

# Migration From Bettiah City To The Gulf: Its Impact On Education And Development Of Migrant Families; A Sociological Study Of Bettiah City

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## **Abstract:**

*For decades, a substantial number of workers from Bihar have sought employment opportunities in Gulf countries, primarily in construction, service, and manual labor sectors. This paper explores the complex relationship between labor migration to the Gulf and its implications for education and development of migrant families of Bettiah city of West Champaran district of Bihar. It examines how remittances, skill acquisition, and the cultural exchange associated with migration have influenced the socio-economic fabric of Bettiah City. Deshingkar et al. (2006) note that migration in Bihar, driven by poverty and limited opportunities, enables families to invest remittances in education. Despite low educational levels among migrants, remittances raise aspirations for schooling among left-behind families. Migration thus supports livelihoods while revealing deep-rooted educational and developmental inequalities (Deshingkar et al., 2006). This research paper aims to examine the role of remittances for education and development in migrant families. The primary source of the research will be based on fieldwork which is Bettiah city of west champaran, Bihar. For secondary data I have used report published by the professionals, academicians and sociologist.*

**Keywords:** Education, Labor migration, Remittances, Skill acquisition, Technical degrees

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Date of Submission: 16-12-2025

Date of Acceptance: 26-12-2025

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## **I. Introduction**

Education has always been a foundation for economic and social development and it will be essential for the knowledge economies of the 21st century. Education manifests itself in many ways like cognitive thinking, affirmative thought system etc. It brings well-being to the society the last decade in Bihar (2004-14) has seen an exceptional development in education. Efforts by the Government of Bihar to increase accessibility to educational facilities in the state are showing signs of positive change. The improvement of Female Literacy Rate in Bihar during 2001-11 (20 percentages) was the highest, achieved by any state in India during that period. Although the growing literacy rates are showing some positive results, still literacy cannot be considered as the only sign of an educated society. On the other hand education rate in Bihar is characterized by wide gaps between the urban and rural woman (Urban female literacy is 72.6% & Rural female literacy is 49.6%) as well as in between the male and female population (Census of India, 2011).

Migration from India to the Gulf region has become a prominent feature of the socio-economic landscape, particularly in states like Bihar. The Gulf countries, offering lucrative job opportunities, have attracted a significant number of migrant workers from India, with a large proportion hailing from Bihar (Koser, 2007). Bettiah, a city in the West Champaran district of Bihar, has seen a steady outflow of its population to the Gulf nations. This migration has had a profound impact on both the local education system and the broader development of the region. This sociological study aims to explore the consequences of this migration on the educational and developmental landscape of Bettiah city.

De Haan and Rogaly (2002) in the article "Migrant Workers and their role in Rural Change" had stated that migration from one area to another in search of "improved livelihood" is a key feature of human history.

Khalid Koser, (2007) in his study, he found that many people leave their home countries in order to look for economic opportunities in another country. In the same way we can clearly see the increasing number of labour of Bihar to gulf countries. They are giving more opportunity to unskilled and semiskilled person basically education for these migrants is low in degree. Labour migration from Bihar to Gulf countries are functioning due to wage inequalities and low growth rate of employment in unorganized sector.

## **II. Literature Review**

Kumar and Bhagat (2012) examine migration from Bihar as a response to poverty, agrarian stagnation, and limited employment, emphasizing education as both a driver and consequence of mobility. They find that households with basic education are more likely to migrate, while remittances are often invested in children's schooling and welfare. However, weak educational infrastructure and unequal access restrict the transformative potential of these investments. Migration thus provides financial means for education but also reflects the systemic failures of Bihar's development, where inadequate educational opportunities continue to push youth toward migration as a livelihood strategy (Kumar & Bhagat, 2012).

Rajan (2021) highlights the strong interlinkages between migration and education in India, emphasizing that unequal access to quality higher education drives large-scale student and labour migration. Educationally backward regions tend to push young people toward urban and developed states in search of better learning opportunities and employment prospects. However, this educational migration often results in mismatched skills and underemployment, reflecting weak coordination between education and labour market needs. Rajan argues that improving regional equity in higher education and aligning curricula with job demands are essential to reduce forced educational migration and enhance employability (Rajan, 2021).

Migration from one area to another in search of improved livelihood is a key feature of human history (De Haan and Rogaly 2002). Migration has a fundamental role in our economic development and planning processes. According to the latest estimate of the Government of India, about 8.5 million Indians work in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GOI, Ministry of External Affairs, 2018).

Looking at the economic aspect of migration it has been seen that almost 60 percent of the remittances that India receives come from the Middle East or Gulf countries (Kumar, 2012). The remittance received from migrants play a crucial role in the local economies of many Indian states like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. India ranks first in the world with the highest absolute remittance (\$ 80 billion). It contributed nearly 4.5 percent of Indian GDP in 2018 (World Bank report, 2018).

Bihar provides an illustrative case for us to explore and understand the migration trend and conditions of migrant labor in the Gulf countries. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Migrants' Protectorate General of Emigrants (PoE) in the past decade there has been a reverse trend (for Kerala and Tamil Nadu) in the rate of migration, and there are more no of workers from Bihar migrating to the Gulf and this is more than the number from Kerala. According to PoE, the preferred destination for these migrants is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. UP and Bihar have overtaken Kerala and Tamil Nadu 30% of our emigrants are going out of UP, 15% Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal—Kerala is only 6% now. So, this is the trend, according to M.C. Luther, the Protector General of Emigrants, this is the recent trend of migration as adding that these seen from numbers showed the pattern in 2016-17.

## **III. Objectives**

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the educational and developmental consequences of Gulf migration in Bettiah city with a particular focus on the social and economic impacts experienced by the children of migrant families. The research seeks to explore how transnational labour mobility shapes local educational outcomes and community development in a migration-dependent context.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To examine the patterns and recent trends of labour migration from Bettiah city to the Gulf region.
2. To investigate the underlying socio-economic factors that drive Gulf migration at the place of origin.
3. To explore the social and economic consequences of Gulf migration on migrant households and the local community.
4. To assess the educational transformations and aspirations emerging within migrant families and the broader sending community as a result of migration dynamics.

## **IV. Methodologies / Method Of Data Collection**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively examine the social, educational, and economic consequences of Gulf migration in Bettiah city, located in the West Champaran district of Bihar.

The research is primarily based on fieldwork conducted in Bettiah, which serves as the central site for

primary data collection. Secondary data have been drawn from relevant academic literature, policy documents, and institutional reports published by scholars, professionals, and international organizations. Key secondary sources include:

1. Data from the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) on migration trends and policies.
2. Reports from the International Labour Organization (ILO) concerning labour migration and employment conditions.
3. Publications by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on migration governance and migrant welfare.
4. Census of India report on education, population, and demographic characteristics.

### Sampling and Data Collection-

The study utilizes a snowball sampling technique to identify and reach migrant households within Bettiah and its adjoining areas in West Champaran. A total of 60 households were selected as the sample unit. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews designed to capture migrants' socio-economic background, migration trajectories, and the perceived educational and developmental changes within their families following migration to Gulf countries.

This methodological framework allows for a context-sensitive and in-depth understanding of migration processes, highlighting both the structural factors shaping mobility and the lived experiences of migrant households.

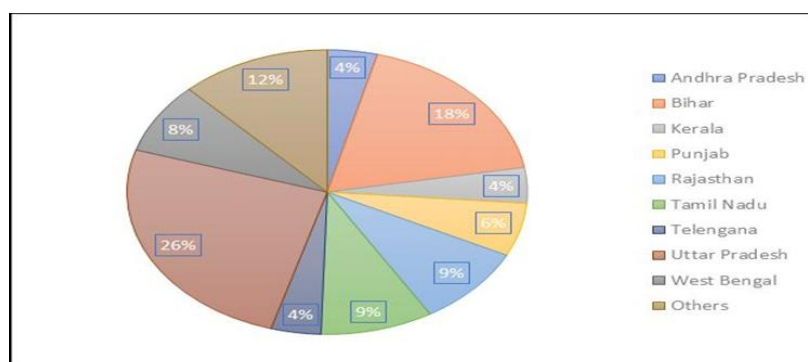
**Population of Overseas Indians in the Gulf States, 2018**

Country	Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)	Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)	Overseas Indians
Bahrain	312,918	3,257	316,175
Kuwait	928,421	1,482	929,903
Oman	688,226	919	689,145
Qatar	691,539	500	692,039
Saudi Arabia	2,812,408	2,160	2,814,568
UAE	3,100,000	4,586	3,104,586
Total	8,533,512	12,904	8,546,416

**Source:** Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report 2018 (Figure 1)

This is the data of Overseas Indians in the Gulf States. This shows the current number of expatriate worker in GCC from India, which shows around 8 million Indians working in gulf Countries.

Now I am going to show the second figure which is also taken from Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report 2018-19.



**Source:** Ministry of External Affairs, Annual Report 2018. (Figure 2)

The International Growth Centre (IGC)<sup>1</sup> in its 2016 report on labour migration from Bihar had stated that laborers are less interested in agriculture, which can be substantiated by the fact that most of them are interested into building construction, carpentry or masonry work and other types of casual work in the informal sector. It is stated that the factors behind migration range from a lack of what was seen as a decent job to income-enhancing potential in destination cities. "In nearly all cases, actual and potential migrants indicated

<sup>1</sup> IGC aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research.

that they knew their migration was temporary". The positive side of Bihar having increased in migration numbers is that it also increases remittances resulting out of high value migration.

This figure (Figure 2) gives a detailed state-wise percentage, which gives data of Gulf Migrants. It shows state-wise percentage. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), there are around 8 million Indian workers in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the UAE, Oman and Bahrain, (GoI, Ministry of External Affairs, 2018). Bihar ranks second in the list of countries from where most migrant workers go to other countries, especially in the Gulf, according to the latest report released by the General Protection of Immigrants (PgoE<sup>2</sup>, 2018). Uttar Pradesh tops the list, compiled by the agency operating under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA), while Bihar leads Kerala and Tamil Nadu in labor migration. The data for 2016-17 shows Bihar contributes 18 percent of the total emigrants from India, behind Uttar Pradesh (26 percent). Kerala's reversing trends seen in the earlier decades - accounts for only 6 per cent. The high percentage of migration is in spite of a trend in shrinking employment opportunities in the Gulf countries - Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait - because of the slump in oil prices, the Protector General of Emigrants had said.

### Factors affecting Decision making for migrants

#### Economic opportunities (Pull factor)

De Haan and Rogaly (2002) in the article "*Migrant Workers and their role in Rural Change*" had stated that migration from one area to another in search of "improved livelihood" is a key feature of human history. Koser, (2007) in his study, he found that many people leave their home countries in order to look for economic opportunities in another country.

#### Underdevelopment and Poverty (Push factor)

Ronald Skeldon (2003) in his article entitled "*Migration and Poverty*" had stated that migration is often seen simply as a flight from poverty; and when there are no opportunities available locally people migrate in order to survive

### Survey Insights from Bettiah

What factors influence your decision to Migrate?

Factor	Respondent		Yes		No	
	Total	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Employment opportunity	60	100	30	50	30	50
High wages	60	100	36	60	24	40
Skill development	60	100	36	60	24	40
Limited job opportunity	60	100	39	65	21	35
unemployment	60	100	36	60	24	40
Social relation with other migrants	60	100	39	65	21	35

The study's field data provided several important insights:

Primary Influencing Factors: 65% of respondents acknowledged that limited job opportunity played significant role in their decision to migrate. 60% accept that gulf currency is higher than India so they are paid more in terms of salary or wages. A one new factors comes in role is social relationship with migrants or I can say religion pay a very prominent role, around 65-70% people accepted that due to personal or social relationship like my uncle is there any elder brother is there or one of my friend is there so I decided to go and explore new opportunity to work.

**Educational Trends and Patterns among Migrant Families in Bettiah City:** According to the 2011 Census, sex ratio of bettiah city is 909 females per 1,000 males. Children in the age group of 0 to 6 years accounted for 108,995 individuals, which is approximately 24.37% of the total population. The child sex ratio for this age group was 892 girls per 1,000 boys. In terms of social composition, members of the Scheduled Castes (SC) made up 6.25% of the population, while Scheduled Tribes (ST) constituted 0.63%.

According to the 2011 Census, The overall literacy rate in the city stood at 80.64%. Breaking it down by gender, the male literacy rate was 85.02%, while the female literacy rate was 75.80%. When comparing urban and rural areas within Bettiah, the literacy rate in urban areas was 79.68%, whereas in rural areas it was significantly lower at 64.05%.

<sup>2</sup> PGoE is the authority responsible for protecting the interest of Indian workers going abroad.

According to the 2011 Census, literacy by religion The Hindu population had a literacy rate of 75.89%. The Muslim population had a literacy rate of 70.44%. The Christian population had the highest literacy rate at 95.47%.

During fieldwork, it was observed that a significant proportion of the migrant population from Bettiah comprises individuals with low levels of formal education, with many having only completed secondary education (matriculation) or having dropped out before achieving this level. Furthermore, a notable majority of these migrants belong to the Muslim community, which, in this context, tends to exhibit comparatively lower educational attainment.

### **Impact on Education in Bettiah**

**Increased Investment in Education** –During field work, one of the most visible effects of migration from Bettiah to the Gulf region is the increased investment in the education of children in migrant households. Migrants, particularly those employed in the Gulf, often send remittances back home, which are used to improve the quality of life for their families, including better educational opportunities for their children. As a result, many families are now able to afford quality education that was previously out of reach.

The rise in remittances has allowed many families to send their children to private schools and institutions that offer better infrastructure, teaching standards, and facilities than government-run schools. Additionally, the aspiration to secure employment opportunities in the Gulf for the younger generation has led to an increase in the demand for education, particularly in fields like ITI, engineering, medical sciences, and information technology, which are seen as gateways to employment abroad.

**A Shift in Educational Aspirations** - Migration has also led to a shift in educational aspirations among the youth of Bettiah. The desire to secure overseas employment, especially in the Gulf, has influenced child and young people to pursue courses that align with private schools, missionary school the skills demanded course. Courses in nursing, hospitality, construction management, and technical trades have seen a rise in popularity, as they are directly linked to job opportunities in the Gulf region.

During my fieldwork, I discovered that some migrant families have established private schools using earnings from employment in the Gulf region. These schools not only represent an investment in the education sector but also function as tools for raising awareness about the importance of formal and technical education within the community. The families disclosed that their initial capital was generated solely through work in the Gulf; however, they are now less inclined to pursue further overseas employment, opting instead to create new sources of income through the operation of these educational institutions.

## **V. Conclusion -**

The data indicates that Bettiah exhibits a high rate of out-migration, contributing significantly to remittance flows. Prior to migration, individuals often encounter substantial socio-economic challenges. However, following migration particularly upon their first return there is a noticeable shift in priorities, with increased emphasis on acquiring technical qualifications and formal education, reflecting a transformation in social aspirations and mobility strategies.

In Bettiah, migrant families are increasingly investing in their children's education by enrolling them in private schools and encouraging higher education, particularly in technical fields such as those offered by the ITI and other skill-enhancing vocational programs. This trend reflects a shift in the family's educational aspirations and class mobility strategies, influenced by remittance income and exposure to urban or global labor markets.

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