

Received: 30 March 2024 Accepted: 25 November 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33182/md.v3i4.3305>

Migratory Movements: Dissecting the Causes and Patterns from Bihar's Kosi Division

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Abstract

This research paper endeavours to provide a comprehensive analysis of the causes and patterns underlying migratory movements in the Kosi Division of Bihar, India. The Kosi Division, characterized by its unique socio-economic and environmental landscape, has witnessed significant population shifts over the years. This study employs a multi-faceted approach, integrating economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors to unravel the complexities of migration dynamics in the region. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the study analyses migration patterns from the Kosi Division, distinguishing between rural and urban shifts. In addition, the research evaluates the role of government policies in shaping migration dynamics, considering the impact of both state and national interventions. The study aims to contribute insights that could inform policy recommendations for addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities associated with migration in the Kosi Division. Ultimately, this analytical study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate web of causes and patterns of migratory movements in Bihar's Kosi Division, offering valuable insights for academia, policymakers, and development practitioners alike.

Keywords: Migration; Bihar; Kosi Division

Introduction

Migration is a worldwide phenomenon. In today's globalized and contracted world, people's movements are not just confined to a particular region but spread over to the global level, which is a very significant development due to the technological advancement of ICTs (Internet and Communication Technologies). Migration is ordinarily defined as the permanent, semi-permanent, or seasonal change in the residence of an individual or a group of people over a significant distance. When people move from one place to another, the place of origin is called the 'place of origin, and the place of destination is called the 'place of destination.' It can be said that migration is a spontaneous attempt to attain a better population-resource balance. Migration is the movement of people over some distance (or at

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least from one migration-defining area to another) and from one 'usual place of residence' to another place. (KOK, 1999).

Interstate migration is defined as the movement of population within the state boundary. According to the census data of 2011, India had around 45.6 crore migrants in 2011, which is 38 percent of the total population, compared to 31.5 crore migrants in 2001, which was 31 percent of the total population (Rajan & Bhagat, 2021). Between 2001 and 2011, population growth was 18 percent, but the number of migrants increased by 45 percent. 2011 census data shows that among total migration, 99 percent was internal migration, which means migration within the boundaries of India, and only 1 percent was international migration.

Bihar is a landlocked state in eastern India. It has been an agriculture-dominated economy, but from the last half decade on, there has been no such expansion of the agriculture sector and its production output. The area under major crops has almost remained stagnant, and there has been hardly any significant change in the yield rate. Due to this low yield rate, which is further combined with the risk of frequent floods, agriculture has over the years become a less preferred employment sector among rural households in Bihar (Kumar & Kumar, 2020)

Kosi division was formed on October 2, 1972, comprising Saharsa, Purnia, and Katihar districts, with its headquarters at Saharsa. After reorganizing several times now, it comprises three districts, namely Saharsa, Supaul, and Madhepura, with its headquarter in Saharsa. The primary occupation of this region is agriculture, in which corn and makhana are the major crops. Brick factories are also an emerging employment-generation industry here that attracts both male and female workers. Rice, mango, litchi, bamboo, mustard, wheat, sugarcane, etc. are also some of the products that agriculture produces. Historically, it was a part of the Mithila region, and the predominately spoken languages are Maithili and Hindi. The most common dialect of Maithili used here is 'Thethi.'

Literature review

Kumar and Bhagat analysed the census data from 2001 to find out that outmigration from Bihar is a well-established phenomenon that even started back in the 19th century and seems to have shot up in recent decades. Employment is the prime reason for this migration, and it is not limited to poor and socially backward households but also to relatively affluent households. (Kumar & Bhagat, 2012). The migration pattern of Bihar shows that there is barely any household without a member who has not migrated outside the state, but at the same time, these migrants contributed immensely to the growth of their destination states such as Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, etc. (Shukla, 2015). The rate of out-migration from Bihar is majorly due to economic reasons such as work, employment, and business. It is twice the all-India figures for both male and female migrants, and the popular migration states are Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. Also, the migration flow is concentrated towards those cities that have a higher concentration of industrial units, which means those are offering more employment opportunities to the migrants. (Sarkar, 2019). Some of the villages have an even higher migration rate above 70 percent for male migrants, which changes tremendously over the period for all classes and castes. People have equal opportunities to choose the area for migration as well as job opportunities. (Somanamaradi & Kashyap, 2019). More than half of the households in Bihar have migrants, and 13 percent of households have seasonal migrants. Seasonal migration is higher among socio-economically deprived households like lower caste



people, etc., and as landholding size increases, the propensity for migration also decreases. The migration stream is mostly male-dominated; hence, the headship gets transferred to the females who stay in the source state, and the majority of the households depend on remittances for their livelihood. (Kumari, Devegowda, Kushwaha, & K, 2019)

The objective of this study is to find out the causes of migration from the Kosi division of Bihar.

Methodology

The Kosi division of Bihar consists of three districts, namely Saharsa, Supaul, and Madhepura. Out of these three, Saharsa district is selected as it is the headquarters of Kosi division. Saharsa district consists of two subdivisions, namely Saharsa Sadar and Simri Bakhtiyarpur. Saharsa Sadar is more urbanized compared to Simri Bakhtiyarpur, and this study needed a more uniform distribution of migrants; hence, Simri Bakhtiyarpur subdivision was selected based on its more rural component, which forced migrants to leave their homes. In Simri Bakhtiyarpur, there are 10 blocks, and from these blocks, 70 migrants were randomly selected. The survey was done through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire method. A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed; out of those, 64 were returned. The analysis of these returned questionnaires is done through the SPSS tool. The reliability test was conducted, and the Cronbach's Alpha value is .601, indicating good reliability.

Table 1. Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	64	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	64	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.601	23

Table 1 Shows the case processing summary of the pilot study done on the total 64 respondents, which are the migrants of the Kosi division of Bihar. Also it shows the reliability statistics of the collected data known as Cronbach's Alpha which is .601, and it is assumed to be as a good reliability of the data.

Results and Data analysis

Table 2. Migration is very common in the Kosi belt

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	46	71.9	71.9	71.9
	Agree	18	28.1	28.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 1.

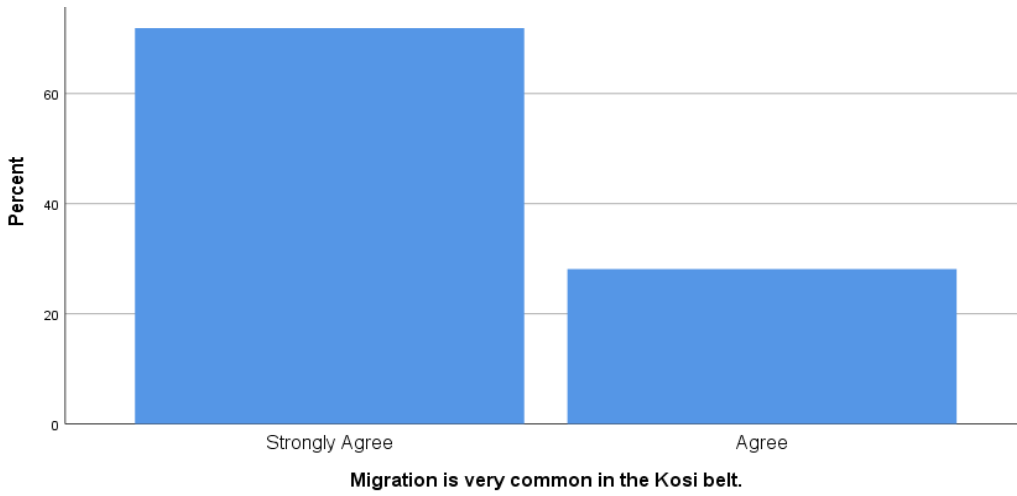


Figure 1 clearly depicts that around 70 percent of respondents strongly agree that migration is very common in Kosi division, around 30 percent agree that migration is very common, and no respondent denies that migration is not happening in Kosi belt.

Apart from these, all other secondary sources of data also verify that migration is a very common phenomenon in Bihar as well as Kosi Division.

Table 3. Migrants are mostly male members of the family

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	30	46.9	46.9	46.9
	Agree	34	53.1	53.1	100.0
Total		64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 2

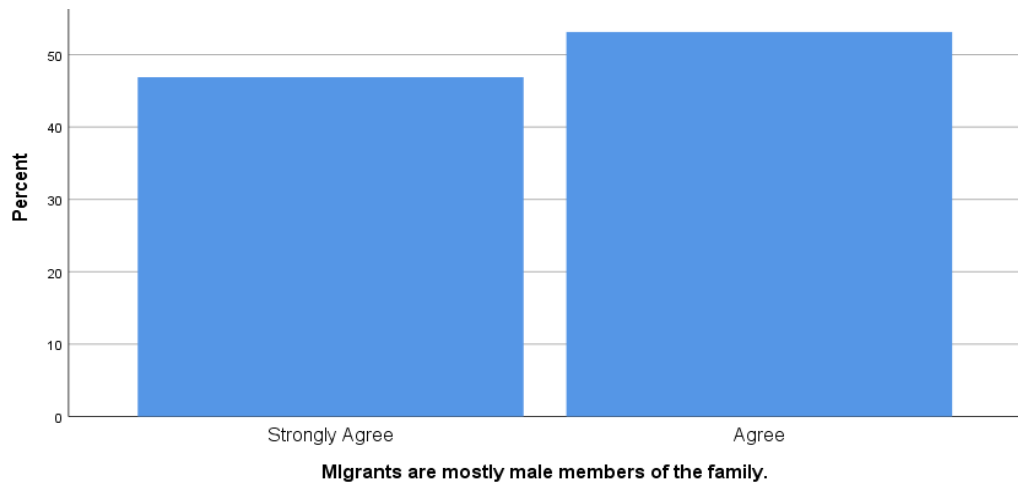


Figure 2 shows that around 47 percent of respondents strongly agree that mostly male members are those who usually migrate, and even 53 percent agree with this notion. And there are no respondents who disagree with this statement. Hence, in the Kosi division, male members of a family are more likely to migrate for different enumerated reasons.

Table 4. Female migrants are mostly those who migrate after marriage

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Agree	24	37.5	37.5	39.1
	Neutral	8	12.5	12.5	51.6
	Strongly Disagree	10	15.6	15.6	67.2
	Disagree	21	32.8	32.8	100.0
Total		64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 3.

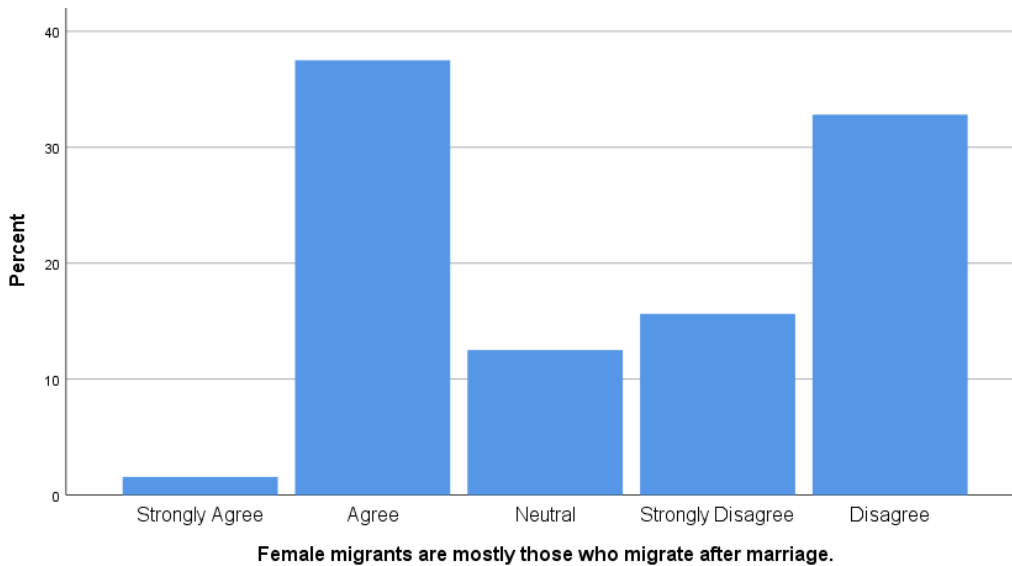


Figure 3 shows that only 2 percent of respondents strongly agree that females migrate only after marriage, and around 37 percent agree that females migrate only after marriage. 12 percent have no say on this, 16 percent strongly disagree with this statement, and around 33 percent disagree with this.

Table 5. Lack of educational infrastructure is the major reason for migration among students in the age group 15-30 years

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	9.4	9.4
	Agree	26	40.6	50.0
	Neutral	14	21.9	71.9
	Strongly Disagree	4	6.3	78.1
	Disagree	14	21.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0

So, we can conclude that although there is one-third of females who migrate interstate after marriage, other than this, usually two-thirds of females stay back at home and act as the head of the family in the absence of their male head.

Figure 4.



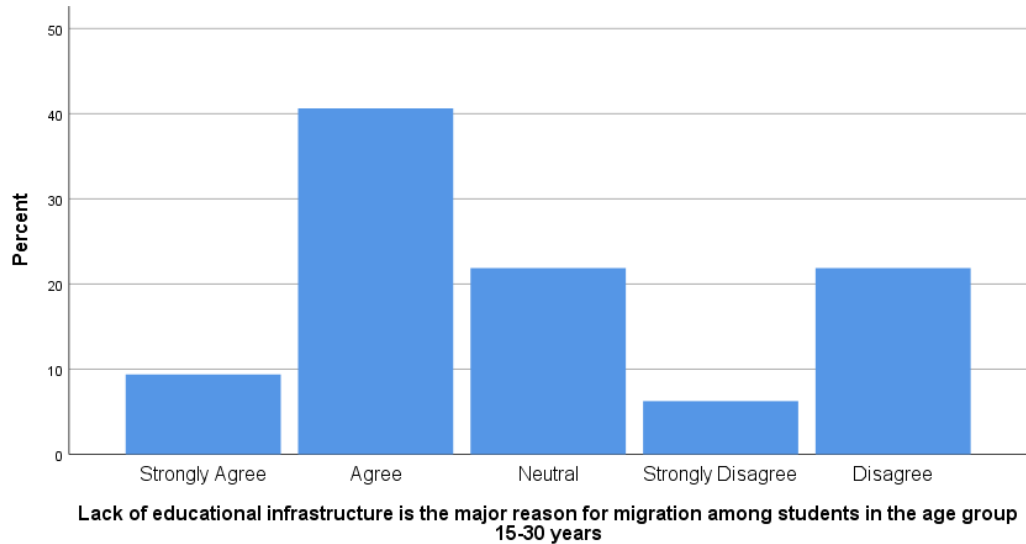


Figure 4 shows that around 9 percent of respondents strongly agree that the young age group of this region is migrating, and 40 percent of respondents agree that a lack of educational infrastructure is giving impetus to the migration rate. 22 percent of respondents have a neutral stand; 6 percent strongly disagree with this statement, and 22 percent disagree. That means most of the population of Kosi Division believes that young people migrate due to a lack of educational infrastructure, but still, some of them migrate because they do not want to study further and want to earn money at a very young age.

Table 6. Migrants are facing difficulties in their destination states.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	17	26.6	26.6
	Agree	30	46.9	73.4
	Neutral	1	1.6	1.6
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	15	23.4	23.4
	Total	64	100.0	100.0

Figure 5 shows that 27 percent of respondents strongly agree that migrants must face difficulties in the destination states; 47 percent agree with this statement; 2 percent have no say in this; 2 percent strongly disagree; and finally, 23 percent disagree with this statement.

It means that while a major proportion of migrants are facing difficulties in the destination state, and those are mostly labor migrants, some of the migrants are not facing such difficulties because they are mostly working-class migrants who work in different formal sectors of their destination states.

Figure 5

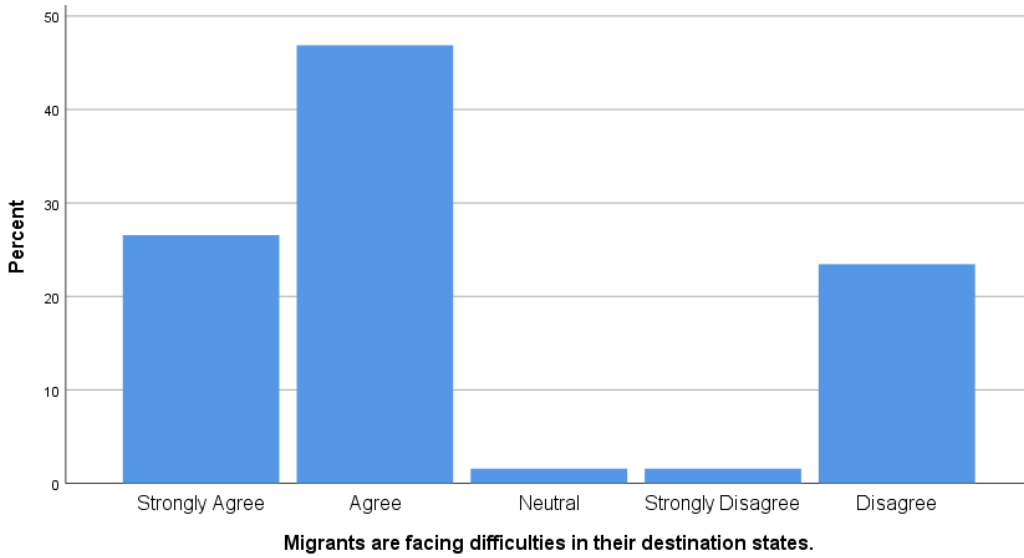


Table 7. Migration is a caste-driven phenomenon.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	6	9.4	9.4
	Agree	8	12.5	21.9
	Neutral	7	10.9	32.8
	Strongly Disagree	16	25.0	57.8
	Disagree	27	42.2	100.0
Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 6.

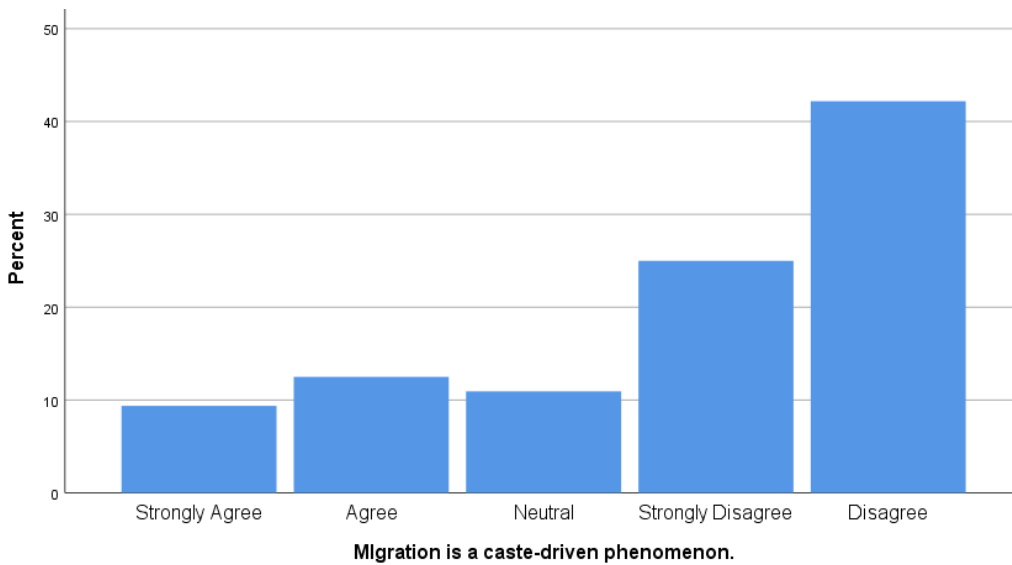


Figure 6 shows that around 9 percent of respondents strongly agree that the migration process is influenced by the caste, 12 percent agree with the above statement, 11 percent have no say on this, around 25 percent strongly disagree with this statement, and approximately 42 percent disagree with this statement.

It means that a major chunk of the migration stream is not influenced by the caste-driven phenomenon; although there are some instances where the effect of caste can be seen, this is not very common in the Kosi region.

Table 8. Migration is due to the flooding impact of the Kosi and other river systems.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Agree	23	35.9	35.9	39.1
	Neutral	8	12.5	12.5	51.6
	Strongly Disagree	7	10.9	10.9	62.5
	Disagree	24	37.5	37.5	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 7.

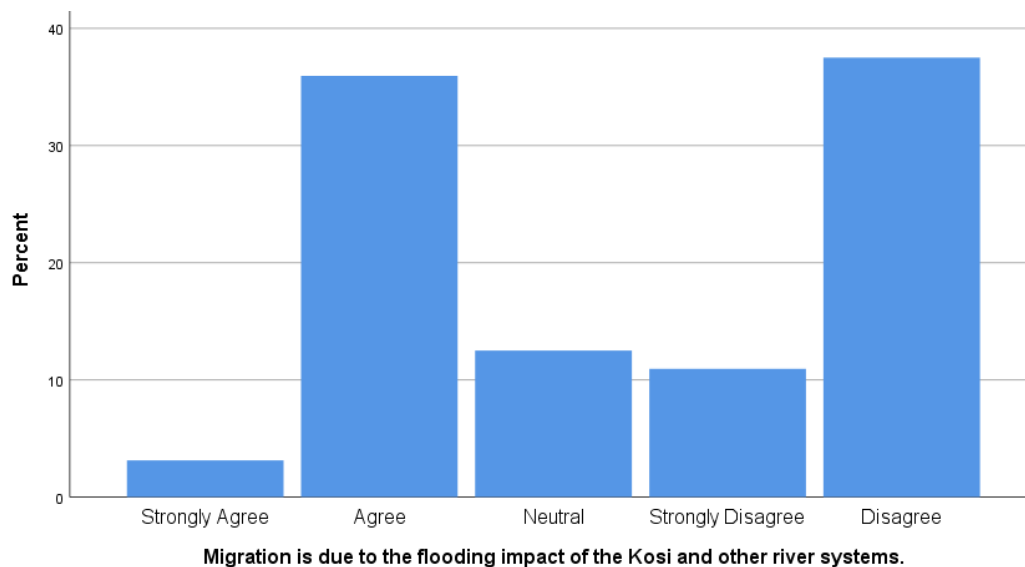


Figure 7 shows that only three percent of respondents strongly agreed that the migration in Kosi division is due to the flooding impact of the Kosi River and other river systems; 36 percent agree with this statement; 12 percent have no say on this; 11 percent strongly disagree; and 37 percent disagree with the statement.

Here, we can conclude that, as of 2008, there has been no such major flood incident in Kosi Division, hence the sole purpose of migration is 'earnings'. That means the current generation is moving towards urban centres only for work-related processes, but the earlier generations were also moving due to flood-related problems.

Table 9. There is very little or no work available in this region.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	42	65.6	65.6	65.6
	Agree	21	32.8	32.8	98.4
	Disagree	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

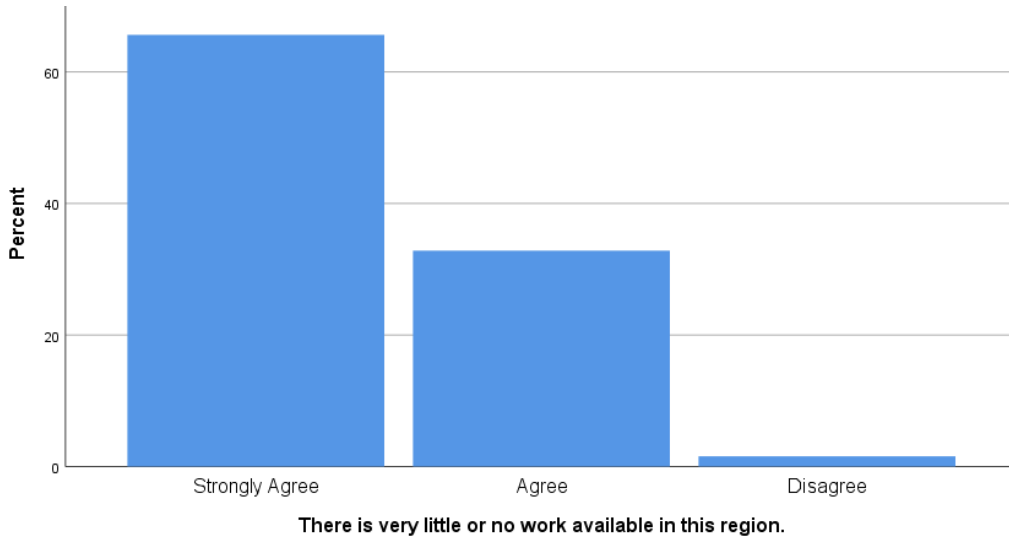
Figure 8.

Figure 8 shows that 66 percent of respondents strongly agree that there is either very little or no work available in this region. 33 percent of respondents agree with this statement, and only 2 percent disagree with it. It clearly depicts that the Kosi region is divided by work; there is no such work available for the working people.

Table 10. The wage rate is quite low in this region as compared to the urban centres.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	43	67.2	67.2	67.2
	Agree	20	31.3	31.3	98.4
	Neutral	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 9 shows that 67 percent respondents agree that the wage rate in the Kosi region is very low as compared to the urban centres of the other states, 31 percent agree with this statement and only 2 percent has no say on this. It means that majority of the migrants from Kosi division is moving due to the less pay or low wage rate



Figure 9.

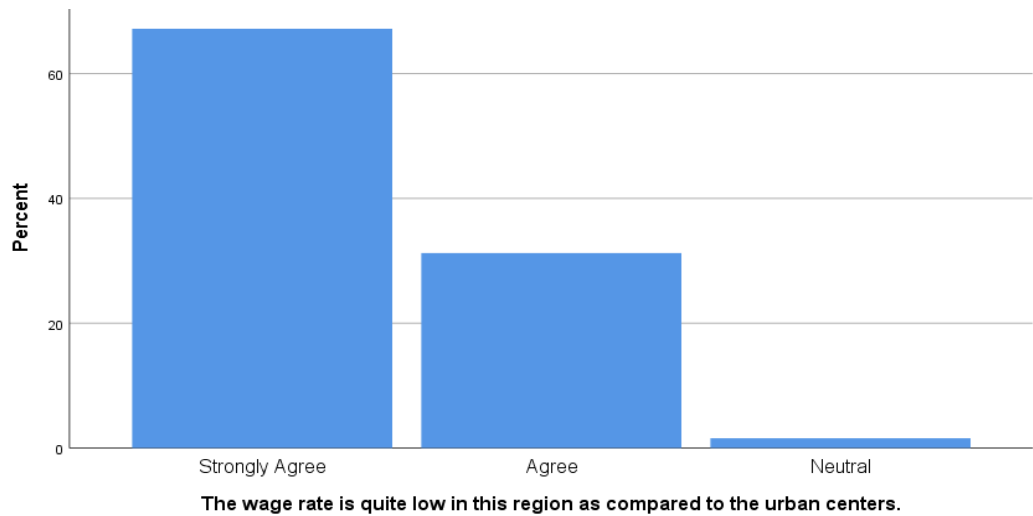


Table 11. The unpleasant living conditions lead to an increase rate of migration.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6
	Agree	30	46.9	48.4
	Neutral	6	9.4	57.8
	Strongly Disagree	2	3.1	60.9
	Disagree	25	39.1	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0

Figure 10.

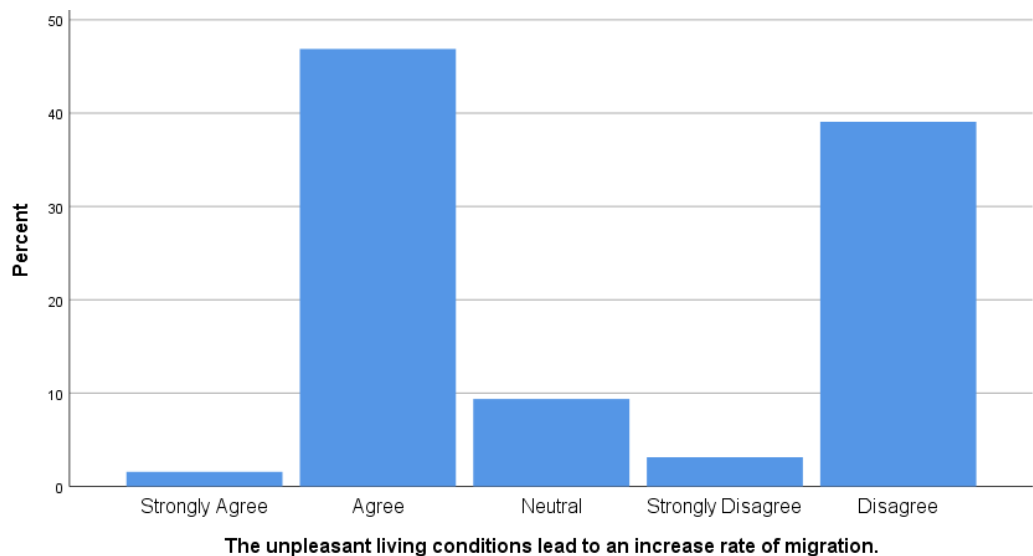


Figure 10. shows that only 1 percent of respondents agree that the unpleasant living conditions lead to an increase in migration; 47 percent agree with this statement; 9 percent have no say;

3 percent strongly disagree; and 40 percent disagree with this. It means that some of the migrants feel that the protection and security of life are threatened in the Kosi region, but at the same time, some of them do not feel the same and feel much safer in their hometown.

Table 12. The lack of entertainment and recreational facilities gives impetus to migration.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Agree	27	42.2	42.2	43.8
	Neutral	10	15.6	15.6	59.4
	Disagree	26	40.6	40.6	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

Figure 11.

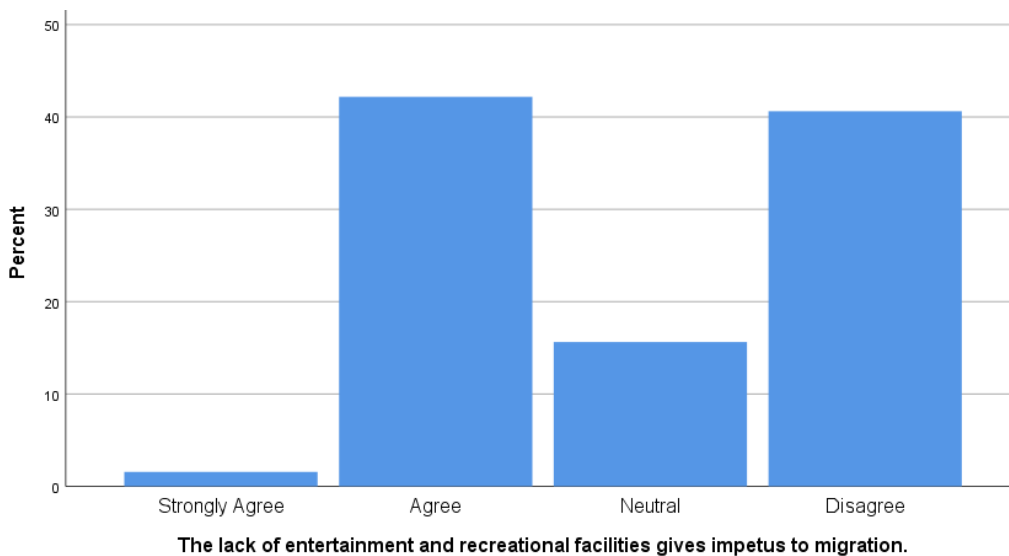


Figure 11 shows that only 2 percent of respondents strongly agree that due to a lack of entertainment and recreational facilities, people are migrating from the Kosi region; 42 percent agree with this, 16 percent have no say on this, and 41 percent disagree with this. This depicts that in the Kosi division, some of the migrants believe that they have much more fun and entertainment in urban centres as compared to their rural region, but some of them feel rural life is more peaceful and stable.

Results and Discussions

After analysing both primary and secondary sources of data, this paper has identified some of the main causes and patterns of migration prevalent in the Kosi division of Bihar. Migration in the state of Bihar is induced primarily by two major factors, which are push factors as well as pull factors. The preliminary study on Kosi migration suggests that push factors have a limited influence, while pull factors play a significant role in driving migration. Despite the absence of major flood incidents since 2008, migration remains high, indicating that natural calamities may not be the primary driver. The scarcity of daily work and low wage rates contribute to the migration trend, with better earnings being the primary motivation. Maharashtra and Delhi are favoured destination states, although migrants face challenges in adapting to the local populace. Lack of industrialization and higher dropout rates due to



financial burdens and limited higher education opportunities contribute to increased outmigration. Caste is not a prominent factor influencing migration, but the lack of awareness about government welfare schemes and policies underscores the need for awareness campaigns. Initiatives such as the Chief Minister's 'Unemployment Allowances' could encourage migrants to stay in Bihar, provided flooding issues are addressed to boost agriculture and allied activities, creating opportunities, and attracting migrants to their home state.

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