

Major Drivers for Migration from Hoshiarpur, Punjab to British Columbia, Canada

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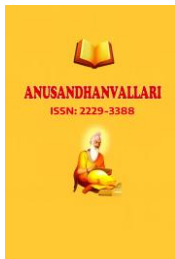
Introduction

The word *Migration* originates from the Latin verb *migrare* which signifies “to shift from one place to another”. As asserted by Monika Boyd (1989), “Migration is not a haphazard movement of poor people.” Migration stands as one of the fundamental elements influencing population dynamics within any given area. In the field of social sciences, Human Migration assumes paramount significance, representing not merely the physical relocation of individuals but also a significant conduit for the dissemination of ideas and innovations. The international migrations are important for the bi-directional flow of resources between sender and receiver countries. The Globalization has increased the cross-border flow which has resulted in a significant social transformation worldwide. From 1950 to 2017, the rate of migration has increased in proportion to increase in world population. Approximately, the number of migrants has been hovering between 2.7 and 3.3 percent of the world population. (Haas *et al.*, 2019). India has maximum share in the total migrants across globe. According to UNDESA, 2019; In total of 1,75,10,931 international migrants are from India in 2019. In India, Punjab has been a major source of migrants to various countries worldwide. A very recent study by Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Ludhiana argues Canada to be the most preferred place of destination for Punjabi emigrants (Sethi, 2024).

Migration is so deeply embedded in the state of Punjab that it has become a part of its heritage. Various factors at different times have influenced emigration from Punjab to the rest of the world. The first wave of emigration began even before independence, driven primarily by military service and indentured labor. During this period, Punjabis migrated to countries such as Canada, Germany, Italy, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The migration continued after India's independence in 1947, driven by political instability and economic reasons. This second wave is particularly marked by the migration of unskilled labor to Canada and the United Kingdom (Grewal I, 2005). Subsequent waves of migration from Punjab have continued to be influenced by various factors.

Most of the Punjabis who emigrated in the early years were from the Doaba region, with a significant number hailing from the Hoshiarpur district (Canada, Report of the Royal Commission, 1908, p. 75; Lal *et al.*, 1984). In the early 20th century, the demand for labor in British Columbia's agricultural sector increased due to sanctions imposed on Chinese workers. To meet this labour demand, migration from Punjab was encouraged. Additionally, advertisement campaigns and agencies played a crucial role in establishing British Columbia as a favoured destination (Canada, Report of the Royal Commission, 1907, p. 7). This trend continues to this day, with a significant number of people from Hoshiarpur migrating to British Columbia every year.

The decision to migrate is an intricate, multifaceted and context dependent process. It is a basic human tendency to pursue for better living conditions. In the desire of better opportunities; people leave their homeland and migrate to distant places. Till date, various scholars have formulated numerous theories to explain the factors associated with migration. For an instance, migration has been connected with advancing industrial sector and its demands by Twin labor market theories. Whereas, world system theory connects migration with advent of globalization (Massey *et al.*, 1993).



The first pioneer neo-economic theory on migration was given by Lewis in 1954. In this theory, he divides world into two major economic sectors: one is overpopulated with surplus labour and other is booming industrial sector offering high wages. He argued that wage difference and better job opportunities are major driving factors for migration. People from underdeveloped, labour surplus countries move to developed, industrial economies.

“Functionalist migration theory” explains migration as a phenomenon of push and pull factors (Todaro, 1969; Harris *et al.*, 1970). Push factors are defined as the conditions within area of origin that compels an individual to depart. The economic status and the socio-cultural background are two major driving push factors. The main economic push factors in the study area include poor economic status, low wages, lesser job opportunities and debt on the family. The main socio-administrative factors of the study area include poor governance, corruption, social pressure etc (Siyal *et al.*, 2018). On the contrary, pull factors are associated with destination place which promote the migration to certain places. For example, better job opportunities, high wages and better living standards are important pull factors (Zoelle, 2011).

In Punjab, beyond economic considerations, various cultural elements contribute to emigration. The interplay of these factors provides insight into the pattern of emigration from Punjab. Consequently, a more targeted and thorough examination is imperative to comprehend the underlying reasons and determinants fuelling this substantial emigration

Research Gap

While various studies address international emigration from Punjab, there is a notable gap when it comes to understanding the migration from Hoshiarpur specifically to British Columbia, Canada. Hoshiarpur is one of the first districts from which migration to British Columbia began, yet no study has thoroughly analyzed the factors responsible for this ongoing high migration rate from this particular region in Punjab to a specific province in Canada. Additionally, most theories discuss migration from a broader perspective, but the factors influencing migration are context-dependent and complex. Therefore, thorough research is required to elucidate the specific factors driving the high rate of emigration from Hoshiarpur to British Columbia.

Objective

The major objective of this study are:

- To analyse major socio-economic push factors responsible for emigration from Hoshiarpur, Punjab to British Columbia, Canada.
- To analyse major socio-economic pull factors responsible for emigration from Hoshiarpur, Punjab to British Columbia, Canada.

Research Methodology

Migrants are individuals who have relocated from Hoshiarpur to British Columbia. Hoshiarpur district comprises a total of 1,481 villages and wards. Responses were received from 1,283 of these villages and wards, while 198 did not participate in the survey. Among those that responded, 947 villages and wards reported having at least one individual who migrated to Canada. From this group, 358 villages and wards were selected, all of which reported migration specifically from Hoshiarpur District, Punjab to British Columbia, Canada.

Using **snowball sampling**, one household from each selected village and ward was chosen, ensuring that one or more family members had relocated at least one year before the data collection date. From these households, 1,000 contacts of related individuals (family members, relatives, friends, neighbours) who had migrated to British Columbia were gathered. Data was successfully collected from 518 migrants using structured questionnaire for the survey. The remaining 482 individuals were unable to respond due to constraints such as time zone differences, nature of work, study hours, or unwillingness to participate.

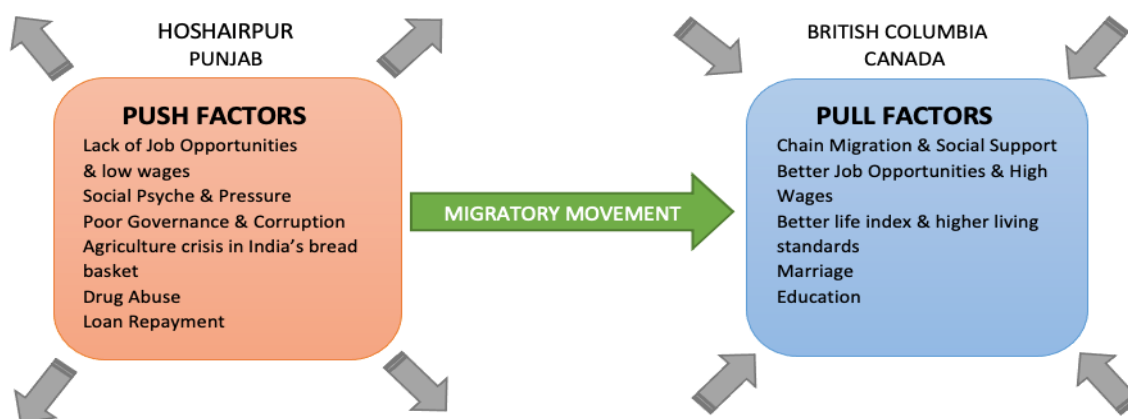


Figure 1: Major push and pull factors for emigration

Analysis and Discussions

During the survey, it was observed that there are numerous reasons that influence and drives the emigration from Hoshiarpur district to British Columbia. Both push and pull factors have analyzed to understand the major factors behind emigration. Major push factors analysed in current study are Lesser Job opportunities and low wages, Social Psyche and Pressure, Poor Governance and Corruption, Agriculture crisis, Drug Abuse and Loan Repayment. Major pull factors analysed in our current study are Chain Migration and Social Support, Better Job opportunities and high wages, Better life index and higher living standard, Marriage and Education

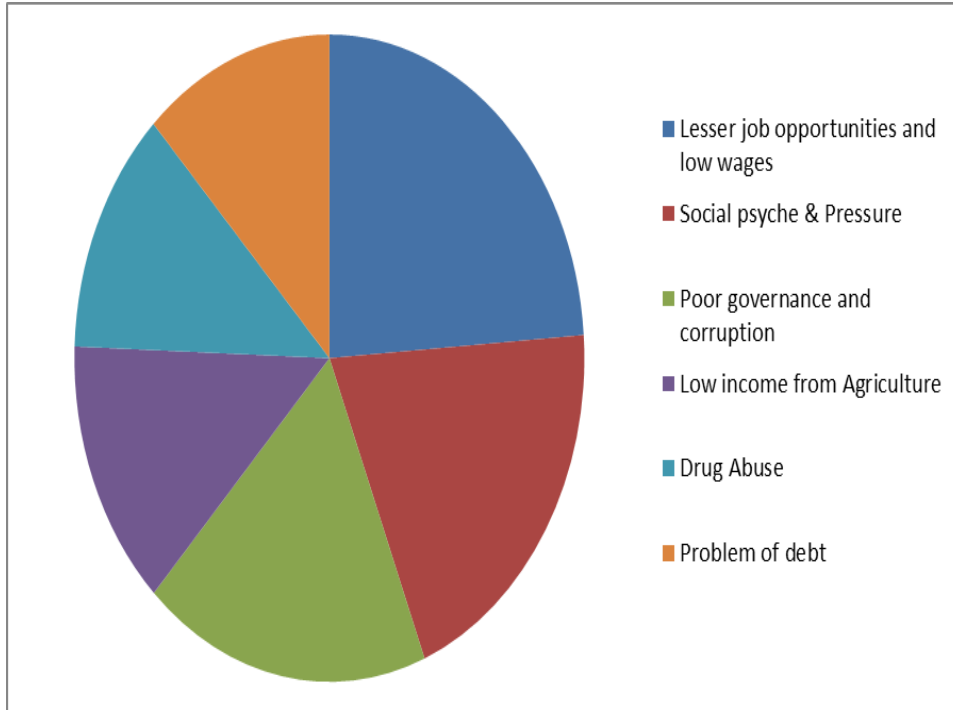
Push factors for emigration

Table 1: Push factors for Emigration

Source: Primary survey done by author

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Lesser job opportunities and low wages	382	73.74%
Social psyche & Pressure	321	61.97%
Poor governance and corruption	291	56.18%
Low income from Agriculture	216	41.69%
Drug Abuse	197	38.03%
Problem of debt	194	37.45%

Figure 2: Push factors for Emigration



Source: Primary survey done by author

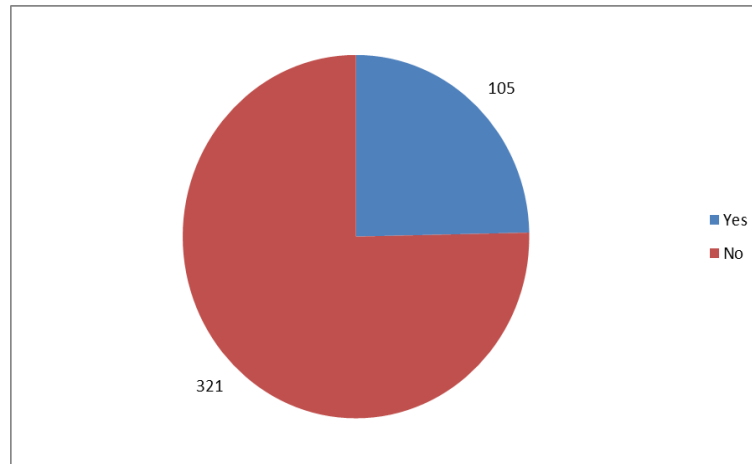
Data related to all variables is presented in tables and figures, which have been analyzed below. Table 1 depicts lesser job opportunities and low wages comes out to be the most important driving factor. The data reveals that out of 518 respondents; 382 listed lesser job opportunities as one of the reason behind emigration. As shown in the table 2; when these 382 respondents were further asked about the quality of job in terms of job satisfaction and wages; 72.51% responded that they didn't have or will not get a quality job in Hoshiarpur, Punjab. While, 27.48 % responded that they had or can get a quality job in the district. In our interactions, many of them argued that will never get a job as par their education qualification in Punjab.

Table 2: Quality of Job in Hoshiarpur

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Yes	105	27.48
No	277	72.52
	382	100

Source: Primary survey done by author

Figure 3: Quality of Job in Hoshiarpur



Source: Primary survey done by author

Table 1 shows that 61.97% of respondents cited social influence and pressure as a factor for migration. The lavish lifestyle of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) creates an enticing image of Canada for locals. Additionally, career choices are driven by reputation and cultural influence, with considerations of "Izzat" (honor) and "Sardaari." Interestingly, people feel more comfortable doing similar jobs in Canada than in India, likely because of the higher wages and the anonymity regarding the exact nature of their work in Canada.

Additionally, in our field report, as shown in Table 1, 56.18% of respondents (291 individuals) identified poor governance, policy-making, and corruption as push factors for their emigration. Many respondents noted that while Punjab is a wealthy state, it suffers from poor governance. Despite initial economic progress, Punjab has failed to diversify its economy, resulting in a lag in per capita income. High corruption levels lead to jobs not being awarded on merit, with positions often held by less efficient workers, exacerbating the situation.

Table 1 indicates that 41.69% of respondents cited low income from agriculture as a push factor for emigration. This issue stems from the district's dependency on a few crops, depleting water levels, uncertain climate patterns, farmer debt, and reliance on migrant labour. The problem of drug abuse is endemic in Punjab, particularly among the youth. The situation is so severe that one in every three males and one in every ten females in Punjab consume drugs in some form. In the primary survey, drug abuse was identified by 38.03% of respondents as a push factor for their emigration.

From our fieldwork, as shown in Table 1, it was observed that 37.45% of respondents (194 out of 518) had some form of debt on themselves or their families in India. An intriguing point is that many individuals resorted to taking loans again, this time to pay fees for IELTS coaching centres or to cover expenses associated with agents helping them emigrate to Canada. This also underscores the allure of job opportunities as a major pull factor for emigration.

Pull factors for emigration

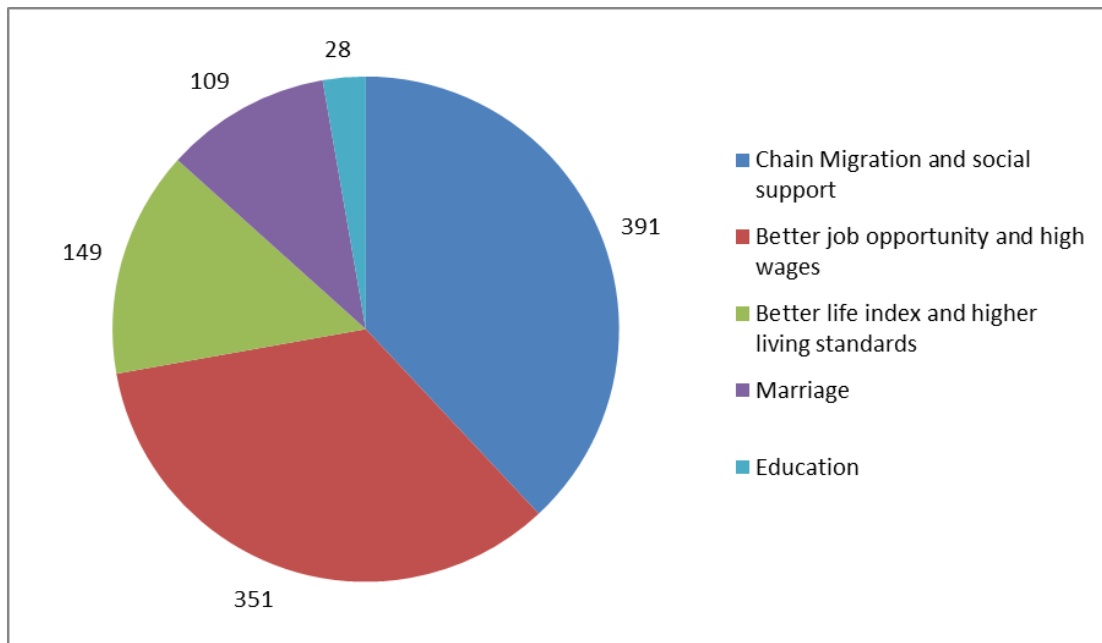
Data related to all variables is presented in tables and figures, which have been analyzed below.

Table 2: Pull factors for emigration

Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Chain Migration and social support	391	75.48%
Better job opportunity and high wages	351	67.76%
Better life index and higher living standards	149	28.76%
Marriage	109	21.04%
Education	28	5.40%

Source: Primary survey done by author

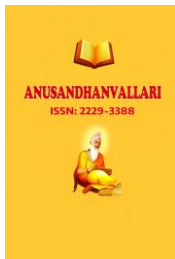
Figure 4: Pull factors for emigration



Source: Primary survey done by author

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents (75.48%) cited chain migration and social support as pull factors for emigration. This can be attributed to various advantages chain migrants have over single migrants, such as access to job networks and the ability to share accommodation, which reduces living costs. These benefits lower utility expenses to nominal levels, increasing overall income and savings. These factors help explain the strong trends of migration from Hoshiarpur to British Columbia.

In our field study, as indicated in Table 2, 67.76% of respondents (351 individuals) migrated in search of better job opportunities and higher wages. Many respondents mentioned receiving higher pay for comparable jobs



abroad. Additionally, due to the higher value of the dollar compared to the Indian rupee, they prefer to make major investments in India.

Table 2 shows that 28.76% of respondents (149 individuals) chose a better living standard and higher quality of life as pull factors for migration. During our interactions, people linked migration to Canada with increased life satisfaction. They were also attracted by the cleanliness, clean environment, and other facilities in Canada.

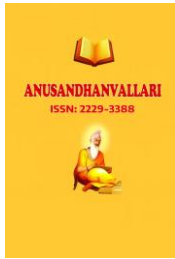
Marriage is a complex and multifaceted factor that needs to be studied in the context of gender specificity. As shown in Table 2, 21.04% of respondents (109 individuals) cited marriage as a reason for migration. This can be attributed to various reasons, including societal pressure, family pressure, aspirations for a better lifestyle, and personal choice. Many women opt to marry NRIs for these reasons. Additionally, many males are migrating due to marriage, often involving contractual or transactional marriages. In such cases, families make agreements where an illiterate groom or one unable to clear basic IELTS exams is matched with an academically proficient bride who has cleared the IELTS exam. The groom's family finances the visas for both, in exchange for the bride clearing the IELTS exam.

Canada is notable among developed nations for its liberal policies regarding permanent residency and its numerous colleges for international students. These favourable conditions have increased the influx of Punjabi youth seizing this opportunity. According to the primary survey shown in Table 2, 5.40% of respondents (28 individuals) chose education as a pull factor for emigration. This contrasts with data showing that 59.65% of respondents initially applied for a study visa (unpublished data). This discrepancy highlights the debate in Punjab regarding "education for migration" versus "migration for education."

Conclusions

Migration from Hoshiarpur, Punjab to British Columbia, Canada began even before Canadian society had fully developed. Starting in the early 20th century, this emigration has steadily increased over the decades, coinciding with significant periods of Canadian immigration. According to Buchignani (1988), between 1904 and 1908, 5200 Indian migrants reached British Columbia, with 80% from Punjab, predominantly Hoshiarpur. However, after 1908, anti-Asian riots led to the Canadian government imposing conditions that effectively ceased migration from India (Judge, 1998). Thereafter, migration remained insignificant until India's independence in 1947, after which it resumed and has increased with each decade (Wood, 1983). The significant migration from Hoshiarpur to British Columbia can be traced back to historical events, such as the distribution of pamphlets in villages by industrialists from British Columbia. Additionally, this migration was further fueled by agents who profited from selling tickets to Canada (Royal Commission report, 1908). In every decade, factors and process of emigration varied a little.

Our study tried to elucidate the factors responsible for current trend of migration. It has been concluded that lesser job opportunities and low wages in Punjab has come out to be major push factor (73.74%) followed by social pressure (61.97%). On the other hand, 75.48% respondents chose chain migration as major pull factor followed by better job opportunities and high wages. The other push factors responsible are Poor Governance and Corruption (56.18%), Agriculture crisis (41.69%), Drug Abuse (38.03%) and Loan Repayment (37.45%). The other major pull factors are Better life index and higher living standard (28.76%), Marriage (21.04%) and Education (5.40%). The primary implication of this study lies in its policy recommendations, specifically addressing the push factors and pull factors that compel people to migrate. The government should take appropriate steps to prevent "Brain drain" and "Capital drain" from the state.



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