

Patterns of Rural-Origin Migration in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh: A Study of Rural-Rural and Rural-Urban Flows

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Abstract: *Migration has long been a transformative force, and its contemporary patterns continue to shape societies. This study examines internal migration from Uttar Pradesh districts to the Bundelkhand region using census data (1991-2011). Focusing on rural-rural and rural-urban streams, it highlights gendered dynamics: marriage-related migration remains dominant, especially among women, whereas employment-driven migration is largely male. Female participation in business and educational migration is minimal. By analysing reasons and socio-economic impacts, this study situates Bundelkhand's migration trends within broader national shifts, emphasising their linkages to developmental challenges, resource scarcity, and opportunities for regional economic resilience.*

Key words: Internal Migration, Trends of Migration, Pattern of Migration, Migration Streams, Reason for Migration, Bundelkhand Region (U.P.)

INTRODUCTION

Migration plays a crucial role in shaping regional economies, demographics, and sociocultural dynamics, especially in countries such as India, where internal migration is extensive and diverse. In Uttar Pradesh, internal migration has been driven by a variety of socio-economic factors, such as employment opportunities, education, marriage, and environmental challenges. Bundelkhand, an economically marginalised region of Uttar Pradesh, has experienced significant out-migration, particularly due to limited livelihood options, poor agricultural productivity, and recurrent droughts (Ojha, P. K., Gautam, U.S., & Ojha, P., 2025; Anamika, 2022). The literature on internal migration in India highlights various dimensions of migration patterns, drivers, and socio-economic impacts, with several studies emphasising the significance of rural-urban and rural-rural migration streams. Studies such as Kundu and Sarangi (2007) highlight that rural-to-urban migration has become a dominant trend in India, driven primarily by economic factors, such as the search for better employment opportunities. Similarly, Bhagat (2010) underscores the role of economic disparity between rural and urban areas in driving migration streams. Research by Srivastava and Sasikumar (2003) points out that internal migration in India is often shaped by regional economic inequalities, where backward regions like Bundelkhand witness significant out-migration due to inadequate economic opportunities.

In Bundelkhand, limited agricultural productivity, compounded by recurring droughts, has been identified as a significant push factor (Kar et al., 2018). Keshri and Bhagat (2013) analyse the patterns of migration in Uttar Pradesh and indicate that rural-rural migration is primarily driven by agricultural distress, while rural-urban migration reflects the search for industrial and service sector jobs. Other scholars, such as Deshingkar and Farrington (2009), have examined seasonal migration in underdeveloped regions of India, showing that agricultural labourers often migrate temporarily to urban areas during lean periods. These migration flows are often not captured comprehensively in official data, as noted by Tumbé (2018), leading to an underestimation of the actual migration volume. The migration patterns in Bundelkhand, as part of Uttar Pradesh, are aligned with broader state-level trends.

Shrivastava and Sutradhar (2016) show that in Uttar Pradesh, the most prominent migration streams are rural-to-rural, followed by rural-to-urban; however, they emphasise that regional disparities within the state lead to significant variations in the causes of migration. Migration driven by marriage, particularly among women, is another key stream, particularly in rural-rural migration, as noted by Bhagat and Mohanty (2009).

In terms of policy responses, the impact of migration on regional development has been studied by Maurya, Singh, and Khare (2016), who argue for the need to address the root causes of migration in economically backward regions through targeted development interventions. The National Sample Survey (2010) and Census reports from 1991, 2001, and 2011 provide crucial data on the magnitude and streams of migration, with census data revealing a gradual decline in rural-rural migration and an increase in rural-urban migration over the decades. Ojha, Gautam, and Ojha (2025) explored how Bundelkhand's environmental challenges, including water scarcity, have been central to driving migration flows, often forcing residents to migrate in search of better livelihoods. Additionally, Deshingkar and Farrington (2009) emphasise the socioeconomic impact of remittances on families, highlighting how migration has become a survival strategy for households in regions like Bundelkhand.

Objectives of the study

1. Identify internal migration streams (Rural-to-Rural and Rural-to-Urban) in Bundelkhand from Census data.
2. Examine socio-economic factors influencing migration in the region.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The primary data source for this study is the Census of India for the years 1991, 2001, and 2011, which provides detailed information on internal/intra-state migration patterns of the Bundelkhand Region of Uttar Pradesh. The data include classifications of migration streams (Rural-to-Rural and Rural-to-Urban) and the causes of migration, such as employment, marriage, education, and others. In the present study, the percentage of male migrants was subtracted from the percentage of female migrants to show the trend of gender differences under different streams. The positive and negative results obtained in the presented process represent female dominance and male dominance, respectively. In addition, by looking at the data, we will be able to understand how female participation changed over time (from 1991 to 2011) under different streams of migration. Since the time of the 1991 census, Chitrakoot and Mahoba districts were not formed, but were later created by separating them from the Banda and Hamirpur districts, respectively. Therefore, the analysis of data related to Chitrakoot and Mahoba districts began with the 2001 Census. In addition, data on socio-economic variables, such as literacy, occupation, and economic status, will be used to understand migration drivers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Intra-state migration in India remains dominant, comprising about two-thirds of the total migration, as per the Census 2011. Rural-to-rural and rural-to-urban streams were the most significant. In Uttar Pradesh, intra-district

rural-to-rural migration prevails and is largely driven by marriage and employment. Research shows growing rural-to-urban shifts in UP urbanising districts, highlighting uneven regional development and persistent livelihood challenges.

Table 01- Status of Intra-State Migration Streams in the Bundelkhand Region of the U.P.

Migration Stream (In %)	Census year 1991	Census year 2001	Census year 2011
Rural to rural	70.26	75.39	70.06
Rural to urban	18.48	13.75	14.38
urban to rural	4.06	3.36	3.97
urban to Urban	7.2	7.5	11.59
Total	100	100	100

Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

This Table (01) provides a comprehensive view of the percentage distribution of overall migration (male and female) across four migration streams in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh for the Census years 1991, 2001, and 2011. The data reflect how migration patterns have shifted over the decades, influenced by socio-economic factors, development patterns, and cultural dynamics. The intra-state migration trends in Bundelkhand demonstrate a dominant rural-to-rural migration pattern driven by cultural norms, such as marriage. However, rising urban-to-urban migration and stable rural-to-urban migration suggest a gradual urbanisation process. Minimal urban-to-rural migration highlights persistent socio-economic challenges in rural areas, necessitating targeted interventions to balance regional development and enhance migration-driven opportunities. The increasing share of urban-to-urban migration and the stabilisation of rural-to-urban migration reflect the transition towards urban connectivity in Bundelkhand, albeit at a slower pace than in other regions.

Table 02- Change in Gender differences in migration streams of Bundelkhand region (U.P.)

Migration streams (In %)	Census year 1991	Census year 2001	Census year 2011
Rural to rural	17.14	26.24	36.12
Rural to Urban	25.6	23.32	25.95
Urban to rural	91.55	90.96	91.47
Urban to urban	65.73	59.5	46.49

Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

This Table (02) represents the gender differences (calculated by subtracting the male percentage of migration from the female percentage of migration) for four migration streams in the Bundelkhand region across three census years: 1991, 2001, and 2011. The analysis provides insights into how gender disparities in migration patterns have evolved over time in intra-state migration streams. The increase in rural-to-rural migration indicates a growing predominance of females in rural-to-rural migration. This is primarily driven by marriage migration, which is culturally significant in rural areas. The increase over the decades suggests persistent traditional practices, where females migrate to join their spouses in rural regions. The urban-to-rural migration stream is the most gendered migration stream and is dominated by females. Females migrate from urban to rural areas primarily for marriage or post-marriage

relocation. The decline in the urban-to-urban migration stream suggests that urban-to-urban migration is increasingly driven by economic factors, which encourage greater male participation over time. However, females still dominate, indicating their role in family based migration, marriage relocation, and gradually growing participation in urban employment sectors. The significant decline in gender differences in urban-to-urban migration reflects increasing male involvement likely tied to economic and employment-driven migration, underscoring the need for gender-sensitive policies that address the distinct drivers of migration for males and females in this region.

Table 03- Overall reason for migration in Bundelkhand Region, Uttar Pradesh

Causes of migration		State/District & Census year									
		Uttar Pradesh		Jalaun	Jhansi	Lalitpur	Hamirpur	Mahoba	Banda	Chitrakoot	
		2001	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	
Intra-State Migration	T ^W %	33021341	45657295	434533	434846	245932	271354	180890	392516	204477	
	M ^W %	11.14	15.92	15.74	23.32	12.26	12.21	15.05	11.66	9.37	
	F ^W %	88.86	84.08	84.26	76.68	87.74	87.79	84.95	88.34	90.63	
Work/Employment	T ^W %	3.86	5.44	5.9	7.23	4.68	4.89	5.23	4.41	3.87	
	M ^W %	29.64	28.35	33.03	26.85	32.81	34.44	28.55	33.06	32.95	
	F ^W %	0.63	1.1	0.84	1.26	0.75	0.78	1.09	0.63	0.86	
Business	T ^W %	0.31	0.53	0.37	0.54	0.28	0.44	0.5	0.33	0.32	
	M ^W %	1.29	1.65	1.56	1.41	1.32	2.37	1.78	2.15	1.68	
	F ^W %	0.19	0.003	0.15	0.28	0.14	0.18	0.27	0.09	0.18	
Education	T ^W %	0.42	0.62	0.83	0.89	0.46	0.55	0.79	0.68	0.29	
	M ^W %	2.87	2.5	3.72	2.41	2.04	3.12	3.11	4.17	1.87	
	F ^W %	0.11	0.27	0.29	0.42	0.23	0.19	0.38	0.21	0.12	
Marriage	T ^W %	77.71	71.84	73.7	62.13	78.36	79.23	74.65	81	83.1	
	M ^W %	6.8	7.31	5.44	3.87	7.82	8.83	9.13	8.59	11.22	
	F ^W %	85.99	84.06	86.45	79.85	88.22	89.03	86.26	90.56	90.53	
Moved with Household	T ^W %	6.84	9.31	10.17	11.61	6.77	6.54	8.25	6.81	6.66	
	M ^W %	23.06	27.06	28.6	24.2	25.42	22.52	25.79	26.53	30.87	
	F ^W %	4.8	5.95	6.73	7.78	4.16	4.31	5.14	4.21	4.15	
Others	T ^W %	10.86	12.26	9.03	17.6	9.45	8.35	10.59	6.77	5.77	
	M ^W %	36.34	33.12	27.65	41.26	30.59	28.72	31.64	25.51	21.41	
	F ^W %	8.28	8.62	5.54	10.41	6.5	5.51	6.86	4.3	4.16	

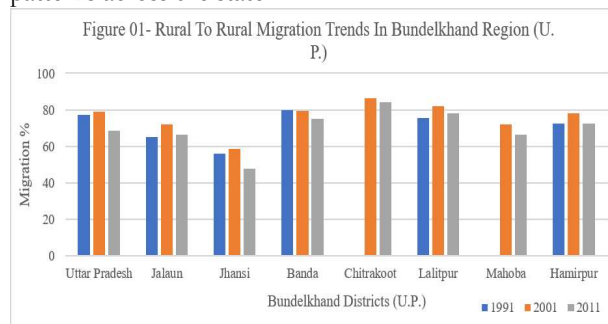
T*%/- Total % M*%/- Male % F*%/- Female %

Source- Census of India 2001 and 2011

Table 03 provides the percentage distribution of various causes for overall intra-state migration in the Bundelkhand region (Uttar Pradesh) for the Census year 2011. The causes of migration include work/employment, business, education, marriage, household, and others. The analysis below highlights trends and district-level variations: Marriage is the overwhelming driver of intra-state migration, contributing 71.84% statewide and exceeding 80% in Chitrakoot (83.1%) and Banda (81%). Migration for work/employment contributes 5.44% statewide, highest in Jhansi (7.23%) and Lalitpur (4.68%), due to the availability of urban and agricultural job opportunities. Marriage remains the primary driver of intra-state migration across Bundelkhand, reinforcing traditional gendered migration patterns. Employment and household relocation contribute to regional variations, with Jhansi standing out for its diversified drivers and higher shares of employment, education, and other reasons. Districts like Chitrakoot and Banda emphasise traditional causes of migration, while Jhansi reflects modernisation and economic diversification. These trends highlight the socio-economic disparities within Bundelkhand.

Rural to rural migration stream

Rural-to-rural migration remains the largest migration stream in India, accounting for approximately 54.7% of the total migrants (Census 2011). In Uttar Pradesh, this trend is even more pronounced, and is mainly driven by marriage and agricultural work. Research has highlighted that economic distress, land fragmentation, and social customs continue to shape rural-to-rural mobility patterns across the state.



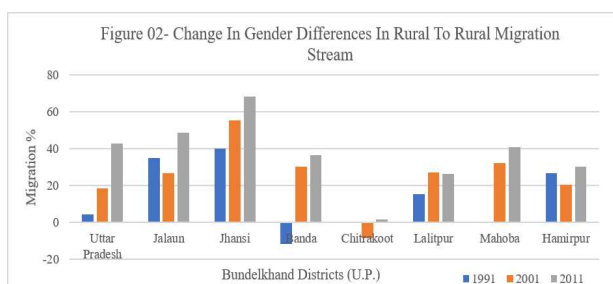
Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

Figure 01 represents the overall migration percentage (male + female) for the rural-to-rural internal migration stream across Bundelkhand districts and Uttar Pradesh, based on census data from 1991, 2001, and 2011. Most districts, such as Chitrakoot and Banda, showed relatively high migration percentages in 1991 and 2001, suggesting that rural areas had more localised movement for work, familial, or agricultural reasons. There was a noticeable decline in rural-to-rural migration percentages from 2001 to 2011 across many districts. This finding suggests a shift in migration patterns, possibly influenced by increased urban migration or changes in the rural economy. Chitrakoot continued to show the highest rural-to-rural migration, reflecting its specific local migration dynamics, whereas Jhansi and Mahoba showed a gradual decrease, possibly indicating the growing attractiveness of urban areas. The overall decline in rural-to-rural migration in 2011 could be due to increasing rural-to-urban migration, as more people moved to cities for better opportunities in employment, education, or healthcare. In districts like Jalaun and Hamirpur, rural-to-rural migration remained relatively strong, suggesting that these areas had economic or social incentives (e.g. agricultural work, family ties) that continued to motivate rural mobility.

Rural to rural migration showed a declining trend from 1991 (77.3%) to 2011 (68.52%), reflecting a decreasing movement between rural areas. This could be due to the stabilisation of rural populations, better access to services in rural areas, or improved agricultural conditions. Rural to rural migration shows a declining trend from 1991 (77.3%) to 2011 (68.52%), reflecting a decreasing movement between rural areas. This could be due to the stabilisation of rural populations, better access to services in rural areas, or improved agricultural conditions. These patterns indicate that rural areas are increasingly stabilising, and fewer people are moving from one rural area to another. A decreasing trend in migration could also indicate more localised development or fewer reasons for rural-to-rural migration.

Change in Gender differences in rural-to-rural migration stream

Figure 02 shows that in Bundelkhand districts of Uttar Pradesh, the gender difference in rural-to-rural migration (female percentage minus male percentage) widened significantly between 1991 and 2011, increasing at the state level from 4.32% in 1991 to 42.66% in 2011. This indicates a strong increase in female predominance within this migration stream. Districts such as Jhansi and Jalaun recorded the sharpest increases in the gender gap over the decades, reflecting a substantial rise in female participation compared to males. Banda shifted from male dominance (-11.74% in 1991) to strong female dominance (36.44% in 2011), while Chitrakoot showed fluctuating trends but reached a small positive gap of 1.56% by 2011. Overall, marriage remains the main reason for rural-to-rural female migration, while limited male participation suggests that economic motives are less influential in this stream.



Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

Causes of rural-to-rural Migration in Bundelkhand Region, Uttar Pradesh

This Table (04) provides the percentages of intra-state migration in Uttar Pradesh and its selected districts (Jalaun, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Banda, Chitrakoot) based on the Census years 2001 and 2011, categorized by the reasons for migration: Work/Employment, Business, Education, Marriage, Household (with HH), and Others. Male migration for work is significantly higher than for females, making up 16-26% of the total work-related migrants, while female work migration remains below 1% across all districts. District Chitrakoot had the highest share of male migrants moving for work in 2011 (25.9%), while District Mahoba had the lowest (17.49%). Marriage is the primary reason for migration, especially for females, across Uttar Pradesh and all districts. For example, 89.4% of female migrants in 2001 in Uttar Pradesh migrated for marriage, increasing slightly in 2011 in most districts.

Table 04- Causes Of Rural To Rural Migration In Bundelkhand Region, Uttar Pradesh

State/District & Census year									
Causes of migration	Migrants	Uttar Pradesh	Jalaun	Jhansi	Lalitpur	Hamirpur	Mahoba	Banda	Chitrakoot
Work/Emp.	T ⁹⁰ %	1.35	1.89	1.61	2.51	1.79	1.92	1.84	1.45
	M ⁹⁰ %	16.25	17.54	18.74	23.23	22.38	23.87	17.49	22.54
	F ⁹⁰ %	0.44	0.77	0.45	0.78	0.53	0.55	0.71	0.35
Business	T ⁹⁰ %	0.31	0.28	0.17	0.19	0.14	0.22	0.28	0.14
	M ⁹⁰ %	1.29	1.02	1.01	0.83	0.52	1.65	1.11	1.49
	F ⁹⁰ %	0.16	0.22	0.11	0.14	0.12	0.13	0.22	0.07
Education	T ⁹⁰ %	0.42	0.21	0.19	0.24	0.23	0.18	0.3	0.22
	M ⁹⁰ %	2.87	1.62	1.74	1.81	1.29	1.78	1.89	3.36
	F ⁹⁰ %	0.05	0.11	0.08	0.11	0.16	0.08	0.19	0.06

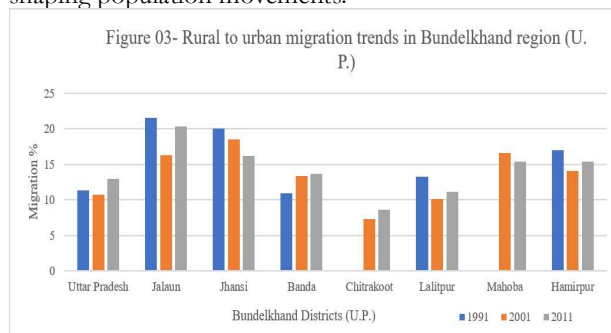
Marriage	T ⁹⁰ %	77.17	86.18	88.67	86.47	87.99	88.97	87.36	91.29	89.54
	M ⁹⁰ %	6.8	20.05	15.19	14.99	18.19	19.91	23.18	21.87	20.28
	F ⁹⁰ %	89.4	90.9	93.65	92.43	92.26	93.28	91.95	94.89	93.56
with HH	T ⁹⁰ %	6.84	3.17	2.87	3.68	2.86	2.65	2.87	2.56	3.27
	M ⁹⁰ %	23.06	23.32	22.61	24.39	23.86	22.15	23.27	25.31	28.51
	F ⁹⁰ %	2.46	1.74	1.53	1.95	1.57	1.44	1.41	1.38	1.8
Others	T ⁹⁰ %	13.91	8.27	6.5	6.92	6.99	6.06	7.35	4.34	4.74
	M ⁹⁰ %	49.73	36.47	40.42	34.75	33.77	30.64	33.06	25.43	22.85
	F ⁹⁰ %	7.49	6.26	4.18	4.59	5.36	4.52	5.52	3.25	3.7

Source- Census of India 2001 and 2011

These data reflect the gender-specific migration trends in Uttar Pradesh, where females migrate predominantly for marriage, while males migrate for employment and other reasons. The disparity between male and female migration for work, business, and education highlights the continued influence of traditional gender roles on regional migration decisions.

Rural to urban migration stream

Figure 03 presents the rural-to-urban migration trends in Bundelkhand Districts and Uttar Pradesh based on census data from 1991, 2001, and 2011. The migration percentage rose from 3.64% in 1991 to 14.08% in 2011, highlighting the steady movement of rural populations towards urban centres in search of better employment, education, and living standards. Jhansi recorded the highest growth, with migration increasing from 7.08% to 31.15% over two decades, while Jalaun and Hamirpur also showed moderate rises. Most districts experienced a decline between 1991 and 2001, followed by a partial recovery by 2011, reflecting the changing rural push and urban pull dynamics. Chitrakoot consistently reported the lowest migration levels, suggesting limited urban infrastructure or opportunities. These trends indicate that urbanised districts such as Jhansi and Jalaun benefit from stronger rural-to-urban connectivity, whereas stagnation in places such as Mahoba and Chitrakoot points to infrastructural and economic challenges. Overall, increasing rural-to-urban migration underscores the growing influence of urban amenities and economic prospects in shaping population movements.

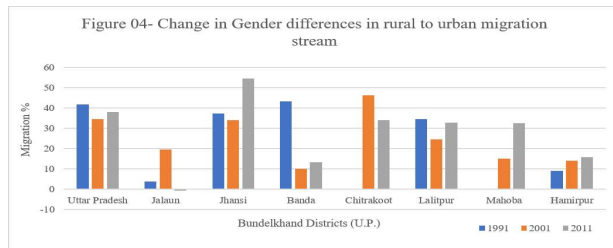


Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

Change in Gender differences in rural to urban migration stream

Figure 04 shows how women and men migrating from villages to cities in Bundelkhand districts of Uttar Pradesh have changed over time, based on census data from 1991, 2001, and 2011. Women consistently led rural-to-urban migration, although the gender gap narrowed slightly from 41.78% in 1991 to 37.88% in 2011, showing a gradual rise in male migration. In Jhansi, female migration increased sharply, reaching a high gender difference of 54.48% in

2011. In contrast, Banda saw a steep decline in female migration between 1991 and 2001. Jalaun presents a unique case where by 2011, slightly more men than women were migrating (-0.84% gender difference).



Source- Census of India 1991, 2001 and 2011

These variations reflect local factors such as employment opportunities, education, marriage patterns, and cultural norms. Men usually migrate for jobs, whereas women move for both work and marriage. Overall, although women continue to dominate rural-to-urban migration, men's involvement has steadily grown owing to changing economic and social conditions.

Causes of Rural to urban migration in Bundelkhand Region, Uttar Pradesh

Table 05 shows that in 2011, rural-to-urban migration in Uttar Pradesh and its Bundelkhand districts was mainly driven by marriage, which accounted for 40.19% of migration at the state level and reached as high as 49.48% in Jhansi. This shows that marriage, particularly among women, is a major reason for moving to urban areas. Work and employment were the second most important causes, accounting for 19.05% of migration in the state, with Lalitpur showing the highest share at 20.45%. Migration along with family was another key factor, especially in Chitrakoot, where 31.29% of the people moved for household reasons. Education-related migration was much lower, with Banda having the highest rate, at only 2.92%. Overall, these patterns reflect the strong role of cultural traditions in migration decisions, while also highlighting economic reasons. The low migration rates for education and business suggest a need for better educational facilities and entrepreneurial opportunities in Bundelkhand's urban areas to encourage broader reasons for migration.

Table 05- Causes Of Rural to Urban Migration In Bundelkhand Region, Uttar Pradesh

State/District & Census year										
Causes of migration	Migrants	Uttar Pradesh		Jalaun	Jhansi	Lalitpur	Hamirpur	Mahoba	Banda	Chitrakoot
		2001	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011	2011
Work/Emp.	T ^W %	17.36	19.05	18.33	16.84	20.45	17.16	16.15	18.01	17.12
	M ^W %	47.51	45.78	44.49	46.95	51.71	47.5	43.84	45.05	43.89
	F ^W %	1.76	2.57	2.1	1.91	1.92	1.9	2.44	1.97	2.13
Business	T ^B %	0.73	0.98	0.79	0.76	0.95	1.26	1.14	1.13	1.03
	M ^B %	1.66	1.83	1.74	1.59	2.27	3.19	2.74	2.76	2.45
	F ^B %	0.25	0.46	0.2	0.35	0.16	0.28	0.34	0.16	0
Education	T ^E %	1.9	1.94	2.56	2.31	1.87	2.22	1.98	2.92	0.24
	M ^E %	4.72	3.68	5.02	4.7	3.67	4.92	4.29	5.64	3.12
	F ^E %	0.44	0.87	1.03	1.13	0.8	0.85	0.83	1.3	0.86
Marriage	T ^M %	45.32	40.19	40.05	49.48	43.9	47.9	47.95	43.3	40.41
	M ^M %	1.56	1.99	1.55	2.06	1.6	2.3	3.1	1.74	1.35
	F ^M %	67.97	63.72	63.93	72.98	68.98	70.85	70.14	67.97	62.25
with HH	T ^{HH} %	22.23	26.09	28.11	20.34	23.12	21.74	23.08	25.45	31.29
	M ^{HH} %	25.95	29.65	30.78	27.24	26.38	24.53	29.68	29.78	34.73
	F ^{HH} %	20.31	23.9	26.45	16.92	21.19	20.34	19.82	22.87	29.37
Others	T ^O %	12.46	11.75	10.17	10.28	9.71	9.72	9.71	9.19	9.91
	M ^O %	18.6	17.06	16.42	17.46	14.38	17.56	16.35	15.03	14.47
	F ^O %	9.27	8.48	6.29	6.71	6.95	5.78	6.43	5.73	5.39

T**%- Total % M**%- Male % F**%- Female %

Source- Census of India 2001 and 2011

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of internal migration streams in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh reveals a complex interplay of cultural traditions and economic transformations. Over the two decades examined, rural-to-rural migration has remained the largest stream, but exhibits a gradual decline, signifying incremental improvements in rural infrastructure and livelihood options that reduce the necessity for inter-village movement. At the same time, the steady rise in rural-to-urban migration reflects the expanding influence of urban labour markets, educational facilities, and health services, indicating an ongoing transition towards an urban-oriented regional economy. Gendered patterns remain striking: female migration continues to be dominated by marriage-related moves, whereas male migration is more strongly linked to employment and business opportunities. Although the gender graph in certain streams has narrowed, the persistence of marriage as the primary cause of female migration provides the enduring weight of social norms and shapes migration decisions. These findings highlight the need for policies that address both the push and pull factors underlying migration by strengthening rural employment opportunities, enhancing access education and skill development, and ensuring gender-responsive programs that can reduce distress migration while supporting those who migrate for economic advancement. This will allow migration to function not only as a coping strategy but also as a tool for the balanced and inclusive regional development of Bundelkhand.

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