

## **International Migration from Rural Punjab: A Socio-economic Analysis**

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The present study tries to analyse the different aspects of international migration from rural Punjab. Based on the primary data collected from 2597 households spread over 12 districts of Punjab, the study revealed that out of the total surveyed households, 2788 people migrated to foreign countries, which reflects that there were multiple migrants from some households, and 13.60 per cent households had entirely migrated to other countries. The study revealed that international migration from rural Punjab was male and youth-centric. The majority of the migrants belonged to the general category. Most of the young people migrated to foreign countries just after completing senior secondary-level education. Unemployment, better living conditions and administration at the destination, desire to earn more, acquiring a higher education, peer pressure/social competition, and worsening the socio-economic conditions of the state were the main reasons for migration from rural Punjab. The study highlights the problems of 'capital drain', 'brain drain', and 'loss of demographic dividend', as a result of international migration from rural Punjab.

### **Introduction**

Since the earliest times, humanity has been on the move. People move in search of work or economic opportunity, to join family, or to study. International migration has become increasingly common, with millions of people leaving their home countries for better opportunities abroad. This trend is particularly noticeable in India, where economic growth and liberalization have created new opportunities for those with the skills and resources to take advantage of them (Gupta et al., 2023). International migration is the dimension that impacts the economic relations between the developed and the developing countries. It is also well-recognized that migrant workers make considerable contributions to economic and social development in their host and home countries (Kumar & Hussain, 2008). Since the 1880s, there has been a regular stream of adventurous young men who have left their villages in Punjab to travel overseas. The initial destinations for the migrants were countries closer to India, like Singapore, and Hong Kong. Later, these became the stepping stones for journeys to more distant lands like Australia, Canada, and the U.S.A. (UNODC, 2009).

After World War II, the Great Britain needed labour for reconstruction; Canada initiated an economic expansion programme and the U.S.A. also opened its doors to Indians. Punjabis used all these developments and migrated in large

numbers to these countries. Moreover, international migration started with recruitment to the British Army, which opened avenues for migration to several other colonies of the British Empire, where Punjabis were posted to maintain law and order. Soon, voluntary migrations started. Among the destinations of early migrants were British colonies in the Far East, New Zealand, Australia, the U.K., Canada, the U.S.A., and Africa, especially East Africa. In the 1970s, countries in the Middle East appeared as significant regions of destination for migrant workers from India, and Punjab too contributed to the pool of migrants (Kapur, 2018). More recently, migration to countries of continental Europe has come into focus, especially countries of South Europe that have transformed from countries of origin of migrants to countries of destination (Jacobsen & Myrvold, 2011).

Until recently, Punjab was one of the best-performing states in the country in terms of per capita income (highest among all the major states in 1992-93). The state is rural with 62.51 per cent of the total population still residing in rural areas and the remaining 37.49 per cent in urban areas. The total workforce of the state was 9897362, out of which 3522966 were dependent on agriculture and allied activities, which accounted for 35.60 per cent (GoI, 2011). With the advent of the 'Green Revolution', Punjab has emerged as the most advanced state in agricultural development. Over time, though the agricultural sector experienced a decline in importance in terms of its share in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) and workforce, it remains the single most important sector of the state economy (Grover et al., 2017). The state's agricultural sector grew at 5.7 per cent per annum from 1971-72 to 1985-86, while the corresponding figure for India was 2.31 per cent (Gulati et al., 2017). Soon, the agricultural sector started to lose its sheen. Its growth rate fell to 3 per cent during 1986-87 to 2004-05 and further to 1.61 per cent during 2005-06 to 2014-15 (Gulati et al., 2017). The 'Green Revolution' has had a negative impact on soil and water levels, increased the cost of cultivation, accumulated debt levels of the farmers and agricultural labourers and forced some of them to commit suicide. The agricultural sector's contribution to GSDP, which was about 44 per cent during the 1970s, declined to 39 per cent during the 1990s, further declined to 31 per cent in 2004-05 and 23 per cent in 2010-11. The state slipped to fifth position in 2004-05 and eleventh in 2013-14 at 2004-05 prices, in Per Capita Income terms (Kapur, 2018).

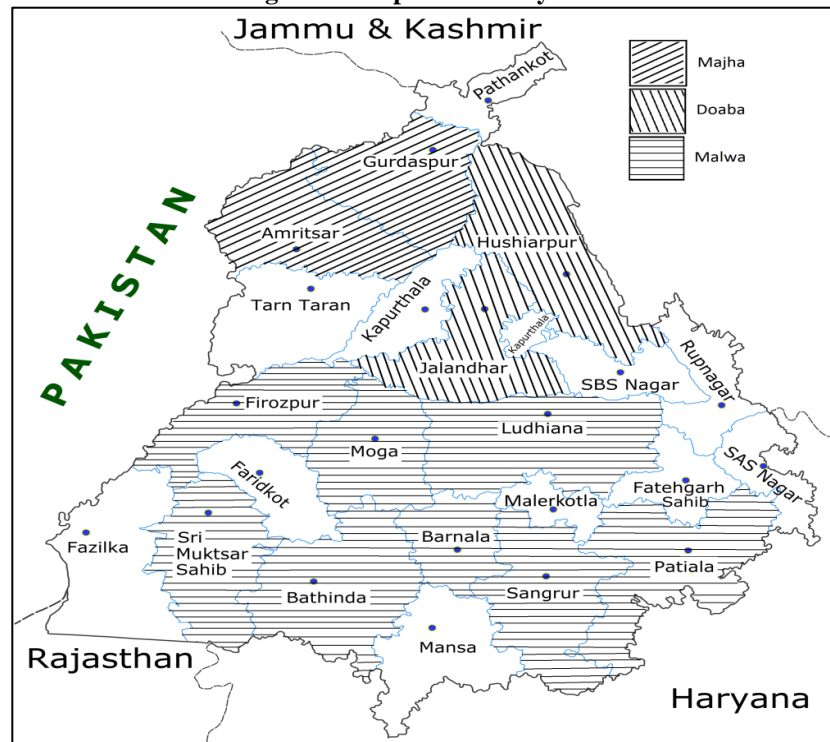
Punjab, the leading agricultural state of India, is also home to a vast share of Indians living abroad. The state of Punjab ranks second in terms of international migration, while Kerala has the first rank (The Tribune, 2019). Emigration from Punjab has been consistently growing over the last many decades. Now, Punjab ranks among the top states in India where large-scale emigration has occurred. As per the Annual Report (2018-19) of the Ministry of External Affairs, Punjab had a share of 6 per cent emigrants in the year 2018. At the state level, the socio-economic differences exacerbate the incidence of emigration, as 13 per cent households in rural areas and only 6 per cent households in urban areas showed a likelihood of sending migrants to international destinations (Nanda & Veron,

2015). Therefore, in the present study, an attempt has been made to analyse the different aspects of international migration from rural Punjab.

### Methodology

The present study, based on a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique, covers the period from 1951 to 2021. For the study, half of the districts in each region of Punjab viz. Majha, Doaba, and Malwa were selected randomly. Out of four districts of Majha, two districts, viz. Amritsar and Gurdaspur were selected. Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur districts were selected out of four districts of Doaba. Similarly, eight districts, viz. Barnala, Bathinda, Firozpur, Ludhiana, Moga, Patiala, Sangrur and Sri Muktsar Sahib were selected from the fifteen districts of Malwa. The map shown in Figure 1 illustrates the study area.

**Figure 1: Map of the study area**



In the next stage, one village from each community development block of the selected districts was chosen based on a random sampling technique. Thus, a total of 98 villages were selected for the survey: 20 from Majha, 21 from Doaba, and 57 from Malwa. From the selected villages, all the households from where some individuals or families migrated to foreign countries during 1951 to 2021

have been surveyed. Such households were 358 in Majha, 947 in Doaba, and 1292 in Malwa, which formed a total sample of 2597 households in rural Punjab. The required primary data were collected from the family members of migrants through the well-prepared questionnaire-cum-schedule by the interview method. Standard statistical tools such as mean values and proportions have been used, while carrying out tabular analysis. The results of the study have been shown through a bar diagram and a line graph.

### Results and Discussion

The craze to settle abroad has grown tremendously among the youth of Punjab. Migration to foreign countries has become a status symbol in some villages in the state (Kaur, 2019). Table 1 reveals that from the total 2597 surveyed households, the number of migrated persons was 2788, which reflects that there were multiple migrants from some households. More than two-thirds of households (69.19 per cent) had single migrants, and the remaining 30.81 per cent had multiple migrants. The percentage of households with two migrants was 13.90 per cent, while 2.89 per cent had three migrants. Only 0.42 per cent of households had four migrants. Out of the total 2597 surveyed households, 13.60 per cent had entirely migrated to foreign countries from the rural areas of Punjab.

**Table 1: Number of migrants and households surveyed**

Number of households surveyed	2597
Number of migrants	2788
Households with a single migrant	1797 (69.19)
Households with two migrants	361 (13.90)
Households with three migrants	75 (2.89)
Households with four migrants	11 (0.42)
Number of families which have entirely migrated	353 (13.60)

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

The data in Table 2 highlights the demographic details of these migrants. Caste and migration have no direct linkage but are indirectly linked. The influence of caste on migration stems from the economic condition of the household. The data showing the caste-wise distribution of the migrants in Table 2 highlight that slightly less than three-fourths of the migrants, i.e., 74.53 per cent belonged to the General category, 15.46 per cent belonged to the Scheduled Caste category,

and 10.01 per cent were from the Backward Class category. It was observed from the field survey that in international migration from rural Punjab, the *Jat* caste dominated among all the castes. This finding was also confirmed by another research study by Judge (2012) about Punjabis in Canada, in which 31 out of 40 Punjabis interviewed belonged to the *Jat* Sikh caste.

**Table 2: Demographic details of the migrants**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Number of migrants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Category</b>		
General	2078	74.53
Scheduled Caste	431	15.46
Backward Class	279	10.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Type of family</b>		
Joint	627	22.49
Nuclear	2161	77.51
<b>Total</b>	<b>2755</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	2157	77.37
Female	631	22.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Educational Status</b>		
Illiterate	22	0.79
Primary	50	1.79
Middle	61	2.19
Matric	292	10.47
Senior Secondary	1786	64.06
Diploma	42	1.51
Graduation	418	14.99
Post-graduation	105	3.77
Nursing/GNM/BDS	12	0.43
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
Less than 15	7	0.25
15-20	1102	39.53
20-25	734	26.33

25-30	512	18.36
30-35	187	6.71
35-40	116	4.16
40-45	53	1.90
45 and above	77	2.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Farm Size (in acres)</b>		
Landless	605	21.70
Up to 2.50	502	18.01
2.51-5.00	803	28.80
5.01-7.50	250	8.97
7.51-10.00	306	10.98
10.01 and above	322	11.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2022

Indian society is a closely-knit family with a culture of joint families. This cultural characteristic faded away in the urban areas a long ago, but its roots remained intact in the rural areas of India. Punjab prospered widely due to its agriculture and gained strength from the joint family system present in the rural areas. However, with the change in socio-economic requirements, land divisions gained importance, and the nuclear family system started becoming an innate feature of rural areas. Table 2 reveals that more than three-fourths of the migrants, i.e., 77.51 per cent were living in the nuclear families, while the remaining 22.49 per cent had a joint family system.

The gender-wise distribution of the migrants shows that out of 2788 migrants, 2157 were males, and the remaining 631 were females. The males accounted for 77.37 per cent, and the females were 22.63 per cent. The high proportion of males in emigration strengthens the fact that in the contemporary world, where almost equal levels of education are provided to both genders, the male counterpart is considered the primary breadwinner and is given the responsibility to uplift the levels of living of his family. It is worth noting that females also have a significant proportion (22.63 per cent) of the total surveyed migrant population. The female international migration from Punjab was mainly marriage-centric where the girls moved to international destinations as spouses. However, in the present Punjab, the scenario has shifted completely, as those girls who are educated and have high band scores in English language proficiency are considered to be ladders for international migration. Families that can afford money but do not have educated and able boys tend to allure the families of these girls. After marrying them off, they sponsor their daughter-in-

law's international travel expenses and education. These girls later call upon their husbands living at the native place on spouse visa, and with the passage of time, they work together to secure citizenship of the country of destination and then become a ticket to migration for their respective families.

Education and migration share a strong relationship as the better educated person has bright chances of assimilating in the socio-economic environment at the place of destination (Browne, 2017). The migration of highly educated people is often called the 'brain drain' because migrants, after acquiring an education in their native country, move to international destinations and give their services. Today, India is almost at the top of the list of countries so far as emigration in the 'brain drain' category is concerned— to developed countries like the U.S.A., the U.K., Canada, Australia, Germany, France, and Japan. In the Indian polity, however, brain drain does not seem to be as worrying a cause of concern for the politicians or the bureaucracy as it used to be in the 1970s (Khadria, 2002). Table 2 reveals that out of total migrants, 64.06 per cent migrated just after acquiring senior secondary-level education. Slightly less than 15 per cent migrated after graduation, while 10.47 per cent passed the matric exam at the time of their migration. A small proportion of the migrants (3.77 per cent) were post-graduates during their migration. Analysis highlights that even the people of the state with higher educational levels consider it a better option to settle in foreign countries. Table 2 further reveals that a meager proportion of the migrants were diploma holders or had a degree in nursing/GNM/BDS at the time of their migration. It is worth noting that the migrants with low levels of education were either the elderly population who migrated along with their families or migrated to the developing countries of the Asian continent on a work visa.

Age and migration have a strong linkage, as the decision to migrate is undertaken mainly by young and mature people. It is mainly because migration is a risky affair and has several challenges and opportunities. Those who belong to an active or working age group can endure the challenges and encash the opportunities provided by the process of migration. Demographic dividend plays an important role in economic development. However, Table 2 shows that a vast majority of the migrants (84.22 per cent) were in the age group of 15 to 30 years at the time of their migration, which highlights that it would result in the loss of a demographic dividend to India, including Punjab. This result goes well with the notion that migration in general and international migration in particular is a youth-centric phenomenon. This finding of the study matches with another research study conducted by Samita Behl (2017), which reveals that at the time of migration, approximately 78 per cent of the migrants belonged to the age up to 30 years or below. This shows that the migration of youth at an early age somehow signifies their preference to work for longer durations in the international job markets. Thus, international migration is supported by easy job opportunities in the international unskilled job market, and this employment security somehow helps the young migrants get easy and specific matrimonial alliances. This age group is considered the most energetic and talented, having new ideas for income generation. The study highlights that the migration of the

young generation translates into a significant loss of human resources, with the direct benefit accruing to the recipient countries that have not forked out the cost of educating them. The youth of any country are the most expensive resource because of their training in terms of material cost and time, and most importantly, because of lost opportunity (Dodani & Laporte, 2005).

The details of farm-size categories of migrants' households given in Table 2 reveal that out of the total households of migrants, the maximum proportion of the households, i.e., 28.80 per cent had land holdings in the range of 2.51 to 5.00 acres. Slightly more than 18 per cent of the households had land holdings up to 2.50 acres. This was followed by 11.54, 10.98, and 8.97 per cent of the households that had land holdings in the range of more than 10 acres, 7.51 to 10.00 acres, and 5.01 to 7.50 acres, respectively. Of the total, 21.63 per cent of the migrants' households had no land for farming.

Table 3 shows the information regarding the destination countries of the migrants from rural Punjab. The table depicts that although the list of destination countries is long, the most widely chosen destination countries are Canada, U.A.E., Australia, the U.K., the U.S.A., Italy, and New Zealand, where 1068, 281, 257, 229, 215, 131, and 92 people migrated from rural Punjab, respectively.



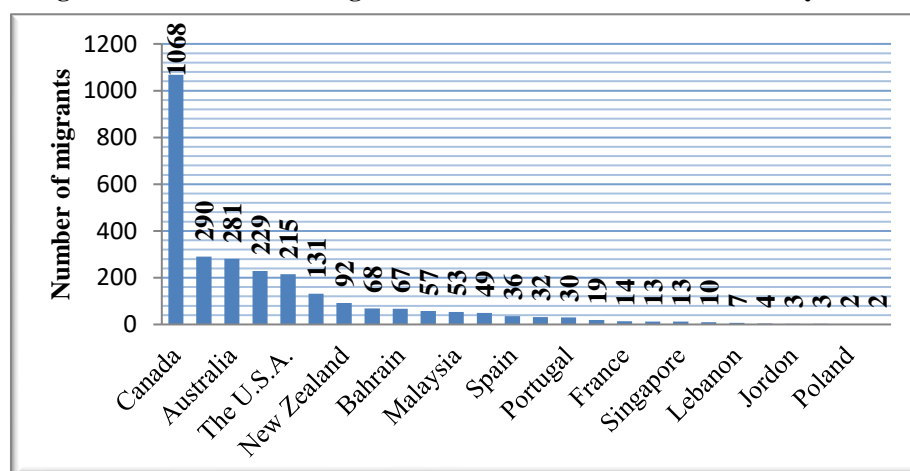
**Table 3: Distribution of migrants based on destination country and class**

Destination Country	Category			Total
	General	Scheduled Caste	Backward Class	
Canada	930	71	67	1068
U.A.E.	109	139	42	290
Australia	249	15	17	281
U.K.	180	28	21	229
U.S.A.	166	21	28	215
Italy	88	24	19	131
New Zealand	76	2	14	92
Qatar	35	25	8	68
Bahrain	43	22	2	67
Germany	45	1	11	57
Malaysia	20	25	8	53
Philippines	29	13	7	49
Spain	24	3	9	36
Kuwait	12	16	4	32
Portugal	20	4	6	30
Saudi Arab	8	9	2	19
France	7	1	6	14
Cyprus	10	3	0	13
Singapore	6	3	4	13
Greece	7	2	1	10
Lebanon	7	0	0	7
Mexico	1	2	1	4
Jordon	2	0	1	3
Sweden	1	1	1	3
Poland	1	1	0	2
South Africa	2	0	0	2

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 further shows that in the General category, the most preferable destination countries are Canada, Australia, the U.K., the U.S.A., U.A.E., and New Zealand. However, in the Scheduled Caste category, U.A.E., and Canada are the most preferable destination countries where 139 and 71 people from this category migrated, respectively. As many as 67 and 42 people from the Backward Class category migrated to Canada, and U.A.E., respectively.

It is evident from Figure 2 that the most preferable destination country for the migrants from rural Punjab was Canada, followed by U.A.E., Australia, the U.K., the U.S.A., Italy, New Zealand, and so on.

**Figure 2: Distribution of migrants on the basis of destination country**

**Source:** Based on Table 3

A look at Table 4 and Figure 3 reveals that out of the total 2788 migrants from rural Punjab, 16.61 per cent of the people migrated in 2019, 13.95 per cent in 2018, 13.45 per cent in 2021, 9.86 per cent in 2017, 6.96 per cent 2016, 6.10 per cent in 2015, 5.34 per cent in 2020, and less than 5 per cent in each of the other years. Travel agents facilitating the Canadian visa for students revealed that the trend has seen a spurt since 2016, when around 75,000 students from Punjab had gone to the country (The Tribune, 2018). The different countries imposed the lockdown to prevent the spread of Coronavirus in 2020, which slowed down the process of international migration, which started again.

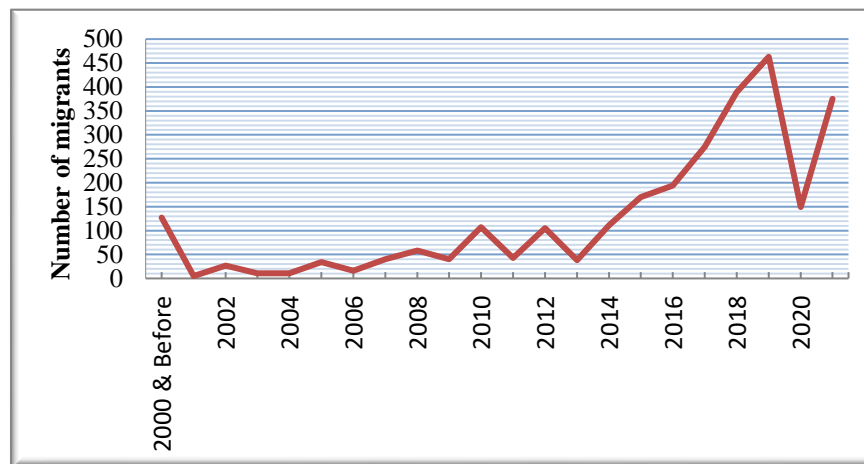
**Table 4: Distribution of migrants according to the year of migration**

Year	Number of migrants	Percentage
2021	375	13.45
2020	149	5.34
2019	463	16.61
2018	389	13.95
2017	275	9.86
2016	194	6.96
2015	170	6.10
2014	111	3.98
2013	38	1.36
2012	105	3.77
2011	43	1.54

2010	107	3.84
2009	40	1.43
2008	58	2.08
2007	40	1.43
2006	16	0.57
2005	34	1.22
2004	11	0.39
2003	11	0.39
2002	27	0.98
2001	5	0.19
2000 and before	127	4.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

**Figure 3: Distribution of migrants according to year of migration**



Source: Based on Table 4

The channel of migration refers to the channel of migration adopted during the migration process. Throughout the world, migration is attempted through both legal and illegal channels. Whilst legal channels are usually time-consuming but involve less risk, illegal migration is an attempt to enter another country by bypassing its administrative and legal setup, making it a hazardous affair. One of the positive aspects of the present study is that in 98.53 per cent cases, the migration channel was legal, while in only 1.47 per cent cases, it was illegal (Table 5). As a UNODC (2009) report shows, some Punjabi youth, under the impression of finding greener pastures in foreign lands, are trapped in the agent-

smuggler nexus. Illegal status in the destination countries makes them vulnerable to exploitation and poses many other problems. Gaur and Saxena pointed out in their 2005 study that there is some evidence of severe exploitation of migrants, especially in those cases where recruiting agents or employers found the migrants illegal, as mainly in the case of Punjabi migrants.

**Table 5: Type of migration channels**

Channel of migration	Category			Aggregate
	General	Scheduled Caste	Backward Class	
Legal	2052 (98.75)	429 (99.54)	266 (95.34)	2747 (98.53)
Illegal	26 (1.25)	2 (0.46)	13 (4.66)	41 (1.47)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2078</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>431</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>279</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>2788</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

*Source:* Field Survey, 2022

*Note:* The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 5 further reveals that 99.54 per cent of the migrants in the Scheduled Caste category, 98.75 per cent in the General category, and 95.34 per cent in the Backward Class category migrated to foreign countries legally. The percentages of people in the Scheduled Caste, General, and Backward Class categories migrating illegally were 0.46, 1.25, and 4.66, respectively.

Table 6 exhibits that out of the total people who migrated legally, more than half (53.88 per cent) migrated on a study visa, while slightly more than one-third, i.e., 34.80 per cent migrated on a work visa. Further, 5.24 and 4.04 per cent of the people migrated on spouse, and visitor visas, respectively. Only 2.04 per cent of the people had a family/blood relation type of visa to migrate abroad.

**Table 6: Type of visa for legal migration**

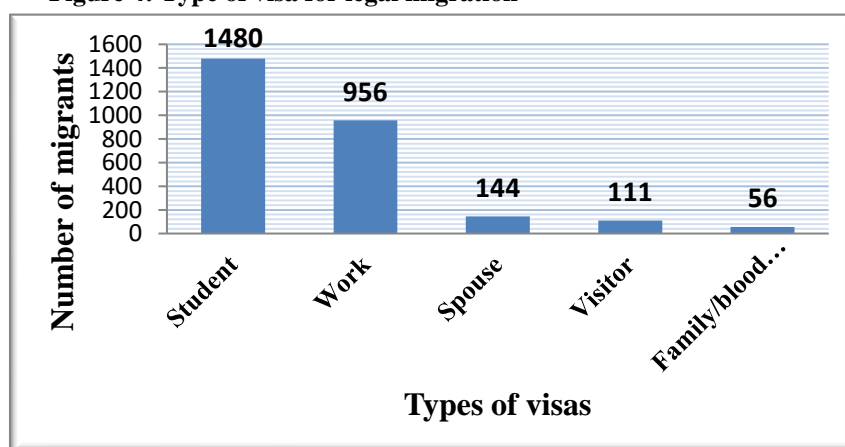
Type of Visa	Category			Aggregate
	General	Scheduled Caste	Backward Class	
Study	1239 (60.38)	107 (24.94)	134 (50.38)	1480 (53.88)
Work	549 (26.75)	303 (70.63)	104 (39.10)	956 (34.80)
Spouse	130 (6.34)	4 (0.93)	10 (3.76)	144 (5.24)
Visitor	84 (4.09)	12 (2.80)	15 (5.64)	111 (4.04)
Family/ blood relation	50 (2.44)	3 (0.70)	3 (1.12)	56 (2.04)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2052</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>429</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>266</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>2747</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

Table 6 further shows that in the Scheduled Caste category, the maximum proportion of people migrated to foreign countries for work purposes, as most of the Scheduled Caste households were landless and did not have other means of production. However, in the General and Backward Class categories, the majority of the people migrated for study purposes.

A glance at Figure 4 exhibits that most of the people migrated to foreign countries on a study visa, followed by work, spouse, visitor, and family/blood relation types of visas.

**Figure 4: Type of visa for legal migration**

Source: Based on Table 6

The reasons or factors that affect migration are also called drivers of migration. These are usually multitudes in number, as the decision to migrate is never influenced by a single factor; rather, it is a combination of several contributing factors that play a decisive role in inducing or inhibiting migration. The decision to migrate to international destinations is always a tricky one, as this type of migration contains high risks as well as gains. The factors that affect migration can be categorised as push and pull factors. These factors vary for both the place of origin and the place of destination. The push factors include increasing unemployment, peer pressure, worsening socio-economic conditions, and social issues like drug menace, increasing crime, etc. The international destinations also generate several pull factors, such as the desire to earn more, better educational and living conditions, good administration at the destination, family unification, high remuneration from work, etc. When the migrants or their family members were interviewed regarding the reasons for the migration, they stated the following push and pull factors (Table 7):

**Table 7: Factors responsible for international migration from rural Punjab (multiple responses)**

S. No.	Factors	Number of migrants	Percentage
<b>A.</b>	<b>Push factors</b>		
1.	Unemployment	2229	79.95
2.	Peer pressure/social competition	586	21.02
3.	Drug menace	338	12.12
4.	Worsening socio-economic conditions	507	18.19
5.	Increasing crime	94	3.37
<b>B.</b>	<b>Pull factors</b>		
1.	Desire to earn more	1936	69.44
2.	Better living conditions and good administration at the destination	1954	70.09
3.	Family migration/marriage	296	10.62
4.	Acquiring higher education	661	23.71

*Source: Field Survey, 2022*

- In the case of 79.95 per cent of migrants, their family members stated that unemployment was the main reason for their migration.
- Better living conditions and good administration at the destination attracted 70.09 per cent of the migrants.

- More than two-thirds (69.44 per cent) of the family members of migrants reported that the desire to earn more motivated their family members to migrate.
- Slightly less than one-fourth (23.71 per cent) of the people migrated to foreign countries to acquire higher education.
- Similarly, 21.02 per cent of the people migrated to foreign countries because of peer pressure or social competition.
- Worsening the socio-economic conditions in the state forced 18.19 per cent of the people to migrate to foreign countries.
- As many as 12.12 per cent of the family members of migrants reported that their children migrated abroad because of the drug menace in the state.
- Another 10.62 per cent of the people migrated because their families were already settled in foreign countries.
- Less than 5 per cent of the people migrated to foreign countries because of the increasing crime in the state.

The above analysis reflects that unemployment, better living conditions and administration at the destination, desire to earn more, acquiring higher education, and peer pressure/social completion were the main reasons for migration from rural Punjab. This finding of the study corroborates with another research study (Kaur & Brar, 2020), which shows that emigration from the state, particularly from farm households, has been following a rising curve because of the interplay of important factors like increasing access to higher education, limited employment opportunities in the locality, rising aspirations of youth, more acceptability of liberal life styles, modernization of economic activities, intensification of migration networks, etc.

The data regarding the expenditure incurred by the migrants for migration to foreign countries are presented in Table 8. The table exhibits that the maximum proportion of migrants (25.57 per cent) spent in the range of Rs. 15 to 20 lakh for migration. Slightly more than 22 per cent of the migrants spent less than Rs. 5 lakh for migration. This was followed by 17.54, 16.14, 11.48, and 4.16 per cent of the migrants who spent in the ranges of Rs. 20 to 25, 5 to 10, 10 to 15, and 25 to 30 lakh, respectively. Slightly more than 3 per cent of the total migrants spent Rs. 30 lakh and above for this purpose.

**Table 8: Distribution of migrants based on expenditure**

Expenditure (in Rs. lakhs)	Types of visa					Illegal	Aggregate
	Study	Work	Spouse	Visitor	Family/ blood relation		
Less than 5	12 (0.82)	502 (52.51)	45 (31.25)	37 (33.33)	11 (19.64)	7 (17.07)	614 (22.02)
5-10	40 (2.70)	280 (29.29)	43 (29.86)	39 (35.14)	43 (76.79)	5 (12.20)	450 (16.14)

10-15	194 (13.11)	93 (9.73)	15 (10.42)	10 (9.01)	2 (3.57)	6 (14.63)	320 (11.48)
15-20	607 (41.01)	75 (7.84)	20 (13.89)	8 (7.20)	0 (0.00)	3 (7.32)	713 (25.57)
20-25	467 (31.55)	4 (0.42)	10 (6.94)	5 (4.50)	0 (0.00)	3 (7.32)	489 (17.54)
25-30	99 (6.69)	2 (0.21)	2 (1.39)	6 (5.41)	0 (0.00)	7 (17.07)	116 (4.16)
30 & above	61 (4.12)	0 (0.00)	9 (6.25)	6 (5.41)	0 (0.00)	10 (24.39)	86 (3.09)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1480</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>956</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>144</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>111</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>56</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>41</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>2788</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

In the case of study visa, the maximum proportion of migrants (41.01 per cent) spent from in the range of Rs. 15 to 20 lakh for migration. A report posted in The Tribune (2018) also brought out that the emigration process comes at Rs. 15 to 22 lakh for the first year of study, depending on the institute, course, and country, multiplied by the number of students flying out, which amounts to approximately Rs. 27,000 crore going out of Punjab each year on account of student education. In the case of work and spouse type visas, the maximum proportion of migrants spent less than Rs. 5 lakh for migration, whereas the maximum proportion of migrants having visitor and family/blood relation type visas spent in the range of Rs. 5 to 10 lakh for this purpose. Further, the maximum proportion of migrants (24.39 per cent) spent Rs. 30 lakh and above who took the risk to enter foreign countries illegally. The data showing the average amount of funds arranged by the migrants from the different sources are given in Table 9. The table highlights that the migrants spent, on average, Rs.1295139.89 for their migration. This amount worked out to Rs. 1857972.97 in the case of the student category. On the other hand, the migrants belonging to the non-student category spent Rs. 658295.11 for this purpose.

**Table 9: Average amount of funds (in Rs.) arranged by migrants from different sources**

S. No.	Sources	Student Category	Others	Aggregate
1.	Selling of land/plot/ornaments/vehicle/ animals, agricultural machinery	396013.51 (21.31)	103639.14 (15.74)	258845.05 (19.99)
2.	Family savings	694695.95 (37.39)	331345.57 (50.33)	524228.84 (40.48)
3.	Loan from banks/ co-operative societies	330743.24 (17.80)	72683.49 (11.04)	209673.60 (16.19)



4.	Loan/help from relatives	217533.78 (11.71)	67178.90 (10.21)	146994.26 (11.35)
5.	Moneylenders	161756.76 (8.71)	35703.36 (5.42)	102618.36 (7.92)
6.	Funding by would-be in-laws	31756.76 (1.71)	13646.79 (2.07)	23260.40 (1.80)
7.	Emigration financing	17432.43 (0.94)	23394.50 (3.56)	20229.56 (1.56)
8.	Large farmers	8040.54 (0.43)	10703.36 (1.63)	9289.81 (0.71)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1857972.97 (100.00)</b>	<b>658295.11 (100.00)</b>	<b>1295139.89 (100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

As far as the sources of funding are concerned, 40.48 per cent of the total expenditure, i.e., Rs. 524228.84, came from the savings of the migrants' families. People, particularly farmers, living in the rural areas of Punjab take bank limits by mortgaging their properties from different institutions to avail themselves of the facility of loans at a relatively low interest rate. However, most of them calculate their income and savings in the wrong manner. Their families also sold their land/plot/ornaments/vehicle/animals/agricultural machinery to arrange the funds for migration purposes. This source of funding contributed Rs. 258845.05, which forms 19.99 per cent of the total expenditure for emigration. The finding of the study has an important implication that *Punjabis are losing their children and their land*. It has been observed that the migrants arranged 16.19 per cent of the total expenditure from banks/co-operative societies, which amounts to Rs. 209673.60. The study further revealed that the migrants also took loans from moneylenders, which provided 7.92 per cent of the total funds, which amount to Rs. 102618.36. It is worth mentioning here that in some cases, the relatives of migrants and even the would-be in-laws had to bear the cost of their migration. The data shows that the contribution of relatives to the total cost of migration was 11.35 per cent (Rs. 146994.26). As far as the cost of migration borne by would-be in-laws is concerned, it was Rs. 23260.40, which was 1.80 per cent of the total migration cost. Some of the relatives of the migrants help them with the hope that when they send their children to a foreign country in the future, the migrant relatives will accommodate them in foreign country. Only 1.56 per cent of the total expenditure of migration (Rs. 20229.56) was financed by the emigration financing amount sent by the previously settled migrants of the family. The migrants received only Rs. 9289.81 from the larger farmers of their villages which form 0.71 per cent of the total funds used for migration. The field survey has revealed a disturbing fact that the larger farmers, while advancing loans, keep an eye on buying land belonging to the migrants. As far as the funding sources among the student and non-student categories are concerned, almost the same pattern has been observed.

Labour migration towards developed countries has allowed individuals to benefit from better opportunities with higher wages and better employment avenues so that the money they save could be sent back to their native places for the overall betterment of their families. Such remittances are often used to eliminate poverty, overcome economic hardships, and help family members raise their standard of living, which thus improves their quality of life (Kaur, 2020). The immediate benefit of migration of human resources is the remittances that are being received by rural households. These remittances affect the domestic economy to a large extent (Behl, 2017). Migration may become a favourable experience for families whose migrant members start sending remittances after joining the workforce at the place of destination. Remittances refer to the monetary transfers made by migrants to their country of origin. These can also include investments, deposits and donations made by migrants in the country of origin (OSCE, IOM, ILO, 2006). However, studying abroad is an expensive affair with various costs involved, like tuition fees, living expenses, travel expenses, etc. Many students opt for part-time jobs abroad while studying to meet some of their expenses. To attract international students, many countries allow students to engage in some part-time jobs to help them fund their expenses. While some countries ask students to apply for separate work permits during their studies, others allow the students to work on their student visa itself, although only for restricted number of hours, usually spanning 10-20 hours a week (Kaur, 2019). Table 10 shows that slightly less than two-thirds of the migrants (63.52 per cent) sent remittances to their households, whereas more than one-third (36.48 per cent) did not send any amount to their households.

**Table 10: Remittances inflow to migrants' households**

<b>a) Did the households receive any remittances?</b>	<b>Number of migrants</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	1771	63.52
No	1071	36.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>2788</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>b) Amount-wise distribution of migrants (in Rs.)</b>		
Less than 1,00,000	49	2.77
1,00,000 – 2,00,000	139	7.85
2,00,000 – 3,00,000	362	20.44
3,00,000 - 4,00,000	350	19.76
4,00,000 – 5,00,000	216	12.20
5,00,000 – 6,00,000	255	14.40
6,00,000 – 7,00,000	61	3.44

7,00,000 – 8,00,000	28	1.58
8,00,000 – 9,00,000	26	1.47
9,00,000 – 10,00,000	25	1.41
10,00,000 and above	260	14.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>1771</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 10 further shows that out of total migrants who sent remittances to their households, around two-thirds of the migrants, i.e., 63.02 per cent, had sent the remittances up to Rs.5,00,000 only. Only 14.68 per cent of the migrants had sent the total remittances of Rs. 10,00,000 and above to their families.

Taken together, Tables 9 and 10 points to a disturbing fact that there appears to be a massive gap between the expenditure incurred and the amount sent back (remittances) by the migrants, which clearly indicates a ‘capital drain’ from India and Punjab. Around a decade ago, the trend was that people or students migrated to foreign countries, got employment within a few days, and started to send back remittances to their families. However, now the trend has changed. Students in lakhs migrate to these countries by spending massive amounts every year. They are facing difficulties in finding work. Moreover, the cost of living has increased tremendously in foreign countries. So, nowadays, it has become challenging to survive in foreign countries, especially in Canada and Australia. Some *Gurdwaras* are arranging *longer* (free meals) and providing shelter for Indian students in these countries (Singh, 2019). In such a situation, students and other migrants cannot send back money to their families, instead they force their parents/families to send more money to them.

Because of the high cost of migration and low remittances, around two-thirds of the households (65.85 per cent) were in debt (Table 11). Out of the indebted households, 44.01 per cent were in debt of up to Rs. 10 lakh.

**Table 11: Debt position of migrants’ households**

Amount (in Rs. lakhs)	Category			Aggregate
	General	Scheduled Caste	Backward Class	
Zero	806 (38.79)	57 (13.23)	89 (31.90)	952 (34.15)
Upto 5	344 (16.55)	260 (60.32)	93 (33.33)	697 (25.00)
5-10	402 (19.35)	71 (16.47)	57 (20.43)	530 (19.01)
10-15	356 (17.13)	29 (6.73)	25 (8.96)	410 (14.71)
15-20	134 (6.45)	11 (2.55)	14 (5.02)	159 (5.70)

20 and above	36 (1.73)	3 (0.70)	1 (0.36)	40 (1.43)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2078</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>431</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>279</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>2788</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Note: The figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

The households in debt of Rs. 10 to 15 lakh and Rs. 15 to 20 lakh were 14.71 and 5.70 per cent, respectively. Even 1.43 per cent of the households were in debt of Rs. 20 lakh and above. The caste-wise analysis of this issue highlights that the maximum proportion of indebted households belonged to the Scheduled Caste category (86.77 per cent), followed by the Backward Class category (68.10 per cent) and the General category (61.21 per cent).

### Conclusions and Policy Implications

The findings of the research study and field survey carried out in the rural areas of Punjab have the following important implications:

- The study reveals that around 97 per cent of the people migrated in the age group of 15 to 45 years. This age group is considered the most energetic and talented, having new ideas for income generation and growth for the country. Around two-thirds of migrants migrated to foreign countries just after completing their senior secondary level of education. Even the people of the state with higher educational levels consider it a better option to settle in foreign countries, and there is a massive gap between the cost of migration and the amount sent back (remittances) by the migrants. In this way, the study highlights the problems of 'capital drain', 'brain drain', and 'loss of demographic dividend' due to international migration from rural Punjab. In the case of 80 per cent of the migrants, unemployment was the main reason for migration. Therefore, the Central and State governments should create sufficient employment opportunities along with other measures to overcome these problems. More part-time jobs should be created specifically for the students in India, as other countries provide this kind of work for students to meet their expenses.
- The study also suggests that those brilliant students who migrate to foreign countries just after completing their senior secondary level of education, if they are interested in their higher education degree at foreign universities, should prepare themselves for the scholarships provided by some foreign universities.
- More than 12 per cent of migrants migrated to foreign countries because of the drug menace in Punjab. Therefore, the Central and State

governments must take strong steps to control the drug menace in the state.

- Some people are so eager to go abroad that they don't hesitate to go illegally, as the study shows 1.47 per cent of such cases. The illegal status of the destination countries only makes them vulnerable to being exploited by foreigners. The problem of illegal migration should be solved by creating awareness among the youth against illegal channels of migration and improving the educational outcomes of the youth to increase their employability in the country as well as in other countries. Besides, the government also needs to act strictly, through legislation and its implementation, to break the agent-smuggler nexus.
- Since better living conditions and good administration at the destination attracted 70.09 per cent of the migrants, the Central and State governments should considerably improve the living conditions and administration in the state and country.

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