

Migration from Jharkhand: Determinants, Livelihood Strategies and Socio-Economic Consequences—An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

Migration is an important component of livelihood transformation in Jharkhand, where rural livelihoods, uneven employment opportunities, tribal and agrarian economies, education and inter-state labour markets intersect. This article examines the determinants, livelihood strategies and socio-economic consequences of migration through a secondary empirical analysis of Census data and published studies. Evidence from a recent multi-village survey, studies of temporary and seasonal labour migration, ethnographic work on brick-kiln migration, and destination-side research in Bihar is interpreted comparatively rather than pooled as one representative dataset. The evidence shows substantial variation in the form and purpose of mobility. In the recent village sample, employment and education were the leading reported reasons for migration, while labouring remained the largest occupational category among working migrants. Studies focused specifically on seasonal and temporary migration show stronger links with poverty, limited landholding and weak household consumption capacity. Migration can diversify livelihoods, raise income, finance education and expand opportunities, but may also increase women's workloads, expose workers to insecure employment, disrupt children's lives and contribute to land abandonment and agricultural labour shortages. The article argues that policy should not seek to eliminate migration; instead, it should reduce distress and hazardous migration while improving the safety, returns and social protection associated with voluntary mobility.

Keywords: Jharkhand; internal migration; seasonal migration; circular migration; livelihood diversification; tribal migration; remittances; labour migration; socio-economic consequences

1. Introduction

Migration from Jharkhand is neither new nor uniform. People move for work, education, marriage, family formation and livelihood diversification, and mobility may be daily, seasonal, circular, long-duration or permanent. A worker leaving a marginal farm for several months at a brick kiln represents a different process from a student moving for higher education or a skilled worker taking an urban job. Treating all movements as one category can therefore conceal important differences in motives, resources and outcomes.

Jharkhand is an important setting for studying these processes because migration intersects with agrarian seasonality, uneven land access, a large Scheduled Tribe population, rural poverty, educational aspirations and expanding links with urban and inter-state labour markets. Earlier research emphasizes seasonal labour migration, while newer studies also document educational and occupational mobility. The result is a migration system in which necessity, adaptation and aspiration coexist.

The article addresses three questions: what determines migration from Jharkhand; how does migration function as a livelihood strategy; and what are its socio-economic consequences? It synthesizes existing empirical evidence rather than presenting a new field survey. Because the underlying studies differ in sample, year and geographical coverage, their estimates are used comparatively and are not treated as a single state-wide dataset.

The central argument is that migration lies on a continuum between necessity and opportunity. Poverty and inadequate local employment can create the need to migrate, while education, skills, social networks and household resources can create the capacity to move. The same migration may therefore contain both constraint and agency: earnings generated away from home can finance education, housing, debt repayment or investment while the original decision may have been driven by weak local livelihoods.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a secondary empirical research design. Its purpose is to synthesize and interpret evidence on migration from Jharkhand rather than to generate a new primary survey. The principal sources are Census of India migration tables, peer-reviewed empirical studies of Jharkhand migration, and research on major destination corridors. The analysis combines descriptive statistics with interpretation of regression results reported in the selected studies.

The empirical base is deliberately heterogeneous. Census 2011 provides the broadest official benchmark on migration reasons, duration and place of last residence, but it is historical and is not presented as a current estimate. Kumar et al. (2023) provide recent micro-level evidence from 12 purposively selected villages in 10 districts, based on 1,623 households and 7,896 persons. Sucharita (2020) and Sucharita and Rout (2020) provide complementary evidence on temporary and seasonal migration in western Jharkhand. Shah (2006), Deogharia (2012) and Sinha and Mishra (2012) contribute village- and corridor-specific evidence, while Roshania et al. (2023) illuminate the Jharkhand-Bihar brick-kiln corridor from the destination side.

The analytical procedure has four stages. First, official and published data are organized around migration type, destination, reason, occupation and socio-economic characteristics. Second, selected quantitative indicators are presented through tables and figures to make differences across studies visible. Third, findings from different studies are compared to identify recurring determinants, especially employment conditions, landholding, poverty, education, gender and household resources. Finally, the evidence is interpreted through push-pull theory, the new economics of labour migration, sustainable livelihoods and migration-development perspectives.

A key methodological limitation is comparability. The studies use different years, sampling procedures, populations and definitions of migration. Village-level percentages cannot be generalized to Jharkhand as a whole, and destination-side samples cannot be read as the composition of all migrants from the state. Correlations reported by individual studies are also not treated as causal effects. These limitations are explicitly retained in the interpretation so that the article provides an empirical synthesis without creating false statistical precision.

3. Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

The push-pull approach explains migration through conditions at the origin and opportunities at the destination. In Jharkhand, low agricultural productivity, seasonal unemployment, limited local wage work and indebtedness may encourage movement, while higher wages, education and migrant networks can attract workers and students. Yet similar households do not always migrate, indicating that household resources and strategies also matter.

The new economics of labour migration treats mobility as a household strategy for income diversification and risk reduction (Stark & Bloom, 1985). This perspective fits seasonal migration in Jharkhand, where households may combine cultivation, livestock, local wage labour, migration and other activities. The sustainable livelihoods approach similarly views migration as one element of a broader portfolio (Scoones, 1998).

Lewis's (1954) model draws attention to movement from low-productivity rural work toward modern sectors, although contemporary India differs substantially from the model's original setting. De Haas (2010) provides a broader migration-development perspective in which mobility can generate income, skills and networks but can also produce dependency and inequality. These perspectives support an analysis that combines structural constraints with migrant agency.

4. Migration from Jharkhand: Patterns and Empirical Evidence

Census evidence provides the broadest official baseline, although the latest comprehensive migration tables are from Census 2011 and therefore describe a historical rather than current situation. The Census D-03 tables classify migrants by place of last residence, duration of residence and reason for migration, including work or employment, business, education, marriage, movement after birth, movement with household and other

reasons. One important Census indicator is the number reporting migration for work or employment: 824,259 persons in Jharkhand, of whom 724,065 were male and 100,194 were female. Thus, approximately 87.85% of those reporting work/employment migration were male and 12.15% female. This gender imbalance reflects the concentration of migration in physically demanding, informal and male-dominated labour markets, while also highlighting the limitations of interpreting migration solely through male workers.

Employment-Related Migrants from Jharkhand, Census 2011

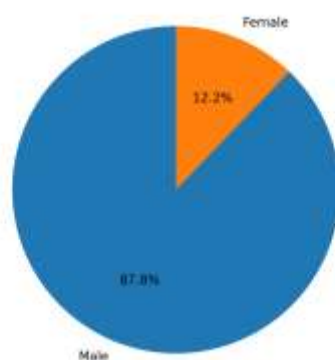


Figure 1. *Gender composition of persons reporting migration for work/employment in Jharkhand, Census 2011. Source: Census of India, D-03, Jharkhand (2011); calculations from reported male and female totals.*

A recent multi-village study provides a useful micro-level picture based on primary data collected between January and April 2022. It covered 12 villages across 10 districts and surveyed 1,623 households containing 7,896 persons. Of these, 3,322 persons (42.07%) were migrants and 4,574 (57.93%) were non-migrants. Because the villages were purposively selected, this percentage should be treated as a study-sample indicator rather than a state-wide migration rate.

Migrant and Non-Migrant Population in the 12 Study Villages

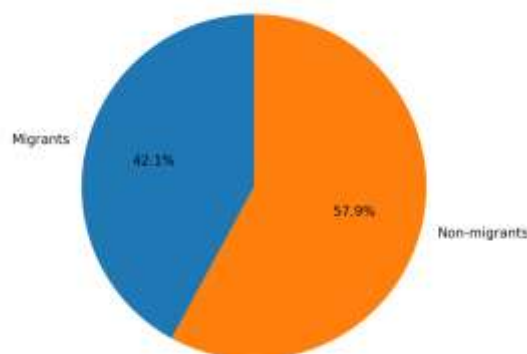


Figure 2. *Migrant and non-migrant population in the 12-village sample of Kumar et al. (2023). Source: Kumar et al. (2023).*

The village-level variation is substantial. Migration rates ranged from 25.92% in Argori, Khunti, and 26.02% in Chichikhurd, Hazaribagh, to 60.82% in Deodih and 57.74% in Bhandaria, both in Garhwa. Other villages recorded rates between roughly 29% and 57%. The variation suggests that local employment, agricultural conditions, landholding and migrant networks shape mobility differently across places.

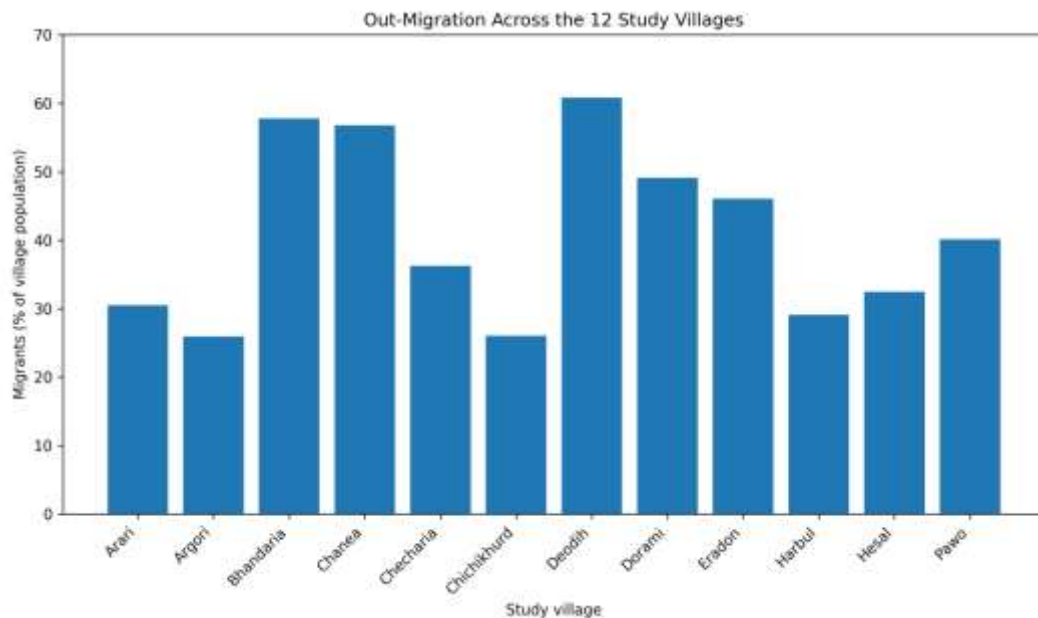


Figure 3. Migration rates in the 12 villages surveyed by Kumar et al. (2023). Source: Kumar et al. (2023). Note: purposively selected village sample; not a state-wide representative estimate.

Table 1. Population and migration in the 12 villages surveyed by Kumar et al. (2023).

Village / District	Population	Migrants	Migration rate
Arari, Bokaro	348	104	30.48%
Argori, Khunti	580	146	25.92%
Bhandaria, Garhwa	734	440	57.74%
Chanea, Palamu	609	341	56.76%
Checharia, Palamu	1031	367	36.27%
Chichikhurd, Hazaribagh	572	148	26.02%
Deodih, Garhwa	818	506	60.82%
Dorami, Latehar	770	371	49.12%
Eradon, Lohardaga	613	279	46.03%
Harbul, Ranchi	109	31	29.10%
Hesal, Ramgarh	1050	335	32.45%
Pawo, Chatra	662	254	40.12%

The temporal character of migration is also important. The survey distinguishes permanent, long-duration, short-duration, monthly, weekly and daily mobility. Permanent migration occurred in only three villages, while long-duration migration was prominent in several villages. Daily migration dominated some villages, whereas short-duration movement was particularly important in others. Migration in Jharkhand therefore includes both circular mobility and more durable relocation.

Table 2. Type of migration among migrants in the Kumar et al. (2023) village sample (%).

Village	Permanent	Long >6m	Short 2–6m	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Arari	0.00	59.22	2.07	0.40	0.30	38.01
Argori	0.00	21.05	9.05	11.69	0.20	58.01
Bhandaria	23.62	41.04	14.84	0.32	0.29	19.89
Chanea	1.39	40.12	18.93	9.50	2.01	28.05
Checharia	1.02	45.03	20.13	7.10	0.41	26.31
Chichikhurd	0.00	25.26	9.02	0.20	0.10	65.42
Deodih	0.00	64.07	21.05	1.75	0.60	12.53
Dorami	0.00	45.06	1.33	0.40	0.30	52.91
Eradon	0.00	64.17	5.59	3.20	0.20	26.84
Harbul	0.00	44.45	0.20	20.10	0.20	35.05
Hesal	0.00	19.97	39.05	0.32	0.00	40.66
Pawo	0.00	34.16	3.20	0.90	0.00	61.74

Destination patterns show the importance of both local and inter-state mobility. About 40% of migrants in the study moved outside Jharkhand, while the remainder moved within the state or to nearby destinations. Among out-of-state migrants, most moved to urban locations, although brick kilns were an important rural destination. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu were among the principal destination states.

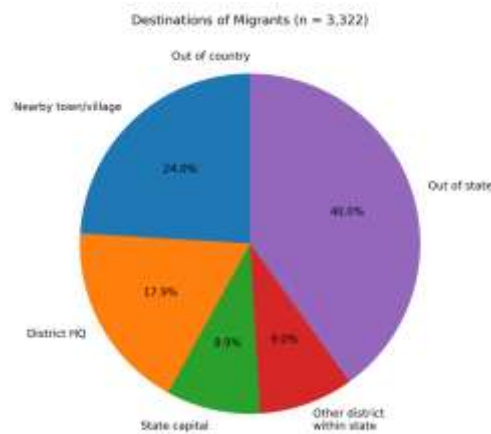


Figure 4. *Destinations of migrants in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample. Source: Kumar et al. (2023).*

Table 3. Destination distribution of migrants in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample.

Destination	Share
Nearby town/village	24.05%
District headquarters	17.94%
State capital	8.95%
Other district within Jharkhand	9.01%
Outside Jharkhand	40.05%
Outside India	0.00%

The reported reasons demonstrate why migration cannot be reduced to distress alone. Employment accounted for 42.39% and education for 38.69%, together representing 81.08% of stated reasons. Family-following, poor agricultural productivity and other factors made up smaller shares. Employment necessity and human-capital investment therefore coexist within the migration system.

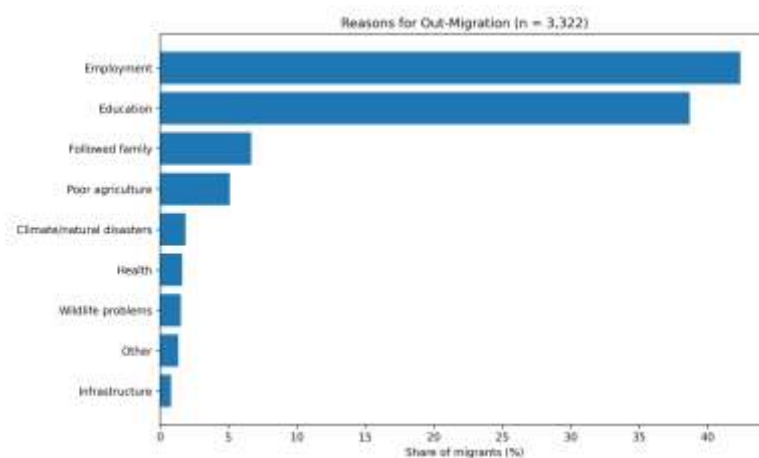


Figure 5. *Reported reasons for out-migration in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample. Source: Kumar et al. (2023).*

Table 4. Reasons for out-migration in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample.

Reason	Share
Employment	42.39%
Education	38.69%
Followed family	6.66%
Poor agricultural productivity	5.09%
Climate change / natural disasters	1.87%
Health	1.63%
Wildlife problems	1.52%
Other	1.34%
Lack of infrastructure	0.81%

Occupation data show a strong concentration in low-skilled and informal work. Among 1,732 working migrants, labouring accounted for 52.13%, followed by other private jobs (15.02%) and driving (9.18%). Government, security, hotel and technical occupations formed smaller shares. The pattern links rural Jharkhand to segmented labour markets where entry barriers may be low but employment security can also be limited.

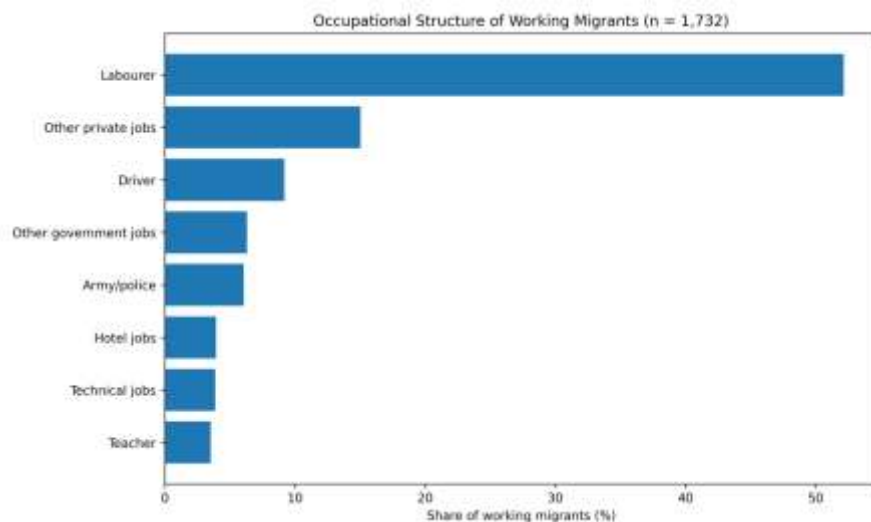


Figure 6. Occupational composition of working migrants in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample.
Source: Kumar et al. (2023).

Table 5. Occupations of working migrants in the Kumar et al. (2023) sample.

Occupation	Share
Labourer	52.13%
Other private jobs	15.02%
Driver	9.18%

Other government jobs	6.30%
Army / police	6.06%
Hotel jobs	3.92%
Doctors / engineers / technical	3.87%
Teacher	3.52%

Evidence from migration corridors further illustrates the circular and seasonal character of mobility. Roshania et al. (2023), studying circular migrant families working in brick kilns in Bihar, included 2,564 families across 1,068 brick kilns. Jharkhand-origin families accounted for 851 households, or 33.2% of the sample, making Jharkhand the second-largest state of origin after Bihar. This does not mean that 33.2% of all migrants from Jharkhand go to Bihar; rather, it demonstrates the importance of Jharkhand as a source region within the specific Bihar brick-kiln migration corridor.

State of Origin of Circular Migrant Families at Bihar Brick Kilns

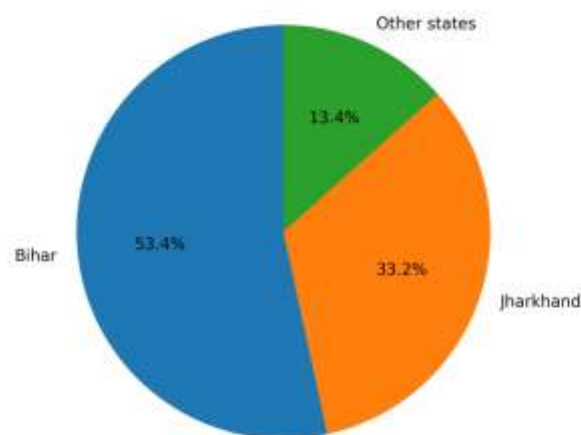


Figure 7. *State of origin among circular migrant families in the Bihar brick-kiln sample.*

Source: Roshania et al. (2023). Note: destination-side sample; not the distribution of all Jharkhand out-migration.

An important feature of the Bihar evidence is the persistence of livelihood ties to agriculture. Approximately 70% of the migrant families used at least one non-market food source at their place of origin, and around half produced food for consumption through crops or livestock. This suggests that circular migration does not necessarily represent a complete exit from agriculture. Instead, migration and subsistence production can coexist, with agriculture supplying food and migration supplying cash. Such complementarity is consistent with a livelihood-diversification framework.

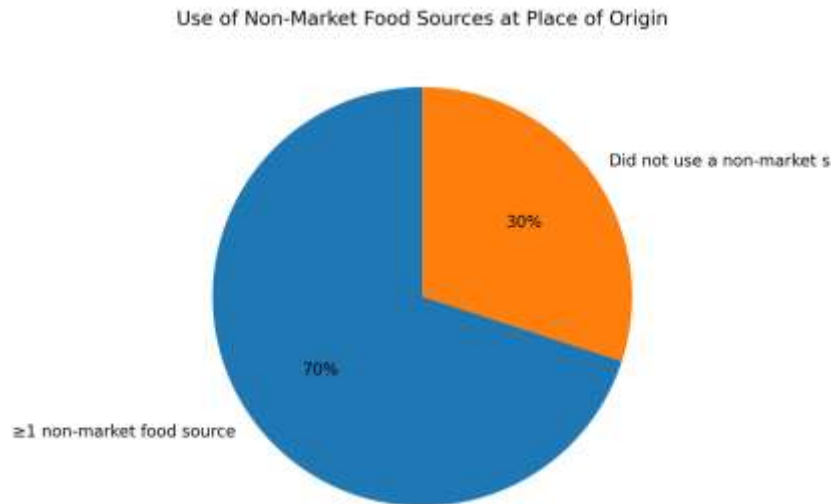


Figure 8. *Use of at least one non-market food source at the place of origin among circular migrant families in the Bihar brick-kiln study. Source: Roshania et al. (2023).*

Local evidence from Ranchi also indicates substantial seasonal migration to brick kilns. Sinha and Mishra (2012), in a study of 12 villages in the Bero and Itki blocks of Ranchi district, reported that approximately 30% of villagers migrated seasonally to brick kilns for four to six months, particularly during the agricultural lean period. This finding should be read as evidence for the selected villages rather than as a district- or state-wide prevalence estimate. It is nevertheless important because it shows how migration can be synchronized with the agricultural calendar.

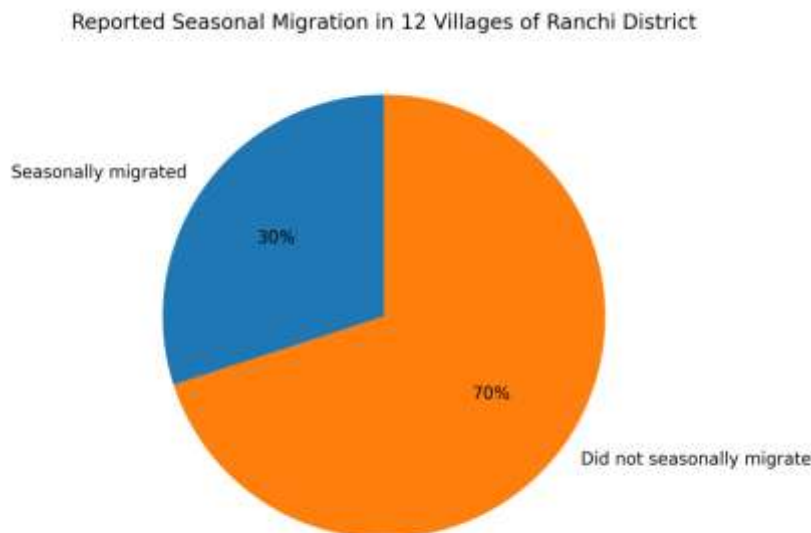


Figure 9. *Approximate seasonal migration share reported for the 12 study villages in Bero and Itki blocks, Ranchi district. Source: Sinha & Mishra (2012). Note: village-study estimate, not a Ranchi-wide or Jharkhand-wide estimate.*

5. Determinants, Livelihood Strategies and Socio-Economic Consequences

The determinants of migration in Jharkhand operate at several levels. Individual characteristics such as age, sex, marital status and education interact with household-level characteristics such as income and landholding, while local labour-market conditions, social networks and destination opportunities influence the final decision. The regression results reported by Kumar et al. (2023) provide a useful illustration of these relationships.

Table 6. Selected odds ratios from Model II in Kumar et al. (2023), n=7,896.

Predictor	Odds ratio	95% CI	p-value
15-64 years	5.92	4.85-7.24	<.001
>65 years	1.66	1.13-2.46	<.01
Male	3.57	3.20-4.00	<.001
Unmarried	4.22	3.57-4.99	<.001
OBC	0.55	0.43-0.71	<.001
SC	0.67	0.56-0.81	<.001
ST	0.57	0.49-0.68	<.001
Primary education	2.02	1.75-2.34	<.001
Secondary education	3.48	2.91-4.16	<.001
Higher education	3.59	2.96-4.35	<.001
Income ₹10-20k	1.99	1.71-2.30	<.001
Income ₹20-40k	2.84	2.39-3.37	<.001
Income >₹40k	4.52	3.66-5.60	<.001
Land 1-2 ha	1.28	1.11-1.48	<.001
Land 2-3 ha	1.55	1.25-1.92	<.001
Land >3 ha	0.96	0.81-1.13	n.s.

The strongest age effect was observed for persons aged 15-64, who had an odds ratio of 5.92 relative to the 0-14 reference group. The male odds ratio was 3.57, while unmarried persons had an odds ratio of 4.22 relative to married persons. Education was positively associated with migration in this model: the odds ratios were 2.02 for primary education, 3.48 for secondary education and 3.59 for higher education relative to the reference category. Income showed an especially strong positive association, rising to 4.52 for households in the highest income category. This result should not be interpreted as evidence that high income causes migration. Rather, migration can require resources, and income may also be affected by remittances and other migration-related earnings.

The social-group coefficients are also noteworthy. Relative to the general category, OBC, SC and ST categories showed odds ratios below one. This finding should not be interpreted as evidence that disadvantaged social groups do not migrate. Other studies of seasonal and

temporary labour migration in western Jharkhand show precisely the opposite for particular forms of migration. The difference likely reflects the fact that migration is not a single phenomenon and that the Kumar et al. sample and model capture multiple forms of mobility, including education and higher-income migration. Sucharita (2020) and Sucharita and Rout (2020), by focusing specifically on temporary and seasonal labour migration, find stronger evidence of migration among poorer and socially disadvantaged households.

Sucharita (2020), using primary data from 4,241 individuals in 781 households across 12 villages in western Jharkhand, finds that temporary labour migration is concentrated among poor households and is associated with landholding, household consumption capacity and access to employment. The study reports a significant negative relationship between land owned and the probability of temporary migration, while higher monthly per capita consumption expenditure reduces the likelihood of migration. Sucharita and Rout (2020) similarly find that seasonal migration is more prevalent among socio-economically deprived groups, including households with lower landholding and lower consumption levels. Their results suggest that education has no significant effect on the propensity for seasonal migration in their particular model, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing educational or professional migration from distress-oriented seasonal labour mobility.

The contrast between these studies is analytically productive. It suggests that poverty can generate the necessity to migrate, while resources can generate the capacity to migrate. A poor household may be pushed into seasonal migration because local livelihoods are inadequate, whereas a relatively better-resourced household may be able to finance education or support a migrant member while waiting for employment opportunities. Migration therefore cannot be adequately explained by a single variable such as poverty, landlessness or education. The type of migration, destination, occupation and household strategy must be specified.

Table 7. Selected socio-economic characteristics of the 7,896 persons in Kumar et al. (2023).

Characteristic	Number	Share
Age 0-14	2,262	28.65%
Age 15-64	5,322	67.40%
Age >65	312	3.95%
Female	3,736	47.32%
Male	4,160	52.68%
Married	4,291	54.34%
Unmarried	3,605	45.66%
Illiterate	2,478	31.38%
Primary	2,815	35.65%
Secondary	1,313	16.63%

Higher	1,290	16.34%
General	2,000	25.33%
OBC	640	8.11%
SC	1,548	19.60%
ST	3,708	46.96%
<₹10,000 income	2,006	25.41%
₹10,000–20,000	3,275	41.48%
₹20,000–40,000	1,651	20.91%
>₹40,000	964	12.20%
<1 ha land	4,142	52.46%
1–2 ha	1,651	20.91%
2–3 ha	564	7.14%
>3 ha	1,539	19.49%

Migration is best viewed as a livelihood strategy rather than simply a labour-market event. For households facing seasonal agricultural constraints, circular migration provides cash during lean periods. Deogharia (2012) interprets seasonal migration in remote tribal villages as livelihood expansion and risk reduction. Although the historical income estimates should not be generalized to present-day Jharkhand, the mechanism of combining migration with agriculture remains relevant.

The coexistence of agriculture and migration is visible in the Bihar brick-kiln evidence. Many migrant families continued to rely on non-market food sources at their place of origin, indicating that circular migration need not represent a complete exit from agriculture. Agriculture can provide food and some security while migration provides cash, creating a diversified livelihood portfolio.

Migration can also alter the relationship between income, labour and land. The multi-village study reports strong correlations between migration and income, migration and land abandonment, and income and land abandonment. These are associations, not causal effects. Remittances may raise income, while migration may reduce agricultural labour; alternatively, pre-existing agricultural difficulties may encourage both land abandonment and migration. The key issue is that mobility can reshape household allocation of labour and land.

The socio-economic consequences are mixed. Migrant earnings can finance food, education, health, housing, debt repayment and assets, while migration networks can broaden occupational opportunities. Educational and professional migration may strengthen human capital, but low-skilled migrants can remain in insecure employment with limited bargaining power.

Yet the benefits of migration are not evenly distributed. Low-skilled migrants may remain concentrated in insecure work with limited bargaining power. Brick-kiln and other circular migrants may be recruited through labour intermediaries, creating risks associated with advances, debt, wage deductions and restricted mobility. Shah's (2006) ethnographic work on seasonal migration from Jharkhand to brick kilns is especially important here because it challenges the assumption that migrants move only because of economic desperation. Migrants can also understand mobility as a temporary escape from village restrictions, a source of independence or an opportunity for new experiences. At the same time, such agency exists within highly unequal labour relations, and it should not be romanticized.

Gender consequences are similarly complex. The predominance of men in official work-migration statistics means that women frequently remain at the origin while carrying greater responsibility for agriculture, household management, children and elderly family members. Kumar et al. identify increased women's workload as one consequence of migration, but also report potential gains in women's leadership and decision-making. Migration can therefore redistribute responsibilities in ways that are simultaneously burdensome and empowering.

Children constitute another important dimension. Sinha and Mishra's (2012) study of brick-kiln migration in villages of Ranchi district highlights children's vulnerability in migrating households. Where children accompany parents, schooling can be disrupted, health and nutrition can be affected, and exposure to hazardous work environments may increase. Where parents migrate without children, separation and changes in caregiving arrangements can create different forms of vulnerability. Policy therefore needs to address children as part of the migration system rather than treating migration as an adult labour issue alone.

At the community level, sustained out-migration can alter age composition, reduce agricultural labour and contribute to land abandonment. At the same time, remittance-funded consumption and investment can increase demand for local goods, construction, transport and services. Outcomes therefore depend on whether migration earnings translate into durable improvements in human capital, assets and local economic activity.

6. Discussion and Policy Implications

The evidence supports a multi-dimensional understanding of migration from Jharkhand. Mobility varies by place, duration and destination; motives range from survival and income smoothing to education and occupational advancement; and migrants enter labour markets with different levels of security. Household gains can therefore coexist with community-level costs.

The policy implication is not to stop migration but to reduce involuntary and unsafe mobility while increasing the benefits of voluntary movement. Restricting migration without improving local livelihoods would leave the underlying incentives unchanged.

First, rural employment and agricultural policy remain central. Employment programmes can reduce the need for distress migration during lean seasons if work is available at the

right time and wages are paid reliably. Agricultural interventions should focus on irrigation, productivity, storage, market access and climate resilience, especially for small and marginal farmers. Where agriculture becomes more remunerative, households can make migration decisions from a stronger bargaining position rather than from immediate necessity.

Second, migrant workers require portable social protection. Because many Jharkhand migrants cross district and state boundaries, access to food, health care, insurance, pensions and welfare should not depend exclusively on residence at the place of origin. Registration systems and interoperable welfare platforms can reduce the exclusion that often accompanies circular mobility. The policy framework should also ensure that migrant workers can access grievance mechanisms at destinations.

Third, recruitment and labour intermediation require stronger oversight. Workers entering brick kilns, construction, hospitality, transport and other informal sectors often depend on contractors or labour intermediaries. Transparent contracts, wage records, access to legal aid and enforcement against coercive practices are particularly important for workers with limited education and bargaining power. Special attention is required where advances or debt can restrict a worker's freedom to leave.

Fourth, migration policy must incorporate gender and family dimensions. Women who remain at origin may require support for agricultural production, financial services and childcare, while women who migrate need safe accommodation, workplace protections, equal wages and access to health services. For migrant families with children, portability of schooling, nutrition and health entitlements is essential.

Fifth, skills and information can raise the returns to migration. The occupational evidence from Kumar et al. shows a heavy concentration in labouring and other relatively low-skilled work. Skill development linked to actual destination labour demand, combined with reliable information about wages and working conditions, can help workers move into better-paid occupations. Training should not be limited to generic certificates; it should be connected to placement, recognition of prior learning and post-migration support.

Sixth, origin communities need mechanisms to convert migration into local development. Remittances can support education, housing and productive assets, but households may lack information or financial instruments for productive investment. Banking access, savings products, financial literacy and agricultural investment services can increase the developmental contribution of migration income. At the same time, policy should recognize that households have legitimate consumption needs; remittance use should not be judged solely by whether it finances productive assets.

Finally, migration data require improvement. Periodic Census data cannot capture rapidly changing corridors in sufficient detail. Regular surveys should distinguish daily, seasonal, circular, long-duration and permanent mobility and record destination, occupation, wages, recruitment channels, remittances and social-protection coverage.

Table 8. Selected empirical studies relevant to migration from Jharkhand.

Study	Sample / setting	Migration focus	Key determinants / findings	Major implication
Kumar et al. (2023)	12 villages; 1,623 households; 7,896 persons	Multiple migration types	Employment and education; age, sex, income, land and education associated with migration	Household gains alongside land abandonment, labour shortages and gendered burdens
Sucharita (2020)	12 villages; 4,241 individuals; 781 households	Temporary labour migration	Poverty, landholding, low MPCE and employment constraints	Migration concentrated among poorer households
Sucharita & Rout (2020)	Jharkhand seasonal migration study	Seasonal migration	Lower MPCE, lower landholding and disadvantaged social groups	Supports social protection and livelihood interventions
Shah (2006)	Ethnographic work in Jharkhand and brick-kiln destination	Seasonal brick-kiln migration	Economic need plus agency, independence and escape	Shows migration cannot be reduced to distress alone
Deogharia (2012)	Remote tribal villages, South Chotanagpur	Seasonal migration	Livelihood expansion and risk reduction	Migration income and savings supplement rural livelihoods
Sinha & Mishra (2012)	12 villages, Bero and Itki, Ranchi	Seasonal brick-kiln migration	Agricultural lean season and livelihood needs	Children's vulnerability and schooling concerns
Roshania et al. (2023)	2,564 circular migrant families; 1,068 Bihar brick kilns	Circular brick-kiln migration	Labour demand and established migration corridor	Jharkhand a major origin; agriculture and non-market food sources coexist with migration

The research gap that emerges from the literature is therefore not a lack of studies on migration, but a lack of integration across types of migration. Studies of seasonal labour migration emphasize poverty and deprivation; ethnographic research emphasizes agency;

newer village surveys reveal educational and occupational migration; and destination studies show the operation of inter-state labour corridors. An integrated analysis is useful because these are not separate populations in a rigid sense. Households may move between migration strategies over the life course, and a worker may combine short-term labour migration with longer-term educational or occupational mobility. Future research should therefore examine migration trajectories rather than only one migration episode.

7. Conclusion

Migration from Jharkhand is a complex process shaped by rural livelihoods, labour markets, household strategies and individual aspirations. The evidence reviewed here shows substantial spatial and temporal diversity. Employment and education are major motives, while seasonal labour migration remains closely linked with poverty, limited landholding and weak local employment. Destination studies also show the strength of established inter-state corridors and the coexistence of migration with agriculture.

Migration should therefore not be categorized simply as either distress or development. It can be both. A household may migrate because local livelihoods are inadequate and then use migrant earnings to improve education, housing or food security. Yet mobility may also increase women's workloads, disrupt children's lives, reduce local agricultural labour and contribute to land abandonment.

The appropriate policy response is to improve the conditions under which migration occurs. Reducing distress requires stronger rural livelihoods and agricultural resilience; making mobility productive requires portable social protection, safer recruitment, skills development and reliable labour-market information; and protecting families requires attention to gender, children and health.

The objective should not be to make people stay, but to ensure that people can move by choice rather than compulsion and that movement produces durable gains in well-being. Jharkhand's migration experience is therefore best understood as a dynamic livelihood system whose outcomes depend on the opportunities, institutions and protections surrounding mobility.

8. References

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Data and Figure Notes

All figures in this manuscript were prepared from published or official secondary data. Figures based on the 2022 multi-village study reproduce the percentages reported in that study. The Census gender figure is calculated from reported work/employment migration totals. The Bihar brick-kiln figures are derived from the destination-side sample reported by Roshania et al. (2023), while the Ranchi figure represents the approximate share reported for 12 study villages. Because the underlying studies differ in design, sample and year, the figures are used comparatively and descriptively rather than pooled into a single estimate.