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Migration in Uttarakhand: Relatives Inspired Youth to Migrate to the Urban Area

Pradeep Tewari^{1*}

¹The Tribune Publication, Chandigarh, India. E-mail: drpradeeptewari@gmail.com

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Abstract

Migration is a universal phenomenon but it is more common among the people of Uttarakhand. Even before the creation of Uttarakhand as a separate state, the migration from hills to the plains was a common phenomenon. The people of Uttarakhand have been migrating for better opportunities. Study reveals that 61% migrant were inspired by their relatives, 47% by their friends and 40% by the family members for migration. As many as 71% of the respondents believe that there is no scope for commercial farming in Uttarakhand. So, they prefer to work in plains for better lifestyle, while 39.5% say they migrated due to poor health services and 36% due to poor education system. A whopping 95% believe that wild animals spoil the fields, due to which the yield is not high, 92% say lack of irrigation facilities are also important reasons. 93% of people say there are no jobs in the hills, so they migrated for employment. One of the main reasons for the migration in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand is also the absence of commercial farming as 41% people say they don't sell any agricultural product, while others say they sell fruits, vegetables and grains, but only in very small quantities. Uttarakhand is known for various herbs but only 1.5% of people are planting herbs in their fields. The farmers of the hilly areas of Uttarakhand are not getting any support from the agriculture department, as 94% says they were never informed how to overcome with animals and irrigation problems.

Keywords: Migration, Commercial farming, Migration in Uttarakhand, Reverse migration

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1. Introduction

In the beginning of human civilization, people used to live in the rural areas. Gradually, towns were formed. After the Industrial Revolution, the growth of urban settlements was very rapid. As most of the world's population before the Industrial Revolution were living in the villages. After the Industrial revolution there was a rapid migration of rural areas to fulfil the needs of industries. This trend led to a rapid increase, population in the towns and cities.

Whenever people move from one place to another place permanently or temporarily in any season is called migration, in which they change their place with or without livestock (Srivastava and Sasikumar, 2003; Panda and Mishra, 2018).

To understand the migration from rural to urban, we should always look into the Harris Todaro model of migration, which was first developed in the 1970s by John R Harris and Michael Todaro. The basic idea behind the model is that rural individuals choose to migrate to the city when they are getting more wages than

* Corresponding author: Pradeep Tewari, The Tribune Publication, Chandigarh, India. E-mail: drpradeeptewari@gmail.com

the village. This is also known as the Wage-Differential Theory of Migration. According to Harris-Todaro the equilibrium will only occur, when expected urban wages are equal to rural wages (Panwar and Mishra, 2017).

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. It can be permanent or temporary; it can be from one district to another district in one's own country and from one state to another state and in any other country of the world. The most important migration pattern is from village to city. Most commonly people migrating from rural areas to cities are in search of better jobs.

There are many reasons for the migration of people from their villages to cities, however, most of the migration is done for better livelihood and employment and is done by poor people (Bodvarsson and Berg, 2009; Usher, 2005; van Dalen et al., 2005; Zachariah and Rajan, 2004; GOI, 2008).

Migration is seen all over the world, there can be many reasons for this such as many people migrate due to financial crisis, hunger, change in climate, globalization and increasing inequalities in income (Jain, 2010).

Out-migration has become a common thing in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand, a large number of youth have out-migrated to work permanently and temporarily, in some villages only the elderly and women are left with the minimum basic amenities (Sati, 2021).

There can be many reasons for this the lack of business agriculture in rural areas and limited resources, education and health system are not good, due to these issues villagers have to face many problems. There is a huge difference in rural-urban income. That's why people migrate to cities in search of better options.

Similar migration has been seen in Uttarakhand too, even before its formation as a separate state, migration continued from here, but those who were working day and night to form Uttarakhand a separate state, believed the problem of migration would be solved after forming a separate state, but it did not happen.

As after many struggles, Uttarakhand was formed on November 9, 2000 as the 27th state of India having been carved out from Uttar Pradesh. Uttarakhand is also known as Dev Bhoomi. It is situated in the northern part of India. It is considered as one of the most beautiful northern states of India, it has many pilgrimage sites.

There are 13 districts in Uttarakhand, in which there are two types of land, a plain and hill region, whose total geographical area is 5.35 million hectares in which 86% is mountainous and 65% is covered by forest, with density of population 189 sq. km. The plain agricultural area is about 3,37,830 hectares (2011 census). It includes the plains of Udham Singh Nagar, Haridwar, some parts of Dehradun and Nainital districts, making Uttarakhand one of the first five states in wheat production, where farming is very well developed. On the other hand, the rest of the districts have hilly agricultural area which is about 443,468 hectares. The cultivation of hilly areas mostly depends on rainfall.

The literacy rate of Uttarakhand is very good. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate in Uttarakhand was 78.82%, whereas the male literacy rate was 87.40% while the female literacy was 70.01% respectively.

Agriculture is the primary source of the hill population of Uttarakhand (2011 census). But the income from agriculture in the hilly areas is negligible as compared to the cultivation in the non-hilly area. There is a huge disparity in income levels in the hills as compared to the plains due to the reduction in agricultural income. Due to difficult geographical conditions, remoteness and lack of livelihood opportunities in rural hills, people migrate from hills to plains in search of better alternatives.

Migration from rural to urban areas in Uttarakhand is a major challenge. According to the report by Palayan Ayog Uttarakhand, migration from rural areas is a serious problem. The comparison of 2001 and 2011 census data shows very slow growth of population in most of the hill districts of the state. The pace of migration is such that the population of many villages has remained in double digits. The sharp decline in the population of Almora and Pauri Garhwal districts between 2001 and 2011 indicates large migration (Rural Development and Migration Commission, 2017).

Development of rural areas of non-hilly districts happened too fast as compared to rural areas of hill districts. The land holdings are very small and fragmented in the hilly districts. Means of irrigation are not available in hilly areas, only about 10% of land in hill districts is irrigated. Most of the people in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand do farming for their livelihood or have migrated to the cities for better livelihood opportunities. Due to lack of infrastructure such as electricity, roads and irrigation, the hill districts remain lacking in development (Negi, 2019).

Migration from the border area is also a big problem from the point of view of security, as Uttarakhand shares international border with China and Nepal, to deal with security, the state government has decided to form a force by the name of 'Him Pahari', Chief Minister Pushkar Dhama meet the Union Home minister and

ask his support in the implementation of Him Prahari scheme in the districts of international borders. As per the proposal of the government, 10,905 personnel will be inducted and deployed in the border areas of Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Pithoragarh, Champawat and Khatima (Udham Singh Nagar). Officials said an amount of ₹5.5 cr has been earmarked for creating this special force with the help of police and armed forces (Singh, 2022). Him Prahari scheme will provide necessary assistance to the exservicemen and youth of the state to settle in the international border districts (Tewari, 2022).

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on the occasion of Independence Day, after unfurling the national flag said, "We will launch a new scheme to revive over 700 'ghost villages' of Uttarakhand. We are planning to acquire land in all those villages, so that entrepreneurs can utilize the land for horticulture, growing medicinal plants or for tourism related activities" (Joshi, 2018).

According to a RTI by Hemant Gaunia, an activist of Nainital more than 5 lakh people have migrated from Uttarakhand in the last 10 years, 118,961 have migrated out of Uttarakhand permanently, which means they settled in other states, while 383,726 have migrated in search of work and better life and keep visiting their villages from the 6,338 village panchayats (Upadhyay, 2021).

2. Literature Review

Many institutions and educational institutions have done research work on the problem of Uttarakhand migration, in which they have tried to find out the reasons for migration.

Migration is not a new trend in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand. The only difference is that during the 11th and 12th centuries, people used to come here from the plain area to the mountains (Atkinson, 1882; and Walton, 1910). Those who came here for pilgrimage settled here permanently, but after the arrival of the British, the trend changed and out-migration started in Uttarakhand as youth were joining the army. However, migration got momentum after Uttarakhand became a separate state, migration has been seen more among educated youth, in search of jobs (Srivastava, 2011; NSDC, 2010). The number of people migrating from Uttarakhand is mainly men, among them young boys, mostly women and elderly practising farming work in the village (Mamgain, 2004; Census of India, 2011; Mamgain and Reddy, 2015a).

Most of the people in the hilly areas are doing agriculture for their livelihood, and most of the agriculture in the hilly areas is completely dependent on the rain, as most of the agricultural area does not have irrigation facilities. Whereas many farmers are suffering greatly from wild animals, especially pigs and monkeys. Anil Padalia, a farmer of Rinchi, said today due to the problem of animals, the people of the mountain have lost their faith in agriculture, and gradually most of the villagers are not doing farming (Padliya, 2022).

As per the report by Rural Development and Migration Commission, more than 66% of the population lives in the rural areas, whereas more than 80% in the hill districts. Uttarakhand has difficult mountainous terrain, due to which the population is scattered in the mountainous areas, development and overcoming poverty has become a big challenge today due to the difficult mountainous terrain (Negi, 2019).

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat also knew that commercial agriculture is not being done in the hilly areas, due to which migration is also taking place, for business farming, agricultural machinery must be good, for that he had announced that his government will open 550 agricultural machinery banks in rural areas by 2019, so that farmers can take advantage of the latest agricultural equipment (Joshi, 2018).

The main reasons of migration in Uttarakhand are unemployment in the hilly areas, the report of Migration Commission shows that people migrated that maximum percentage of 50.16% migrated due to the employment in other places. Whereas education came second with a contribution of 15.21% people migrated (Negi, 2019).

For the first time the reverse migration was seen on such a large scale, a large number of migrants returned home in the middle of the lockdown due to Covid-19, who had left Uttarakhand for better opportunities. The hill villages have been revived. About 60,000 migrant workers came back to their villages, now the deserted hill villages of Uttarakhand have come alive due to reverse migration (Singh, 2020).

According to research, about 60-70% of the food in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand is still produced by the small-scale farmers, who are still using traditional farming techniques. In traditional smallholder farming systems, there are no developed markets for traditional crops. Farmer's crop production and consumption decisions are often tied to families. Consumption preferences continue to influence them. The produce is sold locally, sometimes in the community. Family labor has been the backbone of traditional agriculture in small-holding households, migration of family labor in search of jobs is an important factor adversely affecting traditional agriculture (Bisht et al., 2017).

3. Methodology

Migration in any state is often the outcome of many reasons, in this research work we will try to know that what were the main reasons behind the migration in Uttarakhand in the last 10 years, as it was found in many research works that people migrated due to unemployment as they were not able to chose agriculture as a business in Uttarakhand, they were not able to earn through the agriculture, due to which people are migrating. In this research work, we will also try to know whether the people who have left their village in the last 10 years, whether they have been given any information about the facilities available in the Uttarakhand and whether any official has ever given any information about agriculture, in this study my area of sample will be Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh, who have left Uttarakhand in the last 10 years.

To conduct this study, survey method was used, questionnaire was prepared on the Google Form and also on Word file. People from the hills living in the above selected five states were contacted with the help of various social organizations of Uttarakhand and various centers of Uttaranchal Utthan Parishad. First of all, I have sent google forms on the various WhatsApp groups and Facebook. But most of the people did not fill the forms, after 6 months only 112 people filled the forms after repeated request, my target respondents were 200 people for that I have called many people on the selected states and filled the rest 88 forms. The following questions were asked from the respondents to understand the problems for the commercial farming in Uttarakhand.

Who inspired you to leave the village?

What was the root cause of migration to cities?

Did you have animals or not?

Do your family members still do farming in the village or have they migrated too?

What did you do in your village?

Did you sell your produce?

If you didn't sell or short sell your farm product, what are the reasons why you weren't selling or why are you unable to do commercial farming?

What do you think is the root reason for the failure of commercial farming in Uttaranchal?

Did any agricultural officer ever tell you about the crop that can be grown even in less water?

Did any agricultural officer tell you any way to save agriculture from animals?

Would you like to go to the village if the government tells you the methods of improved agriculture, so that even animals will not spoil your agriculture and water will not be needed too much, and the government will buy the crop too?

4. Data Analysis and Results

When any person migrates, he mostly does not migrate on his own, he must take inspiration from someone, Figure 1 shows that most of the respondents 61% says they were inspired for migration by their relatives, whereas 47% inspired by their friends and 40.5% says they were inspired by their family members.

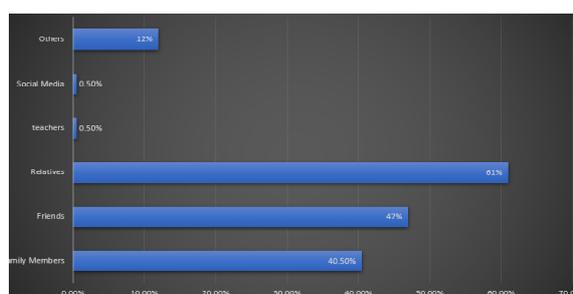


Figure 1: Who Inspired You to Leave the Village?

According to Figure 2 the root cause of migration of majority of the respondent 93% was employment. As there are hardly few jobs in the rural areas of upper hills of Uttarakhand. 71% respondent says in Uttarakhand

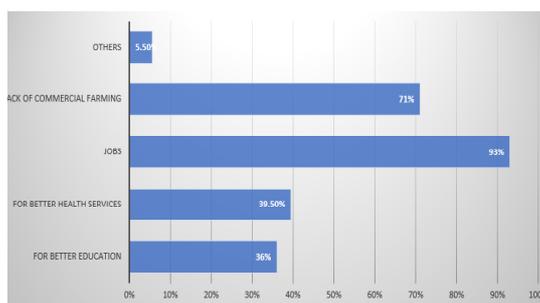


Figure 2: What was the Root Cause of Migration to Cities?

there is no scope of commercial farming and 39.5% respondents says health faculties are not up to mark whereas 36% accept due to lack of quality education the migrated to cities.

Majority of the people in rural areas of upper hills are into agriculture business and they are too having livestock. According to Figure 3, majority of the respondent 88% are having cow and 46% having goats and 20.5% are having buffaloes. Only 5% respondents say they are not having any livestock.

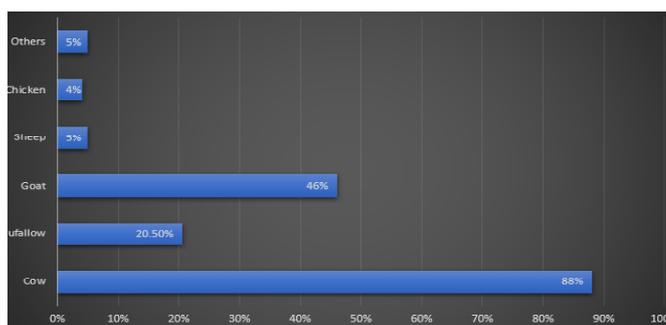


Figure 3: Did You Have Animals or Not?

Many villages have completely migrated in Uttarakhand and named as ghost villages. Figure 4 shows only 10.5% respondent says they have completely abandoned the villages. 56.5% respondent says the family members are in village and they are doing agriculture and horticulture and having livestock. Whereas 25.5% respondent says their parents are into agriculture and to have livestock's.

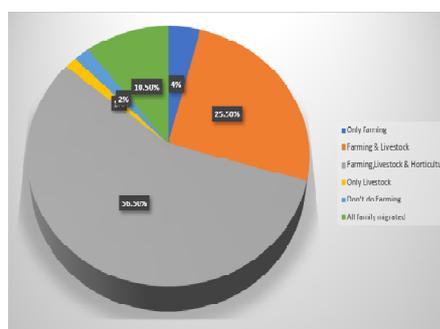


Figure 4: Do Your Family Members Still do Farming in the Village or Have They Migrated Too?

Agriculture is the only work of hill people, Figure 5 shows that only 1.5% of people are planting herbs in their fields while most of the people 90.5% plant cereals, second number comes to vegetables 88.5% and then fruits 76%. Whereas if they go for herbal farming, they can earn almost three times of cereals income.

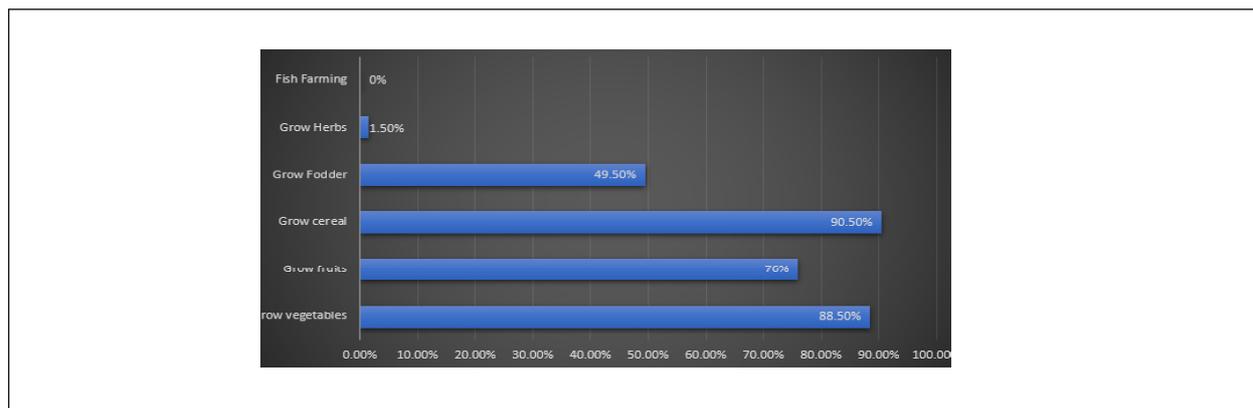


Figure 5: What Did You do in Your Village?

Agriculture is the main occupation of the hill people in Uttarakhand, but Figure 6 shows that only 5% respondents sell their grains in very small quantities. Whereas most of the people in hill region are growing grains. 47% accept that they sell small quantities of vegetables and 44.5% says they sell small quantities of fruits. 41% people says they don't sell any product.

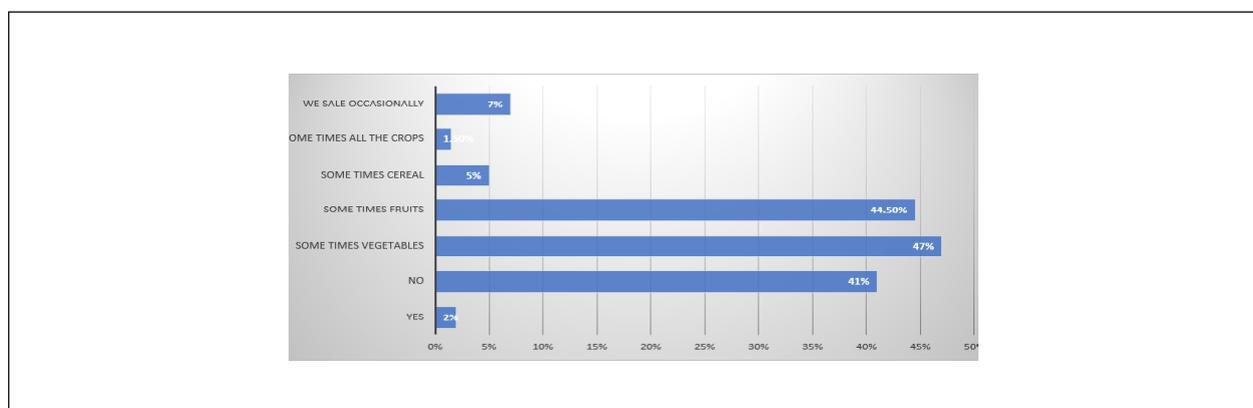


Figure 6: Did You Sell Your Produce?

Despite having agriculture as the primary work in hilly area of Uttarakhand, they are not able to earn from the agriculture. Figure 7 shows the important reason for not adopting commercial farming in hilly areas. 88.5% respondents says they don't sell because produce is very low, 83.2% people blame animals for not having good grains, vegetables and fruits and 79.1% says we are not able to produce in quantity due to lack of irrigation facilities, 64.4% respondent says they don't sell as we are not able to fulfil the need of our own houses. 28.3% says transportation system is not good and 23% says grain markets are far away from the villages.

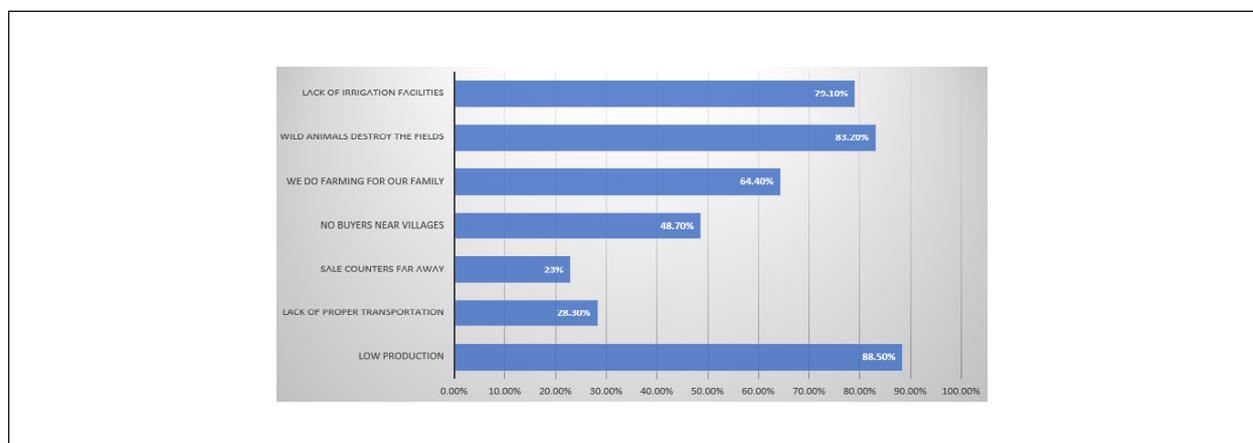


Figure 7: If you didn't Sell your Farm Product, What are the Reasons Why You Weren't Selling or Why are you Unable to do Commercial Farming?

Many people in upper hills of Uttarakhand are producing organic product. Despite that they are not able to earn from the agriculture as other states earn from organic products. There are many reasons for the failure of commercial farming in Uttarakhand. Respondents in Figure 8 explaining the root causes of failure of commercial farming in Uttarakhand. Majority of the respondents, 95% believe animals are the main reason for not having good produce, 92% says lack of irrigation facilities are also important reason, whereas 82.5% says small fields are also an important reason as in the hills fields are small and the distance of one field to another field is minimum 20 meter, 80% believe there should be Minimum Support Price (MSP) for hill product and 62.5% believes lack of interaction between agriculture department and the farmers are also an important factor.

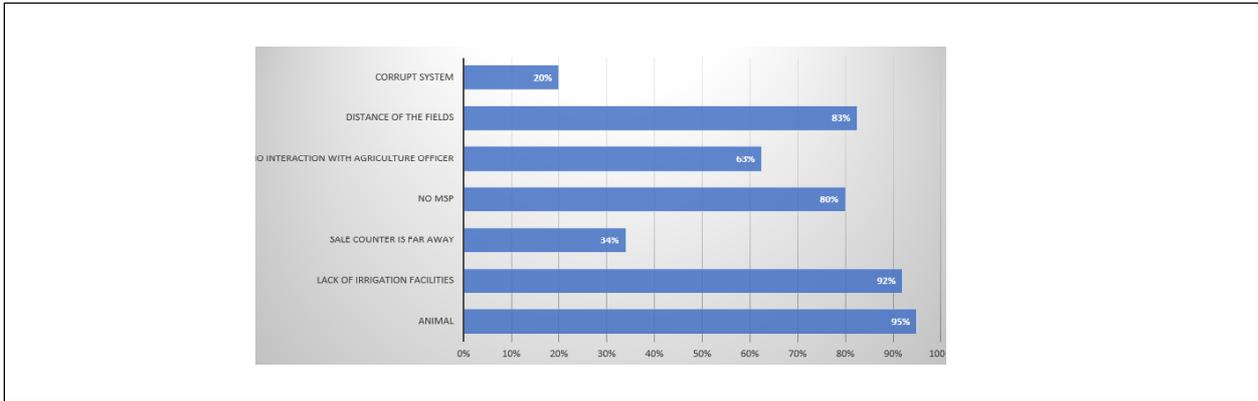


Figure 8: What do you Think is the Root Reason for the Failure of Commercial Farming in Uttarakhand?

Uttarakhand government claims their offices are doing their best in the field, they keep meeting with farmers. And they have separate budget for awareness programs for the villagers. Whereas only 6% responded says agriculture officers informed them about the crops to be sown in the less water area. While 94% says they never seen agriculture officer in their villages (Figure 9).

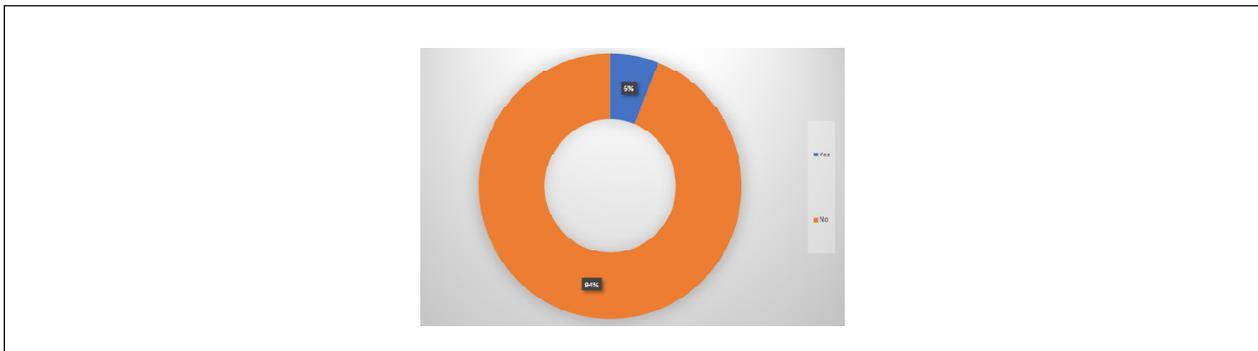


Figure 9: Did any Agricultural Officer Ever Informed you About the Crop that Can be Grown Even in Less Water?

Animals remain the biggest problem for agriculture in the hill region. But agriculture officers do not tell the farmers, which crop to plant to avoid wild animals. As 94% of the people says that they have never been told by any official, how to protect their farm from wild animals? There are only 6% of people who say they were informed by an agriculture officer about the alternative crop which can't be harm by the wild animals (Figure 10).

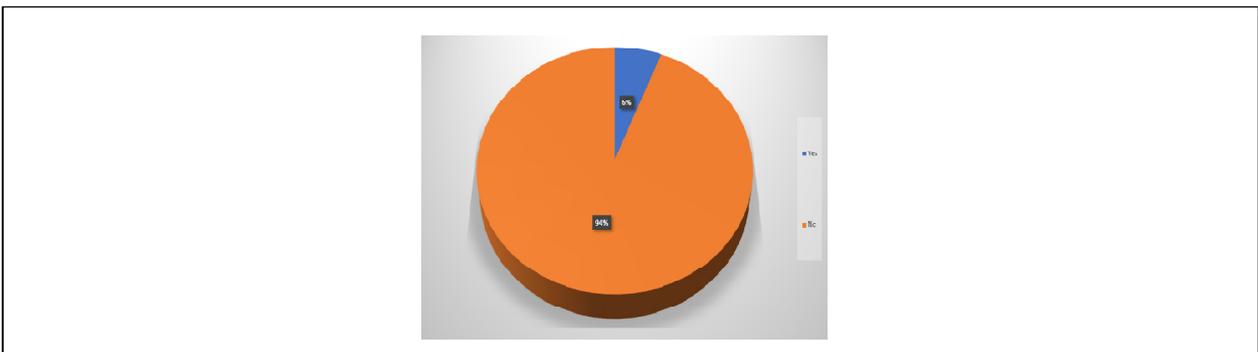


Figure 10: Did any Agricultural Officer Tell you any way to save your Farms from Animals?

Government of Uttarakhand is working on reverse migration. We asked people if government provides all the facilities for commercial farming, will you do reverse migration? 49% respondent says if the government is providing market and infrastructure to counter wild animals, we are willing for reverse migration, where as 34% says we will think what to do and 17% straight refuse for reverse migration, as they are well settled (Figure 11).

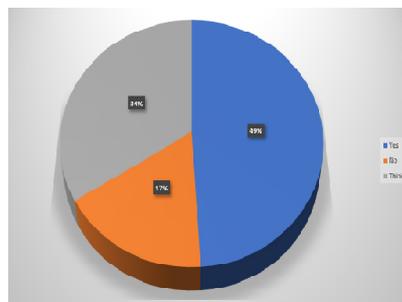


Figure 11: Would you like to go to the Village if the Government Tells you the Methods of Improved Farming, so that Even Animals will not Spoil your Agriculture and Water will not be Needed too Much, and the Government will buy the Crop too?

5. Conclusion

One of the main reasons for migration in Uttarakhand is lack of basic infrastructure in the rural area of hills, as still some villages are far away from the roads and are only connected through footpaths, the education system is also not good, health centers are too far. Most of the people have left their traditional work, and now they are looking for jobs. Whereas jobs are not available in the villages, so they are moving from hilly areas to non-hilly areas in search of jobs.

Government figures also shows that agriculture is the main occupation of the people living in hilly region. The research shows that the people living in hills, have very little knowledge of agriculture, which can't be harm by the wild animals. Most of the respondents says agriculture officials are unable to pass the latest information regarding the agriculture technology to farmers. This research suggests the government should organize the information camps from time to time in the villages of the hilly area.

Today we should motivate our farmer to cultivate herbs and plants which are not eaten by animals and require less irrigation and these crops are in high demand in India and abroad. Most of the farmers say that government should give them assurance of Minimum Support Price (MSP), as many times farmers didn't get good price of their crops. Right now, most of the farmers produce in their fields only for the food of their families. Some of the farmers sale their vegetables, fruits and grains in the nearby markets, but still, they are not adopting farming as a business.

Agricultural production is very less in the hilly areas, mainly due to poor irrigation system and animals spoil the crop. According to this study, unless those crops are not selected, which are not eaten by animals and require less irrigation, the income of the farmer of Uttarakhand cannot increase. It is also very difficult to take agricultural produce to the market, the absence of sales centers in rural areas is also one reason for not having interest in commercial agriculture.

Those who have migrated to the cities, most of their families are still in the villages, good thing is that they are engaged in farming, doing fruits, vegetables and animal husbandry. If they are motivated for commercial farming and their produce is precured by the government from the village, they may remain in the village for better income as many respondents are not happy with their present work in the cities.

Research shows that agricultural officers are not able to communicate with the villagers, due to which villagers are not aware of many schemes of the government, most of the respondents say agricultural officers never guided them to overcome animal problems. As there are also such types of crops in hills, which give

good profit even on less irrigation, if the villagers were informed in such a way that these crops will not be eaten by animals and require minimum water, then people will start farming in the villages.

Nearly half of the respondents willing for reverse migration if the government is providing market and infrastructure to counter wild animals, whereas 34% says they will think what to do and 17% straight refuse for reverse migration. It is better sign of reverse migration in Uttarakhand if government resolve all the issues which people of Uttarakhand are facing in the hilly area.

6. Suggestions

Looking at the current agriculture problem of Uttarakhand, it seems that there is a conflict between animals and humans. We can take both of them together if such crops are selected which animals do not harm.

For this we have to grow fruits and vegetables in the forest, so that needs of animals like monkey and wild boar can be fulfilled in the forest area. We have many examples of villagers of Uttarakhand, where they just throw the seeds in the forest before the rainy season, which now have grown as a forest of fruits itself. Now these villagers say animal attacks on the agriculture fields have reduced many folds.

Some fruits and vegetables are such that they cannot be kept for long, if food processing units are set up in more and more rural areas, income will also increase and the wasted fruits and vegetables will become a source of profit.

The government should inform each villager to grow those plants on the entry of village from the forest side, which protect the villages from animals like wild boar and monkeys. Such practice is already adopted by some of the villagers in Pauri Garhwal they planting rosemary on the borders of village. Research proved that some plants with a particular scent can be used as an animal repellent them, they suggest that it can be used around the border of the garden as an animal repellent. This practice is beneficial as it serves as an extra source of income to farmers as rosemary is on high demand even in India.

Chili peppers is also an excellent repellent against elephants, monkeys, squirrels, and some other wild animals; similarly, farmers who plant chili peppers on the border of their fields will also benefit from an extra source of income. Lavender is also an excellent repellent against rabbits and it can be a good and additional source of income.

It was found in the research that a lot of expenditure is being incurred in reaching the farmers' crop in the markets and the resources are also not in such a way that every farmer can easily take his produce to the market, the government must find a solution to this problem.

Cooperative farming is being done in many areas to counter this kind of issues, as an individual farmers costs of transportation is much higher to bring agricultural produce to the market. If cooperative farming is done, this cost becomes very less. Government of India is also promoting cooperative farming to give more profit to farmers.

Today, with the increasing trend of organic farming in Uttarakhand and with the help of the central government, organic farming is gaining a lot of strength in Uttarakhand. Those who are doing organic farming in Uttarakhand, they should get themselves registered with the organic board so that they can sell their products in the market at higher prices.

Agriculture officers must visit the village from time to time to inform the villagers about the new research and government schemes.

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