



CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF OUT-MIGRATION: A STUDY IN MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The scenario of development and poverty in Murshidabad district make it as critical example of the peripheral region in the entire space of development. Entire district is considered as the pocket of chronic out migration. The backwardness of the district of West Bengal is reflected in the lower agricultural output, skewed distribution of land and higher incidence of landlessness, higher dependency on agriculture and lack of industrialization and several socio-economic and institutional barriers. The stagnation in all sectors of economy in the past led to lower per capita income and higher incidence of poverty in the state as well as India. The lack of infrastructure, institutional barriers and poor governance in the state has developed a milieu of underdevelopment. This situation is considered as the leading factor of heavy out-migration from the district of West Bengal. The current phenomenon of labour migration from the district can be traced back to recent few decades. This region started to experience labour out-migration at the earliest. This phenomenon is largely attributed to the pattern of regional inequality and underdevelopment. The migrants are reinforced to other district particularly Kolkata, other states in India and most recently to abroad. The level and trends, stream, duration, where to go, remittances, reasons of out migration and their socio-economic impact on environment are discussed in this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

The continuous flow of out-migrants from Murshidabad district has always been a part of not a scholar's interest but interested to the nation, as it became a metaphor of out-migration led by under-development, poverty and highly concentrated Muslim population. The violent reaction of the political class and host community of the migrants has further accelerated the debate on various issues regarding out-migration from the district. The migrants are facing more hostility from political class though the ongoing policy of urban planning, which is flipped towards the richer section of urban residents on the other hand it is also increasing difficulty to survival of poor migrants. In this context, it is important to understand the actual pattern of out-migration and its importance for the community of origin. Migration is an intrinsic part of process of development.

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It abbreviates a dynamic link between both area of origin and destination. Migration operates within the framework of social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends and it plays an important role to alter the conditions of the entire space within which this processes operate (de Haas, 2008). Migration is often rationalized as an outcome of asymmetry of development between area of origin and destination (N. Kumar & R.B. Bhagat). However, there is complete disagreement regarding the outcome of migration at area of origin (de Haan, 2000). The development list argued that with flow of migration, counter-flows of capital (remittances and investment) and knowledge are also generated to the area of origin, which can be vested and believed to subsequently stimulated development and modernization. Pessimist view believes that in the capitalist system, the process out-migrants from the area of origin is a part of the larger process of draining away of resources from an under-developed region to developing region and so on. The heaping of resources from periphery (underdeveloped region) to core area (developing region),

further accentuated in the development of under-development at periphery region (Hagen-Zanker 2008) are discussed. The recent literatures on out-migration however don't rule out the relationship between core and periphery on entire development space, but it emphasize on the critical role of remittance in the process of development at periphery (McDowell and de Haan 1997). In this study, the volumes, trends, patterns, causes and consequences of out-migration has been tried to focus on the mirror of world wide. The amount of remittance is also assessed and its role to support the household has been examined. The main source of data for the present study is Census of India, 2011 and NSSO 64th Round, 2007. Census data is very useful and authentic to understand the volumes, streams of out-migration because it based on complete enumeration. While, NSSO data give extensive information on causes of out-migration and remittance send back to the household.

Objectives

- To identify the stream of out migration from the district.
- To abstract the causes of out migration.
- To identify the use of remittances of the out migrants.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted in the 26 CD Blocks and 7 Municipalities in Murshidabad District where the percentage of out migration is high due to lack of employment and other source for consuming survival. From this point of view, selected using probability proportional to out migrants from selected blocks and Municipalities, 100 out migrant labourers were interviewed making a total sample of 3300 respondents. The data from selected respondents were collected by personal interview method using an especially designed schedule. All respondent out migrants were classified into various sides based on questionnaire schedule.

Level and trend of current out-migration from Murshidabad District

Total numbers of out-migrant and their proportion shares to the area of origin-by using the data of place of last residence of the block level household survey of the district which shows in table no-1. It shows that the volume of out-migration from Murshidabad district is very high. About 14.29% people are counted as out migrants from the district which is 2666 out of 18651 people from 26 CD Blocks and 7 Municipalities. In connection with table no-1 portrays 1823 male and 253 female out migrants from rural areas and 500 male and 90 female from urban areas are out migrant from the district (household survey). In addition to that, a slightly greater volume of out-migrants were captured by using the place of birth data. It shows that male population of Murshidabad is more out-migratory than female and male out-migrant comprises 12.46 per cent of total male population as against the 1.84 per cent of total female population. The propensity of urban migrant population of the district is slight high (16.02%) than rural population (13.87%); total out migrants from rural area comprise 12.18 per cent male and 1.69 per cent female of total rural population of the sample households, whereas out-migrants from urban area comprise 13.57 per cent male and 2.45 per cent of rural population of the households.

Table 1. Number and Percentage of Out-migrants from Murshidabad to Others

	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Male	1823	500	2323	12.18	13.57	87.13
Female	253	90	343	1.69	2.45	12.87
Total	2076	590	2666	13.87	16.02	14.29

Source: Household Survey.

Streams of out migration from Murshidabad district shows in Table 2. Place of last residence to place of enumeration from rural to urban comprises 55.34 per cent and urban to urban shares 7.38 per cent which indicates total place of enumeration in urban areas is 62.72 per cent. In view of other point rural to rural enumeration comprises 36.76 per cent and urban to rural shares only 0.52 per cent according to household survey of the district. Again, the Table reveals out-migration from the district is especially towards urban areas, which indicates more than sixty per cent of migrants move to urban areas of the others. Besides these, the table shows that about 59.73 percent male are enumerated from rural to urban and 33.14 per cent from rural to rural and 41.27 percent female from rural to urban and 54.50 per cent female are from rural to rural.

Table 2. Streams of Out-migration from Murshidabad district to the Others

Place of last residence	Place of Enumeration	Percentage of different streams			Sex Ratio
		Persons	Male	Female	
Rural	Urban	55.34	59.73	41.27	691
Urban	Urban	7.37	5.4	2.59	480
Total	Urban	62.71	65.13	43.86	673
Rural	Rural	36.76	33.14	54.5	1645
Urban	Rural	0.53	1.73	1.64	948
Total	Rural	57.29	34.87	56.14	1610
Total	Total	100	100	100	

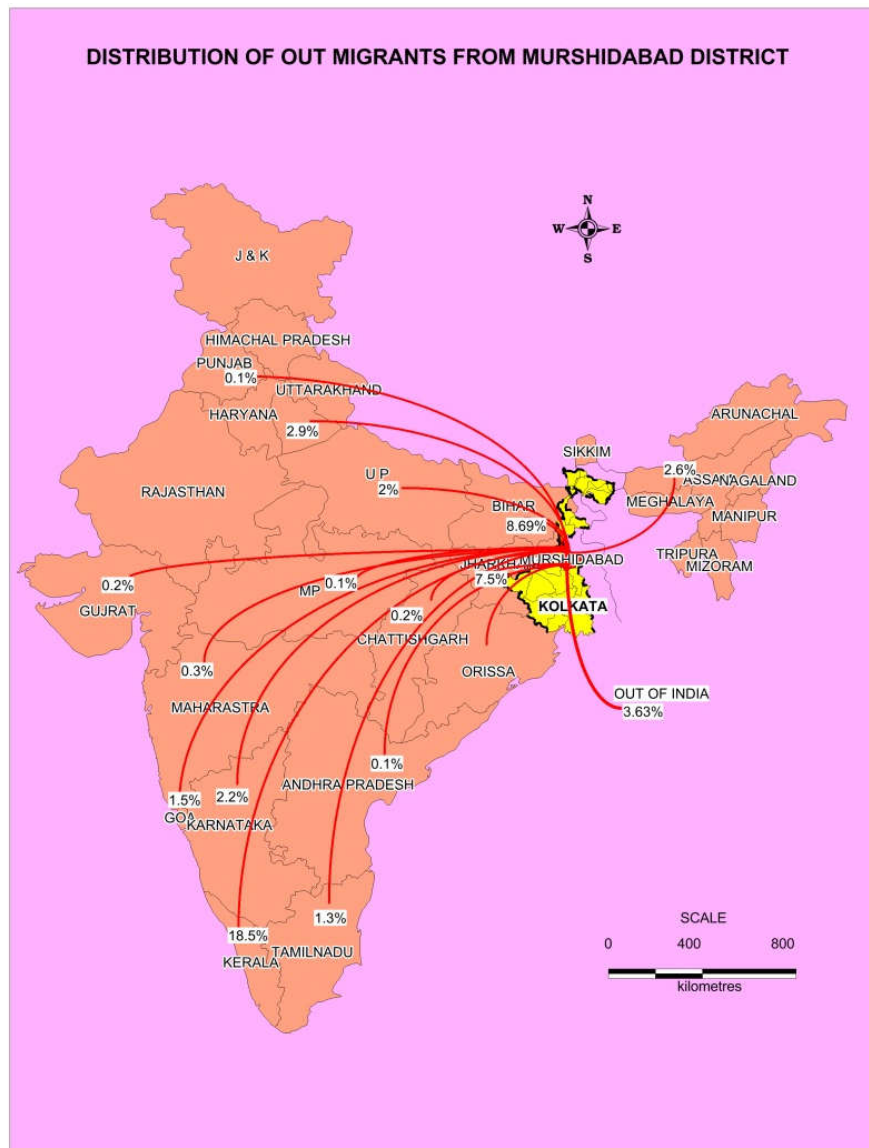
Source: Calculated from household survey.

Table 3 shows the duration of stay of out-migrants from their birth place to current temporary residence. A major chunk of out-migrants (62.98 per cent) is staying at their place of current residence for a period of less than 10 years, which is defined as inter-censal migrants. Among male out-migrants for proportion of inter-censal migrants is higher (around 68 per cent) than female out-migrants (around 65 per cent). Even among the last one year out-migrants, the proportion of male out-migrants is higher (around 18 per cent) than female migrants (around 17 per cent). The rural-urban difference of out migrants in duration of stay is not even, its shows that less than one year migrants are always high and simultaneously decreases to the duration of higher year of residence. Figure no 1 & 2 shows the place of destination of out-migrants and inter-censal migrants in the others as well as other district of West Bengal, other states of India and abroad. Migrants are mostly (about 42.98 per cent) enumerated in other district' of West Bengal particularly in Kolkata as labourer and tiny per cent as others. Besides these, the states where larger proportions of out-migrants is enumerated in Kerala (18.5 per cent), Bihar (8.69 per cent), Jharkhand (7.5 per cent), Orissa (5.2 per cent), Delhi (2.9 Per cent),) and Assam (2.6 per cent) and some states like Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Rajasthan indicated zero proportion of out migrants counted from Murshidabad district on the basis of door to door sample survey. It suggests that the direction of movement of out-migrants is decreasing from nearest to too far. Generally the district is situated in eastern part of the country so migrants are shifted from eastern India towards the other regions of the

Table 3. Duration of Residence of Out-migrants from Murshidabad district to others

Duration of residence	All Area			Rural			Urban		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Less than 1 year	62.98	67.35	64.76	60.93	63.57	52.6	70.17	60.23	59.69
1-4 year	23.71	18.2	17.38	26.4	20.38	22.51	14.24	17.24	19.5
5-9 year	9.26	10.4	15.6	9.25	12.6	18.6	9.32	6.93	9.89
10 year & above	4.05	4.05	2.26	3.42	3.45	6.29	6.27	15.6	10.92
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Household survey.

**Figure 1.**

country particularly southern and western part of the country. In case of other part of West Bengal and Kerala, maximum migrants are found particularly more dramatic in case of female out-migrants, who migrate for the purpose of marriage or with their households and for gaining more capitals for survive. Recently trends are followed that the migrants are going to abroad particularly Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Indonesia, Malaysia for achieving higher goal of out migrants. Among the 3300 households of Murshidabad district about 3.63 per cent are out migrant to abroad. These countries are highly benefitted by the out migrants. Those who are engaged as cleaner, industry labour, petrol pump care taker and so on and the migrants are highly gained by doing such type of work.

Reasons of Out-migration

The reasons of migration divide into six broad categories by the Census of India. These categories are work or employment, business, education, marriage, moved with house hold, moved after birth (associated with the custom of Hindu family). The household survey reveals the reasons of migration in a more comprehensive way, compared to census. It classifies the reasons of migration into 18 categories. Employment related reasons are also classified into six categories, which are in search of employment, in search of better employment, to take up employment or better employment, business, transfer of service or contract and proximity to place of work. Table 4 shows the reasons of migration on the basis of household survey.

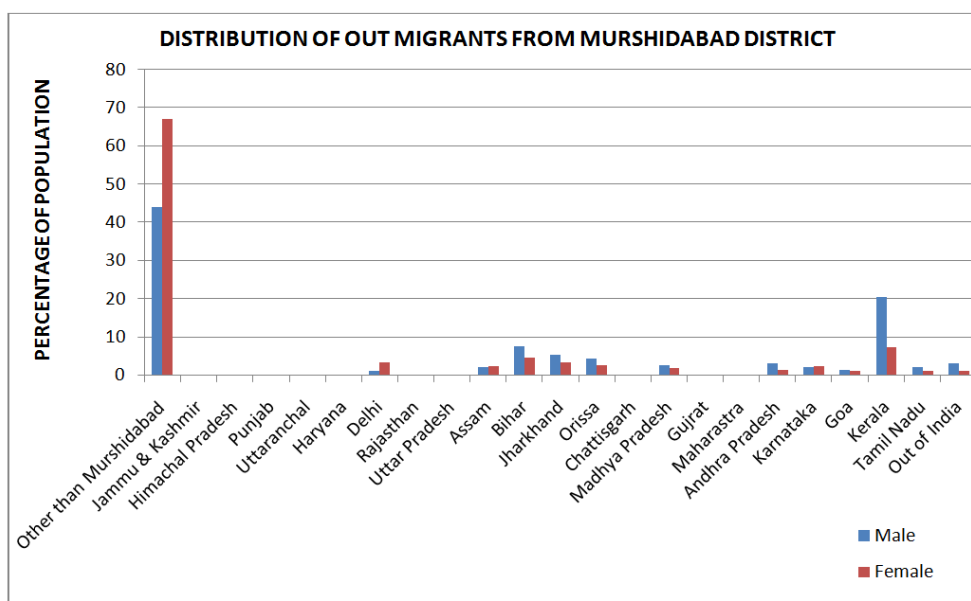


Figure 2.

Table 4. Reasons of Migration from Murshidabad district to Other States

Reasons of migration	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
In search of employment	35.62	2.5	32.3
In search of better employment	18.8	0.9	16.6
Business	2.3	0	4.6
To take up employment/ Better employment	21.58	1.9	19.6
Transfer of service/ Contract	2.1	0	1.2
Proximity to place of work	7.5	0.1	10.5
Studies	3.9	3.7	2.7
Health Care	0.6	0	0.6
Marriage	0	30.5	2.5
Migration of parent/Earning member of the family	4.7	59.5	5.7
Others	2.9	0.9	3.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: Calculated by the Author on the basis of household survey.

This Table reveals an entirely different reason of out-migration of male and female. The Table shows that heavy male out-migration from Murshidabad district is taking place exclusively for socio-economic or employment related reasons. About 32.3 per cent of the total out-migrants moved to search an employment, as they were not in employment at the place of origin. About 35.62 per cent of entire male out-migrants left their place of origin to get a better employment than their previous employment at their place of origin. Around 18.8 per cent of male out-migrants moved when they got an offer of employment or better employment at place of destination. Other important causes of male out-migration is migration of parent or earning member of the family (4.7 per cent), business (2.3 per cent), proximity to place of work (7.5 per cent) etc. The survey data also suggests that female out-migration is heavily depending upon either the migration of parent or earning member of the family (59.5 per cent) or marriage (30.5 per cent). About 3.7 per cent female out migrants are studies category. All the other economic reasons together are responsible for the move of only around 6 per cent female out-migrants.

Socio-economic background of male out-migrants household

The sample survey portrays the socio-economic characteristics of left behind households. It makes possible to understand the

socio-economic background of the household, from where the out-migration is taking place. In Table 5, the propensity of out-migration by the group of different socio-economic background has been shown. Among the migrants household, only those households are categorized from where at least one male member is migrated, the remaining households are categorized as non-migrants households. The out migrant's households are separated from the data and it is classified into other than Murshidabad district, other states and abroad. However, around 44 per cent of male out-migrants from the district are other than Murshidabad district out migrants, so the findings of out-migrants to all distance can be generalized to the other district particularly Kolkata out-migrants as well. Table 5 suggests that among the caste groups, the propensity to migrate is highest among general caste (38.2 per cent), among OBC household out-migration took place from 35.5 per cent household and among SC & ST households the proportion of out-migrants is the lowest (26.5 per cent). The land holding determines the socio-economic status of the household in rural area. The distress migration from rural area is correlated to the smaller size of holdings of a household, which force them to out-migrate in absence of productive assets to survive. But at the same time, it has also been argued that migrants are not exclusively from the lower socio-economic stratum, because the household of this stratum can't bear the costs associated to migration. Out-migration is highest (32.5 per cent) among the landless households (less than 0.005 hectare) compared to

marginal and small farmers (less than 0.2 hectares) and so on. Further, Table 6 also shows that richer households have higher propensity to migrate compared to poorer households. This finding is consistent with other studies based on macro level data.

Table 6 shows the contribution of remittances to total household received remittances. The contribution of remittance is equally important for all the section of household.

Table 5. Percentage of Households with any Male Out Migrants

	Household having any Male migrant		
	Yes	No	Total
Caste			
SC & ST	26.5	73.5	100
OBC	35.5	64.5	100
General	38.2	61.8	100
Land Holdings			
Less than 0.005	32.5	67.5	100
0.005-0.01	23.4	76.6	100
0.01-0.20	21.3	78.7	100
0.21-0.40	22.5	77.5	100
0.41-1.00	22.6	77.4	100
Greater than 1.00	13.5	86.5	100
MPCE Quintile Class			
Poorest	20.7	79.3	100
Poorer	22.6	77.4	100
Middle	20.2	79.8	100
Richer	27.5	72.5	100
Richest	32.6	67.4	100

Source: Calculated by the Author on the basis of household survey.

Table 6. Contribution of Remittances to Household Expenditure, Murshidabad District

MPCE Quintile Class	Percentage of households received remittances	% Contribution of remittances in household expenditure
Poorest	25.6	65
Poorer	22.3	52
Middle	20.2	40
Richer	17.5	42
Richest	14.4	45

Source: Calculated by the Author on the basis of household survey.

Table 7. Use of Remittances at the Household Level, Murshidabad district

Use of remittances	First Use	Second Use	Third Use
On food items	73.5	5.2	6.5
Other items on household consumer expenditure	5.1	28.6	25.6
Household durable	1.5	22.5	10.5
For improving housing condition	2.5	6.2	6.9
Marriage and other ceremonies	3.6	0.2	2.5
Health Care	8.6	11.5	26.5
Education of household members	2.5	21.5	4.1
Debt repayment	1.5	1.6	6.2
Financing working capital	0.1	0.2	2.2
Initiating new entrepreneurial activity	0.1	0.1	3.1
Saving/Investment	0.2	1.5	3.5
Others	0.8	0.9	2.4
Total	100	100	100

Source: Calculated by the Author on the basis of household survey.

Table 8. First Use of Remittances by Wealth Quintile in Murshidabad district

The first use of remittances	Poorest	Poorer	Middle	Richer	Richest
On food items	80.7	76.2	71.5	48.2	53.5
Other items on household consumer expenditure	7.6	6.5	7.9	12.5	10.6
Household durable	0.1	0.3	0.8	2.5	4.6
For improving housing condition	1	1.2	2.5	7.6	7.9
Marriage and other ceremonies	0.6	2.5	1.5	3	0.7
Health Care	2.5	4.2	5.4	10.5	6.3
Education of household members	0	0	0	1	6.5
Debt repayment	0.2	0.6	0.9	1	0.2
Financing working capital	0	0	0.2	0	0.5
Initiating new entrepreneurial activity	0	0	0	0	0.2
Saving/Investment	0	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.7
Others	7.3	7.6	8.8	13.1	8.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Calculated by the Author on the basis of household survey

In the poorest quintile, in which around 25.6 per cent of entire household receive remittances which contribute more than half (around 65 per cent) of total household expenditure. Even among the richest quintile, 14.4 per cent of them receive remittances which contribute to 45 per cent of their household expenditure. Middle quintile class received 20.2 per cent remittances and contribute to household expenditure is 40 per cent. Table 7 shows the first, second and third important uses of remittances in out migrant households who receive remittances. Around 73.5 per cent of household mentioned the first use of remittance for food items. Around 8.6 per cent of household used it for health care, and around 3.6 per cent used it for marriage and other ceremonies. The second use of the remittances reported by the households' shows that it was used to other items on household consumption (28.6 per cent), followed by household durable (22.5 per cent), education of the household members (21.5 per cent) and health care (11.5 per cent). The third use of remittances is mainly on other items of household consumer expenditure (25.6 per cent), health care (26.5 per cent) and household durables (10.5 per cent). Table 8 shows the differences in use of remittances to different wealth quintiles. Poorest households use remittances more for their need of food (80.7 per cent) compared to 53.5 per cent used among the richest households. The other items on household expenditure are also financed by remittances in a significant proportion, exclusively among the richer and richest households. The health care expenditure met by remittances is higher among richer and richest compared to poor and poorer households. However, the fact remains among the migrant households irrespective economic status, remittances are source important of food expenditure in Murshidabad district. Thus, the importance of remittances in mitigating food insecurity in the district is paramount and this must be recognized by policy makers.

Conclusion

Out-migration from Murshidabad district is a well-established phenomenon started back in the nineteenth century seems shouted up in the recent decade. The flow and direction of migration has also been altered in course of time and most of the migration is taking place towards the adjoining district particularly Kolkata, southern and western parts of India i.e. states like Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkhand, Bihar and Gujarat. The prime reason of such heavy out-flow is related to employment for their basic needs. People are migrating not only in the absence of employment at their native place but also to secure a better earning also. It seems that the out-migration for employment is taking place not only in poor and socially backward households but the members of relatively affluent households are also migrating either in the same proportion or even higher. Most of the household has received remittances sent by the migrants of the household. The remittances comprise almost half to one third of the household expenditure, irrespective of economic status of the households. It is mostly spent on food and other items of consumer expenditure, health care and education of the family members. The use of remittances for food and other basic needs is almost similar across the different quintile groups which suggest the importance of remittances for their survival as well as betterment across the economic classes. Remittances received through migration have provided an important cushion against food insecurity for many households in the district. There is also a social impact particularly on the lives of migrant families. The most

problematic issue is the temporary abandonment of minors by their labour migrant parents, and that forced authorities to formulate policies to monitor the situation. This must be noted by the policy makers while formulating programmes for mitigating insecurity of food.

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