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Case Study NJREL

Migration Pattern of Indigenous Families: A Case Study of Spiti

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Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the shifting patterns of emigration from the indigenous families of Kibber village in Lahaul Spiti to the other towns in the district of Kullu. Reports, histology evidence, and self-observation are used to explain why the practice—which in the past was the result of a seasonal shift—has evolved into a permanent relocation of indigenous families from their original land to an exotic one. Understanding this movement from temporary to permanent family relocation is crucial since it is contributing to a number of issues, including the village's declining young population and the waning of local traditions.

Keywords: Indigenous, native, originating or occurring naturally in a particular place

INTRODUCTION

The migration of native families from the upper areas of Himachal Pradesh to the lower areas has had some significant implications for the different districts of the state in terms of their demography, economy, and cultural environment. The process of migration that started in the earlier days was a result of the climatic conditions of the area, but in the 19th century, the local families started settling permanently in the lower regions of Himachal Pradesh ranging in altitude [1]. This change in the migration pattern is directly and indirectly contributing to the large-scale migration in the state.

The Scenario in Himachal Pradesh

The historical events of Himachal Pradesh state that the people from the villages of Kugti and Bharmour migrated to district Chamba, Lahaul and Spiti to district Kullu, and Nako to district Kinnaur in the state of Himachal Pradesh. This shift was temporary in nature since the villages had extreme climatic conditions in the winter months. After the season was over, the families used to go back to their native places. But as time passed, by the end of the 19th century, the census reports and migration tables showed us how the population of small villages has declined in the last one decade. According to census 2001, the combined population of villages of Spiti was 42,364 which declined by the year 2011 to 31,782. Moreover, out of this, 63 percent were male migrants [2].

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On the ground as of now, these findings are not creating much impact, but if they start growing at a large scale, it will have a big impact on this vicious cycle of urbanization. As per the estimate of domestic and foreign tourist data by the Department of Tourism Shimla, the number of tourists coming to Kullu has increased by 40 percent from 21,14,458 to 36,37,233. Also, checking out the in and out migrants, the number of migrants in the states is higher than the out migrants.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the given research questions, the broad objective of this study is to understand the complex

nature of family migration decisions, and the factors that are responsible for these migration decisions in the study area. The study has also tried to conceptualize the role of the urban informal sector and the interrelationship between the rural-urban migration and agricultural efficiency. The specific objectives of the present study are as follows:

a. To examine the nature and extent of rural-urban migration in Himachal Pradesh, particularly from Kibber village in Spiti to Kullu
b. To investigate the determinants of the level of migration and the choice of migration
c. To identify the factors which are responsible for the choice of location in the migration decision
d. To evaluate the interrelationship between migration and the loss of culture and tradition in Spiti [3, 4].

A detailed analysis is one important demand of this project that I required to be done for dealing out with the problem. This can lead to large-scale problems at the urban level in the district of Kullu, and the villages of Spiti will lose their essence of culture and tradition (Figure 1).

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

For the analysis of the migration of indigenous families from Spiti, a total of three villages named Kibber Khas, Chicham Khas, and Rangrik have been selected with all the indigenous factors involved like culture, traditions, food habits, traditional dress, various traditional practices, etc. The criteria of selection of the three villages has been taken on the basis of location of the village and the settlement pattern of the village, Chicham Khas being on the highest altitude of 4,780 meters, Kibber Khas on 4270 meters, and Rangrik village at an altitude of 3,048 meters. In reference to the settlement pattern of the villages, three of them bear different patterns according to the physiography of the area. Village Chicham, being on the ridge of the hill has a very dispersed settlement, the buildings are situated at very far distances from each other. The access to the place even is very difficult as people have to go by timber trail. However, Asia's highest bridge is proposed in the same village. Kibber Khas, on the other hand, has a compact development; all the buildings are near to each other and at easy walking distance as well. The last village Rangrik, is situated in the valley area, hence the settlement there is nucleated. The village even has the highest density of the other two villages [5].

The main case area remains Kibber Khas since it is one community and that has to be taken out as a village model for the analysis to be conducted. It is situated in the subdistrict Spiti in the district of Lahaul Spiti. The present administrative centre or block is situated in Keylong in Lahaul itself. The entrance pass to Spiti Valley from Lahaul is Kunzum Pass at an altitude of 4,551 meters. The district is connected to Kullu Manali through the Rohtang Pass. The main NH-22 is the National Highway which passes through the district. The village is accessible from two sides one being Kullu and the other one being from Shimla which is actually far away from Kullu around 435 kms. It halts at the nearest railway station in Jogindernagar which is around 360 km. The nearest airport to the place is in Bhuntar, Kullu District, around 263 km.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS (SAMPLING 77 HOUSEHOLDS)

The village of Kibber Khas is mostly residential, with 77 households bearing 88% of the total land use. Then comes the commercial land use, which includes four buildings that are restaurants with homestays included. Three buildings hold the religious land use. One Gompa being situated at the entry of the village while the other two at the highest elevations of the village on the opposite hills which are separated by Spiti River. Other than these major land uses, the village just has two other civic buildings which includes one primary school building which is within 0.23 kms of the village and one healthcare facility which is within the 5 km radius of the village. The total area of the village is five square kilometers, holding 77 households with the population of 366 persons. Hence, the population density becomes 70 persons per sq. km. The demography data suggests that the female population of the village is more than the males, 83 being the total number of females and 82 being the total male population (Statistics, 1974) [6].

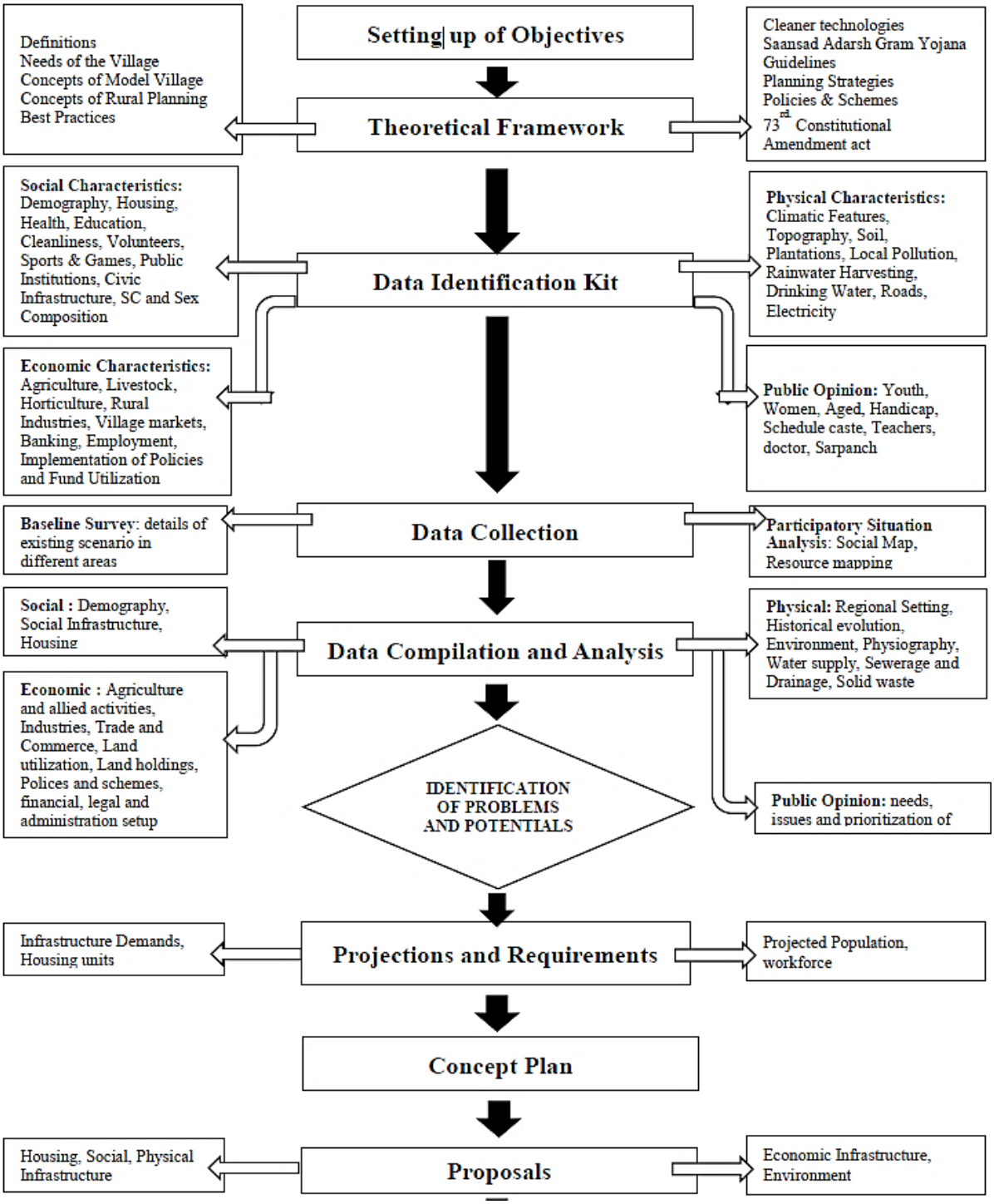

Figure 1. Methodology.

After the primary survey was done, it came to light that out of 366 people, 109 had temporarily migrated to different areas, mostly to different towns in Kullu District. Since Kullu District is the nearest to Kibber village, the people migrated to this place only. 43 people migrated in the villages of Kullu which is the highest because they have to hold their cattle by themselves. 20 people have migrated to Bhuntar area (Nagar Panchayat) since it has new airport developed and people are going in the search of new job opportunities. The remaining count goes to the census town of Shamshi and the Municipal Council area of Kullu (100% sampling, i.e., 77 household). The resultant being 41% people migrated because of the lack of cattle and poor facilities, then 26% of them migrated because of the job

opportunities and education, climate, factors like poverty became the least marked reasons for migration of the people from Kibber Khas to the different towns and villages of Kullu.

The alarming factor or the contradictory situation was the data collected of income of the people of the place since no one was below poverty line and most of them earn around three to four lakh of money annually. About 26% percent of the population was migrating to find different fields of work and a better standard of living.

This concludes that the standard of living is actually preferred over the quality of living by the young generation, and hence they want to migrate.

CASE STUDY RESEARCH: LIVING CONDITIONS OF INDIGENOUS FAMILIES OF VILLAGE KIBBER KHAS, SPITI, HIMACHAL PRADESH

The current population of Kibber Khas which is 366 persons in summers reduces down to 172 in winters, and this is result of the extreme weather conditions for 7 months, i.e., from September to March. Half of the population seasonally migrates from the village with their cattle to the lower regions of the state increasing population on the districts like Kullu and its surrounding towns.

Physical Infrastructure in Kibber

Water Supply

Taking into consideration the water supply availability in the village, it is being fulfilled by a traditional technique called khul. A khul is constructed to carry water which melts from the glacier through the streams to the fields and the whole process uses the natural phenomenon of gravity. According to the old tales, they say a khul was believed to be governed by a God who possesses miraculous powers and provides them water. Each farmer today even offers a small share of the produce as a form of gratitude. The physiography of the village is such that it is being divided by a natural river and 20 percent of the settlement is on one side which is served by a natural spring through which the water is channeled with the help of pipes. 80 percent of the settlement which is on the other is being served by the khul which is constructed with small cement embankments. In summers, out of 77 households, all are being served with proper water supply but in the winters, the 20 percent of houses are devoid of water coming from the spring since it gets totally frozen in the harsh winter climates which goes up to –40 degree Celsius so those 12 households have to use the water which is harvested from snow by some local techniques. Other than the basic amenities, four hand pumps have been installed which is serving 35 households.

Electricity

According to the public opinion survey, out of 77 households, 8 had bad electrical services and because of which, these 8 households along with 4 more households in collaboration with a private company has managed to install individual roof top solar panels which served those 12 households in the area. The situation again in winters become difficult since there is very less clear sky in winter. On an average in a month, out of 30, the clear sky is for around 12–16 days. Hence, solar panels were more successful in the area but the primary survey suggests that the households whose annual income is above 3.5 lakhs are the ones who have installed solar panels on individual bases and the remaining 60 percent of households are still dependent on electric connection which does not supply electricity on regular basis, and it is mostly inefficient during winter season. Hence, the remaining number of households somehow becomes dependent on the ones having solar panels. The customs and relations among the community is such that different households live like a family and hence at the time of emergencies, the people having solar panels help the old and children to stay with them in comfortable conditions.

Drainage System

The physiography of the village Kibber Khas has provided enough benefit to the drainage system of the area. Kuccha embankments have been created for laying down the drainage system for houses. Natural slope has been used for the same and the complete system goes down till the end of the valley.

Solid Waste Management

Moreover, the waste generated in houses are segregated before dumping. The kitchen waste is collected separately at the household level and is later fed to the cattle. The dry waste is collected at the cluster level and dumping wells have been dug up in the equidistant areas where after every four days, the waste collected is burned down. Since the amount of waste generated at the village level is low hence the pollution generated does not affect the environment to a large extent.

Social Infrastructure in Kibber

Schools and Colleges

The village Kibber Khas holds one primary school in its extents and other than that within the radius of 20 kms. There are four other schools also, Dhankar School (51 km), Chicham Govt. School (5.8 km), Hikkim Govt. School (15 km away) and key Gompa (12.4 km away). All the schools are government-owned and none have been developed by any private developer. The Key Gompa as a school has special features because only the monks are given teachings in the school and according to the customary law of Spiti, if a family gets two sons then the younger one has to be donated to the community of monks so that the culture and community of monks could sustain and progress. So, special preaching and teaching is provided to the young monks inside Key Gompa which is confined to them only because of the tradition. The Lahual Spiti district is divided into three sub-districts Lahaul, Spiti, and Udaipur.

The nearest college from the village Kibber Khas lies in Udaipur district which is 208 km far. According to URDPFI, for such population, the college is sufficient but according to the physiography, climate, and the lifestyle of the place, it becomes very difficult for the families to send their children this far from home. Moreover, higher education has become one of the factors because of which, 42 percent of the migration is happening from the village.

Healthcare

There is one small clinic in Kibber Khas owned by a local doctor with no professional degree but he has inherited the art of creating medicines from flowers from his ancestors. No proper healthcare is there in the village as such but one government civil hospital is situated at a distance of 18.9 km away from the village. This is sufficient for the villages nearby within the radius of 30 kms but the problem arises in winters when the whole stretch is covered with snow and if there is some emergency it would be impossible to carry the patient from the village to the civil hospital.

Recommendation: Physical Infrastructure Proposals

For collecting water from khuls, there are several points in village from where it is collected and the khuls are not properly covered so as to prevent it from dust and rubbish. Other than this, there are times when the availability of water is less so people have to collect and store water in their houses. So for proper and smooth flow of water throughout the year, water tanks can be proposed for storing it. This will also help in preventing the freezing of upper layer water in the winters and at a time when there is less availability of water. If the water is stored already and supplied appropriately, there would be no scarcity in any season. According to URDPFI, 135 lpcd of water is required per household and for each, the area of water tank becomes 0.63 meter cube. According to the projections, for 95 households, 245 meter cube is required for the tank. 20 percent has already been taken extra for the water requirement of the cattle.

For electricity requirements, there is a need of solar plant in the village at a collective level. The current households which are benefited by solar electricity are the most successful in both the seasons; hence, a site which is taking advantage of the southern slope is selected for the solar farm. A total area of 300 sqm is required for the installation of the same providing 141.96 kWh/day per household.

Recommendation: Social Infrastructure Proposals

The total number of schools according to the requirements and standards is enough for the village but there is a dire need of a college in the nearby area since the location of nearest college is far for the

people to send their children to study. Since the current college is serving in the radius of 350 kms from Udaipur which is not sufficient so the new college proposed is in the economic hub of the sub district Kaza Khas. The location is selected due to its gradual contour lining as well as its central location in reference to the whole subdistrict, it will then serve in the radius of 80 km and the existing one can serve in a radius of 80 km as well.

About the healthcare facilities, the current clinic in the village can be modified and converted into a small healthcare center which can hold emergency equipment for the areas related to brain and sensory organs, Oncology, heart, vascular, and reproduction. In harsh winter climates, it will become easier for the community to get these services within the village itself.

CONCLUSION

Migration is a process that cannot be stopped, but it has to be reduced to save the culture and traditions of the indigenous families. And filling up the gaps that lead to this process can somehow reduce this process of permanent migration that is happening in the village of Kibber Khas. The infrastructure proposals mentioned here can help alleviate the problem of migration. In this way, the villages of Spiti will retain their essence of culture and tradition.

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