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural-urban migration is a significant phenomenon in developing countries, driven by economic, educational, and social factors (Singh & Singh, 2017). In India, rural-urban migration has increased owing to disparities in employment opportunities, income levels, educational facilities, and infrastructure between rural and urban areas. Young people, particularly males, constitute a large proportion of migrants because they are more likely to seek employment and economic advancement in other countries. This case study focuses on a young male migrant who moved from a rural village to an urban centre in search of better livelihood opportunities. By examining their experiences, this study seeks to understand the realities of migration at the individual level. Young male migrants often face unstable employment, long working hours, and insecure living conditions, particularly during the initial stages of their migration. Many work in the informal sector, where wages are low, and employment lacks legal protection or social security. Despite these hardships, migrants generally perceive urban migration as beneficial because it provides opportunities for skill development, higher income, and broader social networks.

A. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To identify the factors that motivated young men to migrate.
- 2) To examine the challenges faced during and after migration,
- 3) To analyse the socio-economic impacts of migration on the migrant and his family.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Migration has been widely studied as a key livelihood strategy in developing countries, especially in rural areas where employment opportunities are limited. Several studies have highlighted both the positive and negative impacts of migration on individuals, households, and communities.

Deshingkar and Akter (2009) in their UNDP report emphasized that migration serves as an important mechanism for poverty reduction. The study found that remittances sent by migrants significantly improve household income, consumption, and investment in education and health. Similarly, Ratha and Mohapatra (2009) observed that India is one of the largest recipients of remittances globally, and these financial inflows play a crucial role in supporting rural households.

Focusing on North East India, Chakravorty (2012) noted that migration from the region is largely driven by lack of local employment and better wage opportunities in metropolitan cities. The study further stated that remittances contribute to improved housing conditions and asset creation in rural households of NER.

Singh and Singh (2017) conducted a study in North East India and found that while migration increases household income, it also leads to agricultural labour shortages and increased workload for women and elderly left behind.

The socio-economic impacts of migration on women and children have also been documented. Bhattacharjee (2018) highlighted that women in Northeast India face dual burdens due to male out-migration. They have to manage both household responsibilities and farm work in the absence of male members. Siddiqui (2013) studied the impact of migration on children left behind and found that although remittances improve their educational opportunities, parental absence often leads to emotional stress and behavioural issues. At the national level, NSSO (2020) reported that youth constitute the largest share of internal migrants in India. The report identified employment and education as the two major reasons for migration. Srivastava (2019) further argued that youth migration is largely distress-driven and reflects the failure of rural economies to provide adequate livelihood options.

In the context of Mizoram, the Government of Mizoram (2020) Economic Survey reported that a large number of educated youths migrate outside the state due to limited job opportunities in the government and private sector. NIRDPR (2021) in its report on NER also emphasized the need for skill development and rural entrepreneurship to reduce distress migration from the region.

From the above review, it is evident that migration has both positive and negative consequences. While it enhances economic well-being through remittances, it also poses social challenges such as family separation and labour depletion in source areas. However, there is limited case-based research on young male migrants from rural Mizoram. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by examining the causes, experiences, and socio-economic impacts of migration through a case study approach.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Study Area

Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram, was selected as the study area for this research on rural–urban migration of young males. As the administrative, commercial, educational, and cultural centre of the state, Aizawl attracts a large number of migrants from rural areas seeking better employment, education, healthcare, and improved living conditions. Therefore, the city provides an appropriate setting for examining the causes, experiences, and socioeconomic impacts of rural–urban migration. Aizawl is the largest urban centre in Mizoram and serves as the state's economic and service hub. Government offices, educational institutions, hospitals, retail markets, and private businesses are concentrated in the city, creating employment opportunities that attract migrants from different Mizoram districts. The city's expanding service sector and urban infrastructure have made it the primary destination for rural inhabitants seeking to improve their livelihoods. The choice of Aizawl as the study area is particularly relevant because it is a major destination for rural migrants within Mizoram. Studying a migrant residing in Aizawl enables an in-depth understanding of the push factors in rural areas, pull factors associated with urban life, challenges encountered during migration, and socio-economic changes experienced after migration. The findings of this case study contribute to a better understanding of rural–urban migration patterns and their implications for both migrants and urban development in Mizoram.

- 1) *Research Design*: A qualitative case study approach was adopted for this study.
- 2) *Tools of Data Collection*: The required data were collected from the primary sources. In-depth interviews, personal observations, and informal discussions with family members were used for data collection.
- 3) *Ethical Considerations*: The participants' identities were kept confidential, and informed consent was obtained before the interview.
- 4) *Profile of respondent*:

Particulars	Information
Age	25
Gender	Male
Marital Status	Unmarried
Education	BA
Occupation Before Migration	Farming And Casual Labour
Destination	Urban
Duration Of Migration	6 Years

B. Reasons for Migration

The respondent reported several reasons for migrating.

(a). *Economic Factors*: Economic conditions in the village were defined by a scarcity of viable jobs and underemployment. The village offered limited employment opportunities, and agricultural income was insufficient to meet the household needs. To escape rural poverty and ensure long-term financial security, migration has become a coping mechanism, allowing individuals to seek consistent wages and financial stability.

(b). *Educational and Career Aspirations*: The respondents strongly believed that urban areas offered better opportunities and far superior pathways for skill development and professional advancement than rural settings. Cities should provide specialized training programs and higher education institutions. Furthermore, they perceived the urban job market as a dynamic environment capable of offering structured career progression, higher earning potential, and long-term professional growth.

©. *Influence of Friends and Relatives*: Peer networks and kinship ties played a critical role in facilitating the migration process through the use of social capital. Friends who had already migrated encouraged him to move and helped him find accommodation and employment in the new destination. Beyond mere encouragement, these established migrants significantly lowered the risks and costs of relocation by providing vital logistics, including temporary accommodation and direct leads to initial employment.

Experiences in the Urban Area

Employment: Initially, the respondents worked in low-paying jobs. Over time, he gained experience and secured a more stable position with a higher income, which enabled him to support his family in the rural area. Remittances play a key role in reducing poverty and improving living standards (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009).

Accommodation: Finding affordable accommodation is difficult. The respondents shared a rented room with several other migrants (friends and relative) to reduce expenses. On the other hand, lack of privacy and shortage of space increased tension and stress for the respondent.

Social adjustment: Adapting to urban centres and lifestyle was challenging during the initial months. At the same time, social isolation was a common experience which effect the mental health of the new migrants. The major challenges included housing, high cost of living, job insecurity, homesickness, limited social support, and work-related stress. Despite these challenges, the respondents considered migration beneficial because it provided financial stability.

C. Socio-Economic Impact

Positive Impacts:

1) Economic Impacts:

- i. Increase in household income: Remittances sent by migrants significantly improve the economic condition of rural households in Mizoram.
- ii. Poverty Alleviation: Migration helps in reducing poverty level as families receive regular financial support.
- iii. Investment in assets: the money received is used for house construction, starting small businesses, patty shop, purchasing land and animals.

2) Social Impacts:

- iv. Better education: Remittances enable families to afford better education for children.
- v. Improved Healthcare: Families can access better healthcare facilities and afford medical treatment.
- vi. Migrants gain new skill and work experience in urban areas which they bring back to their villages.

3) Development Impacts:

- vii. Infrastructure Development: increased income leads to better housing, assets, sanitation and access to technology.
- viii. Women Empowerment: in the absence of male members in the family, women take up decision-making roles and manage finances.

Negative Impacts:

1) Social Impacts:

- i. Left-behind children: Children grow up without proper parental guidance, leading to behavioural and educational issues.
- ii. Family Disintegration: Due to long-term separation causes marital problems and increase divorce rates.
- iii. Old parents are left alone without proper care and support.

2) Economic impacts:

- i. Labour Shortage: Out-migration of youth leads to shortage of agricultural labour, especially in jhum cultivation.

- ii. Remittance Dependency: Families become dependent on remittances instead of developing local livelihood options.
- iii. Rising price: Increased income leads to inflation in local markets.

IV. FINDINGS

- 1) Economic reasons were the primary drivers of this migration.
- 2) Urban employment significantly increases income.
- 3) Migrants face housing and employment insecurity.
- 4) Remittances improve families' living standards.
- 5) Emotional and social challenges were significant.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Creating more employment opportunities in rural areas is essential.
- 2) Agricultural productivity can be improved through modern technology.
- 3) Provide vocational skill training to rural youth.
- 4) Strengthen social security and labour protection for migrants:
- 5) Expanding affordable housing in urban areas is essential.
- 6) Improving rural infrastructure, education, and healthcare.
- 7) Promote small-scale industries and entrepreneurship in villages:

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This case study of a 25-year-old male migrants from rural to urban in Mizoram highlights the complex nature of rural-urban migration. The primary causes of migration were economic distress, lack of local employment opportunities and the aspiration for a better standard of living. The migrant's experience reflects both struggle and adaptation in the initial phase, followed by economic stability through regular remittances. The socio-economic impacts of migration are two-fold. On the positive side, migration has led to a significant increase in household income, enabling investment in education, cleared debts, health and housing for the family left behind. It has also contributed to skill development and greater exposure for the migrant.

However, the negative impacts cannot be ignored. The absence of the young male member has increased the burden on elderly parents and created emotional stress within the family. At the community level, the out-migration of youth has resulted in labour shortages in agriculture and a weakening of social structure in the village (Chakravorty, 2012). Therefore, it can be concluded that while rural-urban migration serves as an important livelihood strategy for young individuals in Mizoram, it also poses serious social challenges. There is a need for policy interventions that focus on creating local employment opportunities and providing social support systems for left-behind families, so that migration becomes a choice rather than a necessity. Hence, to maximise the benefits of migration, the government must promote skill development and rural entrepreneurship to reduce distress migration.

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