



## FLIGHT FROM PUNJAB TO FOREIGN: A CASE STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION OF RESIDENTS OF PUNJAB

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**Article History: Received:** 01.02.2023

**Revised:** 07.03.2023

**Accepted:** 10.04.2023

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### Abstract

This case study examines the phenomenon of international migration of residents of Punjab, with a particular focus on their flight from Punjab to foreign destinations. Punjab is a state located in the India's north-western region and is known for its fertile agricultural lands, rich cultural heritage, and diverse population. From the few past years, however, there has been a substantial rise in the number of people leaving Punjab to seek better opportunities abroad. This study helps in establishing why this massive migration trend is being followed by the residents of Punjab and what all factors are contributing to it. Moreover, this study also includes factual trends and the proportion in which residents of Punjab are opting

**Keywords:** Migration, International migration, Punjab, Economic growth, Job opportunities, Education opportunities, Cultural Factors, Challenges, Remittances, Brain drain, Social disintegration, mixed-methods approach, Quantitative data, Qualitative data, United States, Canada, Australia, United Kingdom, Policymakers, Migration scholars.

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### INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex phenomenon that has been the subject of much research and debate in recent years. International migration has become increasingly common, with millions of people leaving their home countries in search of 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. One of the regions in India that has seen a significant increase in international migration in recent years is Punjab. Located in the nation's north-western region, Punjab is known for its

fertile agricultural lands, rich cultural heritage, and diverse population. Historically, Punjab has been a major agricultural region, with farmers cultivating crops such as wheat, rice, and sugarcane. However, in recent years, the region has undergone significant economic and social changes, with many people leaving rural areas in search of better opportunities in urban centres or abroad. While migration from Punjab to other parts of India is not new, the recent increase in international migration has been significant. According to a report by the Ministry of External Affairs, in India, Punjab was one of the top five states for emigration clearance granted to Indian citizens in 2018. This suggests that a large

number of people from Punjab are leaving the country for work or study abroad.

The reasons for this flight from Punjab to foreign destinations are complex and multifaceted. Economic factors are often cited as the main reason for migration, with many people leaving Punjab in search of better job opportunities, higher wages, and improved living standards. This is especially true for those rural residents with little access to education and employment opportunities. Additionally, social and cultural factors may also play a role, with many migrants citing a desire for adventure, curiosity about other cultures, and the pursuit of higher education as reasons for leaving Punjab. Despite the potential benefits of migration, it is not without its challenges. Migrants often face a range of difficulties before, during, and after their journey. Financial difficulties, language barriers, discrimination, and social isolation are just some of the challenges that migrants may encounter.

The migration for the citizens of Punjab has significant implications for both the individuals and communities involved. For migrants, it provides opportunities for personal and professional growth, access to better healthcare and education, and the ability to send remittances back home. For communities in Punjab, migration has led to increased economic growth, improved infrastructure, and the transfer of skills and knowledge. However, there are also potential negative consequences of migration, including brain drain and social disintegration. Given the importance of this phenomenon, thorough understanding of the patterns and causes of migration, the difficulties experienced by migrants, and the effects of movement on the people and communities affected is necessary. This case study aims to provide such an understanding, focusing specifically on the flight of residents of Punjab to foreign destinations. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study will analyse both

quantitative and qualitative data to provide a detailed picture of the phenomenon.

The study will address several key research questions. First, what are the patterns and motivations of migration from Punjab to foreign destinations? Second, what are the challenges faced by migrants before, during, and after their journey, and how do they cope with these challenges? Third, what effects does migration have on the people and communities affected, and how can policymakers mitigate any negative effects of migration? By addressing these questions, the study will contribute to a broader understanding of the complex dynamics of international migration and its implications for the people and places involved. Additionally, the study will provide insights into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by residents of Punjab who choose to migrate to foreign destinations, as well as the ways in which they navigate these challenges and capitalize on these opportunities. The findings of the study will have important implications for policymakers, migration scholars, and the broader public. By shedding light on the motivations, challenges, and impacts of migration from Punjab to foreign destinations, the study will provide insights into the ways in which policymakers can support and facilitate migration while minimizing its negative effects. Additionally, the study will contribute to a broader understanding of the intricate social, economic, and cultural factors that drive migration and shape the experiences of migrants and their communities.

Overall, the flight of residents of Punjab to foreign destinations is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that warrants careful attention and analysis. By undertaking a detailed case study of this phenomenon, this research aims to provide a more nuanced knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced by migrants, and to provide insights into the

ways in which migration can be harnessed for the benefit of individuals and communities alike.

### **STATISTICS**

Historically, Punjab is a part of both India and Pakistan, has seen migration of people to various countries for different reasons, including economic opportunities, education, family reunification, and asylum seeking. Some common destinations for migration from Punjab include countries in North America (such as the United States and Canada), Europe (such as the United Kingdom), Middle East (such as United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar), and Australia. According to the trends presented by the then Minister of External Affairs, V Muraleedharan, a total of 2.62 lakhs students have migrated to foreign countries in search for higher education since 2016. Punjab is placed as third in the country in terms of migration after Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.

Following are the countries that has been favourite destination for the citizen of Punjab. These regions are separated by various factors that includes family ties, employment trends, education facilities and much more.

- Canada: Punjabi immigration to Canada has been significant, particularly to provinces like British Columbia, Ontario, and Alberta. According to the 2016 Canadian Census, after English and French, Punjabi is the third most popular language in Canada with over 700,000 speakers. Punjabis
- United States: Punjabi immigration to the United States has also been notable, with Punjabi communities established in states like California, New York, and Texas. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, there were approximately 250,000 people of Punjabi origin living in the United States in 2019.
- United Kingdom: Punjabi immigration to the United Kingdom has a long history, with Punjabi communities established in cities like London, Birmingham, and Manchester. According to the 2011 UK Census, Punjabi is one of the most spoken South Asian languages in the UK, with over 700,000 speakers.
- Australia: Punjabi immigration to Australia has been increasing in recent years, particularly in states like Victoria and New South Wales. According to the 2016 Australian Census, Punjabi is one of the most commonly spoken languages in Australia after English, with over 130,000 speakers.
- Gulf countries: Punjabis have also migrated to Gulf countries like United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar for employment opportunities, particularly in sectors like construction, oil and gas, and hospitality.

Table 1. Reason-based migration of citizens of Jalandhar and SBS Nagar

Particular	USA and Canada	Australia and New Zealand	United Kingdom	Europe	Asia	All
Jalandhar and SBS Nagar						
Social Network	26.84	17.02	22.47	24.74	8.69	21.42
Less Cost	-	10.64	11.24	13.4	68.69	18.48
Higher Education	16.02	51.06	3.37	-	-	11.05
Work Opportunities	42.86	40.02	55.06	58.76	81.74	54.92
Marriage	18.18	14.89	24.72	11.34	1.74	14.51
Family	30.3	10.64	29.21	22.68	6.09	22.45

### **REASONS OF YOUTH MIGRATION**

Nowadays, there are so many young people especially from Punjab who decide to migrate to the developed countries like Canada, Australia, USA, United Kingdom and others for a better life where they will get good employment opportunities and better education. The migration of young people to affluent nations is caused by a variety of variables. These causes can be divided into push and pull factors, with those that cause migration from Punjab being the most important. These causes are:

#### **Push Factors**

- **High Unemployment:** The main driving force behind youth migration to industrialised countries is a lack of employment prospects, not just in the Punjab region but throughout all of India.
- **Increasing Population:** Increase of Population and less increase in facilities as compared to increment in population is also a major factor that causes migration. Punjab's population is growing daily, which forces individuals to labour for low pay in order to at least make some money.

- **Strong emigration history:** There is no denying that there has been a migration trend in recent years, particularly in Punjab. The level of living in other nations is far greater than it is in Punjab. People relocate due to the better lifestyle and currency disparity to foreign nations and live a luxury lifestyle with first-rate amenities.

- **Lack of Multinational companies in Punjab:** Every year, thousands of students in Punjab earn degrees in business administration, but because Punjab lacks multinational corporations and corporate headquarters, they prefer the career chances abroad.

- **Better Educational Facilities in developed country:** In contrast to India, foreign countries also have best of the class educational facilities. Students typically relocate in order to explore various educational systems and multiple cultures.

#### **Pull Factors**

- **Availability of Jobs:** Most young people leave Punjab in search of better employment opportunities. Compared to India, industrialised nations have

easier access to jobs, both skilled and unskilled. Even the salaries and rates paid there are substantially higher than those in India.

• **Kinship network and Family:**

The people of Punjab have relocated to wealthy nations abroad. Another primary reason why young people leave Punjab is to establish kinship ties in these nations because most of their relatives, family and friends are already migrated to these developed countries such as Canada, Australia, USA and United Kingdom etc.

• **High Standard of living and access to better Education:**

Another important factor in going abroad is access to better educational opportunities and a good level of living. Internationally recognised experts agree that education increases the value of a person's life. This trend appears to have gained traction since the outbreak. Independent living, a high level of living, and exposure to foreign cultures and customs are typically what draw students to study abroad.

• **Safe and better Political Environment:**

Another significant element that contributes to migration to industrialised countries is access to better public services and a more stable political system. It is clear that many abandoned their former residences because they felt unsafe and dissatisfied with the quality of municipal services and public transit.

Youth migration from Punjab to other nations is also because of the globalisation. Higher education's affordable internationalisation, increased affluence, and adoption of modern lifestyles, among other factors, serve as a motivational push for the youth to choose studying in foreign as an option. The trend of moving permanently abroad has expanded greatly. In the past, students used to

travel to foreign countries for post graduation or also 12th grade students desired to study overseas, but now they are using it just as a step to get settled there permanently. Additionally, youth is drawn to the latest way of life that is lacking in Punjab. Moving to foreign nations has become as a status symbol in some regions, such as rural Punjab.

### IMPACTS OF YOUTH MIGRATION

Youth migration from Punjab to other countries can have both positive and negative impacts on the individuals, families, and communities involved. The impacts are:

#### Positive

• **Reduces Unemployment:** one of the most important positive effect of migration is that it reduces the unemployment because when young people move to the developed countries like Canada, Australia, USA, United Kingdom and New Zealand, etc, they get better job opportunities where they can earn good amount of money along with their studies.

• **Better Opportunities and enhancement of Skills:** Young people can benefit from migration by taking advantage of fresh possibilities, a route to university education, a better and decent work, the opportunity to pursue personal growth or professional experience, a chance to increase self-confidence, and the potential to develop skills and competencies beneficial to themselves, their home countries and communities, as well as their new places of residence.

• **Improved living standards:** Migration aids in raising people's quality of life. Young people who migrate often have access to better healthcare, education, and living conditions in the destination country which automatically improve their quality of life.

- **Economic benefits:** Most of the youth move by expecting good job possibilities and higher wages. This can lead to increased remittances, which can help to support families back home and stimulate the local economy.

### Negative

- **Brain drain:** the loss of talented and educated young people can have a negative impact on the development of Punjab. It can lead to a shortage of skilled labour and a brain drain effect, where the most talented individuals leave the region for better opportunities elsewhere.
- **Social disruption:** Migration can lead to the fragmentation of families and communities, as young people leave their homes and communities behind. This can lead to social disruption and a breakdown of traditional social structures.
- **Loss of home culture:** The rich domestic culture of Punjab is deteriorating as the massive youth exodus keeps going. The youth of today are incredibly ignorant of their rich culture, religious martyrs, religious knowledge, customs, national priorities, and other topics. As young people's interests have shifted to western culture, many people no longer care about their culture, while others are ashamed to exhibit it in front of their foreign acquaintances. This is disappointing because we have a rich culture and tradition that we should be proud of.
- **Exploitation:** some young people who migrate may be vulnerable to exploitation, particularly if they are undocumented or working in the informal sector. This can lead to exploitation, abuse, and other human rights violations.

Overall the impact of youth migration from Punjab to other countries depends

on a variety of factors, including the individual circumstances of the migrants, the destination country, and the communities left behind. While migration can provide opportunities for young people, it is important to address the potential negative impacts and work towards solutions that benefits all stakeholders involved.

### CONCLUSION

The study found students while examining the exodus of students from Punjab. They have a significant role in migration. 88% of the students were men, who made up the majority. Over time, there was a rise in student migration. From 2001 to 2010, 48% of students left the country, and from 2011 to 2015, 41% of students left the country in just 5 years. Punjabi students migrate to Australia and Canada due to their countries' open policies during the past ten years. At the time of emigration, the majority of students had completed higher secondary levels of education. To study overseas, they must be successful on the English language test. IELTS, which 88% of students pass, is the entry-level exam. The student chose a variety of degrees after leaving, including information technology and hotel and resort management.

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