Caste and Migration: Insights from Study of Migrant Men from Rural Uttar Pradesh
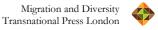
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Abstract

In its own particular way, India is a tremendously diverse nation. In a nation like India, where villages are frequently separated into caste-based parts, the caste system plays a very important role. Despite having achieved independence for such a long time, caste continues to play a significant role in shaping power dynamics, access to material resources, and even employment possibilities in rural India. Scholars have long been interested in the significance of caste in rural India, and numerous attempts have been made to comprehend the function of the caste system and its connections to migration. However, there hasn't been much research done in Uttar Pradesh, despite being the state with the highest male out-migration rate. Caste and male migration from rural Uttar Pradesh have received little research. In light of this context, the study will make an effort to comprehend the relationship between caste and migration in rural Uttar Pradesh. To meet the objective, a primary survey of 150 households in Azamgarh, the district with the highest male out-migration, was conducted. Data analysis and presentation have been done using simple statistical methods. Study found that male migrants from the village's higher castes tend to have advanced degrees and work mostly in skilled occupations. Caste affiliation frequently affects the availability of economic opportunities in rural Uttar Pradesh. More agricultural and non-farm possibilities must be created in the state's rural areas in order to close this gap. The MNREGA should be implemented well since it will be a significant step toward equal accessibility to all work possibilities. Giving the lower class of the village vocational and educational training needs to be prioritized more. Another intriguing finding of the study is that a considerable degree of educational attainment is supporting the reduction of disparities among different castes.

Keywords: Caste; Employment; Occupation; Migration; Rural Men

… "I had been to other countries –in Europe, Asia and the Middle East but none of them had provided me even half as much variety, or so much to see experience and remember, as this one state in northern India. You can travel from one of Australia to other, but everywhere on the vast continent you will find

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> *that people dress in the same way, eat same kind of food, and listen to same music. The colourless uniformity is apparent in many other countries of the world both east and west. But Uttar Pradesh is a world in itself…"*
>
> Ruskin Bond

Introduction

Migration is most often adopted strategy of rural households to reduce liquidity constraints and to diversify household financial resources in developing countries like India. Migration decision in a household is an outcome of various socio-economic factors. This paper will be an attempt to understand one of the most important factors i.e. linkages between caste and migration. It is been more than 70 decades since India gained independence but caste based small clusters and labor market discrimination are still clearly visible even after so many decades of independence. The interplay between migration, occupation and caste can be traced back in Hindu Varna System in India. Caste based occupation is one of the oldest social arrangements and can be dated back to many centuries ago (Hnatkovska,et al., 2013). Migratory behaviour and occupation based on caste has been in Indian society since very long with traditional assignments of occupations based on caste. This traditional system in current era though imposes the social restriction imposed by the hereditary nature and is major obstacle for the mobility of underprivileged section of the society. Literature shows that there are various diversities in all human societies but it becomes an issue when the distribution of major resources such as wealth, land, power and prestige are based on these discriminations (Tsujita & Oda 2012; Sekhon, 2000).

Many studies show that work force in India is segmented along religious and caste lines (Kunduri,2018; Anupama, 2015; Banerjee and Knight 1985; Das & Dutta, 2007; Madheswaran and Attewell 2007; Morris, 1965; Form, 1973) since ages. This implies that various kinds of discrimination in occupational opportunities that migrant households and migrant often go through are somewhat just a mirror image of discrimination and social exclusion in society. Social exclusion in society is a phenomenon which underprivileged and poor section of the society in rural India often goes through. The term social exclusion was first used in France to demarcate the excluded who then comprised of the disabled, suicidal and elderly persons and abused (Silver,1994). Literature shows that excluded groups are generally group of people comprised of ethnic and religious minorities. Traditional Varna system perpetuates inequality and as a result downtrodden and underprivileged section of society often end up in debt and inequality traps (Walton, 2007). Another major outcome of the traditional occupation based classification passed over generations, making it difficult for lower caste and underprivileged to move up in occupation hierarchy (Thorat,2007; Thorat et al.,2007). As an outcome of caste based occupation allocations lower section of society has comparatively less access to employment opportunities, power relation and resources. Consequently, the educational attainment of the marginalized class is much lower than the upper castes; the poverty ratio among the former is much higher as compared to the latter and these differences are further widened with discriminatory labor market. Formal referral system works as hindrance to access to jobs in various destinations. And although there is existence of rigid class systems across globe as well but the complexity, elaboration, and rigidity of caste in India make it an almost unique system (Madheswaran and Attewell 2007).

Justification, Need and Contribution of the Study

Literature shows caste and migration are highly interlinked in country like India and migration and occupational structure is often an outcome of traditional social/caste stratification in India (Madheswaran and Attewell 2007; Morris, 1965). Literature (Mildner et al.,2011;Barbier, 2005) shows that there is strong association between natural resources and growth and and development of nation.Though few attempts have been made to understand the interplay between caste and migration, literature on the same is negligible in Uttar Pradesh. Current paper will fill this void by making a preliminary attempt to understand the relationship between caste and migration in rural Uttar Pradesh. The study have been done in eastern region of Uttar Pradesh as it has highest male out migration among all five regions (NSSO) in rural Uttar Pradesh and is also among most underdeveloped region in Uttar Pradesh (Diwakar, 2009; Baliyan, 2016). The contribution of current study therefore, is to develop a preliminary understanding of linkage between caste and migration in one of the most populous and underdeveloped state of India. Only male migration has been taken into consideration in the current study as female migration as per NSSO is majorly for marriage purpose. Rural male migration from Uttar Pradesh have been studied and analyzed as share of urban male out-migrants from Uttar Pradesh is relatively low (NSSO).Paper is divided in five parts. Part I is introduction, part II is review of literature, part III will be dealing with descriptive analysis of migrants and their households and migration linkages, part IV is concluding remarks and policy suggestions. This study aims to present a brief profiling of socio-economic characteristics of migrant households and understand linkages between caste and migration.

Data and Research Methodology

To disentangle existing literature on linkages between caste and migration paper has undertaken exhaustive literature review. To meet the objectives, study undertakes a primary survey of 150 households in randomly selected Village Gaura in Ahiraula block of Azamgarh district in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Azamgarh have been selected for the study, as it is the district with highest male out-migration among all districts in Uttar Pradesh as per NSSO. Selections of sample villages and households have been done based on simple random sampling. The study in primarily based on survey method, although focused group discussion, in depth interviews, key informant methods were also used for data collection. Simple statistics have been used for the tabular analyses of the study as the study is primarily qualitative in nature.

Review of Literature

Present section disentangles existing literature on interplay of caste and migration. Literature shows labour market discriminants is very prevalent in India (Banerjee and Knight, 1985; Banerjee and Bucci, 1994; Bros, 2015; Boorah, 2005; Bhattacherjee, 2001; Das and Datta, 2007; Deshpandey, 2001; Deshpande & Sharma, 2016; Saez and Mahmoodv, 2016; Scovile, 1996). Bopegamage and Kulahalli (2008) have studied impact of urbanization on different castes and occupations. Authors also analyzed the reasons of variations among various castes such as ritual prestige of an occupation, skill along with urban influence. Baliyan (2016) attempted to understand trends and patterns in demographic changes and growth of population in Uttar Pradesh. Study found that in growth and development of any country availability of land and natural resources plays an important role.

Vikas et al. (2015) highlight the role of changes in socio-economic conditions of the country in disrupting hierarchies in society. Authors have analyzed the role of marketization and privatization in altering various social and political hierarchies in northern India. Iversen et al. (2014) attempted to understand the role of caste dominance in economic performances of rural India. Study using household data for rural India over period found that upper caste dominates in proximity gains in comparison to SC and other minority groups in rural India.

Singh (2014) found that social network plays very important role in facilitating migration. Rao (2014) attempted to understand the role of caste, life course and kinship in women's work in southern part of India. Study highlights that its time to reevaluate the nature of work available to women and its social valuation. Singh (2018) found that credit constraints plays very important role in undertaking migration sections especially for underprivileged and poor households in rural Uttar Pradesh.

Hnatkovska et al. (2012) argued that structural changes in India in last 20 years have played very important role in breaking down caste-based barriers to socio-economic mobility. Singh (2012) analyzed the inequalities in earnings and consumption in Indian men. Author highlighted the discrimination in above mentioned factors can be attributed to inevitable and predetermined circumstances that is beyond control of individual such as parental education and occupation, caste, religion, and place of birth. Howard and Prakash (2011) examines the effect of quota policy at large scale in public sector employment on marginalized and minority section of the society such as scheduled caste and scheduled tribes and found that quota policy significantly affects the occupational structure of the minority population. Das and Dutta (2007) have highlighted the role of caste in wage determination in Indian labour market. Study found that caste is primary source of stratification in Indian society and found pay gaps in labor market based on caste. Boorah (2005) has analyzed inequality, poverty and caste in India. The study analyzed caste based discrimination on household income, income percentiles and poverty. The study found widespread inequality and income difference in rural India on the basis of cased based unequal treatment.

Munshi and Rosenzweig (2006) have examined the role of caste networks in reducing incentives to migrate. Their explanation for the low mobility in India (particularly among the poor) is the informal credit and insurance offered by caste networks. Madheswaran and Attewell (2007) found that occupation discrimination is more prominent in Indian context than wage discrimination and authors have attributed this differences as a result of differences in human capital endowments. Muller and Shareef (2010) found positive relationships between remittances received and schooling attendance of teens and this magnitude is highest from marginalized and downtrodden class. Introducing more income earning opportunities in rural India can reduce the child from being trapped in child labor.

Scovile (2003) studied the economics of caste in his study. Kabeer (2000), have analyzed social exclusion, discrimination and poverty. Study shed light on different kinds of disadvantages that underpin social exclusion and found that social exclusion is an outcome of institutions. Papola & Mishra (1980) studied wage determination and labour supply and found that there is huge variation in demand and supply in wage responsiveness in rural Uttar Pradesh.

 Nafziger (1977) highlights the differences in economic opportunities between the privileged and under privileged portions of the population. Author mentioned about three important

factor behind prevalence of caste system in labor market in India i.e. impermeability, permanence, and inevitability. Arrow (1971), in his paper, have shed light on theory of discrimination in labor markets and highlighted various personal characteristics of workers valued in labor market. Author mentioned that discrimination has value implications can never be completely eradicated. Hutton (1969) in the study analyzed the nature, function and origin of caste system in India. Becker (1957) in his research work attempted to understand and analyse the economics of discrimination.

Major findings from literature:

- *Caste and migration have strong linkages.*
- *Occupational distribution and discrimination has long trace in Indian history since Varna system*
- *Occupation, land and power relations are based on caste in rural society.*
- *Poorest and underprivileged section of the village are the ones often face social exclusion and discrimination from dominance caste in all spheres of life since ages.*
- *There is a huge difference in income earning and wage pay across all caste in rural India.*

Brief profiling of Migrant Households and occupational structure across social group

This section deals with brief profiling of socio-demographic and economic variables of surveyed migrant households in sample villages in Azamgarh district. In total 150 households have been surveyed Table 1. Shows that SC households have least percentage share on total migrant households i.e. 19.6 percent and percentage share of OBC and Others is very high in total migrant i.e. 40.7 and 39.7 percent respectively. In sample, migrant household there is no household that belongs to ST category. Educational attainment of the head of the household is very important in influencing educational attainment of other members of the household and initiating migration in skilled sector. Head of the household of migrant household in Upper caste is having higher educational attainment than SC and OBC migrant households. There is huge difference in educational attainment of Others and other social groups. Highest educational attainment of head of the household of Others migrant household is PG and above. Study also shows that educational attainment is comparatively better in socially better off section of society (Singh & Tripathi, 1995).

In both SC and OBC category, remittances have the highest percentage share as primary income but for Upward caste cultivation (52.0 percent) is primary source of income. Upward caste migrant households reported cultivation as their main source of income and are comparatively better off in terms of land attainment as well in comparison to other two groups. Percentage share of cultivation in SC and OBC migrant households is very small in comparison to people from upward caste. Average monthly income is very high in Upward caste followed by OBC and is very low in SC migrant households with Rs.56,908.2, Rs.29,9232.0 and Rs.13,380.4 respectively. There is huge inequality in monthly income across various social groups. Study by Kumar et al. (2013) also shows that it is not the poorest that migrates, instead people from lower middle income and middle-income households are sending male member out for economic reasons. Literature shows that there is difference in wage based in caste (Das and Dutta, 2007).

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Sample Migrant Households of Surveyed Villages in Jaunpur District according to their Social Group (in percentage)

Name of Variables	Social Group			
	SC	OBC	Upward Caste	Total
Head of the HH of Sample Migrant Households				
Male	78.0	80.0	76.0	78.0
Female	22.0	20.0	24.0	22.0
Average Household Size	8	9	7	8
Educational Status of Head of Household				
Illiterate	43.5	28.2	4.1	21.4
Primary	30.4	16.5	7.1	15.4
Matriculation	10.9	42.7	20.4	27.9
Intermediate	15.2	8.7	18.4	13.8
Graduate	0.00	3.9	44.9	19.4
PG and above	0.00	0.00	55.1	2.0
Average Land (in hectares)	.3	.3	1.8	0.9
Primary source of Income				
Cultivation	8.7	16.5	52.0	29.0
Non agriculture enterprises	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Wage/ Salaried Employee	2.2	4.9	8.2	5.7
Remittances	82.6	68.9	32.7	57.1
Others	6.5	9.7	7.1	8.1
Average monthly Income in Rs. including Remittances	13,380.4	29,932.0	56,908.2	33,406.9
Average Monthly Income without Remittances (in Rs.)	5,456.5	20,205.3	46,260.2	27,565.4
Average Monthly Expenditure	10,947.8	19,047.6	35,894.9	24,434.0
Average Monthly Expenditure without Remittances	1,334.4	9,369.4	26,578.6	15,203.9
Total	19.6	40.7	39.7	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2019.

Brief profiling of Migrants

This section in very brief gives an outline of profile of male migrants from rural Uttar Pradesh. Table 2, shows that migration is selective and young male member of family often undertakes migration. The average ages of migration for all three castes are 33, 34 and 37 respectively. As far as educational attainment of male out-migrants are concerned, majority of them are having only primary education. Majority of male members are married. Major reason reported by households for male out-migration is economic in nature. Major reason for out-migration is to take up employment (62.5 percent) for upward caste , lack of non-farm employment (74.8 percent) for OBC households and lack of access to credit facilities (81.2) leading to exorbitant rates of interest for SC households. Better civic amenities are another major reason for upward caste which itself shows the intricacies of migration from these village and its linkage with caste. As mentioned above educational attainment plays very important role in migration and occupation of prospective migrants. Educational attainment across various social groups also shows huge disparity in human capital in sample migrant households of Azamgarh district of rural UP. Upward caste male out-migrants are much better in terms of educational attainment followed by OBC migrants and SC migrants. Education of migrants is very crucial in getting

decent job at destinations. Less educated migrants such as SC migrants in our case often end up in informal jobs in urban areas.

Table 2. Migration Related particulars of Male Out-Migrants from Sample Migrant Households (in percentage)

Demographic Characteristics of Rural Male Out -Migrant	Social Group		
	SC	OBC	Other Upward Caste
Average age	33	34	37
Marital Status			
Married	74.0	82.0	78.0
Unmarried	26.0	18.0	22.0
Migration with family			
Family (1)	15.5	33.1	58.6
Single (2)	84.5	66.9	41.4
Reason behind leaving family at home*			
Type of migration			
Short Term (less than 6 months)	3.4	5.3	4
Temporary (Less than 12 months)	8.4	2.8	0.3
Long term (1-3 years)	0.0	8.9	9.0
Permanent (more than 4 years)	88.2	83.1	86.5
Reasons for Migration			
In Search of Employment	12.3	21.3	6
In Search of better employment /low wages/low farm income	61.2	85.2	55.7
To take up Employment	47.1	52.9	62.5
Lack of Low/Non-farm Income	72.1	74.8	23.4
Better Civic Amenities	15.2	8.7	57.3
Lack of Access to credit Facilities /High rate of interest	81.2	40.6	7.0
Studies	4.4	5.4	17.5
Others	0.0	0.5	2.8
Were you working before migration in village			
Yes	60.3	56.1	45.0
No	39.7	43.9	55.0
If Yes, Major Occupation			
Agricultural labour	57.8	71.8	62.3
Other Labors	42.2	28.2	38.9
If no, Student	0.0	100	90
Total	19.6	40.7	39.7

Source: Field Survey 2019

Major reason of male out-migration for SC households is lack of access and credit facilities, for OBC it is in search of better employment followed by lack of non-farm income i. percent and lack of access to credit facilities. Major reason reported by upward caste is to take up employment is followed by better civic amenities. Percentage share of lack of access to credit as a reason is very low in upward caste and better civic amenities is very low in SC categories and OBC categories.

From Table 3, it can be seen that high skilled jobs such as bank service; software engineers are highest in Upward caste whereas SC migrants are more into construction sector. Major occupations of OBC male migrants are Taxi/auto driving. Table 3.also highlights occupational and income details of migrant's households at origin across various occupation and social group. In SC migrants' category remittances is the primary source of income and secondary source of income for SC migrant households is Others category and wage paid

labors. In OBC migrant categories primary source of income is remittances followed by cultivation i.e. majority of migrants reported the main source of income at households is remittances. OBC migrants reported remittances as their secondary source of income as well. In case of Upward caste primary source of income is Cultivation and secondary source of income is remittances i.e. majority of the Upward caste migrants reported that primary source of income in their household is cultivation and secondary source of income is remittances. This implies that shows that Upward caste is better off in land availability, which is one of the major reasons their primary source of income is cultivation.

Table 3. Occupational and Income details of Migrant's Households at Origin across various Social Groups and Occupation (in percentage)

Name of Variables	Social group and occupational distribution						
	SC	OBC	Upward Caste	Constru ction Workers	Taxi drivers	Skilled migrants	Total
Primary source of Income							
Cultivation	8.7	16.5	52.0	0.0	76.2	48.0	37.3
Wage/Salaried	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.0	8.0
Remittances	2.2	4.9	8.2	100.0	23.8	24.0	53.3
Others	82.6	68.9	32.7	0.0	0.0	4.0	1.3
Average Monthly Income **	13,380.4	29,932.0	56,908.2	9,420.00	41,120.00	87,600.00	46,046.67
Average monthly Expenditure	10,947.8	19,047.6	35,894.9	8,488.00	34,920.00	42,240.0	28,549.33
Average Land size (in hectares)	0.3	0.7	3.8	0.4	0.9	4.1	1.8
Average Land owned (in hectares)	.05	0.5	3.8	0.1	0.9	4.0	1.7
Total	19.6	40.7	39.7	25	25	25	75

Source: Field Survey 2019.

** Average Monthly income and expenditure presented in the Table have included remittances as well.

Average income of SC migrant's household is very lower than Upward caste, and OBC group. There are huge differences in monthly income of households of construction workers, skilled and taxi drivers. Huge income and expenditure shows that migration is survival strategy for casual workers among which most of them are SC migrants, is risk and income diversification strategy for Taxi drivers in which major share is of OBC migrants and is accumulation strategy for Upward caste households. Literature also shows that caste dominance plays very important role in economic performance of various social groups in rural India (Iversen et al., 2014).

Brief note on Livings conditions at destinations across social groups

This section briefly and descriptively delves into living conditions of migrants at their respective destinations. Focus group discussion and in-depth interview methods have been used for better understanding of the living conditions of migrants. The aim of this section is not to give detailed analysis of living conditions of migrants at destination rather to give a brief insight. The comparative analysis of living conditions of migrants across caste and occupations at destination will support and substantiate the fact that caste and migration are strongly linked with each other.

A brief discussion has been done on wages migrants receive in villages, for those migrants who were working in village as well prior to migration. 100 percent of migrants reported in all class and occupation that they receive more wages in destination in comparison to villages. From detailed discussion and observation regarding living conditions, it was found that migrants in Varanasi who are casual workers have better place to live and constructor provides basic civic amenities. Taxi drivers who are majorly OBC migrants and stay in Mumbai resides in comparatively bad and unhygienic conditions in slums of Mumbai. None of the migrants have reported that they own a room/flat in Mumbai. They reside in sharing room in suburbs of Mumbai. In a small room of 170-200 square meters 3-4 migrants stay together, share common kitchen in room itself and use public toilets on daily payment basis. In case of high skilled and Upward caste migrants majority of them have their own flat at their respective destinations and those who don't have, reside in good township in nice area in highly rented apartments. In terms of asset as well, these migrants are far better than other categories of migrants. The analysis of living conditions of migrants at origin and at destination gives us an insight that migration is risk and income diversification strategy for OBC and taxi driver migrants, is accumulation strategy for Upward and high skilled migrants and is purely distress induced and survival strategy for migrants belonging to SC household and are engaged in construction sector. OBC migrant it is Mumbai and for Upward caste it is in various parts of India and abroad. The major destinations of various social groups are as follows: construction workers have been surveyed in Varanasi, taxi drivers have been surveyed in Mumbai. Major destinations for high skilled migrants are Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Gujarat, Australia, and Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion and policy implications

Study attempted to understand the linkage of caste, migration and occupation and found that caste plays very crucial role in labour market in rural Uttar Pradesh. The study also found that SC workers earnings are significantly less than non-SC workers. Discrimination in society followed by discrimination in labour market in form of access to occupations can be attributed for driving differences in earnings by caste. Study shows that SC workers are generally employed in least skilled, low paid and menial jobs. Other backward caste is employed in comparatively better occupation i.e. taxi/auto driving. The occupational status of upward caste very good in comparison to other two caste. Majority of male migrants from upward caste are employed in high skilled jobs such service sector, education sector and banking sector. It was found that there are huge differences of educational attainment across various three castes so occupational structure is also an outcome of human capital.

After so many decades of independence, historically most underprivileged and disadvantaged SCs still continues to be among poorest and most excluded from high skilled and high paid jobs. The brief insight of living condition of migrants supports the findings that that caste plays very important role in migration and occupational structure. Educational attainment across various social groups that the proportion of illiterate workers is much higher among SCs and OBCs than that of the upper caste workers. On the other hand upper caste share is very high in educational attainment of graduation and above. Study shows that change is direction of migration have taken place over time. Initially migrants migrate to big cities but there has been recent shift to Varanasi as lots of big projects are undertaken in the city recently.

The eradicate the deep roots of caste based discrimination, effective solution is to empower underprivileged and deprived section with better education and vocational training. Better the educational attainment of labour highest the chances of getting employed in high paid and skilled jobs. Although there are some ongoing schemes and policies for betterment of low paid and minority workers but its lacks proper and widespread implementation. Schemes like MNREGA should be more properly implemented so that underprivileged can get employment opportunities.

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