Working Paper Series

An Array of Push and Pull Factors of Migration

13

OKD Institute of Social Change and Development

Guwahati, Assam

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1. Introduction

Migration, i.e. the movement of people from one location to another, is a fundamental process that has shaped societies throughout history. As per the 2011 Census, India had 45.6 crore migrants, accounting for 38 percent of the population, compared to 31.5 crore in 2001, which was 31 percent of the population. Infact the data shows a 45 percent increase in the number of migrants between 2001 and 2011, compared to an 18 percent growth in the overall population during the same period. Internal migration accounted for 99 percent of total migration while international migrants or immigrants accounted for only 1 percent of the total migrants.This trend underscores the growing internal mobility within India, driven by factors like urbanization, economic opportunities, education, and social reasons, while international migration remained minimal.

Studies have shown that three out of four homes in various parts of India are made up of migrants and two Indians out of ten are internal migrants (Jane, 2016). The effects of India's social, economic, and political circumstances are significantly impacted by the migration of labourers and their families. According to studies on internal migration population mobility declined upto the decade of the nineties while the post-reform era confirms a rise in internal migration (Kundu, 1996, Srivastava, 1998, Bhagat 2009). A number of conflicting variables have been identified for this rise in the labour migration rate. People are forced to relocate due to factors such as rising unemployment, resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and the depletion of natural resources. These push forces contrast with pull factors, such as better employment opportunities, wages, good educational facilities, urbanization, communication access, better transportation, and economic factors.

Driven by a variety of economic, social, political, and environmental factors, migration reflects individuals' quest for improved livelihoods, security, and well-being. Whether crossing international borders or moving within a country's boundaries, migration significantly influences the demographic, economic, and cultural landscapes of both the origin and destination regions. There are two broad reasons that induce rural migration. Migration for sustenance and migration for survival are the two main causes of labour

migration in rural areas. The first highlights the extreme social and financial struggles that rural workers encounter, the later implies a circumstance in which survival requires movement. The need to augment income to fill in the gaps caused by seasonal employment is the second motive for migration, which has its roots in subsistence as well (Jane, 2016).

Migration can also be voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary migration often involves individuals seeking better job opportunities, education, or healthcare services, typically associated with rural-to-urban migration within countries or labour migration across borders. Involuntary migration, on the other hand, often results from conflicts, natural disasters, or environmental degradation, forcing individuals to relocate for safety and survival. Both forms of migration have profound implications, impacting economic growth, labour markets, social services, and cultural integration.

As countries and regions experience varying degrees of economic and social development, migration trends continue to evolve. Rural areas with limited job prospects and infrastructure often see high outmigration rates, while urban centres, with their promise of opportunities and services, experience rapid population growth. This influx of people into urban areas can lead to both opportunities and challenges, as cities may face pressure on housing, infrastructure, and social services, while rural areas may experience demographic shifts and potential labour shortages.

Migration from rural to urban areas has long been a significant social and economic phenomenon, transforming the demographic landscape of developing countries like India. In Assam, rural-to-urban migration plays a pivotal role in shaping the economy, labour dynamics, and urban development. The transition from rural settlements to urban centres often reflects individuals' search for improved livelihoods, better education, healthcare, and enhanced social services. Yet, this shift is not merely an outcome of individual choices but also a complex interaction of various socio-economic, environmental, and cultural factors.

In India, five percent of female interstate migrants and fifty percent of male interstate migrants moved for jobs. In 2011, there were 4.5 crore migrant labourers, according to the Census 2011 data. The Working Group Report on Migration (2017), however, noted that the Census understates the number of migrant workers. Since family is the main motive for travel, female migration is documented as family-related. The number of women who migrate for work-related reasons does not, however, reflect the fact that many of them find jobs after their migration.The Economic Survey, 2016–17, also noted that census data understates the labour movement of temporary migrants and reported that an estimated six crore interstate labour migration took place during 2001-2011. Further during a five-year period 2011-2016 an average of 90 lakh people travelled for work (Economic Survey, 2006-2007). The NSSO calculated that seven crore people, or 29% of the workforce, were migrant workers in India in 2007–2008.

Mass migration from rural hinterlands to metropolitan hotspots has coincided with China's rapid economic expansion primarily along the shore. Migration for employment and education has historically been a phenomenon that coincides with economic structural change and has made it possible for "surplus labour" to be transferred from comparatively low-productive agricultural sectors to industries with better productivity. The remittance flows that follow boost household spending in the receiving areas and advance the less developed nations' economies. The Economic Survey 2016-17 observed that internal migration rates have fallen in Maharashtra and increased in Tamil Nadu and Kerala reflecting the growing pull of southern states in India's migration dynamics. At the same time, out-migration rates increased in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh which are relatively less developed states. Assam has witnessed a dip in out-migration from the state largely due to an increase in the number of welfare schemes of the state government and also because of the economic buoyancy witnessed by the state since the mid-term of the eleventh five-year plan.

Assam, with its diverse socio-cultural fabric and economic profile, experiences unique migration patterns shaped by both "push" and "pull" determinants. Rural areas, typically characterized by lower employment opportunities, agricultural dependency, and limited infrastructure, often serve as "push" factors, driving individuals to seek prospects in urban settings. Conversely, the perceived benefits of urban areas, such as higher wages, varied job opportunities, and improved living conditions, create "pull" factors that attract rural inhabitants.

This study aims to explore the determinants of rural-to-urban migration in Assam, analysing the multifaceted drivers behind this movement. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, this study explores how factors like employment, income disparities, education, and environmental conditions influence migration decisions. Understanding the causes and impacts of migration is crucial for policymakers, planners, and stakeholders, as migration touches various aspects of human development and social equity. By exploring the underlying factors of migration and analysing its consequences, societies can work toward developing balanced strategies that address migrants' needs and promote sustainable growth in both sending and receiving areas.

2. Types of Migration

Migration is inherently forward-looking: it entails having expectations for the migration endeavour (such as achieving certain goals) and making plans (regarding whether to stay or return) (Triandafyllidou, 2022). Studies related to migration contribute to a deeper understanding of mobility and different dynamics related to migration. It tends to cover a wide range of questions why people migrate, how migration takes place, and what the consequences are of migration in a broad sense, both for migrants themselves and for societies involved in migration.

Migration is often triggered by various factors at certain life stages, with available livelihood options potentially leading to temporary or permanent relocation (Scholten et al., 2022). Migration motivations are complex and can be categorized into "root causes," "drivers," and "determinants" (Carling & Talleraas, 2016). Root causes, such as poverty, political oppression, or conflict, represent the fundamental social and political reasons people leave their home regions. Drivers encompass broader influences on migration decisions, including social networks and access to information, which go beyond root causes.

The classification of migration based on time, geography, and motive provides a structured way to study its patterns and trends. This section explores the different dimensions of migration and highlights its significance in the context of changing societal and economic landscapes.

Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI) defined migration as "A person, whose last usual place of residence was different from the present place of enumeration on the date of enquiry has been considered as migrant". A usual place of residence is defined as the location (village or town) where an individual has lived continuously for at least 6 months or plans to live for at least 6 months.

Migration can be categorized under different heads based on the nature of time, geographic boundary, and motive (Scholten, 2022). Based on time it can be grouped under the heads of temporary migration, circular migration, seasonal migration, and spontaneous migration which are often used interchangeably (Keshri & Bhagat, 2012). All these motives are short-term in nature. Temporary or circular migration is a move made for a short period of time with the intention of returning to the place of usual residence.

Time is an important factor when discussing the nature of migration. It defines the nature of migration whether short-term or long-term (Triandafyllidou, 2022). In the context of migration, the experience of time can be viewed as "heteronomous", meaning it is influenced by external factors or others. For instance, employers determine working hours; institutions dictate the rhythm of public life, holidays, or festivities, and other people shape the pace of social activities during one's free time, as suggested by Cwerner (2001). Over time, the immigrant community begins to exhibit values and ambitions that closely align with those of the native population, particularly regarding time.

A significant segment of temporary migration comprises seasonal migrants, who move between various locations based on the demand for labour during different seasons (Keshri & Bhagat, 2010). Moreover, based on geographical or political boundaries, one can categorise migration as international migration, inter-state migration and intra-state migration, and so on.

While there are many types of migration, economic studies primarily focus on two main categories: (1) internal (or domestic) migration and (2) international (or overseas) migration. In contrast to international migration, internal migration is challenging to track due to the absence of registration and documentation at both the point of origin and the destination (Rajan, 2023). The rate of migration between two locations is inversely related to the distance between them. Initially, migration will occur to nearby areas, followed by moves to rapidly growing cities and eventually to distant places. Technological advancements tend to encourage higher rates of migration (Ravenstein, 1885).

According to the 2011 census data, as Aggarwal et al. (2020) pointed out, the total number of interstate migrants in India was nearly 54 million. States in northern, western, and southern regions of India typically receive interstate migrants, whereas eastern states generally send them to those regions. According to estimates from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLSF) 2018–2019, approximately 18.8 million people residing in rural areas work in urban India. Earnings from urban employment account for 19.3% of total non-farm income in rural areas. Among all rural workers, 7.3% commute from rural to urban areas, while only 2.1% of urban workers commute from urban to rural areas (Bhatt, 2020). Rural migrants contribute significantly to the urban informal sectors (Misra, 2022).

Internal migration is categorized into four streams: i) rural to rural, ii) urban to rural, iii) rural to urban, and iv) urban to urban (PFLS, 2021). The first category, rural-to-rural migration, holds the majority with 55 percent in India. This dominance is largely attributed to female migration, which constitutes 63 percent of this stream, primarily due to marriage (93.8 percent). Similarly, in Assam, rural-to-rural migration represents a substantial share, accounting for 35.4 percent of inter-district migration as per the 2011 census (Kazi, 2020). The likelihood of female out-migration in Assam is also notably higher due to marriage (Deka, 2019).

3. Theoretical Background

The pioneer work done in the field of migration is often credited to the work of geographer Ernst Ravenstein in the 1880s, and his Laws of Migration (1885). His work lays the foundation to understand migration from the economic point of view. The study on international migration on the other hand can be traced back to the work of Znaniecki & Thomas (1927). The study contains an in-depth analysis of the lives of Polish migrant families which happen to be the biggest immigrant group in America at that time.

The studies for migration began to formalise and expand more in the 1950s (Scholten et al., 2022). Neoclassical migration theory, for instance, Sjaastad's (1962) cost-benefit model, and Lee's (1966) push-pull model of migration, proposes that individuals migrate because of the

economic opportunity differences between their current location and a potential destination. The decisions regarding whether to migrate and where to go are influenced by significant income or utility disparities between locations. People are likely to migrate if the expected benefits outweigh the costs.While neoclassical studies generally explain overall migration flows between different locations effectively, they have been criticized for not accounting for why most people do not migrate despite large income differences (Bogue, 1977). One reason for immobility is that migrants are not solely influenced by wage gaps or differences in livelihoods between places. Instead, their decisions about whether and where to move are guided by their agency and self-determination (Bogue, 1977).

Another criticism of the neoclassical migration model is its methodological individualism, which assumes that individuals are the primary decision-makers. In reality, individuals are part of households and communities that influence or even make these decisions (Boyd, 1989). The study of personal networks in migration sheds light on the social relationships involved in migratory behaviour. It offers insights into the composition, direction, and persistence of these networks. Harbison (1981) contends that family structure and function are not just additional factors to consider. Families play a crucial role in conveying information and shaping individuals' motivations, values, and migration norms, thereby influencing migration decision-making both directly and indirectly. Family ties represent significant social externalities that impact migration decision-making (Mincer, 1978). For example, strong connections to the place and people of origin create negative externalities that reduce the likelihood of migration. Conversely, family and friends living elsewhere provide positive externalities by sharing valuable information, thereby decreasing the uncertainty associated with migration (Stark & Bloom, 1985). In short, migration decisions are frequently made collaboratively by both the migrant and a group of non-migrants.

Studies indicate that household size and family structure impact migration patterns, and they highlight the significant role that families can play in migration decision-making (Meyer, 2018). Household size influences the internal migration of family members to other rural or urban areas. This migration often aims for family members to work in different economic sectors to diversify risk and stabilize household income (Gubhaju & De Jong, 2009). Larger households tend to have family members migrate to various locations, both rural and urban, to find work in different economic sectors. This strategy helps spread out potential risks and ensures a more consistent household income. For example, if one sector faces economic difficulties, other family members working in different sectors can still support the household financially.

Migration is also associated with some gender-specific issues. The presence of children or elderly dependents tends to increase migration among men but decrease migration among women, highlighting the gender-based division between work and care giving responsibilities

(De Jong, 2000). Conversely, the presence of elderly non-dependent family members boosts female migration, as it allows women to engage in the labour market (Danzer & Dietz, 2014).

Attitudes, views, and perceptions about one's own country, along with the desire to reside in another country, play a role in determining if and where individuals choose to migrate (Schapendonk, 2012). Emotions and feelings, often combined with more concrete factors, also influence migration decisions (Boccagni & Baldassar, 2015). Nonetheless, intangible attitudes and perceptions generally appear to be secondary to more tangible socio-economic resources or demographic factors, such as a person's age or marital status.

Additionally, migrant networks and transnational communities have long been acknowledged as major drivers of migration by offering information and practical support. These networks are often quantified by the number of prior migrants from the same family, town, region, or country at the destination. Empirical studies have consistently confirmed the significance of networks and social ties in explaining various forms and patterns of migration (Bertoli & Ruyssen, 2018; Haug, 2008). However, migration can also occur without networks, emphasizing the influence of other migration drivers (Sue et al., 2018). The importance of networks grows with restrictive migration policies, as established migrants can serve as gatekeepers and bridgeheads (Carling, 2004). Nonetheless, networks may become irrelevant if migration is viewed as too difficult (Collyer, 2005). Additionally, networks do not always enhance migration since new migrants may compete with established migrants for jobs and resources (Heitmueller, 2006).

Conversely, a steadily increasing immigrant population can have negative effects. Migration inherently reduces the expected income disparities between the sending and receiving countries through geographical movement. Building on Todaro's (1969) work, individuals migrate in pursuit of higher anticipated incomes. Consequently, the potential benefits diminish over time as the expected income differences between the sending and receiving countries are levelled out. This phenomenon highlights a crucial aspect of migration dynamics: while initial migrations might offer substantial economic benefits for individuals, the cumulative effect of continuous migration can gradually erode these advantages, leading to a more balanced but less economically differentiated global landscape (Heitmueller, 2006). This shows the importance of considering both the short-term and long-term economic impacts of migration on both sending and receiving countries.

Classical economists from Smith to Marx, it was either assumed or argued that an unlimited supply of labour was available at subsistence wages. On the Neoclassical part, Lewis believed that underdeveloped countries have an unlimited supply of labour available at subsistence wages. He argued that economic development stems from capital accumulation, which is fuelled by transferring surplus labour from the subsistence sector to the capitalist sector (Gollin,

2014). Lewis upheld the classical assumption that labour supply is perfectly elastic in many underdeveloped countries, where the marginal productivity of labour is negligible, zero, or even negative due to an excess labour force. This abundant labour supply enables the industrial sector to expand and create new industries by attracting labour from the subsistence sector at the prevailing wage rate.

The Neoclassical migration theory suggests that people migrate either to exploit economic opportunities in their destination or because their origin lacks such opportunities. Their goal is to maximize their expected income or overall well-being (Todaro, 1969; Lews, 1954). There is a nexus between development and migration. Some even argue whether development will stop migration or not (Castles, 2009; De Haas, 2007). There is a widely held belief in popular and political circles that promoting economic development in the Global South can curb migration to the North (Castles 2009). According to this view, migration from economically disadvantaged regions to wealthier ones is undesirable, and people in the Global South should remain in their home countries. This shows "sedentary bias," highlighting its continuity with historical colonial policies that mobilized labour for industries while discouraging permanent urban settlement. European policymakers and academics often focus on migration flows from Africa, framing their efforts to reduce these flows as development-oriented policies. In contrast, many migration scholars argue that human mobility is a natural aspect of social transformation, allowing individuals to enhance their livelihoods. From this perspective, migration represents a form of agency rather than a problem to be solved.

Harris & Todaro (1970) explored the significant issue of widespread urban unemployment, particularly in less developed countries. They highlighted the excessive migration of labour from rural to urban areas, driven by the persistent income disparities between these regions.

Economic development, often measured by GDP per capita, can initially lead to increased internal migration from rural to urban areas or across international borders. This occurs as previously immobile potential migrants overcome poverty-related constraints (Clemens, 2014). The connection between economic development and migration is often characterized by an inverted-U pattern or what researchers refer to as a 'migration hump'(Sanderson & Kentor, 2009). This phenomenon occurs as societies experience the 'mobility transition' (Zelinsky, 1971).

Migrants are drawn to destinations with higher income levels and wage differences (Ortega & Peri, 2013). This succinctly captures the idea that economic factors, particularly income disparities, play a significant role in influencing migration patterns. When income prospects are better at a particular destination, it acts as a magnet for people seeking improved livelihoods. Moreover, migrants originating from developing countries exhibit a notably pronounced

preference for destinations with higher income levels (Ruyssen et al., 2014). Differences in living costs and conditions, housing standards, and overall quality of life and lifestyles motivate various types of migration. This includes both internal and international migration, regular and irregular migration, and the movement of both low-skilled and highly skilled migrants (Baizán & González, 2016; De Haas, & Fokkema, 2011).

Although evidence on the precise relationship between migration and poverty is mixed (Black et al., 2006), there is a consensus that the poorest individuals are generally not the ones who migrate. Much like the migration-development relationship, poverty and migration may also exhibit an inverse U-shaped pattern (Du et al., 2005).The initial response to whether unequal societies exhibit higher migration rates is nuanced. It hinges upon the specific form of inequality. In societies with divisions, both vertical (within social groups) and horizontal (across social groups) inequalities are typically witnessed. However, this distinction has often been overlooked in studies exploring the relationship between inequality and migration. Hence, migration patterns are influenced not only by absolute deprivation and poverty but also by relative deprivation and the sense of being disadvantaged compared to an internal or international peer or reference group (Czaika, 2013).

The relationship between mobility and public infrastructure is closely intertwined. While robust and efficient infrastructure can lower transportation costs and encourage migration, it may also reduce migration tendencies by offering improved economic prospects (Castaing, 2013). However, when considering student mobility, the quality of educational infrastructure plays a significant role. Students move within their own country or across borders due to factors such as university reputation, scholarships, and living costs, emphasizing that educational opportunities are a major driver of migration (Beine, 2014).

4. Review of Literature

Comparative studies have primarily examined integration policies at the national level and/or with a focus on international migration, while internal migration holds significant importance in developing countries. Migration is one of the primary livelihood strategies employed by the poorest segments of rural people in a developing country like India, primarily taking the form of seasonal labour mobility (Keshri & Bhagat, 2012). This kind of labour mobility helps to diversify risk during the lean agricultural season. In India, migration behaviour is found to be different across different social backgrounds. The SC and STs tend to migrate more compared to other social categories (Mazumdar et al., 2013; Mosse et al., 2005; Keshri & Bhagat, 2012).

Baizan & González, (2016) finds that education significantly influences Senegalese migration patterns. Individuals with only primary education or less are less likely to migrate. However,

increased educational opportunities can boost an individual's ability to migrate by overcoming social and economic barriers, enhancing social status, raising aspirations for a better quality of life, and improving access to employment opportunities at the destination. Nonetheless, this pattern is not universal. In some regions, including Assam, a lower level of education correlates with a higher likelihood of migration compared to those with higher education levels (Deka, 2019). Therefore, migration tendencies may vary based on the socio-economic characteristics of different areas.

In India, women have higher migration rates than men. According to the 2011 census, 70 percent of women migrate due to marriage, compared to just 4.3 percent who migrate for employment-related reasons. However, it is observed that among women who migrated for marriage or because a family member moved for work, nearly 35 percent in rural areas and 14 percent in urban areas participate in the active workforce (Chandrasekhar et al., 2017).

Regional differences in temporary migration are notably prevalent in India. States such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Nagaland experience high levels of migration. Disparities in employment opportunities across different regions in India are a major factor driving regional migration (Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2005; Keshri & Bhagat, 2012). The rapid pace of urbanisation demands more labour force and pushes the wage rates upward which in turn lures rural labours into that region. Interstate migration is essential for balancing surpluses and shortages in the national labour market, and this need is expected to increase in the medium term. Although migrants from other states have not always been welcomed in the past, there is a growing recognition in the receiving states that they need these workers and must treat them better (Krishnamurty, 2020).

The north-eastern states of India have received comparatively less attention in discussions about migration. These states have a long history of welcoming people from neighbouring eastern countries, characterized by diverse races and cultures, due to their natural resources. Presently, Assam, a state in the northeast, is experiencing dual roles as both a receiving and sending state. The state is grappling with conflicts arising from undocumented immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh (Das, 2016; Saikia & Choudhury, 2021). Although this is largely a political issue, the substantial undocumented immigration adds pressure on available resources. Over time, Assam has been developing, and gaining recognition, particularly through the "Act East Policy," which aims to establish it as a corridor to Southeast Asian countries (Barua, 2020). Deka (2019) noted the development across its districts has been uneven, leading to increased inter-district migration. The majority of people from rural areas in Assam migrate in search of employment. Moreover, out-migration is influenced by a combination of various factors, rather than a single one, that collectively determines whether a person will migrate.

5. Research Gap

Numerous studies have identified regional disparities as a major driver of migration (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022; Bhagat & Keshri, 2020; Polese, 1981). These disparities can manifest in various forms, including wage rates, expected income, employment opportunities, and living standards, as well as other socioeconomic factors such as freedom, well-being, power, and prestige (Faist, 2016). On a global scale, it has been observed that migration from low-income to high-income countries is often driven by differences in wages and employment opportunities (Plotnikova & Ulceluse, 2022). In India, both inter-state and rural-to-urban migration is increasing (Bhagat & Keshri, 2020). Das & Saha (2013) explained the same trend by highlighting developmental disparities across states. Their findings are consistent with those of Plotnikova & Ulceluse (2022), showing that people migrate from less developed to more developed areas. Specifically, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh exhibit significant levels of out-migration compared to other states, as their secondary and tertiary sectors have failed to absorb the rural population, leading to increased migration.

There is a lack of studies on migration within Assam, although many focus on immigration from neighbouring Bangladesh, often with a political perspective (Sarma, 2015; Nath & Nath, 2011). Beyond these politically motivated articles, works by Deka (2019), Basumatari (2014), and Das (2023) explore migration from an economic standpoint, emphasizing patterns and factors influencing migration.

6. Research Objectives

Based on the identified research gap, the following research objective is proposed:

- To identify and analyse the push and pull factors that determine migration decisions

7. Method of Sample Collection

Migration data in India are primarily available from two major secondary sources: 1. Census data collected by the Registrar General of India. 2. Survey data includes employment/unemployment surveys or migration surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). However, this study is primarily based on primary data collection. The study focuses on specific districts with the higher numbers of migrants according to Census, 2011 migration data.

7.1 Selection of Study Area

For this study, a multi-stage sampling method was used for the collection of primary data. First, districts were carefully chosen based on some specific criteria. First, districts with the higher number of migrants are chosen as per Census, 2011 data on migration. Secondly,

the study included one district from each geographical division of Assam except the Barak Valley and Hill regions. A district from Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) is also included in order to analyze the pattern of migration among the tribal communities. Bodos are the single largest community among the notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam. They constitute about 5-6% of Assam's population (Baro & Dutta, 2014).

Selected Districts

Table 1: Number of HHs (Migrants + Non-migrants) for each district

District	Frequency
Barpeta	181
Kokrajhar	185
Hojai	200
Dhemaji	204
Golaghat	208
Total	**978**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

In the second stage, two or three blocks were randomly selected from each chosen district. Then two to five villages were selected from the respective blocks depending on the house listing in the villages. In the final stage, a total of 978 households were collected randomly (containing 3498 individuals) across these selected districts. Table 1 shows the number of households for each districts.

7.2 Sampling Methodology

The sample households were selected using Simple Random Sampling without replacement.

7.3 Data Collection

The primary data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with six sections to capture comprehensive information about the households and their migration patterns.

7.4 Structure of the Questionnaire

Section 1 covered the background information (name of village, block, district, place of residence, religion, social group, household size) of the households.

Section 2 included household characteristics (principal occupation, industry of occupation, land possession, migration status, location of usual place of location, pattern of migration, reason for

migration, and household consumption expenditure of the household) of households.

Section 3 covered information related to demographic information like relation, age, sex, marital status, migration status, and education; and economic information which included primary occupation, secondary occupation, industry of occupation, nature of occupation, duration, work days, place of work, and income earned.

Section 4 covered information related to occupational shift like details of previous occupation, duration, and reason forshifting of the household members.

Section 5 covered information related to out-migration which includes place of residence, the reason for migration, the period since leaving the place of residence, the status of engagement, remittance and use of remittance, etc.

Section 6 included the details of non-workers, their working status, unpaid work, non-work income, etc.

Section 7 focussed on housing conditionsand asset possession of the household.

8. Sample Profile

The sample profile provides an insightful overview of the demographic characteristics of the individuals involved in the study, including their age, sex, education, social group, and marital status. Examining these key variables provides a deeper understanding of the participants' socio-economic backgrounds and the diverse factors influencing their experiences. This comprehensive profile offers a foundation for analysing the broader trends related to migration and employment, particularly how these factors intersect with the decision-making processes of individuals and households.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by age group and gender (n=3498)

Sex/ age group	15-25	26-35	36-45	46-59	60 and above	Total
Male	15.9	13.6	7.4	11.4	5.3	53.6
Female	13.1	9.8	8.4	11.1	4.0	46.4
Total	**29.0**	**23.5**	**15.7**	**22.5**	**9.3**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

In the demographic profile, the distribution across different age groups and sex can be observed in the data presented in Table 2. The data highlights the proportion of males and females in each age category, reflecting the overall structure of the population.

Each 10-year interval corresponds to distinct life stages and socio-economic roles. For example, the 15-25 age group typically encompasses late adolescence and early adulthood, a period characterized by education, entry into the workforce, and other significant life transitions. The 26-35 group usually represents early career development, family formation, and greater economic responsibilities. By structuring the age groups in this manner, the analysis can better capture the distinct challenges and behaviours associated with each stage of life.

For the age group 15-25, males constitute 15.9% of the total population, while females account for 13.1%. This age group, being the youngest among those surveyed, represents a combined total of 29%, making it the largest group in the data set. In the 26-35 age group, males make up 13.64%, and females constitute 9.8%. The combined total for this group is 23.5%, which indicates a slight decline in the population share as the age increases. In the 36-45 age bracket, the male population accounts for 7.4%, and the female population is slightly higher at 8.35%. Together, this age group contributes 15.7% to the overall population, which is lower compared to the younger age groups. For the 46-59 age group, males make up 11.4% of the population, while females are slightly lower at 11.1%. This age group has a combined total of 22.5%, indicating that nearly a quarter of the population falls within this middle-to-older age range. Finally, in the elderly age group, 60 and above, males account for 5.3%, while females make up 4%. The total contribution of this age group is 9.3%, reflecting the smallest population share among all age categories.

Overall, males represent 53.6% of the sample, while females constitute 46.4%, resulting in a total population distribution of 100%. This distribution reveals that the population is fairly balanced between the sexes, with a slight male majority. The data also shows that the younger age groups constitute a larger portion of the sample, while the sample gradually decreases with increasing age.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of respondents by social group and status of migration (n=3498)

Social group	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	2.8	10.5	13.3
Scheduled Caste (SC)	4.0	13.8	17.8
Other Backward Class (OBC)	8.9	32.3	41.2
General	5.3	22.4	27.8
Total	**21.0**	**79.0**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 3 presents the distribution of migrants and non-migrants across different social groups. Among the total sample, Other Backward Classes (OBC) make up the largest portion, with 41.2% of the population, including 8.9% migrants and 32.3% non-migrants. Scheduled Castes (SC) follow, comprising 17.8% of the population, with 4% being migrants. The General category

accounts for 27.8% of the total, with 5.3% migrants. Scheduled Tribes (ST) represent the smallest group, contributing 13.3% to the total, with 2.8% migrants. The data suggests that migration is more prevalent among the OBC group, while the ST group shows the lowest migration rates.

Table 4: Percentage distribution of the respondents by marital status (n=3498)

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Never married	972	27.8
Currently married	2,312	66.1
Widowed	200	5.7
Divorced/separated	14	0.4
Total	**3,498**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The data in Table 4 highlights that a substantial majority of the people, 66.1%, are currently married, showing a dominant category in the dataset. In contrast, 27.8% of the population has never married. Additionally, 5.7% are widowed, and 0.4% are divorced or separated, illustrating various life transitions and experiences related to marital status. Overall, the distribution provides insight into the significant role of marriage and the diversity of marital situations within the community.

Table 5: Percentage distribution of the respondents by household size

Household size	Frequency	Percent
Single-person household	9	0.3
Nuclear family (2-4 members)	1715	49.0
Extended family (5-7 members)	1552	44.4
Large extended family (8-10 members)	222	6.2
Total	**3498**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The data on household size offers a detailed view of the distribution of household types within the population (*Table 5*). A very small fraction, just 0.3% (9 households), are single-person households, indicating that living alone is relatively rare. The majority of households fall into the "Nuclear Family" category, which includes 49% (1,715 households) with 2 to 4 members. This suggests that smaller family units are the most common household structure. A significant portion, 44.4% (1,552 households), are "Extended Families," which consist of 5 to 7 members, highlighting a strong presence of households that include additional family members beyond the nuclear family. Additionally, 6.2% (222 households) are classified as "Large Extended Families," with 8 to 10 members, reflecting a smaller but notable proportion of households that encompass larger family networks. This distribution illustrates a predominance of both nuclear and extended family households, with large extended families being less common but still present.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of the respondents by their income category and industry of occupations (n=1618)

Monthly Wage (000's)	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
0-5	9.8	1.3	2.9	14.0
5-10	5.5	3.0	9.3	17.8
10-20	5.8	28.4	20.5	54.8
20-30	0.4	1.9	3.9	6.2
30-40	0.1	0.0	1.9	2.0
40-50	0.0	0.1	2.2	2.3
50 and above	0.0	0.1	2.9	3.0
Total	**21.6**	**34.7**	**43.7**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The distribution of income across different economic sectors- primary, secondary, and tertiary, provides insights into the income associated with each sector (Table 6). In the income bracket of 0-5 thousand, the primary sector dominates, with 9.8% of individuals earning within this range. This indicates that lower income levels are more common among those engaged in primary sector activities such as agriculture. The secondary sector accounts for 1.3% in this bracket, while the tertiary sector represents 2.9%, reflecting a lower presence of lower-income earners in the manufacturing and service sectors at this income level.

The 5-10 thousand income range shows a shift with the primary sector contributing 5.5%, the secondary sector 3%, and the tertiary sector 9.3%. This suggests that individuals in the tertiary sector, which includes services and retail, begin to represent a larger proportion of this income bracket compared to the primary sector, indicating a higher presence of moderate earners in service-related fields.

A significant concentration is observed in the 10-20 thousand income bracket, where the primary sector comprises 5.8%, the secondary sector 28.4%, and the tertiary sector 20.5%. This bracket includes the highest percentage of individuals, particularly those in the secondary sector, reflecting that manufacturing and construction industries have a substantial representation in mid-range incomes.

In higher income brackets such as 20-30 thousand, the primary sector's share drops to 0.4%, while the secondary and tertiary sectors account for 1.9% and 3.9%, respectively. The 30-40 thousand and 40-50 thousand brackets continue this trend, with the primary sector contributing minimally (0.1% and 0%, respectively), and the secondary and tertiary sectors having a slight increase, particularly in the tertiary sector with 1.9% in the 30-40 thousand bracket and 2.2% in the 40-50 thousand brackets. Finally, the 50 thousand and above income range shows no

primary sector representation (0%), while the secondary and tertiary sectors account for 0.1% and 2.9%, respectively. This indicates that better income earners are predominantly from the tertiary sector, which includes highervalue service industries.

Overall, the data reveals that individuals in the tertiary sector are more likely to reach higher income levels compared to those in the primary sector, highlighting the economic benefits associated with service-oriented professions.

Table 7: Migration status of the respondents (n=3498)

Migration status	Frequency	Percent
Migrant	734	21.0
Non-migrant	2,764	79.0
Total	**3,498**	**100**

Source: Primary survey, 2022

Table 7 provides a comprehensive overview of migration patterns within the sample. Out of a total of 3498 individuals, 734 are identified as migrants, accounting for 21% of the population. This indicates that a relatively small but significant portion of the population has migrated, while the majority, 2,764 individuals (79%), have not migrated.

Table 8: Percentage distribution of migrants by destination (n=734)

Destination	Percent
Same state and within the same district	10.8
Same state but another district	32.0
Outside the state	56.5
Another country	0.4
Not known	0.3
Total	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Further analysis of the destinations of migrants reveals varied patterns of movement as shown in Table 8. A majority of migrants, 56.5%, have moved outside their state, suggesting a significant trend of inter-state migration. This may reflect economic opportunities or other factors that compel individuals to seek opportunities beyond their immediate geographical area.

In contrast, 32% of migrants have moved within the same state but to a different location, indicating a tendency for intra-state migration, which could be driven by job transfers, family reasons, or other factors. A smaller proportion, 10.8%, have migrated within the same state but to a different district or locality, showing that while some individuals remain within their

state, they are still relocating for various reasons. Migration to another country is minimal, with only 0.4% of migrants choosing this route. Additionally, 0.3% of the migration destinations are not known, indicating some uncertainty or lack of data regarding the exact destination of these migrants by the respondent. This category often includes cases where respondents are unsure about the specific whereabouts of a family member who has migrated. This is common with older individuals, such as grandparents, who may not have detailed information about the current location of their family members.

In short, the data highlights that while a significant proportion of individuals do migrate, the majority of these migrations are intra-state or inter-state rather than international, with the most common destination being outside the state.

9. Analytical Methodology

Data analysis

The data were processed and analysed using statistical software like Microsoft Excel and STATA. To examine the determinants of migration, various cross-tabulations, descriptive statistics, and a regression model were used. As migration and non-migration are binary responses, the binary logistic regression model is the most suitable method to examine the determinants of migration. The logistic function f(z) describes the probability of migration occurrence and is defined as:

$$f(z) = \frac{e^z}{1+e^z} = \frac{1}{1+e^{-z}}$$

The function ranges from zero to one, where "z" represents a linear combination of predictor variables (independent variables) and their respective coefficients, which influence migration. The model is expressed as:

$$z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots + \beta n Xn$$

Here, β_0 denotes the model coefficient, i.e., the intercept or constant, while β_1 to β_n are coefficients representing the contribution of predictor variables X_1 to X_n influencing migration. These coefficients are unknown and are estimated based on the relationship between the independent variables and migration conditions, using the maximum likelihood approach. This approach is derived from the probability distribution of the dependent variable, which in this case is migration. The independent variables are spatially represented as thematic layers, illustrating each factor influencing migration. The value of "z" varies between $-\alpha$ and $+\alpha$, serving as an index to combine the various independent variables responsible for migration occurrence. Sample observations are used to fit a multiple logistic regression model, where the coefficients $\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2 \ldots\ldots \beta_n$ are estimated and utilized to ascertain migration probability.

Let Y be the dependent variable where Y=1 if the person has migrated and Y=0 otherwise.

The logistic regression model can be expressed as:

$$\text{logit } P = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ age} + \beta_2 \text{ age}^2 + \beta_3 \text{ sex} + \beta_4 \text{ marital status} + \beta_5 \text{ ST} + \beta_6 \text{ SC} + \beta_7 \text{ OBC} + \beta_8 \text{ religion} + \beta_9 \text{ middle} + \beta_{10} \text{ secondary} + \beta_{11} \text{ HS} + \beta_{12} \text{ Graduation and above} + \beta_{13} \text{ Land holding}$$

Where:

Logit P= $\ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right)$ represents the log-odds of the probability of migration

β_0 is the intercept term

β_1 through β_n are the coefficients for each independent variable

n denotes 1, 2, 3,……

Age and Age Squared: Measured in years; age squared is included for non-linear effects.

Land Possess: Total land possessed at the survey date (in hectares).

Sex: Male = 1, Female = 0.

Marital Status: Never married = 1, Married = 0.

Social Group: Dummies for ST, SC, and OBC, with General = 0

Religion: Hindu = 1, others = 0.

General Education: Dummies for Middle, Secondary, Higher Secondary, and Graduation and above, with No formal and Primary education =0

The logit regression model estimates the probability of migration given the values of the independent variables. The model coefficients (β_n) indicate the change in the log-odds of migration associated with a one-unit change in the corresponding independent variable, holding all other variables constant.Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables included in the regression model.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of the variables

Variables	Mean/Percentage	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	37.38	15.23	15	95
Age square	1629.20	1297.93	225	9025
Land Possess	0.40	0.42	0.02	4.01
Migration				
Migrated	20.98	NA	NA	NA
Non-migrated	79.02	NA	NA	NA
Sex				
Male	53.6	NA	NA	NA
Female	46.4	NA	NA	NA
Marital status		NA	NA	NA
Never married	27.79	NA	NA	NA
Married	72.21	NA	NA	NA
Social Groups				
ST	13.32	NA	NA	NA
SC	17.75	NA	NA	NA
OBC	41.17	NA	NA	NA
General	27.76	NA	NA	NA
Religion				
Hindu	91.6	NA	NA	NA
Muslim	8.4	NA	NA	NA
Education				
No formal education	6.55	NA	NA	NA
Primary	21.93	NA	NA	NA
Middle	28.56	NA	NA	NA
secondary	19.07	NA	NA	NA
Higher Secondary	15.67	NA	NA	NA
Graduation & above	8.23	NA	NA	NA

Note: NA implies Not Application

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Indices used in the analyses

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

The Asset Index is calculated using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with the following variables:

- **Housing Characteristics**: Type of house, type of floor, type of roof, and type of wall.
- **Household Items**: Possession of key items such as an electricity connection, electric fan, radio, television, refrigerator, air conditioner/cooler, washing machine, bed, chair, table, watch/clock, sewing machine, mobile phones (both basic and smartphones), internet connection, computer, bicycle, scooter/motorcycle, car, and tractor.

PCA is applied to these variables to create a composite index that represents household assets. The index is derived from the first principal component, which captures the maximum variance across the variables, providing a single measure of economic status based on asset ownership and housing quality. Using this index, households are then divided into five categories based on quantiles: Lowest, Second, Middle, Fourth, and Highest allowing for a deep understanding of asset distribution within the sample.

For the analysis of occupational distribution among respondents, detailed occupations were grouped into three broad economic sectors: primary, secondary, and tertiary. This classification was employed to provide a clearer understanding of employment patterns within the sample.

The **Primary Sector** consists of occupations related to agriculture and other activities. The occupations included under this category are cultivators, agricultural workers/labour, livestock rearing, fishermen, plantation workers, and miner and quarry worker workers.

The **Secondary Sector** encompasses industrial and manufacturing-related occupations. Occupations categorized under this sector include brick kiln workers, factory workers, craft and related trade workers, plant and machine operators, assemblers, professionals related to the utility industry, masons, painters, bar benders, weavers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, and carpenters.

Occupations within the **Tertiary Sector** include service-based and professional roles, such as service workers, shop and market sales workers, clerks, managers, education professionals, health professionals, transport and storage workers, renters, pensioners, remittance recipients, security guards, hostel and lodging workers, and defense and police personnel.

9.1 Assessment of Multicollinearity: Tolerance and VIF results

Collinearity among the chosen independent variables significantly impacts the model's performance. Tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) are used to assess multicollinearity in the selected variables. Tolerance values below 0.2 suggest marginal multicollinearity, while values under 0.1 indicate a high level of multicollinearity. Likewise, a VIF value greater than 5 points to serious multicollinearity (Chien et. al., 2022). In this study, all the selected variables have tolerance values above 0.2 and VIF values below 5, indicating that the variables are not excessively correlated with one another (except for the variable age). Therefore, all the selected variables were included in the model. The results of the VIF test are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: VIF test results

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
Age	1.78	0.56
Sex		
Male	1.1	0.91
Marital Status		
Never Married	1.62	0.62
Social Groups		
ST	1.42	0.7
SC	1.6	0.62
OBC	1.81	0.55
Religion	1.39	0.72
Education		
Middle	1.66	0.6
Secondary	1.63	0.61
Higher Secondary	1.63	0.61
Graduation and Above	1.36	0.74
Land Possess	1.05	0.95
Mean VIF	1.5	

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

10. Result of Logit Regression Analysis of Migration Determinants

Due to the presence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model, robust standard errors have been applied to ensure accurate estimation of the coefficients. Heteroscedasticity refers to the situation where the variance of the residuals varies across observations. It can lead to inefficient estimates and affect the validity of statistical tests. Due to the presence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model, robust standard errors have been applied to ensure accurate estimation of the coefficients. The results of the heteroscedasticity test, which confirm the presence of this issue, are presented in Table 11. This adjustment helps in obtaining more dependable estimates and ensures the robustness of the model's results. Table 11 displays the results of the logit regression analysis, offering a comprehensive understanding of the migration phenomenon.

The results of the binary logistic regression in Table 11 identify key factors influencing labour migration. A one-year increase in age increases the log-odds of migration by 0.28, indicating that migration likelihood grows with age. However, the negative coefficient for age squared (−0.01) suggests that this effect diminishes at older ages, reflecting a curvilinear relationship. Being male significantly raises the log-odds of migration by 2.56 compared to females, highlighting

a strong gender disparity in migration patterns. Unmarried individuals have a 0.39 higher log-odds of migration than married individuals, showing that marital status also influences migration decisions. Education positively affects migration, with the log-odds increasing by 0.37 for middle-level education, 0.61 for secondary, 0.49 for higher secondary, and 0.46 for graduation and above, compared to those with education below middle level. This demonstrates the critical role of education in expanding employment opportunities and inducing migration. Conversely, land possession reduces the log-odds of migration by 0.34, indicating that land ownership discourages migration, likely due to stable livelihood opportunities in their native places. Social group and religion show no significant effect, suggesting that these factors do not strongly influence migration decisions in this sample.

Table 11: Determinants of migration – outputs from Binary Logistic Regression

Explanatory variables	Coefficients	Robust Standard error
Age	0.28	0.04***
Age square	-0.01	0.01***
Sex (Female®)		
Male	2.56	0.14***
Marriage (Married®)		
Never Married	0.39	0.15***
Social Group (General®)		
ST	0.16	0.17
SC	0.13	0.16
OBC	0.16	0.14
Religion (Others®)		
Hindu	-0.04	0.19
Education (Below Middle®)		
Middle	0.37	0.15***
Secondary	0.61	0.16***
HS	0.49	0.18***
Graduation and above	0.46	0.21***
Land Possess	-0.34	0.12***
Constant	-7.31	0.72***
Loglikelihood: -1292, R square: 0.28, Wald Chi-Sq: 603.26***, Observation:3498, Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity, Ho: Constant variance, chi2(1) = 873.51***		

*Note: *** denotes significant at 1 % level; ® reference category*

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The model's overall fit is supported by a significant Wald Chi-square ($\chi2$=603.26, p<0.01) and an R^2 value of 0.28, indicating that the included variables explain a reasonable proportion of the variation in migration likelihood. The Breusch-Pagan test confirms heteroskedasticity ($\chi2$=873.51, p<0.01), which was accounted for using robust standard errors. These findings reveal the importance of demographic, economic, and educational factors in shaping labour migration decisions.

10.1. Discussion of Results on the Determinants of Migrants

In the logistic regression analysis, both age and age squared (Age^2) are included as explanatory variables to capture potential non-linear effects of age on the likelihood of migration. The significant positive coefficient for age and negative coefficient of age-squared reflect that initially with age migration increases and with older ages it tends to decrease. The pattern illustrates an inverted U-shaped relationship between age and the likelihood of migration. This trend suggests that younger adults are more likely to migrate in search of opportunities such as education, employment, or personal growth, while with age and family responsibilities, older ones are less likely to migrate. Consistent with Lundborg (1991), the likelihood of migration increases with age initially but declines at older ages, suggesting that the expected benefits of migration diminish as individuals invest more in their family and community. The gender dimensions of analysis reflect that males are more likely to migrate than their female counterparts indicating traditional gender roles where men often migrate for work or economic opportunities, while marriage is the most common factor for female migration. This supports the previous findings by Clark and Hunter (1992), who emphasized that economic opportunities drive male migration, while women often migrate for non-economic reasons, as noted by Williams et al. (1986).

Single individuals are more likely to migrate than married individuals, which can be attributed to the greater flexibility and fewer family obligations that typically accompany single status. This flexibility allows them to relocate more easily for work, education, or other reasons (Williams et al., 1986).

Moreover, the results indicate that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to migrate compared to those who are illiterate or possess only pre-primary or primary education. This positive relationship between educational attainment and migration is widely documented in the literature, with schooling and formal education recognized as a key pathway to socioeconomic mobility, enabling access to skilled and better-paid jobs and expanding opportunities in society (Dreze and Sen, 1995). Both the Neo-classical and new economics of migration theories view educational attainment as a form of human capital that enhances the likelihood of migration by providing individuals with the skills, knowledge, and credentials necessary to secure employment and pursue higher earnings (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Massey and Espinosa, 1997).

Empirical research supports the view that educational attainment is positively associated with migration, particularly among men (Williams, 2009). However, this relationship may differ in cases of seasonal migration. For instance, Keshri and Bhagat (2012) found that individuals with lower levels of education have a higher propensity to migrate seasonally, often due to their limited economic resources. This suggests that while education generally promotes long-term migration, individuals with lower educational attainment and from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to engage in seasonal migration as an economic strategy.

Further, the results of this study reveal a negative relationship between landholding and migration, suggesting that individuals with land are less likely to migrate. This finding aligns with Keshri and Bhagat (2012), who also observed that land ownership provides economic security and income stability, reducing the need for migration.

In respect of the social groups, the study does not find significant effects, suggesting that caste does not strongly influence migration in respect of Assam. Cast dominance is less pronounced in Assam due to its multi-ethnic population composition. However, Keshri and Bhagat (2012) found that people from backward classes are more likely to migrate, highlighting possible regional or contextual variations. Other variables, such as religion, also show no significant effects, suggesting that these factors may not be primary determinants in labour migration decisions in the current sample.

11. Migration as Special Reference to Scheduled Tribes (ST)

The Scheduled Tribe (ST) community in Assam represents a significant portion of the state's diverse population, marked by rich cultural heritage and varied socio-economic backgrounds. Among the ST groups, the Bodo community stands out prominently in the dataset, constituting 65.7% of the sample, primarily from Kokrajhar district (Table 12). This region, part of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), is notable for its unique socio-political and cultural identity. Dhemaji district, contributing 27% of the dataset, represents a different geographical and socio-economic context, reflecting the diverse living conditions and challenges faced by ST communities. Migration dynamics among these groups are shaped by a complex interplay of push factors, such as limited economic opportunities and financial instability, and pull factors, including better employment prospects and education in urban areas.

This section examines the migration patterns of Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in Assam, with a special focus on the Bodo population, which forms the majority of the dataset. It begins by analysing the occupational distribution of ST individuals, categorized by gender and their migration status (migrants versus non-migrants). The section further explores the push and pull factors influencing migration, such as the quest for better employment, access to education,

and financial stability. It also examines the role of remittances in supporting households and their connection to migration decisions. By investigating these dynamics, the section provides insights into how rural-to-urban labour migration manifests among ST groups, particularly in Kokrajhar and Dhemaji districts, and the socio-economic challenges and opportunities it entails.

Table 12: Percentage distribution of Scheduled Tribe respondents across the selected districts

District	Percentage
1. Barpeta	2.8
2. Dhemaji	27.0
3. Golaghat	1.9
4. Hojai	2.6
5. Kokrajhar	65.7
Total	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The occupational distribution within ST social group highlights distinct gender roles as shown in Table 13. Females predominantly engage in domestic duties, with a substantial 29.4% involved in household tasks and food collection.

Table 13: Occupational distribution of ST population by their primary occupation and gender (n=466 & In %)

Primary occupation	Male	Female	Overall
Cultivator	5.6	0.9	6.4
Agricultural workers	2.6	0.6	3.2
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	0.6	0.4	1.1
Miner and quarry worker	1.9	0.0	1.9
Brick kiln workers	0.6	0.0	0.6
Factory worker	3.2	0.2	3.4
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	3.4	0.9	4.3
Clerks	0.9	0.0	0.9
Managers	0.2	0.0	0.2
Teachers/Tutor	2.4	0.6	3.0
Health professionals	0.2	0.0	0.2
Transport /Warehouse worker	2.4	0.0	2.4
Utility service worker	0.4	0.0	0.4
Mason	5.8	0.0	5.8
Painter	0.4	0.0	0.4
Weaver	0.2	0.0	0.2
Attend domestic duties only	0.6	29.4	30.0
Attended domestic duties and free collection of foods	0.9	1.7	2.6
Renters, pensioners and remittance recipients	1.3	0.0	1.3
Not able to work*	0.2	0.0	0.2
Students	6.4	6.9	13.3
Non-worker	2.6	2.6	5.2
Unemployed	1.7	1.3	3.0
Hotel and lodging worker	1.1	0.4	1.5
Defense or Police personnel	2.8	0.0	2.8
Carpenter	0.2	0.0	0.2
Security Guard	2.4	0.0	2.4
Others	2.3	0.6	3.0
Total	**53.4**	**46.6**	**100.0**

*Note: *Not able to work due to physical disability*

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

A smaller portion of women also attend educational institutions, indicating some participation in formal education, yet their overall economic involvement remains limited. On the other hand, males are primarily the breadwinners, with significant participation in agricultural activities, reflecting Assam's agricultural dominance. Men also take up employment in sectors such as defense, police, and security guard. This gendered division of labour within this social group illustrates the broader socio-economic challenges that contribute to migration patterns, where men are more economically active outside the home, while women manage household responsibilities.

In analysing the landholding patterns among the scheduled tribe (ST) community, it is evident that the majority possess marginal landholdings, as shown in Table 14.

Table 14 highlights that a significant proportion of ST households (91.2%) hold marginal land size. Marginal landholders typically own less than one hectare of land, which is insufficient for large-scale agricultural production along with their living space. Consequently, these farmers are often only able to produce enough to meet their own subsistence needs, with little or no surplus for sale in the market. This limitation hinders their ability to improve their economic status through agriculture alone, necessitating their involvement in various other economic activities to sustain their livelihoods. Given these constraints, many individuals from the ST community seek alternative employment opportunities. The data on the primary occupational distribution of ST people, categorized by migration status, provides insight into the occupational diversity within this group.

Table 14: Landholding status of the ST population

Landholding	Frequency	Percent
Marginal	425	91.2
Small	41	8.8
Total	**466**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 15: Percentage distribution of migrant and non-migrant among ST population by their occupation (n=204)

Primary occupations	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Cultivator	0.0	14.7	14.7
Agricultural workers	0.0	7.4	7.4
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	0.0	2.5	2.5
Miner and quarry worker	3.9	0.5	4.4
Brick kiln workers	1.5	0.0	1.5
Factory worker	5.4	2.5	7.8
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	2.5	7.4	9.8
Clerks	1.5	0.5	2.0
Managers	0.5	0.0	0.5
Teachers/Tutor	1.5	5.4	6.9
Health professionals	0.5	0.0	0.5
Transport /Warehouse worker	0.5	4.9	5.4
Utility service worker	0.5	0.5	1.0
Mason	6.4	6.9	13.2
Painter	1.0	0.0	1.0
Weaver	0.0	0.5	0.5
Hotel and lodging worker	2.0	1.5	3.4
Defense or Police personnel	5.9	0.5	6.4
Carpenter	0.0	0.5	0.5
Security guard	5.4	0.0	5.4
Others	2.5	2.9	5.4
Total	**41.2**	**58.8**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 15 reveals distinct occupational patterns between migrant and non-migrant members of the ST community. Non-migrants are more likely to engage in traditional occupations such as cultivation (14.7%) and agricultural work (7.4%), reflecting their continued reliance on small-scale farming. In contrast, migrants tend to diversify into non-agricultural sectors, such as miner

and quarry workers (3.9%), factory workers (5.4%), and service-related occupations (2.5%). This occupational shift among migrants suggests an adaptation to the limitations of landholding by seeking income through alternative means, which offer better economic prospects.The difference in occupation between migrants and non-migrants further illustrates how migration serves as a strategy for economic survival and potentially upward mobility within the community.

Following the analysis of occupational distribution, it is evident that migration significantly influences the types of jobs ST community takes up. Migrants from the ST community are more likely to engage in occupations such as factory worker, masonry, security services, and defense roles. Some of these job opportunities are often scarce or pay low wages in rural areas and are sometimes irregular in terms of the number of work days, inducing individuals to migrate in search of better employment prospects. The appeal of such occupations lies not only in their availability but also in the better wages they offer compared to rural jobs. For instance, the wages of masons and carpenters are notably higher in urban areas. Furthermore, roles in defense and police services require a minimum level of educational qualification, making them slightly inaccessible to all, but those who meet these criteria find these positions more lucrative.

This trend is further reflected in the income distribution among the ST community, as shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Percentage distribution of ST population by their monthly income from primary occupation (n=204)

Income (Rs. 000's)	Non-migrant	Migrant	Total
0-5	30.8	1.2	18.6
5-10	15.0	6.0	11.3
10-20	41.7	64.3	51.0
20-30	4.2	15.5	8.8
30-40	1.7	3.6	2.5
40-50	3.3	6.0	4.4
50_above	3.3	3.6	3.4
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 17: Normality test of monthly income from the primary occupation of the respondents

Variable	Obs.	z	Prob>z
Monthly wage	204	7.7	0

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The income distribution data clearly illustrates that migrants generally earn more than their non-migrant counterparts. For example, 64.3% of migrants fall within the 10-20 thousand income bracket, compared to 41.7% of non-migrants. As the income brackets increase, the proportion of migrants remains higher, indicating that migration provides access to better-paying jobs. This trend is particularly noticeable from the 10-20 thousand income category onwards, where the number of migrants surpasses that of non-migrants.The disparity in earnings between migrants and non-migrants is further substantiated by statistical analysis, as shown in Table 18.

The analysis of income distribution between migrants and non-migrants revealed that the data is not normally distributed (Table 17), necessitating the use of the Mann-Whitney U test to compare the two groups. The results of this test are summarized below:

Null Hypothesis (Ho): The distribution of monthly income is the same for non-migrants and migrants.

Table 18: Mann-Whitney U test (non-parametric test)

Migration	Obs.	Rank sum	Expected
Non-migrant	120	9719.5	12138
Migrant	84	10986.5	8568
Combined	204	20706	20706
unadjusted variance 169932, adjustment for ties -875.3, adjusted variance 169056.6, Ho: monthly~e(non-migrants=0) = monthly ~ e(migrants=1), z = -5.882, Prob > |z| = 0.000			

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The test results shown in Table 18 reject the null hypothesis, indicating that the distribution of monthly income differs significantly between migrants and non-migrants. Specifically, the actual rank sum for non-migrants is lower (9,719.5) than expected (12,138), while the actual rank sum for migrants is higher (10,986.5) than expected (8,568). This suggests that, on average, migrants earn better monthly incomes compared to non-migrants. This finding highlights the importance of income as a key factor driving migration.

The higher income earned by migrants reflects their access to better-paying jobs, which are often not available in rural areas. This brings a crucial aspect to exploring what induces individuals to seek better income opportunities through migration. One explanation is the concept of social responsibility within the household. This pressure can drive individuals to migrate to areas where they can earn better wages, allowing them to send remittances back home to support their families.The data shown in Table 19 on remittances sent by ST migrants further supports this explanation:

Table 19: Status of Remittance sent by the ST migrants (n=99)

Send remittances	Frequency	Percent
Yes	76	76.8
No	23	23.2

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The majority of ST migrants (76.8%) send remittances back to their families, indicating that the additional income earned through migration is often used to support family members. This highlights the role of social responsibility and economic necessity in inducing migration, as individuals seek to alleviate the financial burden on their households by earning more in other urban locations.

One notable observation from the Table 20 is that a very small proportion of migrated individuals engage in secondary occupations. This indicates that migrants are less likely to diversify their income sources compared to non-migrants. However, it is important to clarify that this does not imply that non-migrants have a significantly higher income from secondary sources. Instead, the data suggests that those with secondary income are less inclined to migrate. This could be because having a secondary income reduces financial pressure, allowing individuals to sustain their families without the need to migrate.

Table 20: Percentage distribution of migrant and non-migrant among ST population by their secondary occupation (n=36)

Secondary occupation	Migrant	Non-migrant	Overall
Cultivator	2.8	38.9	41.7
Agricultural workers	0.0	27.8	27.8
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	0.0	19.4	19.4
Factory worker	0.0	2.8	2.8
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	0.0	2.8	2.8
Transport /Warehouse worker	0.0	2.8	2.8
Others	0.0	2.8	2.8
Total	**2.8**	**97.2**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The distribution of secondary occupations among the ST people reveals that nearly 90% of those who have a secondary occupation are engaged in agriculture-related activities. Specifically, 41.7% are cultivators, 27.8% work in agricultural labour, and 19.4% are involved in livestock rearing or fishing. This heavy reliance on agriculture for secondary income could be further illustrated by the limited opportunities for income diversification within this community.

When examining the secondary income distribution, it is evident that most of the individuals (61.1%) earn between 0 to 5 thousand from their secondary occupations as shown in Table 21. This low level of income suggests that secondary occupations help sustain life but do not significantly improve the economic situation of these individuals. As a result, the reliance on secondary income is more about maintaining a basic level of subsistence rather than achieving financial growth. In short, the analysis shows that income diversification through secondary occupations is more common among non-migrants. However, these secondary sources of income tend to be modest, primarily helping to sustain life rather than drive economic improvement. The lack of significant income from secondary occupations could be one reason why some individuals choose to migrate, seeking better financial opportunities elsewhere.

Table 21: Percentage distribution of ST population by their monthly income from secondary sources (n=36)

Income (Rs. 000's)	Migrant	Non-migrant	Overall
0-5	2.8	58.3	61.1
5-10	0.0	13.9	13.9
10-20	0.0	22.2	22.2
20-30	0.0	2.8	2.8
Total	**2.8**	**97.2**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 22: Percentage distribution of the ST population by their reasons for migration (n=99)

Reason for migration	Frequency	Percent
In search of employment*	22	22.2
In search of better employment**	30	30.3
To take up employment***	27	27.3
Transfer of services/contract	8	8.1
Studies	8	8.1
Marriage	1	1.0
Others	3	3.0
Total	**99**	**100**

*Note: * Person who was not in employment at the time of leaving the last Usual Place of Residence (UPR)*

*** Those persons who were employed at the time of leaving UPR but had come to the place of destination in search of better employment*

**** The person who were offered better jobs than the one they were having at the UPR*

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 22 provides a breakdown of the reasons for migration among the ST people, highlighting three predominant reasons: searching for employment, searching for better employment, and taking up better employment opportunities. The second and third reasons, in particular, are cited by the majority of respondents. This aligns with the earlier discussion that migration is primarily driven by the pursuit of better income rather than simply finding employment.

The data reveals that the majority of the ST people migrate not merely due to a lack of employment opportunities but rather because the available employment in their local areas does not provide sufficient income to sustain their families at a desirable standard of living. Although these individuals possess some land, the majority own less than one hectare, including their homestead area, which allows them to sustain a basic livelihood but falls short of enabling them to achieve economic prosperity. The core issue, therefore, is not the absence of employment but the inadequacy of earnings from the employment available in rural areas.

The notion that migration is primarily about improving income rather than securing a job, is further supported by the fact that a minimum level of employment is often available in rural areas, especially for those who have even a modest amount of land. However, this employment often does not provide the financial stability necessary to meet the rising demands of their families. The pursuit of a higher standard of living, rather than just subsistence, drives many to migrate.

Moreover, it emphasizes that it is not a lack of jobs that pushes people to migrate but rather the disparity in wage rates between rural and urban areas. Many migrants find that with a basic level of education, they can secure jobs in urban areas that offer better wages than the same jobs in rural areas. This is consistent with the earlier discussion that a significant number of non-migrants are employed in various occupations within rural areas, though the majority remain tied to the agriculture sector.

So, it can be seen that migration among the ST community is largely induced by the desire for better financial prospects, rather than a sheer lack of employment opportunities. This trend highlights the economic challenges faced by rural communities, where the available jobs often fail to provide a sufficient income, prompting individuals to seek better opportunities elsewhere.

The comparison between the occupational distribution of non-migrated and migrated ST people shown in Table 23 and Table 24 reveals significant insights into how the level of educational attainment influences occupational choices and migration patterns. Among non-migrants, those with lower levels of education, such as no formal education, primary, or middle schooling, are predominantly engaged in agriculture-related occupations, such as cultivators or agricultural workers. This trend reflects the reliance on traditional occupations within rural areas. However,

as the level of educational attainment increases, individuals tend to diversify into other occupations, such as service work, transport and storage, and education-related professions. This indicates that higher educational attainment opens up opportunities for non-agricultural employment within the rural context, allowing individuals to stay within their communities while pursuing alternative careers.

Table 23: Percentage distribution of ST non-migrants by their level of educational attainment and primary occupation (n=120)

Primary Occupation	No formal education	Primary	Middle	Secondary	HS	Graduation and above	Total
Cultivator	5.0	7.5	7.5	2.5	1.7	0.8	25.0
Agricultural workers	2.5	4.2	3.3	0.8	1.7	0.0	12.5
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	1.7	1.7	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.2
Miner and quarry worker	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Factory worker	0.0	2.5	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	4.2
Shop owner/ Helper/Sales workers	0.0	0.8	3.3	4.2	0.8	3.3	12.5
Clerks	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.8
Teachers/Tutor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.3	5.0	9.2
Transport /Warehouse worker	0.0	0.8	2.5	0.8	3.3	0.8	8.3
Utility service worker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
Mason	1.7	2.5	4.2	1.7	1.7	0.0	11.7
Weaver	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8
Hotel and lodging worker	0.0	0.8	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.5
Defense or Police personnel	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.8
Carpenter	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.8
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7	2.5	0.8	5.0
Total	**10.8**	**21.7**	**25**	**14.2**	**15.8**	**12.5**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

For migrated individuals, the occupational distribution differs notably. Migrants with at least middle school education are more likely to engage in occupations outside of agriculture. Many are involved in mining, quarrying, factory worker, and various service sector jobs. This shift reveals that migration is often pursued by those who possess a minimun level of education, allowing them to seek better opportunities in urban or industrial areas. Furthermore, individuals with higher secondary or graduation level educational attainment are more inclined towards specialized professions, such as education, health, or managerial roles, indicating that migration is seen as a pathway to more lucrative and diverse employment opportunities.

Table 24: Percentage distribution of ST migrants by their primary occupation with respect to educational attainment (n=84)

Primary Occupation	Primary	Middle	Secondary	HS	Graduation	Total
Miner and quarry worker	1.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5
Brick Kiln workers	1.2	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Factory worker	0.0	1.2	6.0	2.4	3.6	13.1
Shopowner/Helper/Sales workers	0.0	0.0	3.6	0.0	2.4	6.0
Clerks	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	2.4	3.6
Managers	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2
Teachers/Tutor	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6	3.6
Health professionals	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.2
Transport /Warehouse worker	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Utility service worker	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.2
Mason	0.0	10.7	4.8	0.0	0.0	15.5
Painter	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	0.0	2.4
Hotel and lodging worker	0.0	1.2	1.2	2.4	0.0	4.8
Defense or Police personnel	0.0	1.2	2.4	7.1	3.6	14.3
Security guard	0.0	0.0	8.3	4.8	0.0	13.1
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	3.6	6.0
Total	**2.38**	**26.19**	**29.76**	**22.62**	**19.05**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

In short, Table 24 illustrates that the level of educational attainment plays a crucial role in determining whether an individual chooses to migrate or not. Non-migrants with low educational attainment are more likely to remain in agriculture, while those with comparatively higher education levels explore non-agricultural occupations within rural areas. On the other hand, migrants, typically with middle to higher levels of education, move towards urban areas or industries, seeking better employment opportunities. This trend highlights the importance of education in enhancing occupational mobility and influencing migration decisions among the ST population.

Following the previous analysis, it is important to explore whether education alone is the primary factor influencing migration to urban areas among the ST population. Another significant factor that needs to be considered is age. Age plays a crucial role, not only because it is associated with physical strength but also due to generational changes, which often drive aspirations and opportunities differently across age groups.

The data shown in Table 25 on age distribution among migrated ST people, when analysed alongside their educational attainment, reveals a notable trend. Migration is predominantly observed among younger individuals, particularly those aged 15-25 and 26-35. These two age groups together account for nearly 80% of the total migrant population, with 40.4% in the 15-25 age group and 38.4% in the 26-35 age group. This higher migration rate among younger people points out that age, combined with education, significantly influences the decision to migrate.

Table 25: Percentage distribution of ST migrants by their level of educational attainment and age group (n=99)

Level of educational attainment	15-25	26-35	36-45	46-59	Total
No formal education	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0
Primary	1.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	2.0
Middle	6.1	5.1	6.1	5.1	22.2
Secondary	12.1	12.1	3.0	1.0	28.3
Higher secondary	14.1	10.1	1.0	0.0	25.3
Graduation and above	7.1	11.1	1.0	2.0	21.2
Total	**40.4**	**38.4**	**12.1**	**9.1**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The Table 25 indicates that while education is a crucial factor in migration decisions, age is equally important. Younger individuals, particularly those with secondary education or higher, are more likely to migrate. This trend reflects the interplay between the physical and mental agility of youth, the generational drive for better opportunities, and the educational qualifications that open doors to urban employment. Therefore, both education and age together shape the migration patterns among the ST population, with younger, better-educated individuals being the most likely to seek opportunities outside their rural communities.

In conclusion, the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community present a complex interplay of factors that significantly influence migration patterns. The limited landholding of ST households, with 91.2% owning marginal land, highlights the economic constraints faced by this group, as such holdings are insufficient to generate substantial agricultural income. This drives many to seek alternative employment opportunities, particularly in non-agricultural sectors. Gender plays a pivotal role in the division of labour within this community,

with women primarily engaged in domestic tasks and food collection, while men take on the responsibility of earning, often in agricultural or defense (Army, police, and security guard) related occupations. The stark differences in occupational distribution between migrants and non-migrants show migration as a strategic response to economic challenges, allowing individuals to diversify their employment opportunities and, in turn, earn better wages, often in urban areas.

Education emerges as a key factor in this process, as higher levels of schooling open doors to non-agricultural occupations both within rural areas and through migration to urban areas. Migrants, especially those with middle to higher education, tend to find employment in industries, services, or specialized professions, signalling that migration offers a pathway to improved financial prospects. Additionally, social responsibility, reflected in the high rate of remittances sent by migrants, highlights the pressure to support non-income-generating family members, further motivating migration as a strategy for economic survival.

The ST population's migration is driven not merely by the lack of employment opportunities but by the inadequacy of earnings in their native places to meet the rising demands of family life. Migration serves as a crucial means for economic mobility, influenced by a range of factors including landholding size, gender roles, education, and social obligations.

12. A Broad Scenario of Rural-Urban Migration

In the preceding section, the discussion highlighted how various socio-economic and cultural factors drive migration among Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities, shedding light on their unique migration patterns and occupational engagements. Building on that focused analysis, the subsequent section adopts a broader perspective, examining migration across diverse social groups. It delves into how migration is shaped by factors such as education, financial stability, the role of remittances, access to secondary income sources, and prior work experiences. These interconnected dynamics reveal how migration serves as both a response to and a reinforcement of existing socio-economic structures. This comprehensive analysis aims to unravel the complex interplay of these factors in influencing migration decisions and outcomes in rural areas.

12.1. Occupational Distribution among Migrants and Non-migrants

Table 26, highlights significant disparities in the distribution of work between males and females, showing traditional gender roles within rural communities. This is evident from the 65.6% of women exclusively engaged in domestic duties with food collection, a figure that vastly outweighs the mere 1.9% of men in the same category. This disparity reflects the deeply entrenched gender norms that allocate domestic responsibilities primarily to women. This is a peripheral role that women have been playing for a very long time which not even have changed significantly over the course of time, especially in rural livelihood.

Table 26: Status of work within gender (Migrant +Non-migrant) (In %)

Status of Work	Male	Female	Total
Attended domestic duties and free collection of food	1.9	65.6	31.5
Student	10.1	10.8	10.4
Other occupations	88	23.6	58.1
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

In contrast, men dominate the "Other Occupation" category, which includes wage work and other income-generating activities, accounting for 88% of male workers compared to only 23.6% of female workers. Interestingly, participation in education is relatively balanced, with 10.1% of males and 10.8% of females engaged, showing some parity in this aspect.

Table 27:Primary occupation-wise distribution of non-migrants within social groups (In %)

Primary occupation	ST	SC	OBC	General	Total
Cultivator	8.2	5.8	7.0	7.5	7.1
Agricultural worker	4.1	4.2	2.7	2.2	3.0
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	1.4	1.0	1.5	1.8	1.5
Miner and quarry worker	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Brick Kiln workers	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Factory workers	1.4	2.3	3.5	2.6	2.8
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	4.1	8.1	5.0	7.1	6.0
Craft and related trade workers	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1
Clerks	0.3	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5
Managers	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.3	0.1
Teacher/Tutor	3.0	1.0	2.0	3.7	2.4
Health professionals	0.0	0.6	0.3	1.2	0.5
Transport/Warehouse worker	2.7	2.9	1.9	1.9	2.2
Utility service workers	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3
Mason	3.8	3.5	5.1	4.6	4.5
Painter	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Bar bender	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Weaver	0.3	0.2	0.3	1.0	0.5
Gold Smith	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Attend domestic duties only	37.6	36.5	37.0	33.3	35.9
Attended domestic duties and free collection of food	3.3	5.4	2.2	2.7	3.0
Sewing, Tailoring, etc. for household use	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.3
Renters, Pensioners, and Remittances recipients	1.6	2.5	4.8	2.0	3.2
Not able to work due to disability	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.4
Students	14.2	12.2	10.4	9.8	11.0
Hotel and lodging workers	0.8	0.2	1.1	0.5	0.7
Defense or Police personnel	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.4
Carpenter	0.3	0.8	1.0	0.6	0.8
Security Guard	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.2
Others	1.6	0.8	1.2	1.9	1.4
Unemployed	10.3	9.3	10.7	12.0	10.7
Total	**100 (n=367)**	**100 (n=482)**	**100 (n=1130)**	**100 (n=785)**	**100 (n=2764)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The most striking observation from Table 27 is the predominance of women in domestic duties across all social groups, with the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) communitiesshowing the highest engagement in this area. This aligns with the broader trend of women primarily managing domestic responsibilities while men typically serve as the breadwinners, reinforcing traditional gender roles within these rural communities.

Furthermore, the data indicates that agricultural work remains a significant occupation across all social groups, with a notable concentration among the ST community. This shows a deep-rooted connection between the ST social group and agricultural activities, likely due to their historical and cultural ties to the land. A similar result is also found by Kachari & Maity (2015) in their study on Bodo community.

The Table 28 shows that unlike the SC and ST categories, which are largely concentrated in specific occupations, individuals from the OBC and General categories demonstrate broader engagement across diverse job categories, including those where SC and ST representation is absent. Notably, OBC individuals are involved in bar bending (4.9%) and weaving (0.4%), while General category individuals are present in brick kiln work (8.6%). These occupations, which lack participation from SC and ST groups, highlight the relatively greater access to varied job opportunities for OBC and General category individuals. This broader occupational engagement shows better mobility, enabling them to explore and secure a wider range of employment options.

In contrast, the analysis of migrant occupations across social groups highlights the varied nature of employment outside the home region. While the data for non-migrants showed a strong

presence in agriculture and domestic duties, migrants from these communities engage in a wider range of occupations, including mining, factory worker, service roles, and security services. The ST community, for instance, shows a significant representation in mining and defense roles, indicating a shift towards more physically demanding and possibly higher-risk occupations when they migrate.

Table 28: Primary occupation-wise distribution of migrants within social groups (In %)

Primary occupation	ST	SC	OBC	General	Total
Cultivator	0.0	0.8	3.0	0.0	1.4
Agricultural workers	0.0	0.0	1.5	1.2	0.9
Livestock farmer/Fisher/Planter	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.3
Miner and quarry worker	9.5	0.0	0.4	0.6	1.6
Brick Kiln workers	3.6	1.6	0.0	8.6	3.0
Factory worker	13.1	21.6	21.3	11.7	17.8
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	6.0	6.4	8.2	11.1	8.3
Plant and machine operator	0.0	2.4	4.1	0.0	2.2
Clerks	3.6	1.6	3.7	3.1	3.1
Managers	1.2	1.6	1.9	1.9	1.7
Teachers/Tutor	3.6	0.0	0.8	3.1	1.6
Health professionals	1.2	2.4	2.2	1.9	2.0
Transport /Warehouse worker	1.2	5.6	4.5	4.3	4.2
Utility service worker	1.2	9.6	3.7	8.0	5.6
Mason	15.5	13.6	10.8	21.6	14.7
Painter	2.4	0.8	0.4	3.1	1.4
Bar bender	0.0	0.0	4.9	1.2	2.4
Weaver	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2
Hotel and lodging worker	4.8	0.8	1.9	3.7	2.5
Defense or Police personnel	14.3	8.0	7.1	7.4	8.3
Carpenter	0.0	0.8	1.1	0.0	0.6
Security guard	13.1	20.0	14.9	4.9	13.2
Others	6.0	2.4	2.6	2.5	3.0
Total	**100 (n=84)**	**100 (125)**	**100 (268)**	**100 (n=162)**	**100 (n=639)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

When analysing employment patterns, examining broad economic sectors often provides a clearer and more comprehensive view of the labour market compared to focusing on specific occupations. This approach allows for capturing overarching trends and shifts in employment that might be obscured when looking at individual job roles.

Migrants and non-migrants are categorized into broad economic sectors—primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-work. This categorization helps to highlight significant differences in employment patterns. By grouping occupations into broad economic sectors, it becomes easier to identify macro-level patterns and shifts. This approach reveals how migration influences broader economic activities, such as the movement from agriculture (primary sector) to manufacturing and services (secondary and tertiary sectors). Such a shift indicates that migrants are likely seeking more varied and potentially better-paying opportunities in new regions, which is less apparent when examining specific job titles alone.

Moreover, this broader perspective allows for a better understanding of overall economic changes and employment trends. It captures the essence of how migration affects economic sectors and provides insight into the types of jobs that migrants are likely to pursue compared to those who remain in their original locations. Thus, using broad economic sectors as a lens for analysis offers valuable insights into general employment patterns and sectoral shifts that are critical for understanding the broader impact of migration on the labour market.

Over time, the share of agriculture in India's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) has steadily declined, while the secondary and tertiary sectors have expanded significantly. In 2023-24, agriculture contributes just 17.7% to India's GDP, whereas the secondary sector accounts for 27.6%, and the tertiary sector dominates with 54.7% (MoSPI, 2024). This shift reflects a structural transformation as the economy diversifies from agrarian roots toward industrial and service-oriented activities, creating a higher demand for labour in non-agricultural sectors. Consequently, individuals from rural areas are increasingly drawn to urban centres, seeking stability and potentially higher incomes in sectors that offer more opportunities for continuous employment and upward mobility. This trend aligns with similar patterns observed in this study. Table 29 reflects the occupational diversity of migrants and non-migrant workers.

Table 29: Broad sector-wise distribution of migrants and non-migrants (In %)

Broad economic sector	Non-migrant	Migrant	Total
Primary	11.7	3.7	10.0
Secondary	9.2	41.8	16.1
Tertiary	17.7	41.8	22.8
Non-market activity*	61.4	12.7	51.2
Total	**100 (n= 2764)**	**100(n=734)**	**100 (N=3498)**

**Non-market activity category includes homemakers and students.*

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 29 detailing the distribution of individuals across broad economic sectors for both non-migrants and migrants offers insightful contrasts in employment patterns between the two

groups. Analysing this data from a sectoral perspective, as opposed to specific occupations, reveals significant shifts in employment related to migration. For non-migrants, a substantial majority, 61.4%, are categorized under non-work, reflecting a high prevalence of individuals not engaged in formal employment or involved in domestic duties. This aligns with the detailed occupational data, which showed a high concentration of non-working individuals and domestic roles. Additionally, non-migrants have a notable presence in the primary sector (11.7%), which includes traditional agriculture and similar occupations. Migrants, on the other hand, demonstrate a markedly different employment distribution. Only 12.7% of migrants fall into the non-work category, indicating a much lower incidence of individuals not engaged in formal employment. In contrast, the primary sector employs only 3.7% of migrants, highlighting a significant shift away from agricultural and similar roles.

The secondary and tertiary sectors show a pronounced difference between non-migrants and migrants. Migrants are heavily represented in the secondary sector (41.8%) and the tertiary sector (41.8%), which encompass manufacturing, industrial, and service-oriented occupations. This shift is consistent with the previous detailed occupational data, where migrants were found to be engaged in a diverse range of jobs, including those in mining, Factory worker, and service roles. For non-migrants, the secondary and tertiary sectors combined account for 26.9%, indicating a less diverse employment profile compared to migrants.

Overall, Table 29 shows the significant impact of migration on employment patterns. Migrants are more likely to engage in secondary and tertiary sector jobs, reflecting a move towards more diverse and potentially higher-value occupations. This shift contrasts with the employment trends observed among non-migrants, who remain predominantly in non-work categories or traditional primary sector roles. The broad economic sector analysis thus provides a clear view of how migration influences employment, revealing broader trends and shifts that are pivotal in understanding labour market dynamics.

While the relationship between occupation and social groups is evident as discussed in the previous section, it is further nuanced by the intersection with religion. The sample highlights the significant presence of Hindus, with Muslims and Christians forming smaller percentages. This religious composition may further influence occupational choices and opportunities; hence Table 30 is stated with respect to religion.

Occupation with respect to social groups does not speak much about their relation because OBC and General categories further can be grouped with respect to religion. The following Table 30 shows how religion is associated with different occupations. In this particular research, three religions are majorly found Hindu (91.6%), Muslim (8.1 %), and Christian (0.3 %).

Table 30: Primary occupation wise distribution of migrants by their religion group (n=639&In %)

Primary occupation	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
Cultivator	1.4	1.7	0.0	1.4
Agricultural workers/	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Livestock rearing/fishing	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
Miner and quarry worker	1.6	1.7	0.0	1.6
Brick Kiln workers	1.6	17.2	0.0	3.0
Factory worker	18.5	12.1	0.0	17.8
Shop owner/Helper/Sales workers	8.6	5.2	0.0	8.3
Plant and machine operator	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.2
Clerks	3.5	0.0	0.0	3.1
Managers	1.9	0.0	0.0	1.7
Teachers/Tutor	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.6
Health professionals	2.2	0.0	0.0	2.0
Transport /Warehouse worker	4.3	3.5	0.0	4.2
Utility service worker	5.7	5.2	0.0	5.6
Mason	12.2	37.9	100.0	14.7
Painter	0.9	6.9	0.0	1.4
Bar bender	2.4	1.7	0.0	2.4
Weaver	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2
Hotel and lodging worker	2.6	1.7	0.0	2.5
Defense or Police personnel	9.0	1.7	0.0	8.3
Carpenter	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.6
Security guard	14.1	3.5	0.0	13.2
Others	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.0
Total	**580 (100)**	**58 (100)**	**1 (100)**	**639 (100)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The analysis of the primary occupations of migrants with respect to religion reveals distinct employment patterns across different religious groups. While the earlier Table 28 showed a significant presence of the general category in the brick kiln industry, a closer examination indicates that within the Muslim religion, a majority of these workers are from brick kiln industry. Specifically, 17.2% of Muslim migrants are engaged as brick kiln workers, and a substantial 37.9% work as masons, reflecting a strong representation in physically demanding, labour-intensive roles. Additionally, 12.1% of Muslim migrants are involved in Factory worker, and 5.2% are professionals related to the utility industry.

In contrast, Hindu migrants exhibit different occupational tendencies, with a larger proportion involved in Factory workers (18.5%), security guards (14.1%), and masonry (12.2%). These roles suggest that Hindu migrants are more likely to be found in occupations that require a mix of physical labour and security guard-related tasks, aligning with broader employment trends among this group.

Christians, although a small sample size in this study (n=12), show minimal migration, with only one individual who migrated and is working as a mason. This highlights the limited presence of Christians in the migrant workforce within this particular sample.

Overall, the occupational distribution shows the varying economic activities undertaken by migrants from different religious backgrounds, with Muslims predominantly in manual labour roles, Hindus in a mix of labour and security guard-related jobs, and a negligible presence of Christian migrants.

Table 31: Monthly wage from the primary occupation of migrants across broad economic sectors (In %)

Monthly wage (Rs. 000's)	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
0-5	25.9	0.0	1.0	1.6
5-10	18.5	3.6	8.9	6.7
10-20	55.6	87.3	58.7	72.3
20-30	0.0	8.5	14.1	10.8
30-40	0.0	0.0	4.6	2.2
40-50	0.0	0.3	6.9	3.4
50-above	0.0	0.3	5.9	3.0
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 31 illustrates the monthly wages of migrants across primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. Most migrants earn between ₹10,000 to ₹20,000, with this range dominating particularly in the secondary sector (87.3%) and significantly in the tertiary sector (58.7%). However, few individuals in the secondary sector earn above ₹30,000, while the tertiary sector has a relatively higher proportion (4.6% in ₹30,000–₹40,000, 6.9% in ₹40,000–₹50,000, and 5.9% in ₹50,000 and above), indicating that higher wages are concentrated in the tertiary sector. The primary sector, in contrast, offers lower wages, with a significant share (25.9%) earning less than ₹5,000.

This pattern shows the critical role of education in facilitating access to better-paying jobs, particularly in the tertiary sector. For households with limited income or assets, education often takes a backseat due to the immediate need to support family income, particularly for necessities

like food. This trade-off limits their ability to pursue higher education, which in turn restricts access to formal sector jobs that could lead to upward income mobility. Thus, the interplay of education, economic necessity, and sectoral opportunities shapes the income distribution among migrant workers.The role of education is discussed in the subsequent sections.

12.2 The Role of Economic Status in Shaping Labour Migration Patterns

The economic condition of individuals plays a crucial role in shaping their migration decisions, particularly across various social groups. This section examines how financial hardship acts as a driving force behind migration, pushing individuals to seek opportunities in diverse fields. Analysis of the economic status of migrants and non-migrants, sheds light on the extent to which economic distress or stability influences the type and destination of migration. The findings provide insights into how economic disparities within social groups dictate labour mobility and the subsequent socio-economic transformations experienced by these individuals.

A composite asset index is calculated to examine their asset endowment. Using quantile, it is categorised under 5 parts (from 1st to 5th) viz: Lowest, Second, Middle, Fourth, and Highest. Each successive quantile implies a better economic status for the people.

Table 32: Percentage distribution of economic status of the respondents across social groups

Social Group	ST		SC		OBC		General		Total	
Quantile	NM	M	NM	M	NM	M	NM	M	NM	M
Lowest	17.7	12.1	16.8	15.8	14.2	15.5	22.0	28.5	17.3	18.4
Second	36.0	28.3	16.4	20.1	19.7	20.7	16.2	17.7	20.3	20.8
Middle	14.4	19.2	28.0	32.4	22.1	22.6	17.6	16.1	20.8	22.3
Fourth	12.0	21.2	21.4	17.3	22.6	23.2	19.0	15.1	19.9	19.8
Highest	19.9	19.2	17.4	14.4	21.5	18.1	25.2	22.6	21.6	18.7
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Note: NM and M imply non-migrants and migrants respectively
Source: Primary Survey, 2022

As shown in Table 32 in both non-migrants and migrants, individuals in the General category are more concentrated in the 1st and 5th quantiles. This reveals that while many from the General category occupy lower economic positions (1st quantile), a substantial portion also achieves comparativelybetter economic status (5th quantile). Among migrants, those in the General group particularly show a concentration in the 1st quantile, due to low-paying or less stable occupations upon migrating engaging in jobs like mason and brick kiln worker. But they also have notable representation in the 5th quantile, indicating upward mobility for some engaging in tertiary sector jobs.

The OBC group shows similar economic distribution patterns across both non-migrants and migrants, concentrated mainly in the 3rd and 4th quantiles. This implies that labour migration does not significantly alter the economic status of OBC individuals, possibly because they might have already occupied stable, medium-level economic positions that remain consistent regardless of migration.

Both non-migrants and migrants in the SC category have a high concentration in the 3rd quantile, with Migrants showing a slightly higher proportion. This indicates that SC migrants, through labour migration, are positioned in jobs that lift them to a relatively moderate economic status, and in some cases, migrants belong to the economically moderate category, though not as high as the General category in the 5th quantile. They are mostly engaged in secondary and tertiary sector jobs.

For the ST group, non-migrants are heavily concentrated in the 2nd quantile, implying a somewhat low to middle economic position. However, Migrants from the ST group are more evenly spread across quantiles, with a notable presence in both the 2nd and 4th quantiles. Those belonging to the 4th quantile they are engaged in jobs like security guard.This could indicate that labour migration opens opportunities for economic improvement for some ST migrants, moving them from the 1st quantile toward the middle quantiles.

Table 33: Estimated economic status of the migrants by religion (In %)

Asset index	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
Lowest	15.5	50.0	100.0	18.4
Second	21.4	15.0	0.0	20.8
Middle	23.2	13.3	0.0	22.3
Fourth	20.1	16.7	0.0	19.8
Highest	19.9	5.0	0.0	18.7
Total	**100 (n=673)**	**100(n=60)**	**100(n=1)**	**100 (n=734)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The Table 33 shows the asset index in relation to religion for migrants reveals a significant economic disparity, particularly among the Muslim community. A striking 50% of people among Muslim migrants fall into the 1st quantile category, compared to 15.5% of Hindus, showing the economic challenges faced by Muslim migrants. Additionally, the only Christian migrant in the sample also falls into the 1st quantile category (100%), further highlighting the vulnerability of minority religious groups in this context. The distribution among Hindus is more balanced, with 19.9% in the 5th quantile category, indicating a broader range of economic conditions.

In contrast, the asset index for non-migrants tells a slightly different story (Table 34). While a considerable proportion of non-migrant Muslims are still in the 1st quantile category (39.6%), this is less extreme than among their migrant counterparts. This suggests that migration among Muslims is more closely associated with economic hardship, as those who migrate are more likely to be from households in the lower asset categories. For Hindus, the asset distribution is relatively even across the different categories, with a notable 22.4% in the 5th category, indicating comparatively better economic stability compared to migrants.

Table 34: Estimated economic status of the non-migrants by religion (In %)

Asset index	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
Lowest	15.2	39.6	54.6	17.3
Second	20.7	14.9	36.4	20.3
Middle	21.1	18.9	9.1	20.8
Fourth	20.6	13.1	0.0	19.9
Highest	22.4	13.5	0.0	21.6
Total	**100 (n=2531)**	**100(n=222)**	**100(n=11)**	**100(n=2764)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Christians, although a small sample size, show a high prevalence in the lower asset categories among non-migrants, with 54.6% in the 1st and 36.4% in the 2nd categories. This reflects a broader trend of economic vulnerability within the Christian community in the sample concerned.

Overall, the data suggests that economic need is a significant driver of migration, particularly for Muslims, who are predominantly in the lowest or second quantile asset categories when they migrate. This aligns with the broader understanding that financial pressures often induce individuals to migrate in search of better opportunities and improved living conditions.

Table 35: Estimated economic status of migrants by broad economic sectors (In %)

Broad economic sectors	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest	Total
Primary	4.9	7.2	5.2	2.4	0.0	4.2
Secondary	69.1	54.7	55.2	39.4	11.2	47.9
Tertiary	26.0	38.1	39.6	58.3	88.8	47.9
Total	**100 (123)**	**100 (n= 139)**	**100 (n=154)**	**100 (n= 127)**	**100 (n= 98)**	**100 (n=641)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

An analysis of the economic backgrounds of the individuals reveals distinct patterns in sectoral engagement. Table 35 highlights the distribution of migrants across primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors, segmented by their economic status post-migration. Migrants in the primary sector are primarily concentrated in the lower economic quantile, with 4.9% in the lowest and

7.2% in the second-lowest categories, and no representation in the highest quantile, reflecting limited economic advancement in this sector. The secondary sector exhibits a more balanced distribution, with the highest proportions of migrants across the lower to middle category, peaking at 69.1% in the lowest group and gradually declining to 11.2% in the highest group. Conversely, the tertiary sector demonstrates a clear association with higher economic status, as 88.8% of migrants in the highest category and 58.3% in the fourth category are employed in this sector. This pattern indicates that tertiary sector jobs offer greater economic mobility compared to primary and secondary sectors, emphasizing the role of sectoral engagement in improving economic status post-migration. A key factor behind this trend is educational attainment, which often correlates with economic background and is discussed in the subsequent section.

12.3 Education and Economic Mobility: The Interplay of Opportunities and Constraints

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping economic opportunities, serving as a key driver for labour migration and upward mobility. In this section, the focus lies on how access to education enables individuals to secure better employment prospects, particularly in secondary and tertiary sectors, often linked to urban migration. Conversely, the analysis reveals the stark challenges faced by economically disadvantaged households, where limited financial resources restrict access to education, compelling individuals to join the workforce at an early ageand compromising their education. This interplay highlights a cyclical relationship between education, financial conditions, and labour migration, offering insights into how socio-economic disparities influence migration decisions and long-term livelihood outcomes.

The educational background of migrants, segmented by religion in Table 36, reveals significant differences in educational attainment among the groups.

Table 36: Distribution of migrants by their level of educational attainment and religion (In %)

Level of educational attainment	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
No formal education	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.5
Primary	7.9	35.0	0.0	11.7
Middle	28.7	35.0	100.0	29.3
Secondary	27.0	6.7	0.0	25.3
Higher secondary	23.0	0.0	0.0	21.1
Graduation and above	12.8	3.3	0.0	12.0
Total	**100 (n=673)**	**100 (n=60)**	**100 (n=1)**	**100 9n=734)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

For Muslim migrants, a substantial 55% have only primary education, and 35% have a middle school education. This contrasts sharply with the Hindu migrants, who show a more balanced educational distribution across various levels. Specifically, 28.7% of Hindu migrants have attained a middle school education, while 27% have secondary education, and 23% have higher secondary education. This broader educational spread among Hindus suggests that their migration may be driven by a range of factors beyond immediate economic needs, potentially including educational qualifications and career opportunities.

The data also highlights that very few Muslim migrants have higher secondary education or above, indicating a concentration in lower-skilled, labour-intensive jobs. This aligns with the earlier finding that a significant number of Muslim migrants are engaged in industries like brick kiln work, where higher education is less critical. Conversely, Hindu migrants show a higher proportion in more advanced educational categories, with 12.8% having graduated or attained higher degrees. This educational advantage may facilitate their entry into a wider array of occupations and potentially better-paying roles.The Christian migrant in the sample falls into the middle education category, but due to the small sample size, this does not significantly impact the overall trend.

In summary, the educational background of migrants illustrates that Muslims are predominantly in lower educational categories, likely affecting their migration patterns towards less skilled and lower-wage jobs. In contrast, Hindus exhibit a more varied educational profile, suggesting that educational attainment influences the range of occupations and opportunities available to them.

Table 37: Estimated economic status of migrants by educational attainments (In %)

Educational attainment/ Asset	Lowest	Second	Middle	Fourth	Highest	Total
No formal education	2.2	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
Primary	28.2	15.7	7.9	7.6	0.0	11.7
Middle	41.5	37.3	35.4	24.8	5.8	29.3
Secondary	19.3	25.5	37.2	24.8	17.5	25.3
Higher secondary	8.9	18.3	14.6	24.8	40.2	21.1
Graduation and above	0.0	2.6	4.9	17.9	36.5	12.0
Total	**100 (n=135)**	**100 (n=153)**	**100 (n=164)**	**100 (n=145)**	**100 (n=137)**	**100 (n=734)**

Source: Primary survey, 2022

Table 37 demonstrates a clear correlation between economic stability, measured by asset ownership, and educational attainment. Individuals from the highest economic category exhibit significantly better access to higher education, with 40.2% completing higher secondary and 36.5% attaining graduation or above. This is in stark contrast to those from the lowest economic category, where the majority have limited educational qualifications, with 41.5% achieving only

middle school education, and 28.2% attaining primary education. Notably, 2.2% of individuals in the lowest economic group have no formal education, whereas this percentage is negligible in higher economic categories.

The disparity reflects how economically stable households provide greater access to resources that enable individuals to complete higher levels of schooling. Conversely, those from lower economic categories are restricted by financial and systemic barriers, which confine them to traditional or primary sector jobs. The ability of individuals from middle and upper-middle economic groups to pursue higher education, as shown in Table 37, further reinforces their advantage in securing higher-paying employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors. These patterns highlight the critical role of economic background in shaping educational and employment outcomes, perpetuating socio-economic inequalities.

Economic hardship often forces individuals from disadvantaged households to compromise on their education and they often forgo continuation of education in order to support their families at an early age. When financial resources are limited, children are often compelled to abandon their studies and take up work to contribute to the household income. This is particularly prevalent in families with irregular or insufficient earnings, where education is viewed as a lesser priority compared to meeting immediate needs such as food, shelter, and medical expenses. As a result, these children miss out on the opportunity to acquire essential skills and qualifications, confining them to low-paying, unskilled jobs in the future. This cycle perpetuates poverty, as the lack of education diminishes their prospects for economic mobility, ensuring that financial instability continues across generations.

12.4 Primary Motivations for Migration

Table 38 indicates that employment is indeed the primary reason for migration across different religious communities, with a slight variation in emphasis. Among the Hindu migrants, 30.2% migrated in search of employment, while 28.1% sought better employment opportunities. For Muslim migrants, 50% migrated to take up employment, and 25% did so in search of better employment. Interestingly, the single Christian migrant in the sample also migrated to take up employment (100%).

This trend shows the strong link between migration and the pursuit of employment, particularly among the Muslim community, where the need to take up employment is significantly higher. In contrast, Hindu migrants show a more balanced distribution across different employment-related reasons.

The data on reasons for migration, categorized by educational level, reveals significant insights into the factors driving individuals to migrate and how these reasons correlate with their educational backgrounds.

Table 38: Percentage distribution of migrants by reason for migration within religion

Reason for migration	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
In search of employment	30.2	23.3	0.0	29.6
In search of better employment	28.1	25.0	0.0	27.8
To take up employment	26.2	50.0	100.0	28.2
Transfer of services/contract	3.1	0.0	0.0	2.9
Proximity to place of work	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.4
Studies	8.0	1.7	0.0	7.5
Natural disaster	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
Social political problem	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.3
Marriage	1.3	0.0	0.0	1.2
Others	2.1	0.0	0.0	1.9
Total	**100 (n=673)**	**100 (n=60)**	**100 (n=1)**	**100 (n=734)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 39 shows that migration primarily serves as a means of employment for individuals with minimal education. Those with no formal education predominantly migrate for work (50%), reflecting limited job options locally. Among primary-educated individuals, reasons for migration remain employment-focused. As education levels increase, migration motivations shift toward better employment: middle-educated individuals migrate to improve job conditions (34.9%) or secure new positions (23.3%). For those with secondary education, improving job prospects (35.5%) and taking up new employment (26.9%) are key motivations. Individuals with HS and graduate-level educational attainment are more likely to migrate for studies (18.7% and 18.2%, respectively). Also, graduates have the highest likelihood of migration to join new employment (38.6%), reflecting the fact that graduate-level educational attainment has better job opportunities in secondary and tertiary sectors than their place of origin.

Higher education equips individuals with the skills and qualifications necessary to access employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors, which offer better wages and working conditions. However, in rural areas, the absence of significant industrial and service sector development severely limits these opportunities. Consequently, individuals with higher education face challenges such as underemployment or unemployment, which hinders their economic aspirations. This structural limitation in rural areas acts as a critical push factor, compelling educated individuals to migrate to urban centres where jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors are more concentrated which acts as the pull factor. Thus, the migration of educated individuals is driven not only by the allure of urban opportunities but also by the lack of viable employment options in their places of origin.

Table 39: Percentage distribution of migrants by reason for migration within the level of educational attainments

Reason for migration/ level of education attainment	No formal education	Primary	Middle	Secondary	HS	Gradua-tion	Total
In search of employment	50.0	30.2	35.4	27.4	28.4	20.5	29.6
In search of better employment	25.0	30.2	34.9	35.5	16.1	12.5	27.8
To take up employment	0.0	36.1	23.3	26.9	27.1	38.6	28.2
Transfer of services/contract	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2	7.1	6.8	2.9
Proximity to place of work	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.4
Studies	0.0	0.0	0.9	4.3	18.7	18.2	7.5
Natural disaster	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Social political problem	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Marriage	25.0	2.3	0.5	1.6	0.7	1.1	1.2
Others	0.0	1.2	2.3	1.6	1.9	2.3	1.9
Total	**100 (n=4)**	**100 (n=86)**	**100 (n=215)**	**100 (n=186)**	**100 (n=155)**	**100 (n=88)**	**100 (n=734)**

*Note: * Person who was not in employment at the time of leaving the last Usual Place of Residence (UPR)*

*** Those persons who were employed at the time of leaving UPR but had come to the place of destination in search of better employment*

**** The person who were offered better jobs than the one they were having at the UPR*

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The data reveals a clear pattern where the reasons for migration are also closely linked to the educational attainment of individuals. Those with lower educational attainment primarily migrate in search of employment, while individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to migrate for better job opportunities, advanced level education, and professional growth. This correlation highlights how educational qualifications can shape migration motives, with higher education facilitating broader opportunities for educational and career advancement.

While migration is largely driven by employment across educational levels, it is important to note that some individuals migrate due to factors beyond education and employment. The data

reveals cases of migration also prompted by natural disasters and socio-political distress, though among a small sample size (0.5 % out of the total sample size). These migrants primarily belong to Barpeta and Kokrajhar districts, regions frequently affected by floods and historical social conflicts (Pathak, 2012). Although not directly linked to education levels, these instances show the role of environmental and socio-political challenges as push factors in migration decisions, highlighting the diverse and multifaceted nature of migration.

12.5 Dependency on Remittances:Usage Patterns

Further Table 40 reveals that a substantial proportion of migrants send remittances back home, with 93.3% of Muslim migrants doing so, compared to 79.2% of Hindu migrants and 100% of single Christian migrants. This high rate of remittance among Muslims suggests a strong economic drive behind their migration to support their families financially.

Given this high percentage of remittances being sent back, the question intrigues whether remittances are being spent on daily consumption, education, savings, or other aspects. If a significant portion is spent on education, it may indicate an investment in human resources, potentially enhancing future employment opportunities in more diverse fields forthe younger generation left behind in native places. This aspect of remittance usage provides valuable insights into the long-term socio-economic impact of migration.

Table 40: Status of remittance sent by different religious communities (In %)

Remittance	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Total
Send Remittance	79.2	93.3	100.0	80.4
Do not send remittance	20.8	6.7	0.0	19.6
Total	**100 (n=673)**	**100 (n=60)**	**100 (n=1)**	**100 (n=734)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

Table 41 presents the utilization of remittances sent back home by migrants from different religious backgrounds, specifically focusing on Hindu, Muslim, and Christian households. A critical observation from the data is that for a significant portion of Hindu and Muslim households, the remittance sent by the migrant family member constitutes the only source of income. Among Hindu households, 31.5% rely entirely on remittances as their sole source of household income, while this figure is even higher for Muslim households, at 37.5%. For the single Christian household recorded, remittances are the only source of income, accounting for 100% reliance.

Table 41: Information on remittances utilised within different religious communities (In %)

Usage of remittances	Hindu	Muslim	Christian
Only source of HHs income	31.5	37.5	100
Food items	32.5	35.7	0
On education	4.9	7.1	0
Household durables	9	3.6	0
Marriage and other ceremony	1.1	5.4	0
Healthcare	12.9	5.4	0
Expenditure on other items	18	5.4	0
Improving housing condition	6.9	7.1	0
Debt repayment on loan	1.1	0	0
Total	**100% (n=533)**	**100% (n=56)**	**100 % (n=1)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

This heavy dependence on remittances as the primary income source compels these households to allocate a substantial portion of these funds to essential needs. For example, 32.5% of Hindu households and 35.7% of Muslim households spend their remittances on food items, which is a significant expenditure category. This pattern extends to other critical areas such as education and healthcare. Although a smaller percentage of remittances are spent on education (4.9% for Hindus and 7.1% for Muslims), it is evident that remittances play a role in supporting the educational needs of the family. Similarly, healthcare expenditures account for 12.9% of remittances in Hindu households and 5.4% in Muslim households, highlighting the importance of these funds in maintaining the health and well-being of family members.

Additionally, a portion of the remittances is spent on improving household conditions, with 6.9% of Hindu and 7.1% of Muslim households directing funds toward housing improvements. However, these expenditures on essential items mean that very little is left for savings or investments. Hindu households, for instance, spend 9.0% on household durables and 18.0% on other miscellaneous items, further demonstrating that most of the remittances are consumed rather than saved or invested.

This consumption-driven use of remittances can be linked to two broader assertions about migrant households. First, due to the lack of savings and investment, these households often remain in a peripheral economic position, unable to improve their financial standing significantly. Second, their reliance on remittances for essential expenses makes them vulnerable to unforeseen contingencies, particularly health-related emergencies or missed opportunities for economic upliftment, such as starting a business, or any other means of economic initiation. This surmises the economic distress faced by families at their place of origin.

The root cause of this situation appears to be the low wages that migrants earn, which limits their ability to save. Moreover, household size plays a critical role in this dynamic. In households with a sole breadwinner and a relatively large number of dependents, the financial burden increases, making it more challenging to save or invest. In contrast, a migrant earning the same wage might be in a better financial position if they have fewer family members to support. This highlights the complex interplay between household size, income levels, and the ability to save, which ultimately affects the financial stability and potential for upward mobility of migrant households. Additionally, having dependent family members becomes a social responsibility for the primary breadwinner, which induces them to seek better-paying opportunities to meet these obligations. This often motivates migration to urban areas in pursuit of better wages. This study found that the proportion of dependent family members is higher among migrants compared to non-migrant individuals, indicating that the pressure to support dependents also drives the decision to migrate when there is income insufficiency for the household at the place of origin.

The data indicates that individuals migrate to urban areas primarily for employment opportunities. However, this does not imply that rural areas lack all avenues for employment or survival, as many non-migrants continue to earn and live in rural areas. For economically weaker individuals with lower education levels, migration often serves to support their families and achieve financial stability. Earnings in rural areas may cover basic needs but often fall short of enabling significant improvements in overall well-being. So, often it becomes a speculation that moving to urban areas provides better and higher income than the rural areas. In such situations, expectations are met and those who find a suitable source of income stay at the ir place of migration, otherwise, they return to their native place.

Table 42: Information on remittances utilized within different social groups (In %)

Usage of remittances	ST	SC	OBC	General
Only source of HHs income	51.3	27.7	29	31.2
Food items	21.1	35.3	30.7	39.6
Education	1.3	8.4	3.3	7.1
Household durables	9.2	7.6	7.5	10.4
Marriage and other ceremony	0	3.4	0.8	1.9
Healthcare	17.1	14.3	9.1	13
Expenditure on other items	11.8	17.6	21.6	11
Improving housing condition	3.9	8.4	7.9	5.8
Debt repayment on loan	2.6	0.8	0.8	0.6
Total	**100 (n=76)**	**100 (n=119)**	**100 (n=241)**	**100(n=154)**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

When examining the utilization of remittances across different social groups (Table 42), a distinct pattern emerges, particularly among Scheduled Tribes (ST). A significant majority of ST households rely on remittances as their only source of income, with 51.3% of ST migrants being the sole earners for their families. This is considerably higher than the percentages observed in Scheduled Caste (SC) households (27.7%), Other Backward Classes (OBC) households (29.0%), and households from the General category (31.2%).

Given this heavy reliance on remittances as the primary source of income, ST households allocate their funds differently compared to other social groups. Notably, ST households prioritize healthcare, with 17.1% of their remittances being spent in this area. This expenditure is higher than that of SC (14.3%), OBC (9.1%), and General category (13.0%) households, indicating a pronounced need or priority for health-related expenses among ST families.

In contrast, spending on education is markedly low in ST households, with only 1.3% of remittances directed towards educational expenses. This is significantly less compared to SC households (8.4%), OBC households (3.3%), and General category households (7.1%). This reveals that education might not be as prioritized within ST communities, possibly due to immediate financial constraints or differing cultural values related to education.

Across all social groups, expenditures on food items, healthcare, and household durables remain prominent. For instance, 21.1% of remittances in ST households are used for food, though this is lower than the percentages observed in SC (35.3%), OBC (30.7%), and General category (39.6%) households. Meanwhile, spending on household durables accounts for 9.2% of remittances in ST households, which is comparable to or slightly higher than the spending in SC (7.6%) and OBC (7.5%) households, but slightly lower than in General category households (10.4%).

Moreover, ST households allocate a smaller portion of their remittances to debt repayment, with only 2.6% being used for this purpose, compared to the minimal but still present debt repayment percentages in SC (0.8%), OBC (0.8%), and General (0.6%) households. Additionally, spending on marriage and other ceremonies is absent among ST households, whereas SC, OBC, and General category households do allocate small portions of their remittances to such events (3.4%, 0.8%, and 1.9%, respectively).

Overall, the data indicates that ST households are heavily dependent on remittances for basic needs, with a significant focus on healthcare and food, while less emphasis is placed on education. This pattern reflects the broader challenges faced by ST communities, where immediate survival needs often take precedence over long-term investments in education and savings. These spending habits further show the precarious financial position of ST households, where the lack of disposable income limits their ability to invest in opportunities that could potentially uplift their economic status.

12.6 Prior Occupation

The analysis of prior occupations reveals a significant shift among individuals, particularly from agriculture and daily wage-related jobs to other works.

As depicted in Table 43, 25% of individuals were previously engaged in agricultural or farming activities, and 22.9% were involved in casual or daily labour. However, a substantial portion of these individuals have transitioned to different occupations, such as security services (10%), construction-related jobs (17.9%), and private sector or other jobs in the service sector (6.4%).

Table 43: Percentage distribution of respondents by their prior occupation (n=140)

Details of prior occupation (Migrants +Non-migrants)	Percentage
Teachers / Tutors	6.4
Agricultural worker	25.0
Security guard	10.0
Casual/Daily Labour	22.9
Construction-related jobs	17.9
Factory worker	6.4
Self-employed/Small Business	5.0
Transport worker	2.9
Livestock and Fishing-related jobs	3.6
Total	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

This shift raises an important question regarding why so many people abandon their previous occupations, especially in agriculture and daily labour, to pursue alternative careers. The data in Table 44 reveals that income uncertainty is the primary factor driving this occupational shift, with 62.9% of former agricultural workers citing it as their reason for leaving.

Table 44: Reasons for shifting their jobs from agriculture to other sectors

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Inadequate/Non-remunerative Income	4	11.4
Uncertainty of income	22	62.9
Job insecurity	1	2.9
Condition of work	1	2.9
Loss of land/livestock/assets	2	5.7
Better opportunity	5	14.3
Total	**35**	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

This uncertainty, along with inadequate or non-remunerative income (11.4%), has pushed many individuals to seek more stable and potentially better opportunities in other sectors (Table 44). While better opportunities were a reason for 14.3% of the respondents, it's clear that the instability and unpredictability of income in agriculture are significant factors motivating this shift.

However, it is important to note that the issue of income uncertainty in agriculture is not universally applicable. For those able to scale their agricultural operations, success is possible. In Assam, the predominance of marginal land holdings limits farmers' ability to achieve large-scale production and benefit from economies of scale. In this study it is also found that the majority people belong to marginal category in term of land holing as shown in Table 45. Although modern technologies like vertical farming offer potential solutions for maximizing productivity on small plots of land, the lack of proper education and guidance often keeps farmers at a disadvantage. This perpetuates their struggle with income uncertainty and hinders their ability to fully leverage these innovations.

Table 45: Share of different categories of landholding

Landholding (in hectare)	Percent
Marginal	92.5
Medium	0.1
Semi-medium	0.9
Small	6.5
Total	**100**

Source: Primary Survey, 2022

The challenge of income uncertainty is not limited to agriculture but extends to casual and daily labour as well. Among those who left casual or daily labour jobs, 43.8% did so due to uncertainty of income, making it the most significant factor for their occupational shift (Table 46). Additionally, 31.3% of respondents sought better opportunities elsewhere, indicating that the search for more stable and profitable work is a common theme across both agricultural and labour-intensive jobs.

Table 46: Reasons for shifting their job from Casual / Daily labour to another sector

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Inadequate/Non-remunerative Income	3	9.4
Uncertainty of income	14	43.8
Qualification mismatch	1	3.1
Job risk/hazard	3	9.4
Better opportunity	10	31.3
Other	1	3.1
Total	**32**	**100**

The persistent concern over income stability highlights the importance and necessity of a steady cash flow for individuals engaged in these occupations. For those who are the sole breadwinners in their households, the pressure to secure a stable income is even greater. The lack of daily earnings can have severe consequences, especially in rural areas where savings are minimal or non-existent. Without sufficient savings to fall back on, these individuals and their families face significant financial hardship if they go even one or two months without regular income.

The shift from agriculture and daily wage labour to other occupations is primarily driven by the uncertainty of income in these sectors. While some individuals leave in search of better opportunities, the overarching theme is the need for a consistent and reliable source of income, which is crucial for the financial stability of households, particularly those with a single earner. These dynamic highlights the broader economic challenges faced by rural communities, where limited resources, lack of education, and minimal savings compound the difficulties of sustaining a livelihood in traditional occupations like agriculture and daily labour.

13. Conclusion

A critical driver of migration is the search for employment; however, better wages in urban areas play an even more significant role in inducing rural people to migrate. This net gain in income (due to the difference of higher wages in urban areas vis-à-vis rural areas) becomes essential for meeting expenses such as food, children's education, housing improvements, and social obligations. Education itself emerges as a key determinant, as those with higher education levels are more likely to migrate in search of better opportunities. The lack of industrial development in rural areas further exacerbates this trend, as it limits the availability of better employment opportunities for individuals with higher educational attainment. As a result, individuals with a certain educational attainment like higher secondary and graduation, often perceive migration as the only viable pathway to align their skills and aspirations with better-paying jobs. Additionally, migration often results in a shift from primary-sector roles, such as agriculture, to jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors, where wages are typically higher.

For many rural households, marginal landholdings limit their ability to generate adequate income through agriculture alone, making migration a viable alternative for livelihood and financial security when rural jobs fall short of providing these securities. This transition allows migrants to earn more than they could have earned in their home villages, contributing to improved living conditions.

The logistic regression analysis further confirms that age plays a significant role in migration, with younger individuals more likely to migrate, and this likelihood decreases as they grow older. The primary reason for the lower likelihood and incidence of migration with older age

is because of two reasons: one, mobility decreases with older age, and two, in most of the tertiary and secondary sectors wage rate tends to be sticky after a certain level of age and work experience and there are fewer employment opportunities at high-end jobs.

Gender and marital status also play important roles: unmarried males exhibit a higher propensity to migrate while married women have a higher propensity to migrate with their spouses. Land possession is negatively associated with migration, indicating that individuals with ownership of cultivable and homestead land are less likely to migrate due to the stability provided by livelihood opportunities tied to land ownership.

Thus, while migration is initially driven by employment needs, it is ultimately shaped by the pursuit of higher wages and economic stability. Migration serves as a strategy for alleviating financial pressures on rural families and achieving a better quality of life. However, the higher reliance on remittances among economically weaker households leaves them vulnerable to economic disruptions in urban areas and tends to perpetuate their vulnerability.

14. Policy Implication

The findings from the study bringout a complex set of issues that induce migration. Besides low economic status (asset ownership), uncertainty and insufficiency of income, educational attainments also influence household decisions on migration. This brings out the criticality of policy intervention for ensuring the economic well-being of households. It has been observed that low economic status and income earning capacities of households not only induce out-migration but also impede the educational attainment of children further pushing these households into a virtual cycle of low educational attainment and capability. This restricts the households with lower eligibility to find employment with higher wages pushing them into a virtual cycle of low wage work trap.

Strengthening Rural Livelihoods

To address the economic hardships that drive migration, programs like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) need better implementation together promotion of household and small-scale industries and agribusinesses based on local resources under the national rural livelihood mission (NRLM). The NRLM Assam has mobilized a total of 3621733 members till 2023-24 under its various livelihood activities and offers substantial scope for further mobilization to enhance livelihood activities in agriculture, horticulture, livestock, and sericulture.

Diversification of rural economies can reduce over-dependence on agriculture and mitigate migration driven by seasonal unemployment. This is important to reduce their reliance on agriculture, which is often vulnerable to seasonal fluctuations and economic risks by creating alternative sources of income such as opportunities in agribusinesses, and other non-agricultural sectors inrural areas. This diversification helps to tackle seasonal unemployment, a key driver of migration, by providing consistent income opportunities throughout the year helps to create a more resilient rural economy, reducing the economic pressures that induce people to migrate.

The strengthening of livelihood security would also reduce the incidence of dropping out from education and ensure better educational attainment with opportunities for better bargaining power in the labour market. Skill and efficiency especially in the service sector offer opportunities for better bargaining power in employment.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 2.0 is one of the flagship programs run by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship. It was launched under the scheme of 'Skill India' and is implemented by Assam Skill Development Mission in the state. The program aims to enable the youths to take up various industries relevant skills training which will help them secure a sustainable livelihood. The implementation of the programme needs to be tailored to the need based market opportunities and linked with educational curriculum such that capacity augmentation can be ensured based on the employment opportunities rather than leaving a vast reservoir of unemployable educated youths whose educational attainment and skill leave them with little opportunities and thereby also depress the labour market and wage rate. Resilient and robust economic growth requires not only emphasis on livelihood security but also adequate resourceful manpower to leverage the growth in the tertiary sector.

Encouraging Reverse Migration and Rural Entrepreneurship:

Policies that incentivize reverse migration, such as providing subsidies or loans to returning migrants for starting rural enterprises, can alleviate pressure on urban areas and promote rural development. Promoting rural innovation through a convergence programme under Skill India and Livelihood mission can create employment opportunities locally and reduce migration rates.

15. Limitations of the Study

Despite its comprehensive analysis of the nature of migration and the economic status of migrant households, the study has limited itself from analysing the following issues:

Working Conditions of Migrants

The study does not examine the working conditions of migrants, which are critical for understanding their overall well-being and job satisfaction. Factors such as workplace safety, wages, and job security remain unexplored.

Work-Life Hazards

The risks and hazards associated with the occupations of migrant workers have not been examined. This omission overlooks an important dimension of their occupational challenges, such as exposure to physical or mental health risks.

Social Security Measures

The study does not consider the availability or effectiveness of social security measures for migrants, such as access to health insurance, pensions, or unemployment benefits. This limits insights into the support structures available to them.

Return Migration

The concept of return migration, including the factors that induce migrants to return to their place of origin and the socio-economic consequences of such decisions, has not been explored.

International Migration and Migration Due to Environmental or Socio-Political Reasons

The study primarily focuses on domestic labour migration and does not extensively address international migration or migration driven by environmental disasters or socio-political factors, which are significant drivers of migration globally. Although the study considered international migration as a destination but data could not be collected on specific regions about where they migrated.

These issues shall be addressed in future research work on migration to provide a more holistic understanding of labour migration and its multifaceted dimensions.

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