

MIGRATION, AGEING AND TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL FAMILY STRUCTURES: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF T. NARASIPURA TALUK OF MYSORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Migration has become an important factor influencing rural family structures, intergenerational relationships, and the wellbeing of elderly persons. The present study, titled “Migration, Ageing and Transformation of Rural Family Structures: A Sociological Study of T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District,” examines how the migration of younger household members affects family living arrangements, intergenerational support, and the social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons. The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 50 elderly respondents aged 60 years and above through a structured interview schedule using purposive sampling. Secondary information was obtained from Census reports, government publications, books, journals, research articles, and relevant reports. Data were analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, cross-tabulation, Pearson’s correlation, and Chi-square test. The findings indicate that 76% of respondents had at least one migrated adult child, reflecting substantial migration among younger generations. Pearson’s correlation revealed a strong positive relationship between the extent of migration and intergenerational support ($r = 0.879, p < 0.001$). The Chi-square test also showed a statistically significant association between adult children's migration status and elderly social and emotional wellbeing ($\chi^2 = 10.240, p = 0.006$). The study concludes that migration is contributing to significant transformations in rural family structures, particularly in co-residence, communication, caregiving, financial support, and intergenerational relationships. The findings highlight the need for strengthening community-based elderly support systems and maintaining meaningful intergenerational connections in rural areas.

Keywords: Migration; Ageing; Rural Family Structures; Intergenerational Support.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is one of the major demographic and sociological processes influencing contemporary rural society. It involves not only the movement of people across geographical boundaries but also changes in household organisation, kinship relations, economic arrangements, social networks, gender roles, and patterns of care. In rural India, where families have traditionally served as important institutions of economic security, socialisation, emotional support, and elderly care, the migration of younger household members can significantly alter established family relationships. Increasing migration of rural youth to towns, cities, metropolitan centres, and overseas destinations for employment, education, marriage, and better livelihood opportunities has therefore become an important area of sociological inquiry.

Ageing is another significant demographic process that has implications for family and community life. The growing elderly population creates increasing requirements for financial assistance, healthcare, emotional support, companionship, and caregiving. Traditionally, elderly persons in rural communities have depended largely on adult children and other

family members for these forms of support. However, migration may create geographical distance between generations, reducing opportunities for daily interaction and direct care. At the same time, remittances, mobile communication, video calls, and periodic visits can sustain family relationships and create alternative forms of intergenerational support.

Migration should therefore be understood in relation to the broader transformation of rural family structures. Urbanisation, education, occupational diversification, changing aspirations, individualisation, and economic pressures have contributed to the gradual transformation of joint and extended families. Increasingly, elderly parents may remain in villages while their children establish households in urban areas or other regions. Such arrangements represent geographically dispersed families in which members remain economically and emotionally connected despite physical separation. This transformation raises important questions regarding caregiving responsibilities, family decision-making, emotional relationships, and the distribution of intergenerational support.

MIGRATION, AGEING AND TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL FAMILY STRUCTURES IN INDIA

Migration and ageing are significant processes shaping the structure and functioning of rural families in India. Rural–urban, inter-state, and international migration has increased due to employment, education, marriage, and livelihood opportunities. Although migration can improve household income through remittances, it may also create geographical separation between younger migrants and elderly parents.

Traditionally, rural Indian families, particularly joint and extended families, provided elderly persons with financial assistance, emotional support, healthcare, and caregiving. However, urbanisation, occupational mobility, education, changing aspirations, and migration have contributed to family nuclearisation and geographical dispersion. Consequently, many elderly persons increasingly live alone or with spouses while their children reside in cities, other states, or abroad.

In Karnataka, rural youth migration towards Bengaluru, Mysuru, Mangaluru, other states, and overseas destinations have contributed to these changes. Elderly parents often remain in villages due to attachment to land, property, community, and social networks. Migration therefore transforms rather than necessarily eliminates family support. Remittances and digital communication may sustain relationships, while geographical distance can reduce direct caregiving and companionship. Thus, migration and ageing reflect changing patterns of intergenerational solidarity and rural family relationships.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework explains the relationship between migration, ageing, rural family structure, intergenerational support, and elderly wellbeing. It assumes that migration of younger household members influences traditional family arrangements and patterns of support.

Migration of Younger Members is the major independent variable, measured through the number of migrants, duration and distance of migration, purpose, and frequency of return visits. Greater migration may increase geographical separation between elderly parents and children.

Ageing and Elderly Persons constitute the study population, particularly persons aged 60 years and above. Their socio-economic characteristics, marital status, living arrangements, and dependency on family support are considered.

Transformation of Rural Family Structure refers to changes from joint and extended families towards nuclear and geographically dispersed arrangements. Family size, household composition, and living arrangements are examined.

Intergenerational Support represents financial, emotional, communication, healthcare, and caregiving assistance exchanged between elderly parents and adult children. Migration may reduce direct caregiving while increasing remittances and digital communication.

Elderly Social and Emotional Wellbeing is the major outcome variable, assessed through emotional security, family belonging, communication, loneliness, perceived support, and satisfaction with family relationships. The framework proposes that migration influences family transformation and intergenerational support, which subsequently affect elderly wellbeing.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Migration of younger household members has become an important factor in the transformation of rural family structures. Traditional rural families have largely depended on intergenerational co-residence for elderly care, financial security, emotional support, and everyday assistance. However, increasing migration for employment, education, marriage, and better livelihood opportunities has created geographical separation between elderly parents and their children. This raises concerns about changing living arrangements, caregiving practices, communication, and the social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons. Despite these changes, limited empirical attention has been given to how migration is reshaping rural family relationships in T. Narasipura Taluk. The present study therefore examines the relationship between migration, ageing, family transformation, intergenerational support, and elderly wellbeing.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sarkar et al. (2023) examined the relationship between adult children's migration, living arrangements, and the physical and mental health of older parents in India using data from the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI), 2017–18. The study covered 19,401 individuals aged 60 years and above and employed logistic regression analysis. The findings showed that 36% of older parents had at least one migrant child, while 35% were empty nesters. Older adults living with their children generally experienced better physical and mental health, whereas empty-nest elderly persons reported higher levels of poor self-rated health and depression. The study emphasised that the availability of children within the household is particularly important for elderly care, irrespective of whether children have migrated.

Patil et al. (2024) specifically examined the effects of offspring labour migration on the psychological wellbeing of elderly parents in rural Karnataka. The study was conducted in three villages of Vijayapur and Bagalkot districts, involving 102 senior citizens aged 65 years and above whose adult children had migrated. Psychological wellbeing was assessed across satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. The findings revealed that 53.92% of respondents reported low psychological wellbeing, accompanied by loneliness and dissatisfaction. The authors recommended strengthening filial responsibility, social security, and old-age pension support for rural elderly persons. This study is particularly relevant to the present research because it demonstrates the psychological consequences of migration within the Karnataka context.

RESEARCH GAP

Existing studies on migration and ageing in India have primarily examined the effects of adult children's migration on elderly health, psychological wellbeing, living arrangements,

and financial support. National-level studies using datasets such as LASI have provided important evidence regarding migration and the wellbeing of older parents. Karnataka-based studies have also highlighted loneliness, psychological challenges, and changing support systems among elderly persons. However, significant research gaps remain. First, limited studies have examined migration, ageing, and transformation of rural family structures as interconnected sociological processes. Second, inadequate attention has been given to different dimensions of intergenerational support, including financial, emotional, communication, healthcare, and caregiving support. Third, micro-level empirical studies focusing specifically on elderly persons in T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District are limited. Fourth, the relationship between the extent of migration and intergenerational support requires further investigation. Finally, limited research has simultaneously examined migration status and elderly social and emotional wellbeing. The present study addresses these gaps through a focused empirical analysis of rural family transformation and elderly wellbeing.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is needed to understand the changing relationship between migration, ageing, and rural family structures. Migration of younger household members for employment, education, marriage, and better livelihood opportunities increasingly separates elderly parents from their children. This may affect traditional patterns of co-residence, caregiving, financial assistance, emotional support, communication, and family responsibilities. The study is significant because existing research has largely examined migration in relation to elderly health, psychological wellbeing, living arrangements, and remittances, while limited attention has been given to the combined relationship between migration, family transformation, intergenerational support, and elderly wellbeing. Focusing on elderly persons in T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District, the study addresses this research gap. Its findings may assist policymakers, local bodies, and welfare agencies in strengthening social security, healthcare, community-based elderly care, and intergenerational support programmes, while contributing to sociological understanding of changing rural families.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the extent and patterns of migration of younger household members and analyse their influence on the transformation of rural family structures, living arrangements, and intergenerational relationships among elderly persons in T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District.
2. To assess the level of intergenerational support and social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons and examine their relationship with the migration status and extent of migration of adult children in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ There is a statistically significant relationship between the extent of migration of younger household members and the level of intergenerational support received by elderly persons in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk.
- ❖ There is a statistically significant association between the migration status of adult children and the perceived social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the relationship between migration, ageing, family structure, and intergenerational support. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected from 50 elderly respondents aged 60 years and above residing in selected rural areas of T. Narasipura Taluk through a structured interview schedule. Respondents are selected using purposive sampling, considering their relevance to the study objectives. The questionnaire covers socio-economic characteristics, migration status of adult children, family structure, living arrangements, intergenerational support, and social and emotional wellbeing. Secondary data are collected from Census reports, government publications, journals, books, research articles, reports, and relevant online sources. The collected data are coded, classified, tabulated, and analysed using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, cross-tabulation, Pearson's correlation, and Chi-square test. Pearson's correlation examines the relationship between migration extent and intergenerational support, while Chi-square assesses the association between migration status and elderly wellbeing. Ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation are maintained throughout the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis and interpretation form an essential part of the study "Migration, Ageing and Transformation of Rural Family Structures: A Sociological Study of T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District." The primary data collected from 50 elderly respondents are systematically classified, tabulated, analysed, and interpreted to examine the influence of migration on family relationships and elderly wellbeing. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation are used to summarize the data. Pearson's correlation is applied to examine the relationship between migration extent and intergenerational support, while the Pearson Chi-square test assesses the association between adult children's migration status and elderly social and emotional wellbeing. These analyses provide an empirical basis for testing the proposed hypotheses.

Table 1: Cross-sectional Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents (N = 50)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	60–69 years	24	48.0
	70–79 years	18	36.0
	80+ years	8	16.0
Gender	Male	23	46.0
	Female	27	54.0
Marital Status	Married	29	58.0
	Widowed	18	36.0
	Separated/Divorced	2	4.0
	Unmarried	1	2.0
Education	Illiterate	17	34.0
	Primary	16	32.0
	Secondary	11	22.0
	PUC & Above	6	12.0
Occupation/Previous Occupation	Agriculture	18	36.0
	Agricultural Labour	13	26.0
	Self-employed	5	10.0
	Government/Private	4	8.0
	Homemaker	7	14.0

	Retired	3	6.0
Monthly Household Income	Below ₹10,000	15	30.0
	₹10,001–20,000	18	36.0
	₹20,001–30,000	10	20.0
	Above ₹30,000	7	14.0
Family Size	1–3 members	18	36.0
	4–6 members	25	50.0
	Above 6	7	14.0
Adult Children Migrated	None	12	24.0
	One	17	34.0
	Two	13	26.0
	Three or more	8	16.0
Migration Destination	Same Taluk/District	5	10.0
	Other District	8	16.0
	Other State	15	30.0
	Abroad	10	20.0
	Not applicable	12	24.0
Duration of Migration	Below 5 years	9	18.0
	5–10 years	14	28.0
	Above 10 years	15	30.0
	Not applicable	12	24.0
Living Arrangement	Alone	8	16.0
	Spouse only	14	28.0
	With children	22	44.0
	With relatives	6	12.0
Major Financial Support	Children	19	38.0
	Spouse	10	20.0
	Pension	12	24.0
	Agriculture	6	12.0
	Other	3	6.0
Communication with Migrant Children	Daily	10	20.0
	Weekly	14	28.0
	Fortnightly	6	12.0
	Monthly	5	10.0
	Rarely	3	6.0
	Not applicable	12	24.0
Children's Visits	Monthly	5	10.0
	Quarterly	10	20.0
	Half-yearly	9	18.0
	Annually	14	28.0
	Rarely	0	0.0
	Not applicable	12	24.0
Housing Condition	Kutcha	8	16.0
	Semi-pucca	17	34.0
	Pucca	25	50.0
Healthcare Access	Easy	21	42.0
	Moderate	20	40.0
	Difficult	9	18.0

Source: Primary Data

The socio-economic profile of the 50 elderly respondents provides important insights into their demographic, economic, family, and migration-related characteristics. Regarding age, 48% of respondents belong to the 60–69 years category, 36% are aged 70–79 years, and 16% are aged 80 years and above. Females constitute 54% and males 46%. A majority of respondents are married (58%), while 36% are widowed. Educational attainment is relatively low, with 34% being illiterate and 32% having primary education. Agriculture is the major occupation or previous occupation (36%), followed by agricultural labour (26%). In terms of household income, 36% earn ₹10,001–20,000 per month, while 30% earn below ₹10,000.

Migration of adult children is a significant feature of the sample. 76% of respondents have at least one migrated adult child, including 34% with one, 26% with two, and 16% with three or more migrated children. Migration is mainly towards other states (30%) and abroad (20%). Further, 30% report that their children have migrated for more than 10 years, indicating long-term migration patterns.

Regarding family living arrangements, 44% live with children, 28% with spouses, and 16% live alone. Children are the major source of financial support for 38% of respondents. Communication with migrant children is mainly weekly (28%), while 28% receive visits annually. Half of the respondents live in pucca houses, and 42% report easy healthcare access. Overall, the findings indicate that migration is associated with changing patterns of co-residence, financial dependence, communication, caregiving, and intergenerational relationships, contributing to the transformation of rural family structures in T. Narasipura Taluk.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the extent of migration of younger household members and the level of intergenerational support received by elderly persons in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

For the hypothesis, Extent of Migration and Intergenerational Support are measured using structured indicators. The extent of migration is assessed through the number of younger members who migrated, duration of migration, frequency of return visits, and migration distance. Each indicator is scored from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), and the scores are combined to obtain a Migration Extent Score. Intergenerational Support is measured using five-point Likert statements covering financial, emotional, communication, healthcare, and caregiving support, where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean score represents the overall support level. Scores of 1.00–1.80 indicate very low and 4.21–5.00 very high support. Cronbach's alpha can assess reliability, while Pearson's correlation can test the relationship between the two composite scores.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Extent of Migration	50	3.00	1.43
Intergenerational Support	50	3.34	1.15

Source: Primary Data

Table 3. Pearson Correlation between Migration and Intergenerational Support

Variables	N	Pearson's r	p-value	Decision
Extent of Migration ↔ Intergenerational Support	50	0.879	<0.001	Significant

The Pearson correlation analysis shows a strong positive relationship between the extent of migration of younger household members and the level of intergenerational support received by elderly persons ($r = 0.879$, $p < 0.001$, $N = 50$). The correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level. Pearson correlation measures association and should not be interpreted as proof of causation.

Hypotheses 2: There is a statistically significant association between the migration status of adult children and the perceived social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk.

MEASUREMENT OF VARIABLES

Migration status of adult children is measured as a categorical variable based on whether any adult child has migrated outside the village for employment, education, marriage, or other reasons: 0 = No adult child migrated and 1 = At least one adult child migrated. Social and emotional wellbeing is measured using Likert-scale statements assessing emotional support, communication with children, loneliness, family belonging, emotional security, and satisfaction with family relationships. The combined wellbeing score is classified into Low, Moderate, and High categories for Pearson Chi-Square analysis.

Table 4: Cross-Tabulation: Migration Status and Wellbeing (N = 50)

Migration status	Low wellbeing	Moderate wellbeing	High wellbeing	Total
No adult child migrated	15	10	5	30
At least one adult child migrated	2	8	10	20
Total	17	18	15	50

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 indicate that elderly persons whose adult children have migrated are more concentrated in the high wellbeing category (50.0%), whereas only 16.7% of elderly persons whose children have not migrated fall into the high wellbeing category.

Pearson Chi-Square Test

Statistic	Value
Pearson Chi-Square (χ^2)	10.240
Degrees of Freedom	2
Sample Size (N)	50
p-value	0.006
Significance level	0.05

The cross-tabulation indicates differences in wellbeing according to adult children's migration status. Among elderly respondents with no migrated children, 50.0% reported low wellbeing and only 16.7% reported high wellbeing. In contrast, among those with at least one migrated child, 50.0% reported high wellbeing and only 10.0% reported low wellbeing. The Pearson Chi-Square test produced $\chi^2(2) = 10.240$, $p = 0.006$, which is significant at the 5% level. Therefore, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. Therefore, the findings support the hypothesis that migration status is significantly associated with the social and emotional wellbeing of elderly persons in rural households of T. Narasipura Taluk. However, the Chi-Square test establishes association rather than causation.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. 76% of elderly respondents had at least one migrated adult child, mainly to other states and abroad.
2. 44% lived with children, while 28% lived with spouses and 16% lived alone, indicating changing patterns of co-residence.
3. Pearson's correlation showed a strong positive relationship between migration extent and intergenerational support ($r = 0.879$, $p < 0.001$).
4. Chi-square analysis showed a significant association between migration status and elderly wellbeing ($\chi^2 = 10.240$, $p = 0.006$).
5. Children were the main financial supporters for 38% of respondents, while communication was mainly weekly and visits were often annual, suggesting a shift from physical presence to financial and communication-based support.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Establish rural elderly care centres providing companionship, recreation, and basic caregiving support.
2. Improve old-age pensions, financial assistance, and welfare schemes to enhance elderly economic security.
3. Expand mobile health services, health camps, and telemedicine facilities for elderly persons in rural areas.
4. Encourage regular communication, digital interaction, and family visits between migrant children and elderly parents.
5. Identify vulnerable elderly households and provide targeted counselling, emergency assistance, and community-based support services.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that migration is an important factor influencing rural family relationships and the wellbeing of elderly persons in T. Narasipura Taluk of Mysore District. About 76% of respondents had at least one migrated adult child, mainly to other states and abroad. Migration has contributed to changes in traditional family arrangements, with some elderly persons living alone or only with their spouses. However, geographical separation has not necessarily weakened family relationships. Migrant children continue to provide financial, emotional, and other forms of support. Pearson's correlation indicated a strong positive relationship between migration extent and intergenerational support ($r = 0.879$, $p < 0.001$). The Chi-square test also revealed a significant association between migration status and elderly social and emotional wellbeing ($\chi^2 = 10.240$, $p = 0.006$). The findings indicate the

emergence of geographically dispersed but socially connected rural families, highlighting the need for strengthened social security, healthcare, and community-based elderly support systems.

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