

# Trends and Challenges of Rural-Urban Migration in Karnataka: An Overview

Dr. Tayanna.H

Assistant Professor

Department of Economics

SJMVS Arts and Commerce College for Women Hubballi

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## Abstract

Rural-urban migration has emerged as a significant socio-economic phenomenon in India, particularly in Karnataka. This article aims to analyse the general trends in rural-urban migration and to explore the specific challenges posed by this demographic shift in Karnataka. Drawing upon secondary data from Census reports, government publications, academic journals, newspapers, and reliable websites, the study is geographically limited to Karnataka and focuses on migration patterns, causative factors, and associated socio-economic implications.

**Keywords:** Migration, Push & Pull Factors

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## I. Introduction

Migration is a dynamic component of population change that reflects economic aspirations, social mobility, and spatial disparities. In Karnataka, rural-urban migration has been shaping urban landscapes, labour markets, and public services. The state, with its rapidly urbanizing cities such as Bengaluru, Mysuru, Hubballi-Dharwad, and Mangaluru, has witnessed considerable movement of people from rural to urban areas, often in search of employment, education, and better living conditions.

## II. Objectives of the Study

To analyse the trends in rural-urban migration in Karnataka.

To examine the major challenges associated with rural-urban migration in the state.

To understand the socio-economic factors driving this form of migration.

## III. Data and Methodology

This study is based entirely on secondary data. Data have been collected from the Census of India (2011 and previous rounds), National Sample Survey (NSS) reports, Karnataka state government publications, research articles, newspapers, and various official websites. The scope is limited to the geographical boundaries of Karnataka.

## Background of the Study

“Study of Migration of Labour to and from Karnataka” aimed at understanding the factors that influence the push and pull factors in Karnataka by analyzing available data and literature and conducting a study with 518 migrant labour in Karnataka, Goa and Solapur. The study participant migrants included: intra-district migrants in Yadgir and Koppal; inter-district migrants from Yadgir and Koppal in Bangalore and Mysore; inter-state migrants in Bangalore and Mysore; inter-state migrants from Karnataka in Goa and Solapur

## IV. Trends in Rural-Urban Migration in Karnataka

According to the **Census 2011**, Karnataka reported over **9.6 million migrants**, with **employment, marriage, and education** being the leading causes. Urban centres such as **Bengaluru** alone accounted for more than **40% of the state's urban population growth**, driven largely by rural inflow.

**Decadal urban growth (2001–2011)** in Karnataka: ~31%

**Top destinations:** Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Hubballi-Dharwad

**Key sources of migrants:** Northern Karnataka districts such as Yadgir Raichur, Koppal, Bidar, Kalaburagi, and Bagalkot

The trend shows a steady shift from agrarian livelihoods to urban informal sector jobs such as construction, domestic work, street vending, and small-scale manufacturing.

## **V. Factors Responsible for Rural-Urban Migration**

### **Push Factors:**

Low agricultural income and land fragmentation  
Frequent droughts in northern and central Karnataka  
Lack of basic services (health, education, roads) in rural areas

### **Pull Factors:**

Employment opportunities in urban sectors, especially in IT, construction, and services  
Better education and healthcare facilities  
Perception of improved living standards and social mobility

## **VI. Major Challenges of Rural-Urban Migration in Karnataka**

### **Urban Overcrowding**

Cities like Bengaluru face severe stress on housing, water, transportation, and waste management due to rapid inflow of migrants.

### **Growth of Informal Settlements**

Many migrants live in slums or unauthorised colonies, lacking access to sanitation, electricity, and secure housing.

### **Job Insecurity and Exploitation**

Migrants often work in informal, low-paid, and unregulated sectors without job security, social security, or labour rights.

### **Pressure on Urban Infrastructure**

The sudden and unplanned migration burdens urban schools, hospitals, and civic infrastructure.

### **Cultural and Social Displacement**

Migrants may face discrimination, language barriers, and social exclusion, especially in cities with distinct linguistic or cultural identities.

### **Impact on Rural Economy**

Out-migration can lead to labour shortages in agriculture and weaken rural socio-economic structures.

## **VII. Government Response and Policy Measures**

**Karnataka Urban Development Policy** emphasizes balanced regional development to reduce migration pressure.

**Skill development programmes** (e.g., Kaushalya Karnataka) aim to train rural youth for urban jobs.

**MGNREGA** and rural infrastructure schemes are designed to curb distress migration by improving livelihoods in rural areas. However, gaps in implementation and coverage limit their effectiveness.

### **8. Conclusion and Suggestions**

Rural-urban migration in Karnataka reflects deep-rooted socio-economic inequalities and regional imbalances. While it provides livelihood opportunities and contributes to urban growth, it also poses significant challenges to sustainable urban development and rural vitality.

### **Suggestions:**

Promote **balanced regional development** to reduce migration pressure on major cities.

Invest in **rural infrastructure**, especially in backward districts.

Strengthen **urban planning** and **slum rehabilitation** policies to integrate migrants.

Enhance **social protection** and labour rights for migrant workers.

Foster **inclusive urban governance** that addresses the needs of migrant populations.

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