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Migration and Depopulation: A Geographical Analysis - A case study of Karga village in West Siang Dist of Arunachal Pradesh in West Siang

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Abstract

Migration is ordinarily defined as permanent or semi permanent change of residence of individual or a group of people over a significant distance. Migration is recognized as one of the most important areas of contemporary research on Population. It is a paradox that migration remains the most neglected component of population change compared with fertility and mortality, the other variable in population change, migration is much more elusive to define, measure and understand. The event of birth and death are absolute and specific and there are no problems in defining their occurrence, but in case of migration, many movement of population are difficult to record to measure. The causes of migration are numerous ranging from natural calamities, climate change, epidemics socio economic and political factors. Many a times the difference between level of technology and economic opportunities also cause large scale migration. Economic motive constitute the most vital determinants which governed the magnitude and availability of good agricultural land, size of holdings, good employment opportunities etc. This quest for better life results in the decline of the rural population leading to rural depopulation. As such this paper deals with the phenomena of migration and depopulation as witness in the village of Karga in Arunachal Pradesh. In this paper an attempt shall be made to analyse the cause, and its effect.

Key words: Migration , Depopulation, Case Study, Karga Village, Arunachal Pradesh

Introduction

One of the major problems being faced today in every society is the gradual depopulation of village leading to the reduction of the size of village and ultimate disappearance of the whole village. There are many well known examples across the world over the world over where village depopulation has taken place. The most significant examples are Japan, Russia and Taiwan .Preliminary result census shows that nearly one third of Russian village have been deserted or depopulated. In Japan, though it is the land of hills and mountain i.e. in villages. The rest live in the metropolitan city of Japan, though the situation is less apparent compared to Japan and Russia, but village depopulation has started in India also, and the state of Arunachal Pradesh too is not left behind in this matter. This phenomenon can be witnessed in the villages of Arunachal Pradesh also. The main reason behind this gradual depopulation is because of the gradual migration of the people. Migration is one of the most important components of population change in spatial analysis.

Study Area

Arunachal Pradesh is one among the eight north eastern states. It is located between 26.28°28N and 29.30°N latitude and 91.30°E and 97.30°longitude and 83,743 sq km area. It has a long international border with Bhutan to the west, China to the north and north east and Myanmar to the east. Assam and Nagaland states border it from south. Arunachal Pradesh the largest state of north east India has an area of 83,743km² which constitute 2.54 % of geographical area of the country .Its total population is 1383,727 as per 2011 census. The population density is of Arunachal Pradesh is only

17 person per sq km which makes the least populous state of the country. With its varied climatic condition Arunachal Pradesh is considered as the hotspot of various biodiversity.

Karga is small agricultural village consisting of only 11 houses with a total population of only 72 persons which include 35 males and 37 females. Karga village is situated in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh which is about 15 km away from the district headquarter Aalo. West Siang district with its headquarter at Aalo bounded on the north by China on the south by Assam and on the west by upper subansiri and lower Subansiri district. According to 2011 census west siang district has population of 112,272. The district has a population density of 13 person per sq km. Its population growth rate over the decade was 8.04%. West Siang district has a sex ratio of 916 female per thousand male. West Siang is the homeland of various tribe like Galo, Minyong, Bori, Bokar Pailibo, Ramos Memba and khamba.

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are identified and analysed the consequences of migration and to access the factor responsible for migration leading to depopulation.

Methodology

It is based on extensive field work and compilation and comparison of two decadal census i.e. 1991 and 2001.

Result and Discussion

According to definition, rural depopulation means decline of population of a given area, usually caused by people moving to other areas for economic reason rather than an increase in death rate or decrease in birth rate. There may be a wide range of reason for the cause of rural depopulation. The reason could be quest for better living condition, better paid jobs, insecurity in their own areas, unemployment, social needs especially for the young ones etc.

Geography being an integrating science, we are concerned with action as well as fact. Whether there is a complete change either in character or condition or form or shape is also the theme of researcher. The rate of depopulation of karga village can be proved more powerfully and easily understood, when we compare the two consecutive decadal census of 2001 and 2011. It is evident from the table that large no of migration took place in recent years and this migration has become a rule rather than an exception. It is expected that in near future migration would be more rapid leading to the depopulation of that particular village.

Table 1: Showing Population of Karga Village

YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
2001	33	36	69
2011	35	37	72

When the period i.e., 1991 and 2001 and 2001-2011 is compared, it is observed that the female population is higher than the male population. It clearly implies that large no of male population have migrated from the village for the quest of better living. It is observed that large no of karga village population have migrated to and have settled in the nearby town of kamba and kamki and made their home there.

The field investigation conducted in the village karga gave researcher some raw experiences. Since twenty years heavy migration has led to depopulation and the village is now experiencing many changes in attempting to cope with the population loss. The residents struggle to sustain ancestral home and foster healthy neighbourhood despite gender and generational imbalance.

Reasons for Depopulation

1. Karga village is situated upon a hill slope and there is less scope for practising permanent cultivation. People have to depend on Jhum cultivation (slash and burn method). However some trace of terraced cultivation has also been witnessed in the hill slope.
2. The topography of village is such that terraced farming cannot be carried out easily as it requires a large man power.
3. The land is not very fertile because of heavy leaching. The land is generally marshy where agriculture cannot be proved productive.
4. The quest for better living among the youth leads to steady but heavy migration.

The findings also examined the effect of migration of population of karga village to develop a theory of depopulation as a dynamic process of place making. The bad effect of depopulation may result in the growth of individualism and less regard for traditional principles instead of insistence on family solidarity and cohesion.

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