

Cultural Changes Through Migrant's Encounters with Hosts: A Case-study of Jammu City (J&K, India)

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Abstract: Many studies have been done on cross-cultural contacts between people of different countries but a country like India which represents the diversity in its each aspect demands for the study of cultural changes that do occur through internal migration. This paper studies the cross-cultural encounters between the local people of Jammu city (Jammu & Kashmir) and the migrant population from the other parts of the country (Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar etc). In the present research, the migration is inter-state migration within country from rural to urban areas. The present study explore tendencies such as push and pull factors for migration, impact of migration on both hosts and migrants, interrelationships among them, and changes that takes place in one's life through the process of migration. In the Present era Migration has become a common phenomenon having a great impact on cultural lives of both migrants and hosts. There have been situations either of assimilation, acculturation, or conflicts within multicultural settings. As a result something novel is born and acquired and is carried forward. The study reveals that migration is an important source of cultural changes. It is not only migrants that get affected by this process but hosts are equally affected.

Key words: Caste, change, cross-culture, interrelationship, language, life-styles

INTRODUCTION

Even when migration is so common in people's lives there are hardly any efforts to develop attitudes and skills that are necessary for a reasonably successful cross-cultural contact. Growing dependency, increased contact and interactions, and the development of a participatory world culture have brought the topic of culture change to our attention as never before.

The theme of the HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2009 was "Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development." Theme of the UNITED NATION WORLD TOURISM ORGANISATION (UNWTO) 2011 is "Cultural Tourism" (Linking Cultures, an opportunity to highlight tourism's role in bringing the cultures of the world together and promoting global understanding through travel). All these organisations stress on the positive impact of movement of people and cultural enrichment. The civilizations of today are due to the resultant changes of yesteryears. Relation between different cultures and their consequent affects on each other has always been thought-provoking.

Many studies have been done on cross-cultural contacts between people of different countries but a country like India which represents the diversity in its each aspect demands for the study of cultural changes that do occur through internal migration. In India the study of cultural changes has not drawn the attention of sociologists in the same measure as that of the changes in the social structure and its process. This limitation was noted by the "Indian Sociological Society" which

deliberated on this problem at its annual session held in December 1992 at Delhi. Therefore, to widen and substantiate the area of cross-cultural encounters and corresponding cultural changes is of immense importance.

In recent years Jammu city has become the hub of intra-state migrant population comprising of Kashmiri pundits from the valley, PoK refugees, Gujjars, Seasonal agricultural labourers and many more. But the present study deals only with those people who came from states other than Jammu and Kashmir like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh etc and the corresponding cultural changes that are taking place due to their encounter with the hosts¹.

- Jammu Municipal area is divided into 4 main parts
 - Old city
 - Bakshi nagar and its extension
 - Gandhinagar and its extension
 - Outlying areas; Digiana, Bari-brahmana, Gangyal, Birpur²

Although some families have registered themselves to get some benefits but a lot of migrants have not registered themselves and no substantial data is available to know their actual number Table 1.

Objectives:

- To evaluate the consequences of cross cultural contacts
- To examine the nature and impact of interdependence of migrants and hosts

Table 1: Registration details of migrants from outside the state

Name of state / U.T	No. of families
Delhi	19,338
Other states	1,995
Total	21,333

Inter Ministerial Team Report

- To analyse the cultural changes taking place due to migration
- To observe the impact of migration on caste-structure

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is based on both secondary as well as primary sources. Purposive sampling was chosen for the study to cover the unknown population residing in different demographic settings of the city. A sample of 100 migrants from different states and 100 hosts from Jammu was taken for gathering information through interviews, thus, making a total sample of 200³. Non-Participant observation, open-ended as well as close-ended interviews, in-depth interviews with residents of Jammu and migrants were the major tools of data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The tolerant societies encourage and support mobility of people. Migration does have an impact on migrating population as well as the host. In the present endeavour effort is made to explore the impact of migration on hosts as well as migrants and cultural changes that take place in one's life through migration. This paper studies the cross-cultural encounters between the local people of Jammu city (J&K) and the migrant population from the other parts of the country (Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar etc)⁴.

According to census report 2001⁵, J&K is one of the least poverty prone States having merely 4% of people below poverty line⁶. In a report by the expert group, headed by Suresh Tendulkar, former chairman of PM's Economic Advisory Council, it was found that Orissa and Bihar are at the bottom, while Nagaland, Delhi and J&K have the least number of poor⁷. The low incidence of poverty in the state attracts many people from other poverty-prone areas of the country.

Cultural impact on migrants: Migration can offer people the opportunity to expand their ability to control their own lives and enhance their substantive choices (Sen, 1999). In the city of Jammu, a large number of people have migrated for various reasons, but mainly for seeking better job opportunities in fields like construction, carpentry, brick kiln, factory works, painting, embroidery, stitching, household work, and many more. "Adverse or unsatisfactory economic conditions at the place of origin

Table 2: Indicators of push factors for migration

Indicators	Respondents (%)
Repayment of old debts	20
Lack of employment opportunities	40
Due to small size land holdings	12
Due to natural calamities	6
Marriage	22
Total	100

Table 3: Indicators of pull factors at destination

Indicators	Respondents (%)
Better standard of living	12
Better working conditions	15
Opportunities of getting higher wages	26
Diverse employment opportunities	47
Total	100

Table 4: Time-period of arrival of migrants in Jammu city

Time-period	Respondents (%)
1980-1985	18
1985-1990	24
1990-1995	26
1995-2010	32
Total	100

are the main factors which stimulates the movement of people to the cities" (Bulsara, 1970). In the push factors for migration to Jammu city, lack of avenues of employment in the place of origin is the major factor (40%), followed by marriage (22%), repayment of old debts 20%, small size of land holdings (12%) (Table 2).

People move to societies that provide a more attractive way of life and, all other things being equal, this process spreads ideas and institutions that promote economic efficiency, social order and equality (Peter and Boyd, 2008).

In the pull factors, diverse employment opportunities at the place of destination is considered as the main factor by 47% of respondents, better opportunities of getting higher wages is also one of the major reasons to migrate (26%) followed by better working conditions (15%) and better standard of living (12%), (Table 3).

It was realised through fieldwork that many migrants are staying in Jammu city from the last twenty years. Moreover, the number of migrants is increasing at a fast rate. While 18% of people came here during 1980-85, the percentage increased to 24% in 1985-90, it further rose to 26% in 1990-95 and now it has reached to 32% (Table 4).

It is observed that it was more difficult for the migrants who came alone to adjust in new cultural setting while the young migrants who came along with their families or those who born in Jammu have no such problems.

In an in-depth interview, a migrant from Madhya Pradesh revealed that twenty years back when he came to Jammu in search of livelihood it was difficult to find a place even to sleep for many days. Gradually, he started working as brick-kiln worker and now he is working as contractor. His family is staying with him, his children

Table 5: Changes felt by migrants in Jammu city

Types of changes	Respondents (%)
Educational facility to children	19
Change in dress pattern, food habits etc.	30
Increase in women mobility and status	15
Acquisition of new skills	22
Learning host languages	14
Total	100

were born and brought up in Jammu and are more familiar with the culture of Jammu than their own.

Life-styles: There is increased inter-regional migration which makes it possible for regional traits, culinary products, cultural performances, ritual forms, styles of dress and ornamentation to flow to other parts and mix together (Singh, 2000).

Migrants interact with local or host communities in the new environment. This interaction leads to exchange of ‘material’ as well as ‘non-material’ cultures. It is an exchange of goods (artifacts) and ideas. it assumes great importance in the process of enhancement of cultures (ibid).

There is a remarkable change in the style and pattern of women’s wear in India. It is marked by a shift from saris to salwar kameez, (a traditional dress of Punjab now spread all over the country). The uses of cosmetics, soaps and detergents have reached all sections of people in India. The vocation of beauticians and the number of beauty parlours and health clubs, etc have grown very rapidly. They have moved even to small towns in various parts of the country (ibid). In Jammu too such kind of changes are visible in dress patterns, food habits and life-styles especially of women. (For instance, one of the Bihar’s woman interviewee start running beauty parlour in her home village after learning skills in Jammu city. The parlour is run by her sister-in-law in the village when she is in Jammu). Thirty percent of the respondents replied that there is change in their life-style after coming to Jammu. (Table 5)

It was also observed that migrants have all the facilities in their jhugis (slums) like Television, Fans, Music systems etc which they do not have in their own native villages. Regarding food-habits, some people replied that they did not get rice in their native villages and now, they have started consuming rice.

Language: According to council for research in values and philosophy, the difficulty of people of different cultures in living together is one of the major problems of our day. In any area where people live in fairly close proximity to others from quite different cultures, the key to a life of personal dignity and social peace depends significantly upon one’s ability, both as an individual and as a member of a group, to relate and be related to in a positive manner by those who are different.

Language is the main medium of expression and interaction. In the past when a family, a kin group or a community moved from one region to another its members acquired the language of their domicile without giving up the language of their ancestors. Bilingualism was widespread in both rural and urban areas, and even among the unlettered (Betteille, 2000). In Jammu city it was observed that 14% of migrants can speak more than one language or at least understand the languages which are not native to them. For better communication, interaction and for the purpose of getting job opportunities, it becomes a requirement for the migrants to know the languages like Dogri, Kashmiri etc. To reinforce, In a village study of Tamil Nadu’s Thanjavur district, it was found that Telugu, Kannada and Marathi were spoken in some homes, in addition to Tamil that was spoken and understood by all (ibid).

Impact on migrant women: For women the traditional division of labour within family continues and with outside work, the burden is doubled. In Jammu city migrant women are working as domestic helpers also which is not permitted in their native villages.

In Pakistan migration increases girls’ school enrolment by as much as 54% compared with just 7% for boys (World Bank Book, 2007)⁸. Such a kind of change is also taking place among migrant children in Jammu, who in their home states did not get education and other facilities.

Secondly, Migrants find it beneficial for their children especially girls to come to Jammu as they get education that too in English medium and in cheap fees. This facility is lacking in their place of origin (Table 5). While interviewing certain migrant women it was realized that their status has been raised, the restrictions on dresses, food habits and mobility have been lessened (ibid). It is husband who decides that where his wife has to work. The woman still has no say.

Cultural impact on hosts: Jammu region has been considered as a melting pot of various cultures which exists in peace and tranquillity. Diversification of economic activities in Jammu city has attracted migrants from rural areas of other parts of the country. For the hosts, coming of migrants is beneficial as 28% responded that they get cheap labour as these people demand lesser amount of money for work than local labourers (Table 6). Areas where migrants are found in bulk are-channi himmat, janipur, malik market, narwal, pamposh colony. In a very short span of time the culture of the Jammu city is changing that is visible to everyone. The important thing to note is that the relation between various cultural groups is harmonious and receptive. No major incidence

Table 6: Changes felt by hosts on coming of migrants (Table 6)

Changes felt by hosts	Respondents (%)
Provision of labour force in cheap rates	28
Bring celebration of new festivals (ganesh visarjan, dandiya etc)	24
Increase in beggary in the city	10
Bringing of new trends and things of material culture (rikshaw, laakh bangles, choupati etc)	14
Replacement of Local workers	24
Total	100

Table 7: Incidences of flexibility in caste structure

Flexibility in caste structure	Respondents (%)
Appointment of migrants as domestic workers	60
Flexibility in kanjak puja	34
Inter-caste marriages	6

of violence or conflict like in other States (Maharashtra etc.) has been occurred till date. Thus, the area is significant to be noted and studied.

Emerging new trends: In Jammu city ‘Chopati’ culture, where one can find variety of food items at one place and at affordable rates is also emerging due to coming of bringing more avenues for entertainment and recreation in Jammu, which was earlier confined to few rich.

With their advent, a host of unknown festivals & cultural activities besides the vocational avenues have spread their splendour in Jammu city. The grandeur of the festivals like Ganesh Pooja/Ganesh Visargan, Dandiya, Durga pooja etc. have mesmerized the locale. Jammu people have started celebrating these festivals with great pomp and show (ibid).

New trends like coming of man- puller rikshaws substituting the city’s tangawala culture is due to coming of migrants who bring products of their material culture along with them.

Now, one can find labour- force coming from different parts of the country replacing the native labourers, who often charge huge amount of money for their work, thus affecting the regional economy. According to local factory-owners, business-men etc. it is better to hire migrant workers for work than local workers as they are more regular, more punctual, and ready to work even in two shifts 24% of the respondents replied that local workers have been replaced by the migrant workers (ibid). The best example can be found in railway-coolies and rickshaw-pullers.

Flexibility in caste structure: In India, a large proportion of migrant workers belong to the lower castes and tribes who have a poorer asset base than other social groups. While some have argued that migration provides an escape from traditional structures of caste-based oppression in villages and gives poor labourers some bargaining power *vis-à-vis* their traditional employers, others maintain that structures of oppression are

reproduced through labour contracting arrangements at the destination and may even be more exploitative (Mosse, 2002; Olsen and Ramanamurthy, 2000).

Migration can free the individual from caste prejudices but when they migrate in group they are more visible. As a result, the prejudice may continue in the place of destination (Bhagat, 2005). Incidences of flexibility in caste structure of migrants were observed in Jammu city also.

But important addition to it was the changes observed in the caste structure of hosts. Many tangible changes are visible in Jammu with the coming of people of different cultures. Working of migrant women as a domestic worker is a common practice now a days, which was also a caste oriented regional issue earlier. Sixty percent of the hosts responded that migrant men and women work as attendants, domestic workers, gardeners and they do not even know to which caste they belong (Table 7). It can be analysed that dearth of local workers and easy availability of these migrant workers can be the reason of such change.

Secondly, as a religious place, there is a tradition of kanjak puja⁹. According to Hindu Mythology, it is a caste-based process where only Brahmin girls are venerated. Thirty four percent of the hosts replied that it is difficult to find Brahmin girls from the city so they ask little migrant girls living in their area for this occasion (ibid). Their caste is unknown to them leading to flexibility in caste-based activities.

Six percent of the hosts also responded that they have seen the cases of inter-caste marriages among migrants and hosts (Ibid). Though the ratio is low but such incidences are increasing. In an in-depth interview, a host factory-owner told that some of the migrant workers in his factory have started marrying to their co-workers who are local. Such kind of emerging trend of choice marriage among migrants and hosts without considering the caste is also contributing to the removal of caste barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is not always that migration and coming of people from other areas causes cultural disharmony but it opens floodgates for enrichment of culture of both hosts and migrants.
- Jammu people get the labour force in cheap rates and sometimes exploit them also as they are needy and illiterate coming from poorer areas. So, it can be analysed that relations between the two are cordial until the migrants start monopolizing certain fields of work.
- Migration can help an individual to free himself from caste rigidity and prejudices.
- It has been realised that in the future the situation

may occur where the second generations of the migrants will start assimilating completely with the local culture;

CONCLUSION

The impact of migration on ones culture depends on a variety of factors. These may include: the reasons for migration, age of a person, whether the migrants come along with their family or not and the duration of their stay in the host city.

The study advocate that cultural changes are acceptable even at the global level and are bound to lead towards a peaceful society by cherishing the differences and accepting the changes. Migration is optimistically a positive process that brings people of different cultures together and gives them avenues to learn new things and broaden their horizons. It is not only migrants that get affected by this process but hosts are equally affected.

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End notes:

- 1 The people from different states are put in a same category (migrants) and native people of Jammu city as hosts for the convenience of the study.
- 2 Sample was taken considering these four units
- 3 In migrant interviewees, there were 50 males, 30 females and 20 children while in host interviewees there wer 80 male and 20 women as mostly businessmen and few house-wives were interviewed
- 4 The migration is inter-state migration within country from rural to urban areas (Jammu city)
- 5 <http://censusindia.gov.in>
- 6 Census Report of India, 2001.
- 7 J&K, Nagaland and Delhi have the least number of poor: Report; Times of c.10, 2009.
- 8 http://econ.worldbank.org/research_digest.
- 9 Little girls are considered as facsimile of goddess and are worshipped on certain occasions like Navratras.