

Trends and Patterns of Migration from Jharkhand, India

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The central aim of this study is to comprehend and delineate trends and patterns of migration in Jharkhand. The basic purpose behind taking up migration for the study is to understand the problem and its impact on social status, which is directly related to the development and empowerment of all sections of society. This paper brings different bodies of literature together to provide an organized and structured framework.

Methodology: This paper has been written as a systematic literature review using Preferred Report Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA). The relevance of the included publications could be justified based on their language and relativity in the field of social sciences.

Main Findings: Migration from Jharkhand encompasses various patterns, including labor migration, women's migration, seasonal migration, rural-urban migration, and tribal migration. Seasonal migration is particularly prevalent among marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups within the state. Research indicates a noteworthy inverse correlation between economic status and temporary migration, highlighting that economically deprived segments, such as Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, exhibit a higher inclination toward seasonal migration. This trend underscores the distress-driven nature of migration in Jharkhand. Rural-to-urban migration accounts for over half of all seasonal migration, primarily driven by economic motives. Migration, to some extent, reflects the developmental processes underway in the region.

Application of the study: The detailed analysis of the concept and paradigms involved in migration, will be most useful for academicians, post-graduate researchers, and graduate students who seek to specialize in the area of migration from Jharkhand. This paper will also be helpful to policymakers in analyzing the developmental process in Jharkhand.

Originality/Novelty of the Study: This paper brings different bodies of literature together to provide an organized and structured framework. This ensured that the review process was more authentic and non-biased. The indexed literature was very helpful in the formation of a systematic literature review. The articles that are selected for study are mainly focused on evaluating trends and patterns of migration in Jharkhand.

INTRODUCTION

Migration has been one of the most dynamic human activities since the very beginning of human existence. During the early period, people used to move from forest to forest in search of products. Later, when they chose a civilized life, they developed relationships with animals and fertile land. According to the United Nations Multilingual Demographic Dictionary ([United Nations, 1956](#)), "migration" is any type of spatial or geographical movement between two or more geographical units. In most cases, it entails moving from the place of origin to the place of destination. After that, migration frequently took on new characteristics. The people moved from early civilized areas to other parts of the world, partly for agricultural purposes or for trade. People from different parts of the country migrate to big cities, bringing with them a variety of social and cultural backgrounds. The study of migration resulting from diverse social, political, and economic factors constitutes a significant segment of population study. Studying how people migrate throughout a vast nation like India aids in improving comprehension of the social dynamics within the nation. There hasn't been much migration on the Indian subcontinent in the past. Various factors have been pointed out to explain this phenomenon, such as the pervasive caste system, adherence to traditional values, prevalence of joint families, linguistic and cultural diversity, limited educational opportunities, and the predominance of agriculture alongside semi-feudal land arrangements ([Davis, 1951](#)). However, the rapid development of the Indian economy, improvements in post-secondary education, transportation, and communication infrastructure, as well as the workforce's shift from agriculture to industries, have all contributed to the new momentum that has been influencing Indian migration patterns lately. Approximately 450 million individuals, constituting roughly 37% of the nation's total population, were identified as internal migrants, categorized by their last place of residence ([Census of India, 2011](#)).

The formation of Jharkhand as a state represents the achievement of a 200-year struggle by the Jharkhandi people (Louis, 2000). Jharkhand was earlier a part of Bihar. After a long-standing tribal movement, Jharkhand became the 28th state of India on November 15, 2000. The term Jharkhand means the land of forests, geographically known as the Chotanagpur Plateau. There are so many economic, political, cultural, and administrative reasons behind the Jharkhand movement. Facing a labor shortage, planters turned to recruiting workers from Jharkhand, particularly the Chotanagpur plateau, under indentured labor agreements. These workers were subjected to severe conditions reminiscent of slavery (Dutta et al., 2024). Before the 1940s, the movements in South Bihar and Santhal Parganas were purely tribal, with no political agenda beyond social and economic improvement. However, as time went on, the movement's leaders came to understand that they would be unable to offer anything to their people unless they removed the leaders of north Bihar and other "outsiders" from positions of authority. The primary causes of tribal unrest in this area can be divided into four main categories: cultural conflict, unemployment among the tribe, alienation from the forest, and uneven development.

Jharkhand makes a substantial contribution to the population's migration, both within and between rural and urban areas. An overview states that between 2001 and 2011, Jharkhand lost about 5 million working-age individuals, or about 5% of its working-age population, who migrated abroad each year. Jharkhand, without a hearty water system framework, is as yet prevalently a mono-cropped zone. Moreover, in the absence of fundamental modern facilities, individuals are left without work for just about half a year (Economic Survey of India, 2016–17). Jharkhand witnesses a significant outflow of migrants, with 74% of them moving out of the state, comprising more than two-thirds of all temporary labor migrants. Particularly in rural areas, the migration rate among Scheduled Castes (SCs) is strikingly high at 73 per 1000 persons (Rajan and Deshingkar, 2023). Migration has played a crucial role in the social and economic development of Jharkhand, bringing in benefits through remittances. However, the significant outflow of people has emerged as a pressing concern. Various factors drive this outmigration from Jharkhand's villages, with economic reasons standing out prominently. The state's employment landscape is characterized by limited opportunities, mainly clustered in industrial zones (Kumar et al., 2023). Jharkhand demonstrates moderate figures for both migrant stock and remittances, suggesting a diverse range of regional migration patterns in the state (Britto et al., 2024).

The tribal people of Jharkhand's Chotanagpur and Santhal Pargana districts have been continuously leaving their homeland in search of work for more than a century. After government development policies, large dams, and industries were constructed on tribal lands and forests. The territorial acquisition by the government posed a significant challenge for the indigenous communities of Jharkhand, compelling them to migrate to urban centres in pursuit of meagre employment opportunities due to displacement. These development programs hurt women as well, who are crucial in raising their families and kids (Deogharia, 2012). Jharkhand ranks lowest in two key factors: household and marriage. This suggests that, compared to male migrants, females in the state have fewer opportunities for employment and education (Kaur and Gupta, 2024). It is critical to investigate human migration to comprehend Jharkhand's transitory stage of development.

Research Objective

1. To understand the patterns and trends of migration from Jharkhand, including the demographic characteristics of migrants, destinations, and reasons for migration.
2. Examine the impact of migration on the socio-economic development of Jharkhand, including its effects on households, communities, and the overall economy.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities faced by migrants from Jharkhand, both in their places of origin and destination.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic review has been conducted by adapting the Preferred Report Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analysis (PRISMA), 2020 (Figure 1). The peer-reviewed articles have been obtained from four databases JSTOR, EPW, Scopus, and Web of Science. Literature has been searched from December 2023 to January 2024 using the keywords migration and Jharkhand. A cumulative of 50 records have been identified from the databases- 37 studies from Google Scholar, 7 studies from Scopus, 4 studies from JSTOR, and 2 studies from Web of Science. Among these, 14 duplicate and 21 irrelevant records have been removed. The relevance of the included publications could be justified based on their language and relativity in the field of social sciences.

Thereafter, the remaining 15 articles have undergone title review. During the abstract review, no articles were excluded. The articles that have been included discuss seasonal migration, tribal migration, rural-urban migration, women migration, and social representation of migrants specifically concerning Jharkhand. The objective of the articles served as the criteria for exclusion from the review. The excluded articles have left behind women, HIV, non-human migration, and human trafficking, as these are not the primary concerns in our study. At the final stage, 13 articles, 1 report, and 1 thesis have been included for full-text review. In this paper, a multi-dimensional approach to the study of migration has built a framework for depicting the primary goal of observing the trends and patterns of migration from Jharkhand. Migration characteristics have been explained to lay the basis for discussion. This has been primarily done through academic literature on tribal and seasonal migration, along with women's migration, rural-urban migration, and labor migration. Therefore, these characteristics of migration have been elaborated on individually.

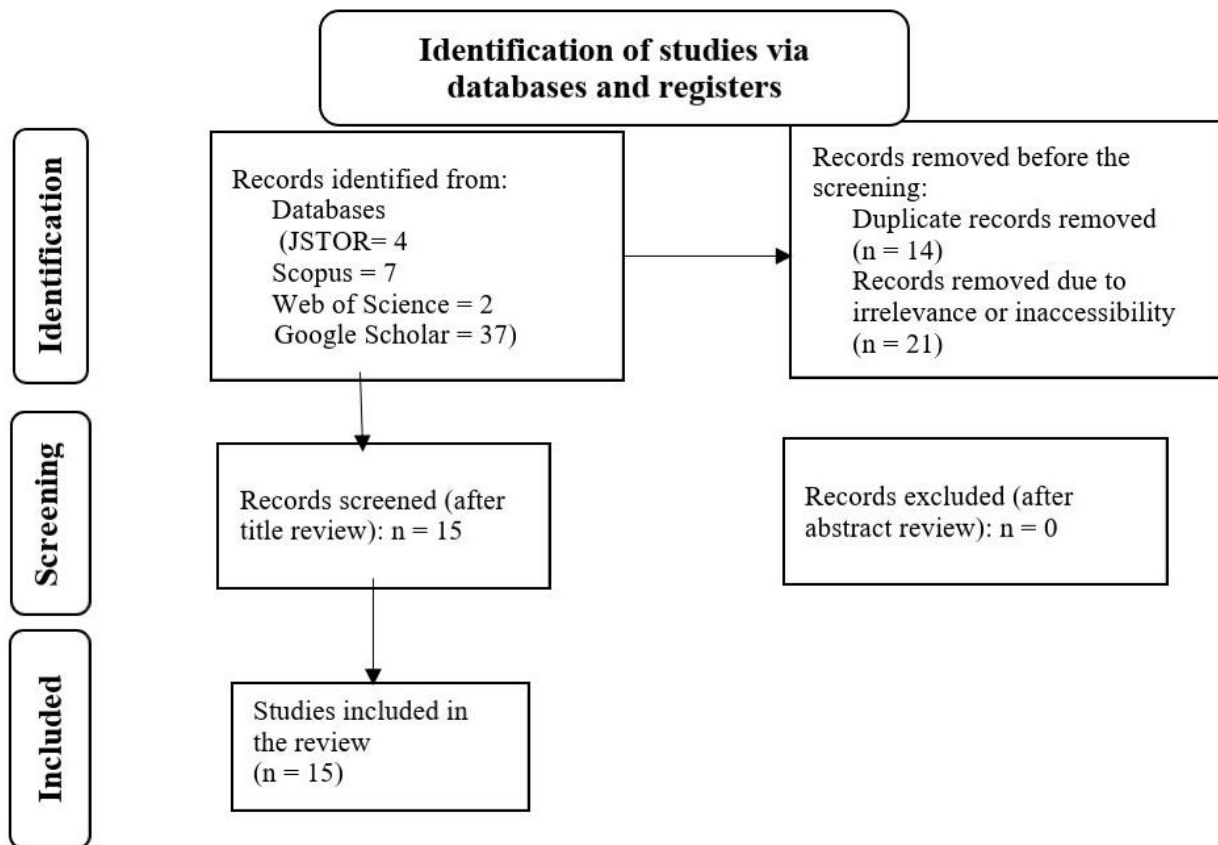


Figure 1: Selection of articles; adapted from PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram

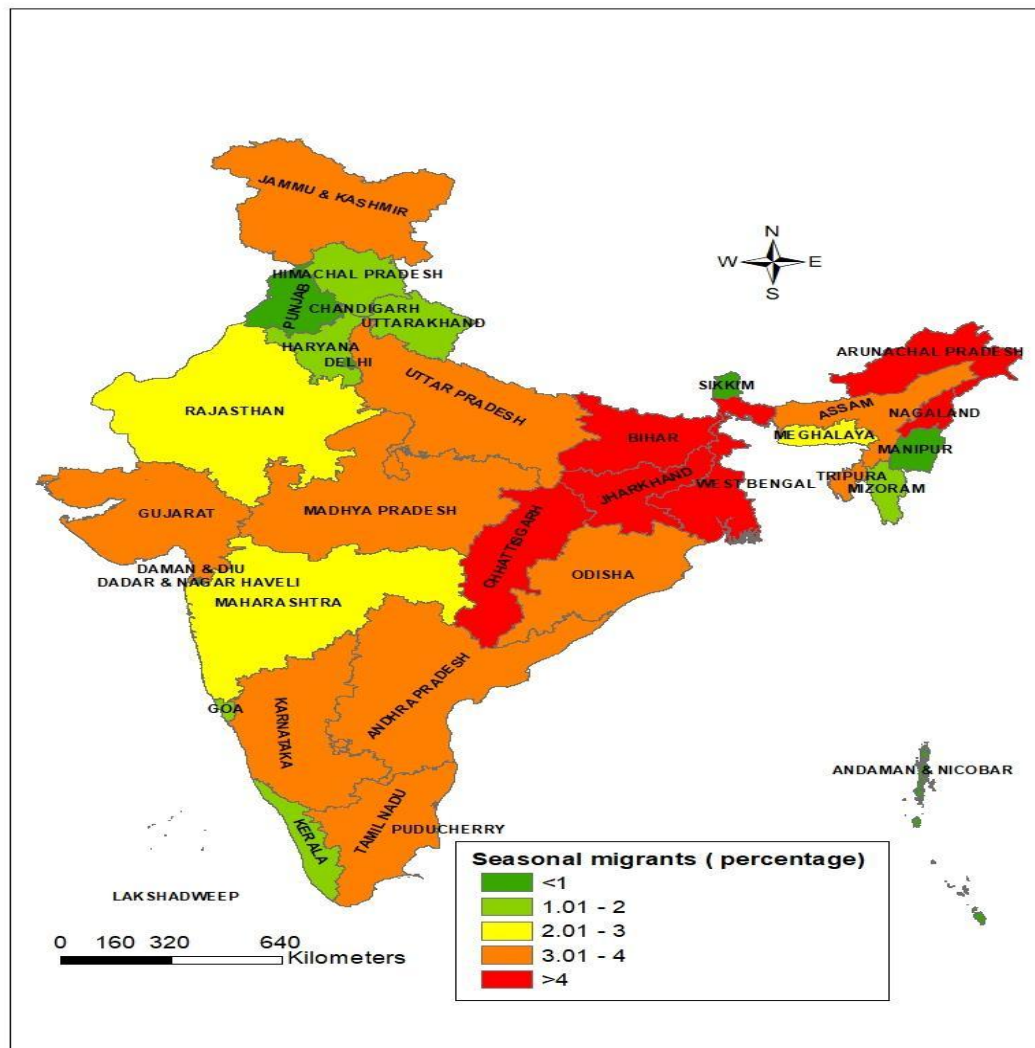
Source: www.prisma-statement.org

RESULTS

Based on the PRISMA (PRISMA, 2020), the literature on migration in Jharkhand has been organized into five themes. First is seasonal migration, rural-urban, and labor migration are the second themes; third is tribal migration, fourth is women's migration; and fifth is migration in the context of representation and social relations in Jharkhand.

1. Seasonal migration

Through systematic review as delineated above, fifteen articles were retrieved, three of which discuss seasonal migration from Jharkhand. A study in 2019 examined the correlation between seasonal migration and various determinants, particularly focusing on socioeconomic status. It was found that socioeconomically disadvantaged and marginalized communities are more likely to engage in migration, emphasizing its distress-induced nature (Sucharita and Rout, 2019). Research conducted in 2017 revealed that in the most remote villages, especially those with a higher proportion of tribal inhabitants, there is a greater prevalence of seasonal out-migration. Conversely, in semi-urban areas, the percentage of seasonal out-migrants is comparatively low (Horo, 2017). Seasonal casual labor migration needs to be understood as a socio-political process instead of just an economic process alone (Shah, 2006). There are various pull and push factors that are distress-driven and development-driven such as low economic, educational, and social status (Sucharita & Rout, 2019). Dry six months due to the absence of adequate irrigation facilities for agriculture compel people from studied villages to become seasonal migrants and earn income for the household (Horo, 2017). Ranchi and other similar districts in Jharkhand that have large rural populations have a nearly absolute dependency on agriculture and almost lack sources of employment. The cause of Jharkhand's seasonal migration, particularly to other states' brick kilns, suggests that migrants do not view their migration solely from an economic perspective. It is argued that moving to a brick kiln offers a brief period of independence from the moralizing viewpoint of Jharkhandi activists and elite adivasis, which is seen as a threat to the integrity and acceptance of tribal society. Migrants perceive their movement as an opportunity to temporarily escape problems at home, explore new places, gain independence from their parents, and experience life on their own terms. This moralizing perspective is believed to perpetuate conditions conducive to capitalist exploitation and the extraction of surplus labor by attracting a significant number of young individuals to seek refuge in brick kilns, where they believe they can live more freely (Shah, 2006). An analysis of data from the 64th round of the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) on migration revealed that seasonal migration is more common in rural areas of India's northern and eastern states. Although Jharkhand's percentage of seasonal out-migration (56) is lower than the national average (128), its rate of out-migration per 1,000 people (46) significantly exceeds the national average (28). The NSSO's 64th round identifies Jharkhand as a net out-migrating state (Bhagat, 2016). (Map 1)



Map 1: Distribution of Seasonal Migrants from Jharkhand (as a percentage of the Population)

Source: [Unit Level Data, NSSO 64TH Round, 2007-08](#)

The dry season or yield disappointment is one of the significant reasons for migration. Dry spells compelled families, to relocate to bigger cities. This increases the number of individuals moving as well as the period of movement. During celebrations such as Sarhul, Karma, and Diwali (Sohrai), a few distressed migrants stayed outside the town. Better economic and educational standing is associated with a decrease in seasonal and temporary migration. High earners are less likely to move temporarily to rural areas. Migration decisions are significantly influenced by social factors ([Deogharia, 2012](#)).

2. Tribal migration

Through a systematic review, fifteen articles were retrieved, four of which discuss tribal migration from Jharkhand. The livelihood of the tribal people is reliant on the land and forests. The tribes in Jharkhand experienced a crisis of livelihood as a result of this phenomenon, forcing the displaced people to migrate to urban areas where they were forced to work for extremely low wages to survive. While the earliest traces of tribal migration are somewhat indistinct, there is a prevailing consensus that Jharkhand served as the primary destination for tribes during both ancient and medieval eras. For the most part, Jharkhand was cut off from the rest of the nation. Numerous tribes, such as the Santhals and Oraon, came to live in this region and were relatively isolated from the outside world. Following the fall of Rohtasgarh fort in the late fourteenth century, the Oraon tribe—which was the second most powerful in terms of numbers—entered this region. The advanced period of migration in Jharkhand started in the eighteenth century with the Santhal out-migration from Hazaribagh to Damin-e-Koh. Migration was also caused by government development initiatives like building large dams and industries ([Deogharia, 2012](#)). A study found that out-migration is seen as a "safety valve" in underdeveloped areas and is thought to have some positive effects. The Oraon tribe resides in Bishunpur Block, Gumla district, Jharkhand, and is aware that leaving their home country to migrate provides a safety net against unemployment and poverty. The Oraon tribal people are deeply rooted in this, so when things in the village don't seem to be going well and there's less and less income, people start choosing to migrate. The Oraon tribal people are believed to be finding hope through migration, which has forced impoverished, vulnerable, marginalized, and tribal groups to migrate ([Baa, 2017](#)).

A study was carried out to examine the nature and pattern of tribal migration in four states with a high concentration of tribal population: Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Chattisgarh. Based on research findings, seasonal migration emerges as the predominant form of migration within India's Scheduled Tribes. Historically, tribal migration was compelled during the colonial period, but a shift occurred in the latter half of the 20th century towards voluntary migration, primarily driven by the pursuit of employment opportunities. Between 1950 and 1980, there was also a noticeable shift as tribal people moved to rural Bihar, West Bengal, mostly to work as agricultural laborers. Tribal people began migrating to larger cities like Kolkata, Delhi, and Mumbai in the late 1980s. Unlike the previous trend, which only involved men migrating to urban areas, the current trend indicates that tribal women are moving to cities in search of a living and have become more vulnerable to exploitation ([Planning Commission, 2010](#)). While it is true that migration can help workers and their families meet their immediate needs and improve their financial situation, there is growing concern about the long-term effects of migration on families and migrants themselves, including the loss of social, cultural, and political traditions. More broadly, migration is increasingly the only means of subsistence for the Oraon tribal people, both for themselves and their families. Migration harms the family, community, and village because, upon returning to the village, migrants actively recruit new members of the youth to join them. Consequently, even children of school age leave school and relocate to far-off cities. Contrarily, other respondents claim that there aren't many excellent jobs in the village, which causes unemployment and poverty and forces people to leave for a better life. Additionally, it is asserted that migration is the final option as a means of support for one's livelihood ([Baa, 2017](#)). Through aiding the tribal community—which is vulnerable to poverty and unemployment—migration strengthens the family, society, and community. However, because migrants prioritized adjusting to the workplace over their tribal knowledge, hospitality, and customs, migration harms the community and culture.

3. Rural-urban and Labor migration

Through a systematic review, fifteen articles were retrieved, two of which discuss rural-urban and labor migration in Jharkhand. Jharkhand's reliance on agriculture is decreasing, and it no longer generates steady employment. Due to the dearth of steady work in rural areas, many people, especially young people, are relocating to cities in quest of better prospects and income. Due to their frequent landlessness or marginal farming, which forces them to migrate in search of wage work to supplement their income, young men make up the majority of the migrants. These results suggest that low-income households participate in short-term labor migration ([Sucharita, 2020](#)). The lack of employment opportunities in rural areas is a major factor in migration, which is why the Indian government enacted the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to create jobs in rural areas. Migration caused by distress is one of its goals. According to a study, the sample household was not interested in performing MGNREGA work because of irregular work and wage payment delays. The sample household reported that their standard of living did not improve after enrolling, indicating that MGNREGA was unable to stop migration ([Kumar and Deogharia, 2017](#)).

In a 2003 study, researchers studied twelve villages in the tribal, forested state of Jharkhand. They discovered that at least one member of one-third of the households had left to migrate to states such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar ([Dayal and Karan, 2003](#)). The number of temporary migrants (30–50) per 1,000 people is extremely high. Major states with greater than average rates of temporary labor migration were Jharkhand (36), Gujarat (34), Madhya Pradesh (33), West Bengal (30), and Rajasthan (21) ([Keshari & Bhagat, 2012](#)). Between 2001 and 2011, migration caused Jharkhand to lose over 5 million of its working-age population. More than 5% of the population leaves each year due to a lack of employment opportunities, poverty, and the loss of traditional means of subsistence. Additionally, this represents the greatest net outflow rate in the nation ([Economic Survey of India, 2016–17](#)).

4. Women Migration

Through a systematic review, fifteen articles were retrieved, five of which discuss women's migration from Jharkhand. Women have been disproportionately affected by "development" because the tribal and forest economies are fundamentally "women-centered." The management, distribution, and provision of food, fuel, fodder, and water to the family and the community falls under the purview of women's responsibilities. There has been a noticeable shift in migration trends. Previously, mostly men relocated to urban areas, but now, a significant number of single women are moving to cities in search of job opportunities ([Sharma, 2018](#)).

According to a study conducted in 2013, living in a city generally offers women access to public spaces and a diverse range of job opportunities. However, for tribal women, employment options and access to urban areas are largely limited to domestic work. The study revealed that 78% of the migrant female population surveyed were engaged in domestic work, which represented the highest category of employment for women from the village ([Wadhawan, 2013](#)). The Oraon community illustrates how factors such as caste/tribe and gender intertwine with various social dynamics, influencing the decision to migrate for domestic work. Being tribal contributed to the perception that these women were hard-working and loyal to their employers. In addition, they are preferred as live-in domestic workers to their lower-caste counterparts, who are still stigmatized due to the prevalent caste-based notions of purity pollution ([Neetha, 2003](#)). According to studies conducted in 2006, there are push and pull factors that contribute to the migration of tribal girls to urban areas. Pull factors include the availability of job opportunities, attractive salaries, desirable lifestyles, and a high demand for domestic workers ([Kurane and Topno, 2006](#)). Conversely, push factors such as poverty, unemployment, limited access to education, and larger family sizes contribute to migration away from rural areas. The success stories that are exchanged and the expensive goods that neighbors and families purchase make urban areas more alluring. Taking into account the fact that

domestic work is still not considered "work" that promotes capital accumulation and social production. The sharp increase in tribal girls moving to cities to work as domestic help is one of the main problems facing Jharkhand's tribal society today.

Since the tribal and forest economies are fundamentally "women-centered," women have been more affected by "development" than men have been. Due to state development and the depletion of natural resources, tribal women are forced to find additional sources of income to support their families. Tribal women eventually migrate as a result of this in search of employment. In the migration literature, commonly accepted explanations for women migrating for domestic work and systems need to be re-examined (Neetha, 2004). According to research conducted in 2004, there exists an autonomous group of tribal women from Jharkhand who are the primary source of domestic workers in Delhi. This autonomous migration significantly impacts both male and female tribal migrants. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine this situation, as tribal women cannot be grouped together with other women from the class society (Singh and Jha, 2004).

5. Migration, representations, and social relations

A systematic review retrieved fifteen articles, among which one delves into the representation and social dynamics of migrants originating from Jharkhand. There are migration dynamics between Jharkhand and western Uttar Pradesh (UP), with a specific focus on the employment trends and personal accounts of Indian migrant workers. Each year, a significant number of individuals belonging to the Manjhi community from Jharkhand migrate to the flourishing agricultural areas of North West India, renowned as the "Green Revolution belt," seeking better opportunities. Here, they engage in arduous and relentless work to sustain themselves (Rao and Mitra, 2013). It's common for impoverished individuals in agriculturally marginal areas to practice circular mobility, often on a seasonal basis (Deshingkar & Farrington, 2009). While some families struggle to make ends meet, others with means gradually amass wealth (Mosse et al., 2002). It's noteworthy that while dependence solely on local employment would lead to hardship for many, transitioning from a state of survival to financial stability represents a significant change (Kothari, 2003; Rogaly & Rafique, 2003). The income and savings generated by migrants are influenced by various factors, such as gender, income levels, living expenses, contractual obligations, and debts. Migration outcomes are multifaceted, shaped by various factors such as social connections, financial means, personal goals, work attitudes, lifestyle preferences, and the need for long-term stability. The complexities of economic and social dynamics, particularly concerning gender roles, become evident in the control strategies implemented by Jat employers and the defiance exhibited by Santhal laborers. This intricate interplay occurs within three realms: the dominant Jat community, the marginalized Santhal population, and their interactions. These dynamics are further governed by labor regulations and working environments.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper is to evaluate Jharkhand's migration trends and patterns. The patterns observed included labor migration, women's migration, seasonal migration, rural-urban migration, and tribal migration. In Jharkhand, the phenomenon of seasonal migration prevails, especially within marginalized and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities. The research reveals a significant inverse correlation between economic status and temporary migration, with socio-economically deprived groups like Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes exhibiting a higher inclination for seasonal migration. This trend underscores the distress-driven nature of Jharkhand's migration patterns. Notably, more than half of the seasonal migration occurs from rural to urban areas, primarily fueled by economic factors. Rural-urban mobility, in many respects, emerges as a consequence of developmental processes. Halting migration is not a viable solution, as it would deprive individuals of their livelihoods, essential economic support, and valuable exposure to the broader world beyond their villages. Instead, seasonal migration plays a crucial role in resource redistribution from wealthier to less affluent regions, serving as a vital mechanism to enhance the incomes of the impoverished. It was noted that improved asset and consumption levels, as well as better and more comparable regular employment, had been attained as a result of migration income. Most people shift to other states' urban areas either on their own or with the help of friends, relatives, agents, contractors, and other villagers. Most migrations last six to nine months, but they can occasionally last longer. Even though many households—nearly 80%—receive MGNREGA benefits (Kumar and Deogharia, 2017). It is challenging to halt migration, though, because there are so few working days. Living without electricity in the village or without any training in using electrical appliances in modular kitchens does not prevent Oraon domestic workers from getting employment in this sector as this work is regarded as "unskilled". The result is that they face difficulties in their workplace as their urban middle-class employers have no idea about their source location and assume that since they are being supplied through placement agencies, they know how to carry out these tasks. Moreover, there is a strong connection between unlicensed placement agencies and local job contractors, which contributes to the exploitation of domestic workers in Jharkhand, a significant source of domestic workers in Delhi. Tribal women from Jharkhand are migrating on their own. Thus, autonomous migration affects both male migrants and tribal women. Given the prevalence of village exogamy, autonomous women's migration has typically been written off as unimportant or ignored because marriage migration between villages accounts for a significant portion of this migration. The negative consequences of migration (such as detribalization, problems related to the marriage of these girls when they return home, problems related to specific aspects of health, and exploitation by middlemen and employers) call for immediate attention. More focused qualitative and quantitative data on Dalit migrants is still desperately needed, despite the lack of research on this topic. For the government to enact policies that would enable Dalits to choose to migrate, evidence-based research on the number of migrants is required. Jharkhand requires fresh research insights and different approaches to planning for migration. A policy can be created to target (or minimize) a particular group of migrants, such as distress-driven migrants.

There must be an analysis of the reasons why migrant households migrate, as well as the obstacles that non-migrant households face. Understanding the obstacles to and within migration is necessary to set the stage for future policy debates and the planning of rural development. It's necessary to have a system in place to improve service and food accessibility and lessen the possibility of harassment. Addressing the diverse impacts of migration on Jharkhand requires prioritizing the issue and implementing targeted policy interventions. It is crucial for governments and policymakers to actively contribute to promoting secure migration practices, thereby safeguarding the well-being of migrants.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the paper offers valuable insights into the migration trends and patterns in Jharkhand, it also has several limitations. The paper primarily focuses on Jharkhand's migration patterns without comparative analyses with other regions or countries. A broader perspective could provide more comprehensive insights into the factors driving migration. Exploring potential counterarguments or alternative perspectives on migration in Jharkhand will be helpful. Considering different viewpoints could enrich the analysis and foster a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

During the conduct of this study, no conflicts of interest were present with the current organization or any other entity. This assertion is based on a thorough self-assessment and a commitment to maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity and objectivity throughout the research process. Everything has been referenced according to the standards of the APA 7th formatting guide.

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AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

1. Shubham Kumar contributed to the framework, abstract, and methodology. He also contributed to the analysis, references, citations, and overall formatting of the paper.
2. Dr. Aditya Raj conceived the idea and worked on the framework and analysis.

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