

Low Skilled Labour Migration Corridor: A Study on Jangipur Sub Division, Murshidabad District, West Bengal, India

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Abstract:

According to the HDI Report (2014) Murshidabad is a backward district. Majority of the local impoverished people are willing to leave their homes in search of jobs that will support their family because of less jobs opportunity in this area. Since the previous few decades, a considerable number of people from the study area have migrated both domestically and internationally. This paper mainly examines the fact that local migrants are taking specified routes to travel between their points of origin and their final destinations, creating specific migration corridors. The systematic explorations of these migration routes and the connections or intermediaries involved in their ongoing operation have received particular attention. Remittances have been thoroughly investigated as a topic. The entire region is regarded as a pocket of ongoing outmigration. In its entirety, this paper explores several particular aspects of out-migration from Jangipur Sub Division, Murshidabad district, West Bengal.

Keywords: *Migration Corridor; HDI; Jangipur Sub Division; Out migration; Domestic and International destination.*

Introduction:

In figuring out the socioeconomic circumstances of rural India, migration has always played a substantial part. In general, people migrate from economically underdeveloped areas to developed ones. The flow of individuals during the process slightly negates the regional economic imbalance (Hazra, 2012). The males of rural India prefer to emigrate for economic reasons (Basu, 2019). A study conducted by the CMID (Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development) revealed the fact that Murshidabad district is one of the primary sources of migrant workers in Kerala. Not only Kerala the rest of India and the Gulf nations are the most prominent pull sector of migrant work force from Murshidabad district (Peter and Narendran, 2017). Ali (2018) has also researched the roots and outcomes of migratory labour. Kundu (2012 & 2013a, b) and Basu (2019) both are trying to find out the level of migration, migration corridors and their characteristics in Murshidabad district. According to the West Bengal Human Development Report (2004), the district's Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.46 shows that it is the least developed among West Bengal's districts. Lots of studies have been done in the recent past, but none has focused on Farakka in the Jangipur Sub Division, in spite of the fact that it is one of the most significant migration corridors for low-skilled workers from Murshidabad to the rest of India and the international marketplace. By

using both theoretical as well as empirical analysis of the migrant corridors' ability to contribute such continuous operation for a long time with rising volume, this research also aims to investigate the complicated and sometimes contradictory character of the particular migration corridor. Only the economic factors that influence migration in the Murshidabad district are considered in this study. River bank erosion, riots related to NRC, ethno-religious conflict, political views, international trafficking etc. are kept out from the present study. In order to examine the profile of out-migration in Murshidabad, both primary and secondary data are utilized. Secondary data are taken from the 2011 Census, NSS 64th cycle and UNDP Human Development Reports (2004, 2011, 2015). Stratified sampling is used to get primary data for our survey. The survey comprises 200 villages (from seven CD blocks) and the Jangipur sub-divisions of the Murshidabad District. A total number of 5000 respondents were considered for sample. Those samples are offering an extensive framework for investigating the local realities of the migration in Northern part of Murshidabad.

Using an independently designed schedule, personal interviews were used to collect data from the selected individuals. In this paper Farakka is considered as migration corridor (Photo -1) on the basis of the following criteria –

- Nature of long term migration in operations.
- The travel distance between the origin and destination is more than 500 kilometers.
- The entire migration procedure is informally organized.
- There is no difficulty in connecting between the origin and the destination.
- Travel migrants along desired paths are mostly set in various waves.

Objectives:

- I. To identify the major destination of migrant labour from northern part of Murshidabad district.
- II. To show the causes of migration and migration profile of migrant labour.

Study area:

The area selected for study is Jangipur Sub division on the northern most part of Murshidabad district, West Bengal, (Fig.1). The Jangipur sub district is located within 24°13'20" and 24°53'15"N and 87°47'25" to 88°14'39"E, respectively. The River Ganga and its major tributaries, the Bhagirathi, are the principal rivers in the study region. According to the 2011 Census, the subdivision has a total area of 1097.82 sq. km. The Indo-Bangladesh border area is located fairly near to the study area. According to the census of India report (2011), the Jangipur sub-division now includes 7 C.D. blocks, 2 municipalities, 254 *gram panchayets*, and 2,210 *mouzas*. The Murshidabad district and the Jangipur sub-division are similar in terms of their physiographic character. According to the Statistical Handbook (2010 to 2011) of Murshidabad District, the River Bhagirathi splits the district into two wide geographical zones of about equal extent but there is a large difference in their geological formation. Western

tract is known as *Rarh* region. It is made up of a sequence of lateritic clay laid down in the Sub-Vindhayan period. The surface is slightly undulating and soil is reddish gray in colour with high content of lime and iron-oxide. The slope of the study area ranges from 0 to 61 degrees. Climatic conditions of the area of research are hot and humid throughout the year. Rainy season is from June to September as a consequence of the south-west monsoon. According to the Murshidabad district statistics handbook (2010–2011), the bulk of the population is engaged in farming. Only a small percent is engaged in industry.

Destination of Migrant Labour:

As reported by the NSSO (64th round, 2007-08), nearly 7% of male out-migrants from rural regions, have settled abroad. The primary field survey data shows that Saudi Arabia is the main country to which migrants travel from Murshidabad. The Human Development Report (2011) by the UNDP estimated that there are 28.1 million people living in Saudi Arabia. Because of less population size with high source of natural oil resources, the standard of living is relatively high (Kundu, 2019). Therefore, Saudi Arabian citizens are unwilling to perform low-skilled physical labour by themselves; rather they depend on hiring personnel for this kind of jobs. Emigrants from countries like India are forced to work in some informal sectors, such as, cleaning, maintenance, and as labourers in construction work. According to primary data, the majority of migrants are found in Riyadh and Jeddah city. Kerala is another most important place for the migrant labour of Murshidabad. High wages of this state is the pull factor for the migrants. The areas mostly preferred for immigration include Ernakulum, Malappuram and Idukki. Another large portion of the migrants from other States also go to Gujarat. There are high concentration of industries and constructional activities. Maharashtra is another most important hub in India for low skilled or unskilled migrant labour of Murshidabad district. There is no doubt that migration has played a significant role in Mumbai's economic growth and development. Mumbai, the 'financial capital' of India, is a major destination for immigration from other places around the nation. There are huge job opportunities for all skilled and low-skilled labours. An additional factor in the hosting of migrants is the growth of Delhi's conurbations and the emergence of large industrial towns (NCR priority towns) like Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonipat, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Meerut, among others. In absolute terms, the number of migrants was expected to be 1.31 lakh, whereas the natural increase in Delhi's population was anticipated to be 2.31 lakh (Kundu, 2019). Major destinations of migrant labours from Jangipur sub division along Farakka Corridor, covers places all over India and also throughout the World (Fig.-2).

Diagrammatic representation (Fig.3) shows the percentage shares of migrant labour from study area to other parts of India. From this primary data it is observed that nearly 18 % of the migrant labours is recorded in Kerala. It is the highest. 4% of the inter-district migrant labour is recorded in Bardhaman- Asansol region from Purba and Paschim Bardhaman districts.

Socio-economic profile of Migratory People:

I. Age

According to Census data of 2011, the majority of the population of Murshidabad belongs to Muslim community, making up 66.3% of the entire population. The share of young migratory people in this area consists of large number of Muslim young men, who have learned artisanship from the predecessors of their family. There exists a huge unemployment in the place of origin of the migratory wave. As a district Murshidabad provides minimal opportunity for employment to the potential working forcedue to lack of significant industry in this area. Jangipur sub division also suffers due to frequent shifting of river course and frequent erosion of their banks. This is another issue for migration. The Muslims have migrated to various regions because they learned the art of masonry from their ancestors, which has given them employment and earning. The ancestral migrants created the path for next generations; so that they take advantage of these corridors and discovered various routes along which they may travel to places, where there is demand for their expertise. For this reason the present generation finds these passageways approachable and familiarizes the ways to the newer destinations. It is apparent from our analysis that individuals falling in the age group of 15–30 are more likely to migrate, than other age groups (Fig.4). Humans are most productive and efficient within the above mentioned age ranges.

In general employers prefer lower wage grade employees with higher rate of productivity. Moreover, men of this age group are often quite daring, able to make reckless decisions, suffer the hardships of travel and have the flexibility to adjust to even in the most difficult situations. Our results therefore, match a typical pattern of human behavior and an inclination to face unknown challenges.

II. Earning

Those who have traditional or ancestral expertise often earn more than others. Minimal-skilled or unskilled migrants who lack connections and are employed as common labour receive minimal wages. Generally, migrants in Maharashtra and Delhi earn approximately ten thousand to twenty eight thousand rupees per month (Table no.-1). Most masons make more money than the workers in other fields. Very recently, a phenomenal change is observed among the migrants from Mushidabad that they sign an initial contract for a job in Saudi Arabia for more than three years. The bulk of them reside in tenements or workers' camps. Depending on the size of the room, often there are four to six (rarely eight) persons, who share a room mutually. Although some of these tenements are deteriorating, but almost all of them are permanent buildings. Most of the *Murshidabadi* migrants (domestic and foreign) put in 8 to 12 hours of labour every day. Some of them received overtime compensation for additional work, but there is now an excess of labour, which limits the possibility for those who are prepared to work more hours to make more money.

III. Occupation:

Primary data survey shows that majority of Murshidabad migrants work as manual labour (69.22%) and masons (22.95%) in Kerala. There are also individuals who work in a variety of skilled crafts (7.83%). These include mosaic and tile artists, colour and paint artisans, electricians, carpenters, embroidery artists etc. The majority of immigrants earn Rupees ten to forty thousand per month. Majority of these travelling employees never settle down in one region or hold to one type of permanent employment. They find newer opportunity by almost wandering throughout the year in major and several minor construction works. In Saudi Arabia, in the non-agricultural sector, a job share of (81.45%) is made by Murshidabad immigrants, as manual workers and masons. It goes without saying that it is pretty evident that agricultural or farm operations are minimum in scale in a place like Saudi Arabia, where greenery is practically nonexistent. The majorities of the migrants work in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs and earn nearly Rupees Thirty to forty thousand per month (Fig.5). Besides as masons or as labour, people work mostly in numerous menial professions; such as, cleaning tasks, mosque servicing, at shopping malls, operating the elevators and such other jobs. .

Causes of Migration:

In this part the causative factors of labour migration are classified into four categories. These are, better earning, poverty, unemployment and others. During the field survey, unemployment and poverty jointly, recorded as highest in responses, nearly as high as 81% of total responses (Fig.-6). Other values on cause of migration are recorded on the basis of property loss due to river bank erosion, school dropout etc. The lack of employment is the main cause of this massive outflow. In our study area, 91.22 percent of the respondents opined that better wages were in favour of migration from Murshidabad to Saudi Arabia. Minor portion of migration occurs due to poverty and unemployment which are nearly 3.78% and 5% respectively. Nearly 60.47 percent migrates to Kerala due to unemployment. Unemployment is also the main reason for migration to Mumbai, Delhi, Gujarat, Chennai and Bhubaneswar. Statistics of our finding also support that poverty is the fundamental push factor for people to leave their hearth and home in search for better opportunities. At the same time poverty is also the main reason for migration to cities like, Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi, Bardhaman and Asansol. The actual case of migration from a source location to a destination is of specified reasons (Fig.-7). Short distance migration occurs basically due to poverty but long distance migration is basically based on unemployment.

It has been demonstrated that the networks and linkages in a given area have a significant impact on migration to that area. When a given agency or contractor operates in that location, many eager migrants will move with them. Additionally, because of specific linkages, if a certain group of migrant workers relocate from a village to a city; the other residents may also be tempted to follow suit. The new immigrants would find it reassuring to travel with some known faces (Hirway et al. 2014). It is seen in the present research that majority of

migrants who went to Saudi Arabia, left with the aid of contractors or agents by following the already established migration routes. A lot of people move out in groups with contractors or agents. According to our primary data, the migrants themselves cover the cost of travel, food and lodging. Only for a few number of people in small groups, the contractors and a tiny group of people made payment for the trip. The migrants often do not have the opportunity to obtain a “formal loan” to pay for the expenditures of travel, lodging, and boarding until they find a job and a payoff. Therefore, they are compelled to borrow money from their relatives or from others who have their best interests in mind in order to pay the initial cost. Things get even worse, when they borrow money from money lenders, who often demand exorbitant interests. As for an example, the cost of migrating from Murshidabad to Saudi Arabia is unquestionably high. The first out-migrants’ outlay ranges from nearly one lakh to one lakh twenty thousand rupees depending on the length of the travel and the destination they intend to move to. On an average, more than a thousand migrant labourers leave India each day in search for employment in Saudi Arabia. Annually they send back to India over INR500 billion (Kundu, 2019). According to our analysis, a significant portion of immigrants have sent money back home to their individual family. Common frequency for migrants to send remittances back home is five to six times in a year.

According to our research, the majority of migrant families use the remittances for basic living expenses. In other cases, they use them to sell their livestock or at the cost of education expenses and accumulated money for repair their homes. If they move from one state in India to another state, they will have to come for the festival once in a year. At present due to high connective cellular network migrants labour also connected with family over to voice call or video call.

Conclusion:

This study reveals the unique features of migration from Jangipur sub division in Murshidabad district, West Bengal. In the framework of our research, I looked into the causes of migration as well as the many factors that affect people’s choices. We have given careful consideration to the reasons behind the migrants’ choice of various locations as their final destination. Our analysis demonstrates that migration from Murshidabad occurs not only in large numbers, but also with a significant number of regular and casual labourers, who travel often over known paths that connect their places of origin and destinations, creating a migration corridor. We have made an effort to investigate the migratory corridors from both an intra-border and a cross-border perspective. According to our findings, Saudi Arabia, Kerala, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Delhi (NCR) are the most popular long-distance destinations for migrants leaving Murshidabad, while Bardhaman-Asansol, Kolkata, and Jharkhand are the leading short-distance destinations. One point that supports our findings must be made here, namely that migrants are frequently the target of apathy. At neither the origin nor the destination, the local government adequately looks after them. This is clearly seen during the lockdown phase of COVID pandemic.

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Although some migration-related works have identified a few anomalies regarding the migrants' obvious deprivation and made some recommendations regarding their ease of communication and stay, at least within the country, as well as for resolving some key issues for the improvement of migrants' conditions generally, there is still much to be done on this front. To solve it, we still have a long way to go.

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Fig.1: Location map of the study area

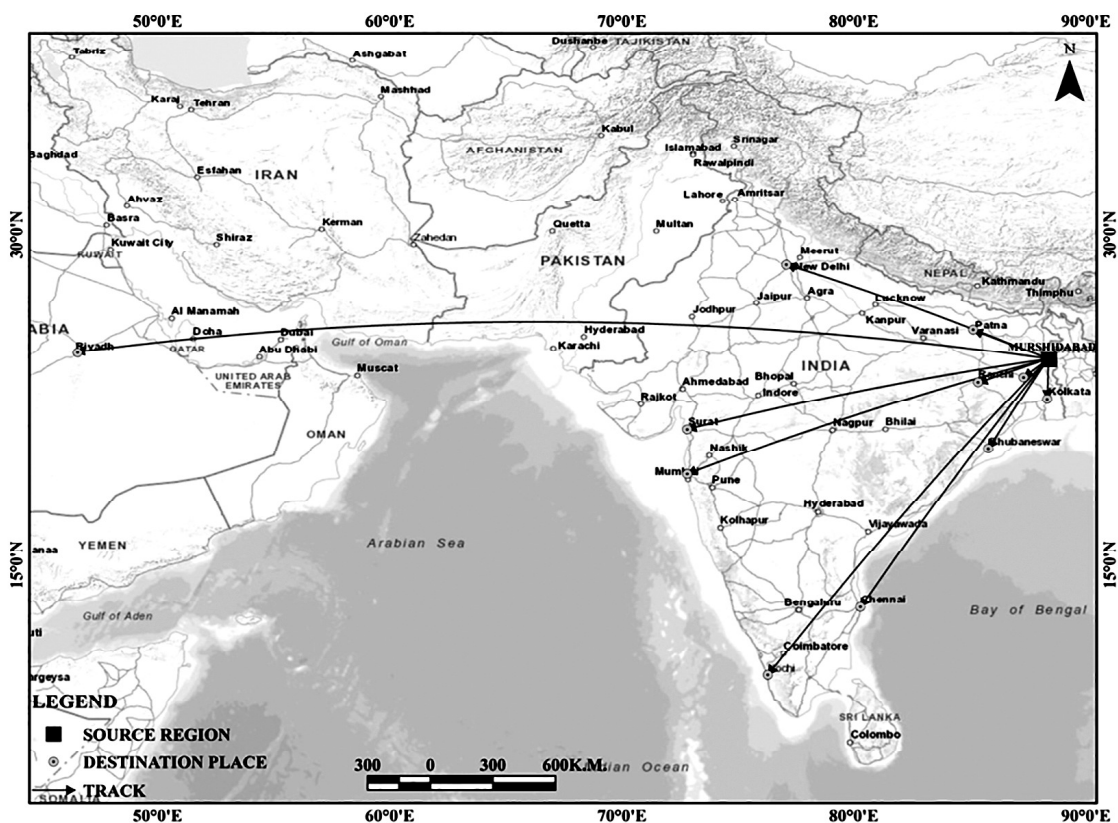


Fig.2: Main destination of Migrant labour from Jangipur Sub Division

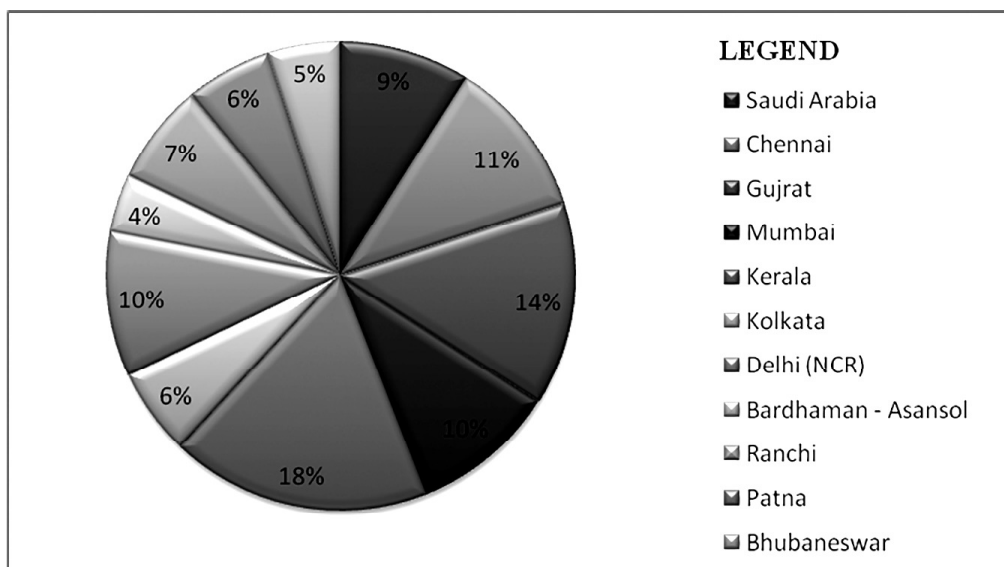


Fig.3: Pie graph showing the Values of Migrant labour from Jangipur Sub Division

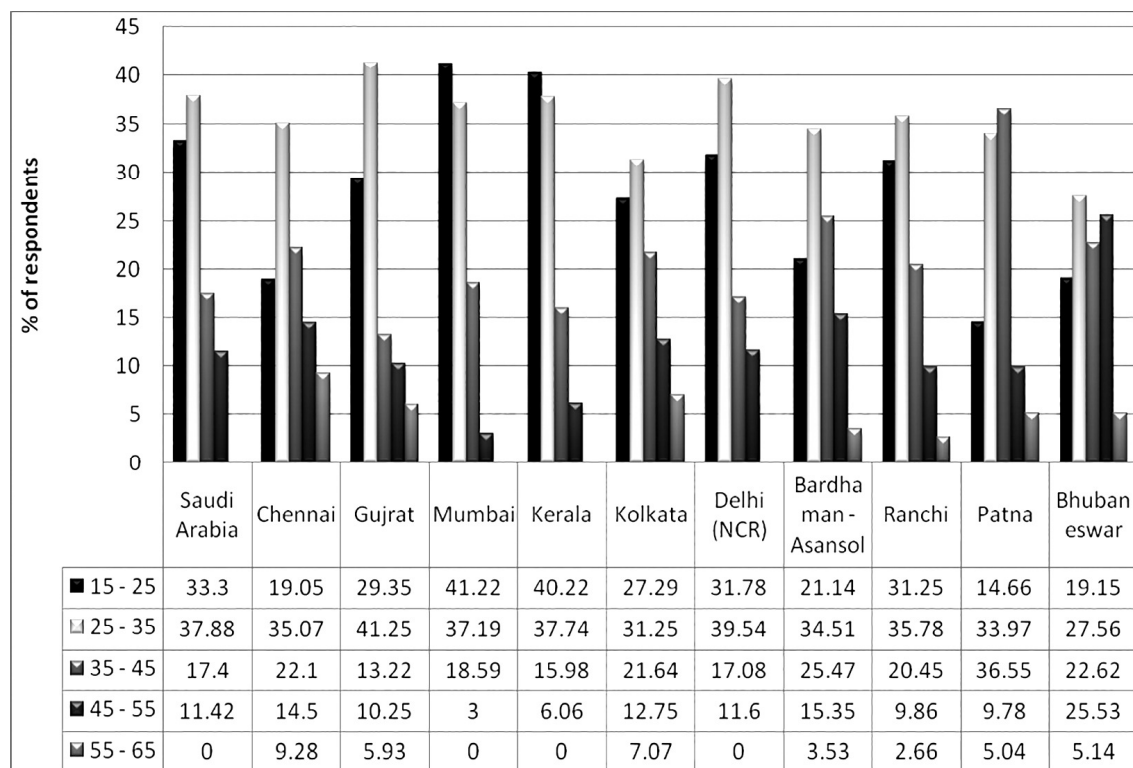


Fig.4: Bar graph showing the Distribution of Migrants according to age
Source –Primary Field Survey, 2022-23

Table1: Distribution of Migrants According to Earning

Destination	Average Salary (Inr)
Saudi Arabia	30000 - 40000
Chennai	25000 - 30000
Gujrat	15000 - 25000
Mumbai	10000 - 28000
Kerala	11000 - 40000
Kolkata	10000 - 20000
Delhi (Ncr)	25000 - 30000
Bardhaman - Asansol	10000 - 18000
Ranchi	12000 - 25000
Patna	11000 - 26000
Bhubaneswar	10000 - 25000

Source: Primary field Survey, 2022-23

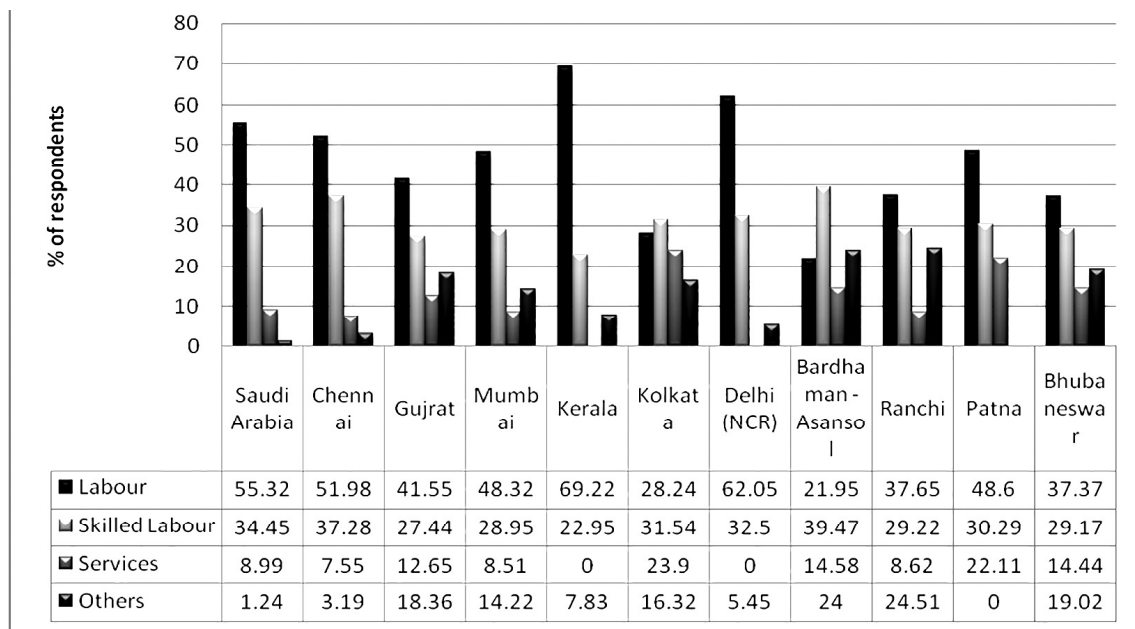


Fig.5: Bar graph showing the Distribution of Migrants according to occupation
Source –Primary Field Survey, 2022-23

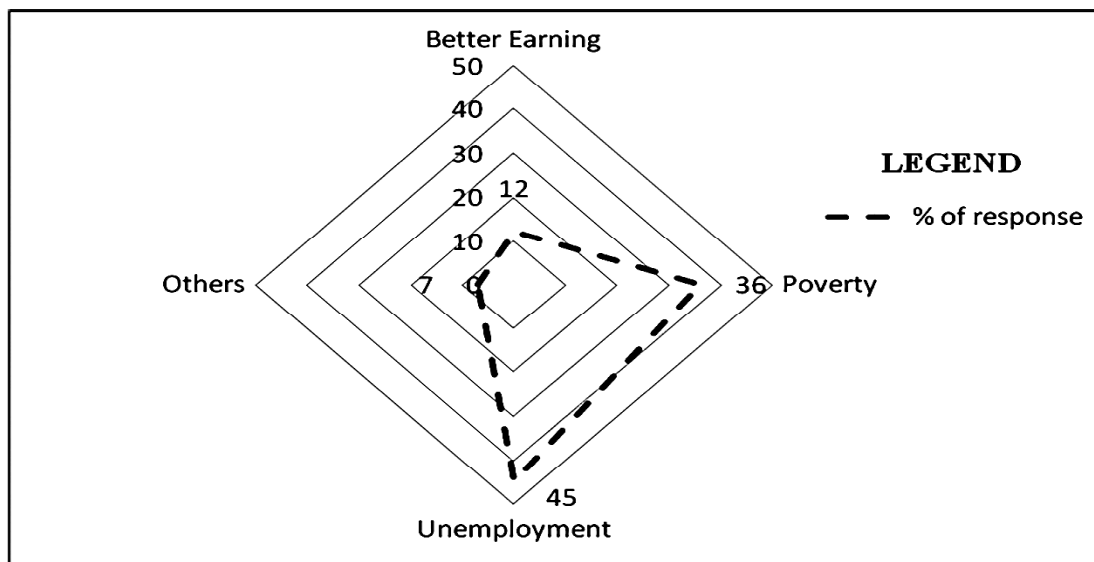


Fig.6: Radar graph showing the main causes of migration
Source –Primary Field Survey, 2022-23

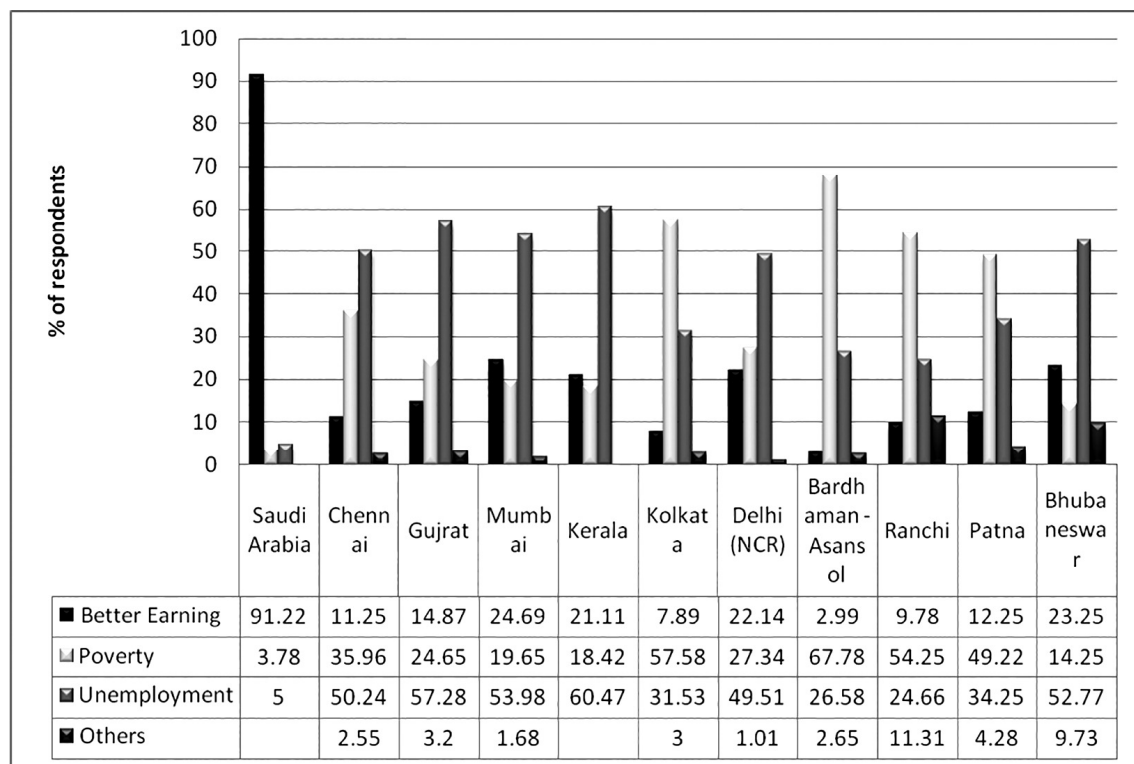


Fig.-7: Bar graph showing the main causes of Migration from source to Destination
Source –Primary Field Survey, 2022-23

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