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***UNDERSTANDING NON-PERMANENT OUT-MIGRATION PATTERNS IN RURAL
RAJASTHAN: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE INFLUENCE OF HOUSEHOLD
ENDOWMENTS***

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	9
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
ABBREVIATIONS	13
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	14
CHAPTER 1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	17
1.1 INTRODUCTION	17
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	22
1.3 MIGRATION STRATEGIES: DEFINITIONS	23
1.4 THESIS METHODOLOGY	27
1.4.1 SOUTHERN RAJASTHAN: CONTEXTUAL FEATURES	29
1.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ENDOWMENTS	35
1.5.1 TYPOLOGY OF MIGRATING RURAL HOUSEHOLDS	37
1.6 MIGRATION STRATEGIES	41
1.6.1 SEASONAL MIGRATION	41
1.6.2 COMMUTING MIGRANTS	42
1.6.3 SEMI-PERMANENT (SP) MIGRANTS	43
1.7 CONCLUSIONS: FRAMEWORK AND OUTCOMES	44
1.7.1 SUMMARY	46
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW: CONCEPTUAL & EMPIRICAL CONSIDERATIONS	47
2.1 INTRODUCTION	47
2.2 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK	51
2.3 INITIAL ENDOWMENTS AND CAPITALS FRAMEWORK	56
2.3.1 CASTE: DETERMINANT OF THE ENDOWMENTS	57
2.3.2 POLITICAL CAPITAL: POLITICAL POWER	59
2.3.3 SOCIAL CAPITAL: SOCIAL NETWORKS	61
2.3.4 PHYSICAL CAPITAL: LAND & TYPE OF HOME	64
2.3.5 HUMAN CAPITAL: EDUCATION AND SKILLS	66
2.4 MIGRATION STRATEGIES	69
2.4.1 SEASONAL MIGRATION	69
2.4.2 COMMUTING	73
2.4.3 SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION	76
2.5 CONCLUSION	78
CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES: TRACING THE MIGRATION PATTERNS	79
3.1 INTRODUCTION	79
3.1.1 FIELDWORK CHOICES: MULTI-SITED APPROACH	80
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	82
3.3 PHASE I: LOCATING THE SOURCE AND DESTINATION	84
3.3.1 UDAIPUR DISTRICT: KOTRA AND KHERWARA BLOCKS	85
3.3.2 UDAIPUR CITY	88
3.3.3 REFLECTIONS	92
3.4 PHASE II: DEFINING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED MIGRATION STRATEGIES	93
3.4.1 ASPUR BLOCK: NANDLI SAGORA VILLAGE PANCHAYAT	94
3.4.2 ASPUR BLOCK DEVELOPMENT TOWN	96
3.4.3 SAGWARA BLOCK: BORIYA FALA	98

3.4.4	REFLECTIONS	99
3.5	METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS	100
3.5.1	SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	100
3.5.2	INFORMAL INTERACTIONS AND OBSERVATION	101
3.5.3	FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS	102
3.5.4	ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER: RESEARCH BIAS & ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	103
3.6	ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK	106
3.6.1	DATA ANALYSIS	106
3.6.2	DATA REPRESENTATION	107
3.6.3	SUMMARY	107

CHAPTER 4 – SEASONAL MIGRATION & HOUSEHOLD ENDOWMENTS: AN ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY

4.1	INTRODUCTION	109
4.2	SEASONAL MIGRATION STRATEGY: INITIAL FINDINGS	111
4.3	AN INTERFACE OF SEASONAL MIGRATION AND TRIBAL HOUSEHOLDS	114
4.3.1	INTRA-HOUSEHOLD ROLES IN SEASONAL MIGRATION	115
4.3.2	CULTURE AND HISTORY: SCHEDULED TRIBES	116
4.3.3	POLITICAL POWER AND WELFARE	117
4.3.4	SEASONAL MIGRATION & ST GROUPS: UNPACKING SEASONALITY	118
4.3.5	SEASONAL MIGRATION: “IDIOSYNCRATIC SHOCKS”	120
4.4	ILLUSTRATIONS: SEASONAL MIGRATION	121
4.4.1	ILLUSTRATION 1: KHEMJI	123
4.4.2	ILLUSTRATION 2: MEENU AND BAKU	126
4.4.3	ILLUSTRATION 3: KANHA AND RAMJIBAI	130
4.4.4	ILLUSTRATION 4: RAMAN AND GHUMLIBAI	134
4.5	CONCLUSION	140

CHAPTER 5 – COMMUTING & HOUSEHOLD ENDOWMENTS: AN ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY

5.1	INTRODUCTION	143
5.2	INITIAL FINDINGS	144
5.3	INTERFACE BETWEEN COMMUTERS AND HOUSEHOLDS	149
5.3.1	MARKET-TOWN: SOCIAL GROUPS THAT COMMUTE	150
5.3.2	OBC GROUPS: SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ATTRIBUTES	151
5.3.3	COMMUTING: IMPACT OF URBANIZATION AND <i>MANDIS</i>	153
5.3.4	SKILLS AND COMMUTING: ADAPTING TO THE MARKET.	155
5.3.5	COMMUTERS, FORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND PRIVATE SERVICES	156
5.4	ILLUSTRATIONS: COMMUTING	157
5.4.1	ILLUSTRATION 1: SURABHI AND HER FAMILY	158
5.4.2	ILLUSTRATION 2: MAMAJI	161
5.4.3	ILLUSTRATION 3: NEETABHABHI	164
5.4.4	ILLUSTRATION 4: POLITICAL POWER AND RENU	166
5.5	CONCLUSIONS	169

CHAPTER 6 – SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION & HOUSEHOLD ENDOWMENTS: AN ANALYTICAL COMMENTARY

6.1	INTRODUCTION	171
6.2	INITIAL FINDINGS	173
6.3	INTERFACE OF SEASONAL MIGRATION WITH RURAL HOUSEHOLDS	177
6.3.1	SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRANTS	177
6.3.2	HOUSEHOLD ARRANGEMENTS AND SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION	179

6.3.3	SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION AND INFORMAL MARKETS	181
6.3.4	SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION: URBAN-RURAL OUTCOMES	183
6.4	ILLUSTRATIONS: SEMI-PERMANENT MIGRATION	184
6.4.1	ILLUSTRATION 1: THARI	185
6.4.2	ILLUSTRATION 2: MANJUBAI	188
6.4.3	ILLUSTRATION 3: RAMESH	190
6.4.4	ILLUSTRATION 4: MOHAN	193
6.4.5	ILLUSTRATION 5: BUNNU	196
6.4.6	ILLUSTRATION 6: TABASSUM	199
6.5	CONCLUSIONS	203
CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUDING REMARKS		207
7.1	INTRODUCTION	207
7.2	THE MAIN FINDINGS	207
7.3	REFLECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH	210
7.4	SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS	211
7.5	MIGRATION AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS: A WAY FORWARD	215
BIBLIOGRAPHY		219
APPENDIX		234
A1.	MOST COMMON MIGRANT LOCATIONS AMONG ST GROUPS	234
A2.	CHANGES IN SELF-EMPLOYED MALES IN INDIAN METROPOLITAN CITIES	235
A3.	CHANGES IN NUMBER OF MALE CASUAL LABORERS IN INDIAN METROPOLITAN CITIES	236
A4.	CHILD LABOR AS PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN INDIAN STATES (AGES 10-14)	237
A5.	CHANGES IN SELF-EMPLOYED FEMALES IN INDIAN METROPOLITAN CITIES	238
A6.	CASTE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN DIFFERENT WORK SECTORS	239
A7.	TOTAL MALE MIGRANTS IN DIFFERENT WORK SECTORS	240
A8.	CHANGE IN PARTICIPATION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN RAJASTHAN IN NREGA (2007 TO 2010)	241
A9.	INTERVIEW VIGNETTE FROM ASPUR BLOCK, DUNGARPUR DISTRICT (12/08/2011)	242
A10.	VIGNETTE FROM A SOCIAL WORKER WORKING WITH CHILD MIGRANTS	243
A11.	MAP OF DUNGARPUR DISTRICT	244
A12.	MAP OF SAGWARA BLOCK IN DUNGARPUR DISTRICT	245
A13.	MAP OF TOWNS IN DUNGARPUR DISTRICT	246
A14.	MAP OF UDAIPUR DISTRICT BLOCKS (TEHSILS)	247
A15.	MAP OF KHERWARA BLOCK IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT	248
A16.	MAP OF KOTRA BLOCK IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT	249
A17.	MAP OF TOWNS IN UDAIPUR DISTRICT	250
A18.	SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE	251

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Map of India & Location of Rajasthan	30
Figure 2 – Map of Rajasthan	31
Figure 3 – The Four Capitals.....	57
Figure 4 – Map of Dungarpur District.....	81
Figure 5 – Map of Udaipur District	82
Figure 6 – Map of Udaipur City.....	89
Figure 7 – Group Exercise - Map Showing Bikes.....	96
Figure 8 – Relationship between Migration Strategies & Rural Households.....	111
Figure 9 – Endowments & Indicators	111
Figure 10 – Select Households with Migrant Destinations	146
Figure 11 – OBC Castes from Aspur & Work Sectors	147
Figure 12 – Higher Caste Migrants, Migrant Locations & Work Sectors.....	175

List of Tables

Table 1 – Migration Strategies & Characteristics.....	27
Table 2 – Types of Capitals for Rural Households & Indicators.....	36
Table 3 – Rural Household Typology.....	38
Table 4 – Fieldwork in Two Phases.....	83
Table 5 – Migrant Stories for Seasonal Migration.....	113
Table 6 – Migrant Stories for Commuting.....	148
Table 7 – Migrant Stories on Semi-Permanent Migration.....	176

Abstract

This thesis explores the out-migration patterns in rural Rajasthan that are non-permanent in nature. Within the agrarian livelihood structure of the rural households in the region, out-migration appears to be a significant diversification strategy. The key research question is to understand the impact of initial endowments on the out-migration pathways of different rural households. I identify three specific out-migration strategies that households are likely to undertake: seasonal migration, commuting and semi-permanent migration. To analyze these out-migration strategies, I develop a typology of rural households, influenced by their household endowment structure--Bebbington's (1999) paper on capitals aided in the articulation of household endowments. Endowments layers historical and cultural attributes, social relations, institutional and policy access, among its key components. I apply the dimensions of human capital as education and skills; the dimensions of physical capital as land; the dimensions of political capital as political power and that of social capital as social networks. Caste forms a determining or an explanatory variable across the typology of rural households whereas the changing role of gender in the intra-household decision-making appears to be a critical variable in the backdrop of continued out-migration. Based on these characterizations, I find that the migration strategies are able to access these endowments in a process called "endowment mapping" (Sen, 1997) that reflect on their outcomes, and the path-dependency that the households experience. This means that households are able to undertake the out-migration trajectories are more likely pre-determined based on the household's endowments, maneuvering them towards set outcomes and not others. For instance, households undertaking seasonal migration are likely to use build or defend their existing land assets to continue their subsistence needs. Households undertaking commuting are likely to use reserve capital to improve their access to formal education and participate in local entrepreneurship. Households undertaking semi-permanent migration build on their social networks, a result of their caste and lineage connections which helps them gain access to political institutions and advance their goals of development. I reflect on the out-migration patterns that households voluntarily undertake, thus rewriting the language of development, social policy and livelihood transition. This also means that rural households are actively

shaping their future livelihood trajectories, with elements of non-farm employment, urbanization and lifestyle and skill changes as probable manifestations of participating in neo-liberal growth through out-migration trajectories.

Key Words: *Bebbington, out-migration pathways, rural households, endowments, endowment-mapping.*

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Abbreviations

AB:	Aajeevika Bureau
APL:	Above Poverty Line
BMC:	Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation
BPL:	Below Poverty Line
NABARD:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NREGA/S:	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/Scheme
OBC:	Other Backward Classes
PRA:	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PHC:	Public Health Centre
PL:	Poverty Line
SC:	Scheduled Castes
SECC:	Socio-Economic Caste Census
SP:	Semi-permanent
SSA:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST:	Scheduled Tribes
UiD:	Unique Identification Number

Glossary of Terms

Adivasis: Another term for tribal communities, or first inhabitants of the land.

Anganwadi: Government program that provides education and nutrition facilities for children from age groups 0-6 and to lactating mothers.

Bhils: A type of indigenous tribe that is settled in Central and North-Western regions of India.

Bighas: One bigha land equals to 0.4 hectares of land.

Brahmins: Social group that is also a caste that studies.

General Castes: The castes include higher and medium-level caste groups that do not qualify for any social welfare benefits.

Higher Castes: They occupy the highest status within the Hindu Varna system.

Hindu Varna system: The caste structure in India, a form of social stratification is evoked from the Varna system, from the holy Hindu book of Manusmriti.

Indira Awas Yojana: rural housing scheme, which provides assistance to below poverty line (BPL) households through the village panchayats.

Jajmani System: reciprocal caste relationships between patron-client in village communities based on the economic roles of each of the actors, ensuring social insurance to the clients in the process.

Kharif Crop and Rabi Crop:: Kharif crop is a summer crop such as corn and rice, grown from April to October. Rabi crop is the winter crop such as wheat, grown from mid-November to April-May.

Kheti: harvest, agricultural land.

Market-Towns or Mandis: they consist of non-administered informal market consisting of informal vendors, shops, small enterprises and administrative offices. Mandis appear in all sizes; they are watershed for all development, informal and illegal affairs in the region.

Mate: A local Merwari word for middleman, however mates should not be seen as contractors or businessmen, they are simply trustworthy individuals (not leaders) who were known to people in the village. They receive a salary/wage

from the work site owner and remain responsible for the quality of work that the laborers provide.

Minas / Meenas: a type of indigenous tribe that resides in Central and North-Western regions of India.

Nakas / Chauks: City spots where the migrants usually gather to get daily employment through brokers or owners.

Panchayat: village council, includes a group of villages that the council govern, council members are elected through formal elections.

Phalas: Villages are further divided into phalas that are physical and social divisions within the territory for administrative conveniences, tribal phalas for instance.

Poverty Line (PL): An administrative category of poverty where BPL signifies households below a certain level of income and consumption - in the present scenario, the PL for rural areas is Rs.28 and Rs.32 in urban areas.

Pucca and kachcha houses: Opposites meaning cemented and informal houses.

Rajputs: Social group with patrilineal clans across the North-Western region of India.

Revenue villages: areas in a village that are demarcated by boundaries for revenue purposes.

Rozgar: daily wage employment.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: Government program that guarantees school education for all children through the public schools.

Scheduled Tribes (ST): Scheduled Tribes are a list of notified tribes that include the Minas and Bhils, making them eligible for social welfare benefits and affirmative action programs.

Tea Shops / Canteen: there are different kinds of tea shops that exist in the informal economy in the big cities in India; the ones that I refer to are either small stalls on public pavements or stands inside a shop or a street corner. Note that many of them are also hawkers, hawking their wares/product illegally.

Tehsil (Block): every district has administrative blocks that consist of many panchayats, revenue villages; the block development officer is the highest governing authority in the region.

Chapter 1. Research Questions and Conceptual Framework

1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores out-migration patterns from rural households to urban, semi-urban and rural locations to work in non-farm and off-farm¹ activities. The study adds to the literature on temporary and long-term circular out-migration and explores strategies followed by specific social groups, along with the factors influencing strategy selection. It looks at a single moment of transition in rural livelihoods from agrarian and allied activities to decidedly diverse, non-farm income activities at migrant locations in underdeveloped regions of Rural Rajasthan in Northern India. Diversification² of farm households into multiple income sources is a pervasive and enduring character of agrarian livelihoods (Ellis 2000, 290). This thesis aims to fill a needed gap in the literature by unpacking out-migration strategies that reflect on the household endowments of types of rural households, understanding their motivations, their “voice” and the manifestation of changes on the household conditions during the process of out-migration.

I analyze out-migration patterns as non-permanent migration, understanding the movement of people searching for temporary working opportunities who intend to return permanently to their village of origin. The regular return migrations occur because the rural households are mostly petty landowning homes³; it is notable though that there is relative disparity on the amount of landholding between different households. It is likely that non-permanence of their migration strategies is strongly intertwined with the household’s land ownership, compelling them to defend, build or maintain their land resources at home through their migration practices. I define at least three such

¹ Non-farm activities include activities that are employment options to the rural labor outside of agrarian and allied work. Off-farm activities are distinct from farm activities as it refers to wage employment or sharecropping from farm-related activities on another’s land (Barrett, Reardon, and Webb 2001).

² Diversification in rural livelihoods implies diversifying from farm income to other income-sources and may imply a change of vocation and skills.

³ There are landless families in many other rural contexts in India that regularly migrate--Breman (1995) has explored some of these narratives from Gujarat but in the context of rural Rajasthan, even the poorest households own land.

movements that encompass the repertoire of non-permanent migration strategies in the given context: these include seasonal migration, commuting and semi-permanent migration. Rural household members rotate between source and destination⁴ in such a way that “the locus of their life is back in the village” (Skeldon 2012, 51). Often referred to as circular migrants, they bring back resources to source communities, sustaining their traditional livelihoods. However, out-migration strategies are diverse, not only in their temporal and spatial characteristics but also because of what they mean to the household’s future. In effect, out-migration is viewed as not merely an ad-hoc survival strategy for households to escape poverty but one that many kinds of households employ to improve their social position. As such, the household’s initial position, or endowments play an important role in their migration strategy, and their outcomes or well-being depend on how they are able expand their initial resource base through the migration process.

The description of a kind of inescapable ‘path dependent’ curse for India’s poor is supported in the research literature. A household’s initial condition determines their members’ life expectations, whether they stay in the village or migrate in search of better opportunities. No matter how different the migration movements are, most rural migrants play a transient and a replaceable role in the informal labor market. However, this dissertation also points out at least two caveats to this tragic determinism. First, welfare policies play an important role in shaping the opportunities of rural households. Frequently, well-intentioned policies may end up reducing the poorest households’ options by setting up misaligned incentives. Alternatively, there is the hope that better informed and better designed policies could improve poor household’s opportunities. Second, non-permanent rural migration may not have the long-term consequence of transforming livelihoods for rural households, but rather it may represent a more temporary solution to a larger, somewhat more precarious livelihood transition. In this sense, out-migration may be a way of gaining time. People do not migrate to the cities looking for a forced insertion into ‘urban development’ but instead, use their exposure to urban employment and lifestyle to maintain their space in their villages waiting for the development to reach there.

⁴ The source refers to the villages that the rural labor migrates from and destination refers to the farm and non-farm work sites at the urban, semi-urban and rural locations that they migrate to.

Migration has been a common feature among certain rural communities in India in pre-colonial and colonial periods but Osella and Gardner's (2004) edited volume of papers highlight the influence of modernization on long-distance migration. In addition, some ethnographic accounts argue how social transformation alongside the improvement in transport infrastructure and communication technology influence migration processes (Osella and Gardner 2004). Nevertheless, different groups undertake different out-migration strategies. Some groups still migrate for months, but others choose seasonal migration or they commute. These options are especially beneficial to poor households with limited resources to migrate out. In this research, I find that out-migration is a voluntary activity but the results from it vary depending on the initial endowments of the household. In a pioneering livelihood framework, Scoones (1998) was the first to identify different forms of capital --physical, political, social, natural, financial and human capital-- that determine a household's livelihood strategies (Scoones 1998). Using at least four capital types, I have identified four indicators defining the endowment structure of different out-migration strategies undertaken by rural households in South Rajasthan. The four indicators include: land, education and skills, political power and social networks⁵. Loosely using this articulation of household endowments, I argue in this thesis that initial endowments influence the household's out-migration pathways.

Within the repertoire of livelihood diversification strategies for poor and non-poor households, commuting in developing countries is an evolving income-earning strategy. The advent of market towns⁶ in underdeveloped regions has changed the nature of rural labor and the rural labor market, providing commuting opportunities for new as well as return migrants. Seasonal out-migration involves wage employment on agricultural farms or at work sites during agricultural off-seasons. Semi-permanent migration or long-term, long-distance migration to metropolitan cities, undertaken by members of rural elites continues to remain attractive to some households from underdeveloped regions. Finally, I analyze the influence of public employment policies such as Mahatma Gandhi

⁵ To analyze these endowments, I also delve into the role of caste as an explanatory variable of initial resource capitals of the households as well as role of women as a crosscutting variable that influences the out-migration pathways.

⁶ Market towns are defined as small marketplaces with retail and wholesale stores that buy and sell local produce as well as consumer packaged goods (CPG) products.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme or NREGA, which guarantees daily wage labor to poor households. Initiated in 2006, it guarantees 100-day employment to rural labor in the local councils at a competitive wage rate⁷.

This thesis may be summarized in four brief statements:

- (i) There are different forms of non-permanent migrant movements from source to destination.
- (ii) The initial conditions of the household, what in this thesis I call “endowments”, are powerful determinants of household members’ migrations strategies.
- (iii) The number of available strategies is limited, and may be classified into three distinctive types: seasonal migration, commuting and semi-permanent migration.
- (iv) Different strategies have differing (or varying) potential to improve well-being⁸ of migrants and left-behind members of the household at source.

In this thesis, I have used rural household as a unit of analysis. This is because it aims to capture the point of view of migrants as well as left-behind members, also highlighting the narrative of intra-household dynamics that influences the flow of endowments. Rural households⁹ in North India are male-headed, joint family systems where the “optimal rational choice” such as financial decisions, inheritance laws, value-systems naturally undermine the agency of women¹⁰ (Robert Chambers and Conway 1991). Women’s roles are important to enabling out-migration in rural households. The

⁷ The type of labor is manual in nature, the locally appointed secretary and engineer contextually designs the public works such as building dams, bridges or digging ponds, to name a few.

⁸ There are many definitions of well-being, including Sen (1998) defining it as “capability” and Haith and Harriss-White (1999) defining it as a measure of the “quality of life” (Saith and Harriss-White 1999) but here, I define well-being in a specific sense, well-being stands for how the rural households use their migration experience and remittances to change their household condition. This is crucial.

⁹ De Haan (1997) rightly argues the use of the term family, in the place of a “household” which is a mere economic unit. While a household is the place of hearth, family is the place of identity and belonging. However, in this thesis I have used the census term of “household” in order to qualify families that are nuclear, joint, broken or only consisting of left-behind members.

¹⁰ In complete contrast to the male-dominated migrant streams in India, the women dominate the migrant streams in Filipina households (Lauby and Stark 1988) and other South Asian countries. In fact, IOM (2005) notes that single-men migrant streams have not taken the form of autonomous female migrant streams due to social acceptability, or a lack of it thereof (Mendola 2010, 107).

women from better-off families are left behind¹¹ but poor women from smallholder households often participate in informal employment. Nevertheless social norms limit them to very insecure and poorly paid wage work in the informal sector (Narayan and Petesch 2007, 8). Public employment programs such as NREGA create incentives to improve women's participation in order to rectify the historical and sociocultural disadvantage to women seeking wage work (Khera and Nayak 2009; Jandu 2008)¹². Therefore despite the continuing domination of existing patriarchal values, women's involvement and financial participation as wage workers and left-behind members is significant (Kabeer 2005). However, it must not be seen as emancipatory (De Haas and van Rooij 2010). I will explore the changing roles of women in each of the migration strategies, highlighting their decision-making strategies, personal goals and individual circumstances as they influence their family's migration pathways (Maya Unnithan-Kumar 2004, 168).

As part of the conceptual framework of this thesis, I use Bebbington's (1999) capitals and capabilities framework (Bebbington 1999) to explore the impact of household resource structure on their out-migration strategies which in turn influences their well-being. In the first step, I analyze the rural household's initial endowments in order to define their migration strategy. In a second step, I explore each one of these migration strategies and explain what drives the different households to undertake them. Finally, I draw linkages between the strategies and the possible outcomes that emerge for the households using this particular migration strategy. Having carefully analyzed the combination of migration strategies based on the household's specific endowments, the results from out-migration for the households are analyzed. This analysis is a break away from the conventional frameworks on poverty or migration in rural areas, demonstrating the influence of out-migration on pathways of development for rural households.

¹¹ Note that "left-behind" has been purposefully used here, instead of commonly used "stay behind" due to a lack of agency that a woman can wield in a patrilineal set-up

¹² Even as these papers strongly present a case of women's empowerment (Khera and Nayak 2009; Jandu 2008; Narayanan and Das 2014), there are many existing structural barriers including an unequal power structure that disempower the women despite the policy incentive. For instance, in cases when the women had their own bank account due to their participation at NREGS, they could not decide how to use the earnings in Rajasthan in this study (Sudarshan 2011). Similarly, crèche facilities guaranteed in the scheme remain unavailable for participating women with children as accompaniments at work sites (ibid).

Through the analysis of non-permanent out-migration, the thesis also adds to knowledge on the impact of social policy on the condition of the rural households.

In the following sections of this chapter, the dissertation explores the overarching themes of the thesis been briefly introduced so far. The research questions have been articulated in 1.2. Section 1.3 describes the basic definitions of migration strategies followed by 1.4, explaining the methodology and fieldwork trajectory with descriptions of the locations. In 1.5, I build a conceptual framework outlining the typology of rural households. Section 1.6 further defines each of the migration strategies analyzed through the lens of the conceptual framework. Lastly, I summarize the conclusions in Section 1.7.

1.2 Research Questions

The dissertation is structured around three main research questions:

- I. What different non-permanent migration strategies do the rural households adopt?
- II. How do different factors influence the way rural households select their out-migration strategy?
- III. In what way do different out-migration strategies influence the household's outcomes?

The first question explores existing non-permanent out-migration undertaken by rural agrarian households. This question identifies the characteristics of different out-migration strategies, including their contextual features, the temporal features; highlight the main features of the migration strategies. Since I was primarily interested in understanding migration strategies followed by different population groups in the informal labor industry, the laborers who were interviewed and observed undertook different types of work. In outlining and differentiating each migration strategy, where the interviewees worked and how long they were able to work there, was significant. The question primarily aims to confirm the potential differences in the non-permanent migration strategies practiced by rural households.

The second question is to explore different dimensions of the migration strategies in order to analyze why some groups undertake specific migration trajectories and not others. Therefore, it was critical here to determine which factors were instrumental for

different groups following specific out-migration strategies. An understanding of these factors facilitated creating a typology of rural households and a definitive understanding of migration strategies. The analysis of the household's endowments was at the center of building this analysis.

The final question explores the results of non-permanent out-migration strategies, determining the impact of out-migration on the household's endowments. I explore in what way migration has been able to influence household resource structure. Given the initial conditions that were able to push people to undertake specific migration strategies, the outcomes will explore which conditions of the household endowments emerged from migration cycles. Therefore, this last question uncovers the reasons for future out-migration routes for different rural households.

1.3 Migration Strategies: Definitions

The definition of out-migration from rural areas has often been restricted to seasonal migrant flows, especially the distress-driven flows. In fact, the recent 66th round of National Sample Survey of India (NSS) captures the economic activity status of individuals on the basis of their daily, weekly and yearly activities -- results that are analyzed to generalize migrant streams (National Sample Survey Office of India (NSSO) 2013). Such a strategy focuses more on short-term rural out-migrant movements. In this thesis, I argue that seasonal migration forms just *one* kind of an out-migration strategy and that the rural labor cycles within the informal labor economy for different reasons and time periods. In addition to seasonal migrants, I discuss the features of commuter and semi-permanent migrants who engage in different occupations at destination, resulting from different conditions at home. The central feature of all non-permanent migration strategies is the return of laborers to their source communities. The reasons and implications of return remain conspicuously absent in the literature of the subject. The process of out-migration is extremely crucial to understanding non-permanent migration strategies since the migrant streams often lack citizenship rights at destination. Non-permanence of migration strategies also implies that rural households are able to maintain social and cultural links with the place of origin, allowing them to accept and make the most of the process of out-migration. All of the non-permanent migrant streams are determined by the household's initial endowments, which in turn depend (or

rely) on social relations between rural households and interaction between households, markets and public policy.

Below, I will first discuss the different strategy categories of non-permanent out-migration, and explain why these different strategies are relevant to the study of rural livelihoods. The following are the migration strategy categories frequently used in development studies contexts:

- i. Seasonal migration
- ii. Commuting
- iii. Semi-permanent migration

Seasonal migration can be defined as short-term, off-season employment activities undertaken by poor small-farm households at migrant locations. Seasonal migration is undertaken for two main reasons: 1) coping mechanism to survive from sudden losses 2) habitual activity during agricultural off-seasons. The movement occurs in non-farm and off-farm activities, for small periods of time -- from a few weeks to a couple of months. The impact of the migration strategy is dependent largely on the household's initial condition at the time of migration.

Seasonal migration that leads to off-farm wage labor or shareholding on a landlord's farm has been defined as one of the most vulnerable forms of rural labor, often leading to bonded labor¹³ and severe discrimination. Non-farm wage labor leads to daily wage jobs in labor-intensive industries such as construction, brick kilns, and mining. These unskilled non-farm jobs that are usually unskilled and manual and often require many long working hours. The main reasons for seasonal migration are embedded in the needs of the family. While, needs is a highly relative concept, here I define needs as debt repayment and nutrition requirements. Migrant streams for seasonal migration are often sporadic and dependent on the availability of information -- the role of "*mates*"¹⁴ remains

¹³ Bonded labor is an uneasy but consistent reality associated with off-farm labor employment ((Finn 1991; Molfenter 2013). The thesis touches upon it in the theoretical framework, including a story on child labor on cotton farms.

¹⁴ A local Merwari word for a local contractor or middleman who provides casual work on worksites to local laborers. He is contracted by the owner, and remains responsible for the quality of work that the laborers provide.

at the centre of many off-farm movements whereas the role of the “*nakas*” or “*chauks*”¹⁵ appears to be the most common medium to find non-farm wage employment in metropolitan cities. Therefore, seasonal migration is the most temporary of all migration strategies, one that involves short-term fulfillment of needs and desires.

Commuting is an emerging migration strategy for rural households in underdeveloped regions. Unlike other migration strategies, it does not necessitate a change of residence¹⁶. Commuting means that the rural laborer migrates back and forth on a daily or weekly basis. This strategy is strongly intertwined with growing local markets and industry. Local markets imply newly developing nearby towns (or census towns with populations of 10,000 and more, as they are classified in Indian population studies) as well as emerging retail markets in the district headquarters where clusters of villages are situated. Growing urbanization means that migrants are able to capitalize their labor and explore non-farm employment opportunities in markets closer to home. In this research, I explore the commuting patterns of household members undertaking petty self-employment in the local market towns, influencing their endowments while catering to the changing needs of the rural consumer, more “neoliberal” in character each day. The availability of private vehicles and growing private transport facilitates the availability of nodal points between remote villages and local markets. The growth of ICT¹⁷, especially mobile phones, is an important factor facilitating commuting. To sum up, commuting is a critical migration strategy that guarantees stability, one that requires that the households have reserve capital to build on.

Semi-permanent migration involves long-term, long-distance migration in contractual and self-employment jobs that facilitates return to source communities once or twice a year during the period of employment. This type of migration involves

¹⁵ Nakas or chowks can be defined as street corners where the laborers gather together in order to look for daily wage work. It is an informal set-up. Naka has symbolic value as it signifies a meeting place between free labor and contractors where manual labor work is offered at a stipulated wage rate.

¹⁶ It is for this reason that some studies do not consider commuting as a migrant strategy – since national surveys such as NSS qualify the migration status of the laborer based on their last place of residence. However, in this thesis the criteria of distinction between migration strategies extend beyond temporal and spatial features: it is the shift in the livelihood characteristics, based on the endowments held by the household that constitute a migration strategy.

¹⁷ Information and communication technology such as the spread of the Internet, use of technology for business transactions and mobile phones are a common mode of communication.

movement of unskilled and semi-skilled migrants to metropolitan cities that provides employment opportunities in informal labor markets such as street vending. These migrants return home at times coinciding with religious festivals or important family events (Breman 1985, 255). Unlike seasonal migration, the key reason of semi-permanent migration strategy is embedded in maintaining the high social status of the households in their village communities, and facilitating upward social mobility to improve their initial situation. Specific endowments such as social capital and access to ICT that channels patronage among clan groups, enhances this out-migration strategy. It is for this reason that the semi-permanent migrant streams are extremely specialized and closed, favoring kin over non-clan friendships. This migration strategy implies strong urban-rural and rural-urban linkages but also a shift in identity especially among the diaspora/transnational migrant¹⁸. This occurs because the migration strategy necessitates longer stays for migrants outside their source communities. Commuting and semi-permanent migration are male-dominated migrant streams. To sum up, semi-permanent migration involves more economic risks at destination but also leads to accumulative results at source -- an impact stronger than any of the three migration strategies.

In summary, the thesis explores three important out-migration strategies. Seasonal migration consists of casual wage labor migrant streams that address the immediate needs of the rural households, requiring little initial capital. It is noted that commuting and semi-permanent migrations are likely to be the more profiteering strategies that are available to rural households with available reserve capital. In Table 1 below, I present a brief list of characteristics and types of jobs in each of the three migration strategies described above.

¹⁸ Such migrants inhabit the cultural space between the rural villages and the cities or what Zelinsky calls “stretched life worlds”(Zelinsky 2001). Ammassari (2009) in her study on return migration of Ghanaian immigrants who work abroad for many years presents the voice of a 50-year old immigrant, working in London and experiencing the lack of a clear cultural identity – *“There is a bit of a dichotomy because when you go back on a holiday they say – oh you’re so English, and when you’re here they say – Oh you’re so African or you’re so Ghanaian. You can’t seem to win”* (Ammassari 2009, 180)

Table 1 – Migration Strategies & Characteristics

Out Migration Strategies	Temporal & Spatial Characteristics	Types of Jobs
Seasonal Migration	Two-three months a year on a large farm; two weeks to a month to a non-farm work site	Wage laborer on another's farm; daily / contract laborer on non-farm construction sites
Commuting	Daily or weekly basis to self-owned shop or as employee in a shop or mining site	Self-employment, petty trades
Semi-Permanent Migration	Up to six months or more in metropolitan cities or international locations	Self-employment, hawking, shop owners and wage workers

1.4 Thesis Methodology

The methodology used to undertake the thesis is influenced by a combination of qualitative approaches. I began to study the phenomenon of non-permanent migration through the available literature on the subject, including the available anthropological readings of Breman on the landless poor in Gujarat, India (Breman 1985). Around this time, Ellis' (2000) discussion of diversification in agrarian livelihoods became critical to understanding the conceptual discourse on the subject. Thereafter, the research questions were juxtaposed with the context such that the patterns of out-migration strategies emerged organically. I undertook the fieldwork in select village communities in Rural Udaipur in December 2010 but due to the constraints of my grant, I was not able to stay out of Bilbao for more than two months at a time. I was aware of some of the basic livelihood and climatic features of Udaipur District where I had previously worked as an intern in 2009-10. In addition, the methodological strategies developed and evolved as I engaged more with the research questions during fieldwork. Semi-structured interviews, FGDs and consultative interviews with NGO partners remained the common methodological tools that were used during fieldwork.

The fieldwork was initially focused on understanding short-term, circular migration as a livelihood strategy; therefore tribal villages in Udaipur district were selected. However during this time, it became certain that there was more than one non-

permanent migration strategy at play, and the migration strategies may differ and vary across households and villages. The participant observation and interviews pointed at existing knowledge that pre-conditioned the household to be able to undertake a specific migration strategy--it decided *what role they are likely to play in the informal labor economy*. In order to uncover this pre-existing knowledge, my fieldwork strategy involved dividing time between the Udaipur city at *nakas* and remote and non-remote villages in Udaipur district to understand the kind of migrant jobs available to rural households. Thereafter it was clear that permanent out-migration was an extremely rare occurrence among the households in these regions, and most of the migrants were small and marginal landowners. All of these features of rural households were valid reasons to return to the region in June 2011.

In June 2011 and 2012, the methodological strategy was focused on uncovering the diversity of out-migration strategies and the factors that remained at the centre of these strategies. I describe this time of the fieldwork process as Phase II of my thesis for two reasons: 1) I focused my time in the village communities of Aspur block of Dungarpur district, south of Udaipur district, which during this period remained the point of departure, and 2) this period involved more methodological rigor, during which I explored the diversity of the study sample and strengthened the research questions. An NGO office working on migrant rights in the Gujarat-Rajasthan belt was based out of Aspur block that remained my base during Phase II of the research. Having spent two to three months on average per year from 2010 to 2012, I undertook purposive sampling at each of the select fieldwork sites. This method is often termed a “multi-sited approach.” It also included tracking down migrants from source to destination, which I undertook on one occasion from Boriya Fala village in Dungarpur village to Ahmedabad city.

Having identified each of three migration strategies that I highlighted in 1.2 above, I undertook five to six interviews each with migrants and left-behind members who practiced or had practiced either seasonal migration, commuting or semi-permanent migration as non-permanent migration strategies. The interviews with rural households were a long-winded process. These that lasted anywhere from two hours to a few days, with scattered information forthcoming each time. Since I traveled to most of these villages during monsoons, many of the household members were out in the fields, so I spent time with them sporadically. The purpose of these interviews was to understand 1) the point of view of the participant on out-migration, 2) the endowment structure that

the household had at the time of migration and on their return, 3) their understanding of the impact of out-migration through different life stages, and 4) the changes occurring in the household/community/village resulting from out-migration. While not all interviews followed a similar/straightforward trajectory, I balanced the flow of conversation on these themes. Most of the interviews were recorded on my phone as well as fieldwork notes in my diary. Transcriptions took place soon after or after a space of a week, depending on when electricity and Internet connectivity was available. The analysis involved manually coding themes that emerged from each of the migrant stories. In the data analysis, I present vignettes from the participant interviews based on specific themes in order to support and elaborate each migration strategy, highlighting individual contexts of migration.

In the next section, I highlight the specific characteristics of the districts of Udaipur and Dungarpur in rural South Rajasthan. I explain the reasons for choosing this for fieldwork, as well as contextual social and cultural characteristics associated with the migrating rural households.

1.4.1 Southern Rajasthan: Contextual Features

In this section, I discuss a number of key features of the select areas of Southern Rajasthan, making it a favorable choice for a study on out-migration patterns. This region is characterized by the following livelihood features 1) The existence of a majority tribal population (Bhils and Minas), 2) routinely practiced small-scale agriculture on small and medium-sized landholdings, 3) rain-fed agriculture 4) wide-spread underdevelopment and lack of industry, 5) introduction of NREGA and 6) strong socio-cultural ties and an existing hegemony of caste-roles. An interface of these factors is responsible for the manifestation of diverse out-migration strategies as practiced by the different rural households. The two distinctive reasons that sets apart the region of Udaipur and Dungarpur districts in Southern Rajasthan include - 1) rural households that have identities that are historically defined by their role in the pre-independence, princely past, 2) out-migration options in non-farm employment form the *central* diversification strategy for poor and non-poor households. I will unpack these factors in the following sections to briefly understand the linkages between migration strategies, context and ensuing conclusions. I will explain how these factors tie together with the research questions.



Figure 1 – Map of India & Location of Rajasthan

Rajasthan state, indicated in the North-Western region of India in Figure 1 above, is classified as one of the most backward states in the country since India's independence in 1947 characterized by high human mortality, severe weather conditions and poor development indicators¹⁹. Udaipur district lies in the Mewar region whereas Dungarpur lies in the Vagad region, both former princely states. The ST²⁰ communities including Bhils²¹, Minas and Sahariyas dominate the districts of Udaipur and Dungarpur. The

¹⁹ Rajasthan state along with other northern and central states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh were identified in the mid 1980's as BIMARU (meaning sick in Hindi) states, with low industrial development and alarming human development indicators. Of these states, Bihar recorded the highest growth rates according to a Government report in 2013, and Rajasthan continued to lag behind much of their human development targets especially education and poor growth of industry (S. Mishra 2013).

²⁰ Indigenous groups were classified as scheduled tribes and backward castes were classified as scheduled castes. In order to compensate for the lack of development among these groups, reservations in education and employment institutions offered them new opportunities.

²¹ There has been insufficient discussion on the terminologies concerning the tribals in the region. We call them Bhils here, and elsewhere they have been termed as Minas or Adivasis and STs. Bhils and Minas are separate tribal groups, with many texts claiming them as early inhabitants of the land (Mann 1993, 94; Doshi 1978, 62). They have been scheduled under the tribal development plans of the state (STs) and often referred to as Adivasi (member of aboriginal tribe).

districts of Tribal South are described as rain-fed regions with few irrigation pockets; migration makes for two-fifth of the total household income (Human Development Resource Centre 2004). Unlike other areas of rural Rajasthan, incidence of landlessness is low among rural households in the Tribal South even though they own even but small landholdings. Average landholdings in Southern Rajasthan are quite small—1.4 hectares per household on average, or 0.25 hectares per capita (given average sample household size of 5.5) (Krishna 2002, 34). The medium landowners belong to the upper caste groups that I term “rural elites”.

Generally speaking, agricultural intensification and mechanization is uncommon in regions of Tribal South²², including Dungarpur and Udaipur districts that still use bullocks for the hilly terrains and have small landholdings (Human Development Resource Centre 2004, 26). Therefore, livestock rearing is a common source of supplementary income for tribal households, sheep and goats being the latest addition to animal husbandry.



Figure 2 – Map of Rajasthan

²² Including districts of Udaipur and Dungarpur, but also other districts in Southern Rajasthan.

In Figure 2 above, note the location of the district of Udaipur and in the extreme South of the Rajasthan State. In one of the first studies done on seasonal migration in the region, Haberfeld declared that seasonal migration has been a common livelihood trend among households in Dungarpur district (Haberfeld et al. 1999). The UNDP study analyzed their household survey data from 2002 alongside the census 1991 data and found that the share of agriculture and allied activities declined by 45% in the Tribal South (Human Development Resource Centre 2004, 24). Local wage options remain the lowest in Tribal South compared to other regions of Rajasthan, due to lack of industry and slow urbanization. Only 19.83% of the total population of Udaipur district lives in urban areas whereas only 6.39% live in Dungarpur district (Census of India 2012b; Census of India 2012a). In fact, the location of the two districts makes it conducive as a catchment area for wage labor in the towns and big cities of Gujarat in the South. For instance, I analyze that the three most common migrant locations of ST groups from Aspur block from a data set of 6977 households are the metropolitan cities of Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Surat²³.

The growth of market towns in Southern districts of Rajasthan is a relatively new phenomenon. The market towns or *mandis* in block development towns are slowly growing as the consumer choices of the rural residents change. Private service providers are responsible for connecting remote areas in Southern Rajasthan to nodal market towns and agglomerates. Alongside improved road infrastructure (notably the improvement in the State Highway 68) and rapid ICT development, locals channelize resources to provide transport services, health services, retail and commercial services to market towns²⁴. Krishna (2004) points out in his study on 5 districts of Southern and Central Rajasthan that despite the households looking for non-farm jobs, non-permanence of the migration strategies forms a central feature of this region. He asserts that, “no more than 2% of rural households have moved in or moved out entirely in the past 25 years and only one member of the household moves out of the village to find

²³ Refer to Appendix A1

²⁴ Market towns refer to rural markets that are popular for regional commodity trades; they can also be periodic markets. Some of their most common features include wholesale markets, where the bulk of agricultural purchase is made. These markets are not regulated. (Krishnamurthy and Witsoe 2012, 16–18). Usually in small village hubs, the traders are primary producers but they also accommodate secondary shops, where the retail products are acquired from other vendors.

work whereas other members remain behind in the village” (Krishna 2004, 133). Therefore, even as rural households voluntarily transition into income diversification jobs, different households are influenced undertake different non-permanent migration strategies.

The implementation of NREGA in Udaipur and Dungarpur districts has resulted in one of the most optimum daily wage outcomes for poor households, ST households in particular. In fact, especially in the early years, Rajasthan state was one of the best performing states compared to data from other states and regions across the country (V. Joshi, Singh, and Joshi 2008); partly contributed by the role of rights-based non-profit and advocacy groups acting as pressure groups in the region. Organizations such as Majdoor Kissan Shakti Sanghatan (MKSS) in Rajsamand district of Southern Rajasthan have played a significant role in ensuring guaranteed wage labor for poor households. The participation of women, especially tribal women from these regions have dominated public works such drought-proofing through NREGA (Pankaj and Tankha 2010; Pankaj, Upendranadh, and Tankha 2009).

Human development and social change are strongly reflective in the occupational features of a region and the choices different households make. For instance, literacy rates in the selected regions continue to be low. According to 2011 census figures, the average literacy rate of Dungarpur is at 59.46% whereas the average literacy rate in Udaipur is at 61.82% (Census of India 2012b; Census of India 2012a). Similarly, the statistic on the child sex ratio is startling in Udaipur district; the 2011 census aggregates it at 924 girls to 1000, lower from 947/1000 in the 2001 census. The decline in female births has resulted in the implications of sex selection and female feticide in many studies²⁵. For the purpose of this study, this statistic on sex ratio with the growing preference for male children is reflective of the future of male-migrant streams. These decisions are also demonstrative of characteristics of a patrilineal society, some social groups more than others that continue to focus on the advancement of the males over the females, defending their traditional value structures.

The historical evolution of the social groups in this region influences their endowment structures, the agency that some castes wield over others and the migration strategies that they are able to undertake. Pre-independence Rajasthan consisted of a

²⁵ It highlights the precarious nature of a patriarchal system (Bhasin 2007, 5–11), providing legitimacy to patrilineal kinship relations that favor son as offspring (Singariya 2012).

socio-political culture that was not conscientious, thriving on the political leadership of princes and feudal landlords. In fact, despite the long history of population dominance of tribal Bhils, in present-day Dungarpur – high caste social groups Rajputs and Brahmins continue to be seen as “outsiders” due to their image as “oppressors” and “opportunists” from the princely regime of the Vagad state. It is commonly observed that in remote mixed-caste and tribal village communities where the Bhils are in majority that the rich trader will be a Jain (an OBC), Brahmin or a Rajput (Higher Castes) (Doshi 1978)²⁶. During the process of decentralization in post-independence India, many of these upper caste leaders including *zamindars*²⁷, large landholders and businessmen began to mobilize support for local administrative jobs. In fact, the presence of Panchayati Raj organizations lead to the dissolution of religious, caste and kinship factions, giving rise to a new channel of interest among the leaders—development and employment is the new agenda for capturing political power in the region (Krishna 2002). In other words, the agenda for political power is not oriented towards any particular castes, focusing on improving development outcomes for all groups--this is a major shift in the region where the interests of rural elites dominated the governing structures.

Each of the above contextual features represents general factors that govern the choices that the rural households make in the present--reflecting on their ability to undertake certain household strategies. Importantly, these are factors that influence the household’s endowment structure. For instance, the implementation of NREGA aids the seasonally migrating households to access another source of income. Alongside, the historical features, human development indicators represent the palate of changes that are occurring or have occurred at the household level. It also demonstrates the role of agency among castes²⁸. I will unpack each of these factors systematically as I analyze the conceptual framework below.

²⁶ Sharma, in his book, promotes the point of view that the continued higher social status of the Rajputs and Brahmins in these regions is a result of feudal relations that they held during the pre-colonial times (C. L. Sharma 1993).

²⁷ Local word for landlord

²⁸ I will explore Gupta (2000) and his point of view that hierarchy in caste order is an arbitrary system, which is as a result of the view of certain individual castes. Therefore, ‘agency’ here implies the social position and power of certain caste groups to mold the arbitrary meaning of other castes, including defining their social mobility (See Section 2.3.1 below).

1.5 Conceptual Framework: Endowments

In the conceptual framework that I explore below, I address the research question: how do the initial endowments of the household influence their out-migration pathways? I will systematically unpack each of the conceptual categories of “initial endowments”, “household” or different types of households and “out-migration pathways” in the following sections.

Any migration pathway is largely influenced by the household’s endowment structure. The conceptualization of household endowments is interlinked with the language of capitals. Capitals as concepts are broad; they represent symbolic and physical power as well as economic wealth. In this framework, I use Bebbington’s (1999) framework to argue how the endowment structure influences out-migration pathways. Capitals form “*middle-level*” concepts that link households with viability of livelihoods but it is the form in which the capitals are used that determine their ability to influence the migration pathways. Bebbington (1999) highlights that the different capitals are not just inputs into livelihood strategies but they are also their outputs (Bebbington 1999, 2033). In other words -- the amount, scale and range of capitals define the manner, in which the out-migration strategies are undertaken and dependent on the outcomes from out-migration, the household capitals tend to transform or take new form. For instance, an illiterate migrant who is able to invest his remittances in his children’s education can transform their household’s human capital. Bebbington points out that, “*household’s capital assets affect their poverty status and quality of life by affecting human experience as well as income*” (Bebbington 1999, 2033). Capitals are a common vocabulary for economics, but this is an important conception that Bebbington proposes -- one that notes an element of “*human experience*” that I interpret through the specific *life stages* of migration.

Bebbington (1999) in his heuristic framework focuses on five types of capitals - natural, social, produced or financial, human capital and cultural capital. In the following table, I present the capitals, as they have been presented in Bebbington’s work along with indicators and to this list, I have also added Scoones’ conceptualization of “political capital” (Scoones 1998, 17) since it appears to be relevant to my research. Using the capitals framework, I will build and defend specific indicators of the five capitals in a way that it helps analyze the out-migration strategies and their outcomes. In Table 2, I present the difference indicators of the five capitals:

Table 2 – Types of Capitals for Rural Households & Indicators

Types of Capitals	Indicators
Natural / Physical	Natural resource stocks such as land, forests, water, common property resources
Social	Social Resources such as networks, access to institutions, shared values, trust
Economic / Financial	Cash income or savings, access to formal financial services for credit
Human	Skills, Aptitudes, Employability, Good health
Political	Broader political conditions, Interaction between state and civil society, Policy

In my analysis of each of the migration strategies, I will analyze how each of the specific indicators influences the out-migration pathways. Moreover, the capitals instrumental for out-migration strategies also play out against the household arrangements -- especially the role of gender. I analyze land as one of the most significant endowments that rural households have, especially in the context of households continuing cultivation but also especially, because land remains an important asset to build for permanent return and retirement to the village communities due to the non-permanent nature of the migration strategies. Next to land is education and skills as relevant human capital indicator for out-migration strategies, one that is structurally linked the caste-based occupations for some households or access to formal, quality education in the local areas in some other cases. Third, I analyze social networks as an indicator of social capital²⁹. It analyzes the migration trajectory of the household, including migrant and left-behind members -- exploring factors such as the migrant's kinship ties, information channels and patronage³⁰. Fourth and last indicator that I analyze from political capital is political power -- it reflects the relationship of

²⁹ Following Krishna (2002), I am interested in the informal nature of social capital in the form of informal social networks that is unique to the experience of some ethnic chains of rural communities in India as in other developing countries. Membership, common agency and agents form some of the main ingredients to keep the social networks running (Krishna 2002, 9–10).

³⁰ Patronage represents an informal system in migration systems where new migrants use the help of a patron through the migration process, continuing the system of reciprocity during their time in power. A patron provides all kinds of help, including financial assistance, employment assistance as well as lobbying for their rightful entitlements.

households following different migration strategies with their access to policy incentives (such as *NREGA*), leadership roles and political influences. Just as gender remains a cross-cutting feature that influences the results from out-migration strategies, caste remains a determinant of how different out-migration strategies define their outcomes. Resource structures in rural communities in India have been structurally and historically linked with caste. That being said, livelihood pathways are transitioning towards non-caste based employment roles and caste-free social mobility. This implies that caste is not an economic phenomenon, but it is embedded in a social hierarchy that marginalizes resource structures that are historically held by different social groups. Migration pathways are seen as an entry point for households from lower castes and tribes to reverse the historical disadvantage but it appears that outcomes from migration continue to be path-dependent.

1.5.1 Typology of Migrating Rural Households

In this section, I will utilize each of the above endowments to draw up a typology of rural households that undertake the three out-migration strategies. This is a critical step to examining the distinction between different households. The first type of household is termed “Landowning household”. It is the marginal land owner who is likely to be a rural “elite” belonging to the higher castes. The second type of household is a household that I term “Skilled household” has access to special skills for business opportunities that is likely to be from an OBC or a General Caste. The third type of household that I term “Subsistence farming household” is a small holder who is likely of ST tribal or lower caste by origin, with limited access to non-farm opportunities. There is a significant difference between the Caste-Hindu household ³¹ and non-*Hindus*, specifically STs. I present a table below that highlights the main features of the three types of households. The households have been termed according to their strongest resource – as I have explained in the earlier section, it forms a determining variable for their migration strategy. In Table 3 below, I also present a representation of the typology of rural households alongside their probable caste identities, their migration strategies and specific caste that were studied in the empirical study. Note that there are variations in the capital structure between similar caste households but notwithstanding their

³¹ Caste-Hindu households are in the Hindu Varna system.

variations, given that they undertake out-migration, they are likely to follow the migration pathways that I articulate in this framework.

Table 3 – Rural Household Typology

	Type 1: Landowning Castes	Type 2: Skilled Household	Type 3: Subsistence Farmer
Probable Caste Identity	<i>Rajputs, Brahmins</i>	<i>Suthars, Nais, Malis</i>	<i>Minas, Bhils</i>
Migration Strategy	Semi-permanent	Commuting	Seasonal Migration
Traditional Occupations	Landlords (<i>Rajputs</i>) & Priests (<i>Brahmins</i>)	Service Professionals: Cobblers, Hairdressers, Gardeners etc.	Subsistence Farmers, Shepherders, Other Agricultural Workers

Landowning Households

In rural Southern Rajasthan, the hierarchal order of the higher castes qualifies them to a privileged status as landowners. I identify two higher caste households -- the Rajputs and Brahmins that have had maximum access to physical and material assets in Rajasthan, owing to their status in the princely states. Landowning households have household arrangements that relegate the role of the woman within the household, on non-income earning roles. Rajputs were historically feudal landlords and kings in the pre-colonial and colonial era, Brahmins remained benefactors of charity and prestige for their role as religious preachers. Brahmins traditionally form one of the most educated castes in the region. The strong culture of clanships among Rajputs suggests their lineage as kings, and it is symptomatic of a social system that is fiercely patriarchal and parochial. This group can be termed as the “rural elites” exercise control over formal jobs in the region -- including having better networks in the administration or the capability to access them, but also, it appears that their traditional caste roles have been traded off for more lucrative migrating opportunities in petty self-entrepreneurship in big cities. In terms of their access to globalization, many of the rural households at source belonging to these two households have access to mobile phones, *pucca* or cemented homes, TV sets and even computers.

Skilled Labor Households

These include diverse groups with corresponding resources who for the purposes of this thesis, are identified as groups that specialize in certain trades in the existing caste hierarchy. Therefore, unlike the higher castes that diversified into non-caste roles, many of these households are likely to follow their hereditary caste roles. While some of these groups were backward before, they are utilizing their skills and new opportunities in market towns to capitalize some non-farm opportunities. Their strongest asset is trade skills. Some of these households are likely to be other backward classes (OBC). OBCs are notified in the constitution as economically and socially underprivileged groups (Agarwal, S.P and Agarwal, J.C 1991, 65) and apart from including SCs and STs, also qualifies religious backward communities. For instance, the OBC households that were investigated include caste groups of Nais, Sutars and Malis. Their caste names are derived from the skill sets usually possessed by the members of their communities. Nai is a household of hairdressers. Sutar is a household that practices wood artisanship whereas Malis are historically gardeners.

An example of low-end trade and entrepreneurship reflects in Sutars, who now undertake furniture carving and sale (as against low level wood carving hire in the past generations), and are extremely effective in using their skills to establish a base close to their home village (Datta et al. 2014). Some of their households own small amounts of land, part of which they cultivate and part of it is rented out to local subsistence farmers. They inhabit their own *pucca* homes in the village and the women are educated. The patriarchal values of Rajput households do not reflect in these households but these are also patrilineal families, with no inheritance rights to the women. These households often access Affirmative Action (A.A) schemes, especially if they are under the OBC groups. The commercial viability of their trades, alongside progressive family values, including encouragement for women's education has carved a positive life path for many OBC households.

Subsistence Farming Households

The third type of rural household refers to the households that practice subsistence farming and livestock rearing as their traditional occupations. They are likely to be indigenous tribes of the region – I analyze the Minas and the Bhils Tribes, based on my empirical evidence. In government lexicon, they are known as Scheduled Tribes

(STs) or *Adivasis*. The Bhils followed by the Minas form a majority population in most of the Southern districts of Rajasthan. They follow traditional occupations that are steeped in natural resources, such as animal husbandry, forestry, agricultural labor and subsistence agriculture. Their control over natural resources in the region forms their most important endowment but during off-seasons, seasonal migration to other agricultural farms is a common income diversification strategy that these households practiced. In the current climate of positive discrimination and reservations in India, influential Bhil and Mina households have capitalized on political power through leadership roles in pro-poor government welfare schemes. They continue to be characterized by low education levels and frequent school dropouts. Moreover, these indigenous groups are mired by backward beliefs and practices in health (Jain and Agrawal 2005), they are less commercially inclined and resistant to social changes orchestrated by mainstream government agencies. The remoteness of their locations, as many Bhil clusters live in forests, makes access to development and growth unviable to these households. Their clanships form the strongest agency for Mina households, and the leaders of the clans govern their livelihood choices. To sum up, indigenous households in rural Rajasthan are steeped in their customs and undertake seasonal migration to be able to continue these customs. Of the earlier two groups, they are the newest entrants to non-farm wage labor.

The typology of rural households presents a realistic picture of the distinction between the households in rural communities. For instance, the material and non-material endowments are polarizing between the landowning households and the subsistence farmers. In fact, there are key endowments such as formal education that only acquired significance to all types of households (with the exception of *Brahmins*) in the post-colonial era in backward regions such as Dungarpur. Noting the diversity of configuration between the households, it is also true that they are driving social change in rural India. Through their interaction with new occupations and trades, through their interaction with globalization, ICT and new consumer goods, rural households are able to participate in the new economic systems that are no longer solely dependent on agriculture. The *Jajmani* system--which involved reciprocal relations between different caste and tribe groups in village communities--has given way to inward-looking clan networks, focused on outward-looking goals that integrate development with individualistic ambitions. It is necessary to note that the above typology of rural

households has excluded population groups that share similar features with chosen household types. For instance, there exist groups of SC groups notably the Dalits and other Scheduled Castes that populate some pockets of the districts of Udaipur and Dungarpur that share similar features as the STs, even though their livelihood patterns that were influenced by hereditary caste roles, now aspire for non-farm wage labor when they are able to.

In the next section, I will intercept the different types of households with their migration strategies in the framework, revealing the changing nuances of the initial endowments of the households.

1.6 Migration Strategies

In this conceptual framework, based on the household endowments, I analyze three migration strategies: seasonal migration, commuting and semi-permanent migration. In the context of select communities in rural South Rajasthan, they are all non-permanent in nature, with varying temporal-spatial characteristics. During their lifetime as out-migrants, there are frequent returns until the time that the migrants permanently retire at home, with the hope to secure their livelihoods with their existing endowments. A majority of the migration strategies consist of non-farm employment – this type of work guaranteeing immediate cash remittances to rural households – off-farm labor still dominates the migration trajectories of tribal households that belong to remote panchayats. The purpose of developing such matrix of migration strategies is to enable analysis and characterization of the internal workings of every strategy – allowing the point of view of the rural household to emerge in the process.

1.6.1 Seasonal Migration

In rural Rajasthan, seasonal migration involving wage work on agricultural farms used to be the most common form of livelihood diversification strategy that has been used across the poor rural groups to cope with household distress and to combat vagaries of the monsoon (Bremar 2008; Kunal Keshri and Bhagat 2008; Mosse, Gupta, and Shah 2005). Seasonal migration involving wage laborers undertaking short-term back-and-forth movements for non-farm employment, lasting from two weeks to a month are now common too. The laborers usually migrate for the *Rabi* agricultural season (August-February for the winter crop) as they focus on subsistence farming during *Kharif* seasons.

A recent development in these *kharif* crop producing regions is the introduction of cash crops among small land holders: a strategy that can permanently endanger their subsistence means of livelihood. In other cases, households with agricultural wage laborers may also alternate their livelihoods by undertaking casual non-farm wage labor alongside during drought years, in particular. Construction sites and brick kilns are some of their most common work sites. In this thesis I analyze the ST groups of Minas and Bhils as they undertake this migration strategy; they possess no existing networks of patronage at work sites, relying entirely on a *mate* or a contractor to fix them with seasonal wage labor during household crisis. These families are cash-strapped, using the remittances to meet their basic needs at home. Moreover, their natural resource-based entitlements including water, grazing land for their cattle and forest cultivation are under severe stress from frequent droughts and commercial developers (Rathore and Verma 2013).

At destination--metropolitan cities as well as small towns, seasonal migrants have little political power--they do not belong to trade unions, and there are no mechanisms for conflict resolution with employers. Financial inclusion and insurance schemes such as accident insurance, identity cards and health insurance exist; they are promoted by rights-based NGOs but seasonal migrants do not always have access to the information. The role of ICT, such as mobile phones is especially effective for information dissemination. Since the introduction of MG-NREGA in 2005, the poorest and resource-poor households are now presented with an alternative to out-migration, though it is noted that tribal women remain the main participants in these regions (Narayanan and Das 2014).

1.6.2 Commuting Migrants

Commuting is increasingly common among return migrants from poor households as well as non-poor rural households with existing trades and business acumen in developing market-towns. It is a migration strategy that is highly specialized, often befitting of the changes in the rural household's available skill-sets. Dungarpur district in particular where industry is limited, commuting opportunities to market-towns for rural households proves to be the best non-farm alternative to households. In this thesis, I find that in the Aspur block development town, some of the Other Backward Classes (OBC)

households³² are the most likely to translate their skills into a strong entrepreneurial base, giving way for commuting to other members of their community. The presence of a developing commercial and retail market, as well as the changing rural demands in services and products influences the configuration of market-towns, allowing for petty old and new trades to flourish to the benefit of some of the rural households. Like seasonal migration, this is also a path dependent migration strategy, one that is pre-determined by the household's skill, financial capital and ability to orient their household arrangement towards education. Nevertheless, it presents a temporary solution to the larger transition taking place in rural households where the households await the changes from their migration activity to influence their long-term goals of successful, dignified and secure non-farm livelihood pathways.

1.6.3 Semi-Permanent (SP) Migrants

Semi-Permanent Migration strategy involves migrant labor undertaking different kinds of long-term informal employment in the metropolitan cities for a maximum period of time during the year; undertaking only one or two return movements every year. SP migration as a strategy has influenced migrant streams to particular locations and in particular kinds of specialized trades in the cities. For instance, it was discovered during fieldwork that most contract laborers in textile mills of Ahmedabad come from specific villages of Barmer district in Central Rajasthan. It was observed that men from that belonged to the rural elites in the village communities usually practice this type of migration strategy. Caste-Hindu households such as Rajputs, generally embedded in their deeply patriarchal values, migrate to metropolitan areas taking advantage of a fellow patron, learning the trade as a new migrant and staying on. If they gather enough capital, they are able to establish their own spot in the informal market. The SP migrant streams are male-dominated; resulting in the women as left-behind members who remain in charge of household and agriculture-based responsibilities; they are also occasional visitors to the migrant locations where their husbands work. The semi-permanent migrating households acquire most of their profits from migrant remittances, even as they maintain their agricultural lands at source. Unlike some migrant movements within

³² Other Backward Classes is an administrative category that was created in the 1980's India in order to include specific backward castes within the fold of affirmative action, under the criteria of their social and economic backwardness.

India that are able to permanently dislocate to metropolitan cities, semi-permanent migration strategy promotes the expansion of land as capital at source. SP migration among households is largely unskilled entrepreneurial work, and is analogous to the strategy of skilled households focused on self-employment. The future of SP migration lies in integrating employment with urbanizing trends.

1.7 Conclusions: Framework and Outcomes

Non-permanent migration is unlike any other movement in internal migration of rural labor since it is a temporary alternative to the future of rural livelihoods in India. That being said, I have systematically demonstrated that rural households have distinct out-migration roles, based on their initial endowments. The focus of the household's goals varies from defending to building assets. The typology of rural households presents the diversity of endowments, arrangement and social relations among and between them. This background helped describe the household's capability of undertaking a certain kind of migration strategy, varied not only in its spatial and temporal components but also in its ability to influence the household's long term outcomes. Development of human capital forms an important goal for all households in rural areas but the emphasis on formal education supersedes the need for employable skills. It appears that the rural households that undertake non-permanent migration strategies, differing in their individual circumstances, are trying to strengthen their non-farm participation in the future. There are two possible results in the external environment that can influence the rural household's migration strategies in the future.

The first result is that of urbanization slowly approaching some backward rural regions of India³³, market towns are now adapting to the consumer demands of metropolitan cities. Therefore, even though the flow of migrants who capitalize on their social networks and skill-sets to metropolitan cities will not abruptly stop, the alternative to non-farm long-term employment may be slowly becoming available at a commuting distance to households. The future of small holders in agriculture and allied occupations remains speculative; the uncertainty in climate patterns notwithstanding and non-farm

³³ In fact, diversification into non-farm employment is strongly linked to development of commercial markets (Barrett, Reardon, and Webb 2001). If the rural areas are able to attract or generate investment in the local markets, the possibilities of diversification can be extensive, across the cross section of the rural communities, the poor and the non-poor.

employment remains an important pathway for diversifying from traditional livelihoods. However, there are many barriers to equitable distribution of non-farm opportunities – in fact, studies on rising inequalities in rural communities is gaining new ground (Black, Natali, and Skinner 2006) - influenced by existing structural inequalities. Within this, the conversation of caste within the out-migration framework remains extremely critical. I have already discussed how caste overrides most endowments among rural households, but the future holds many positive window of opportunity for lower caste households to escape the power hierarchy through out-migration and non-farm jobs.

Non-permanent out-migration is also a way of “gaining time” for households, such that they are able to cope with changes in their livelihood apparatus, allowing them to adjust their expectations from urbanization and non-farm employment without having to permanently dislocate. This positions the household within a unique dynamic, where migrating members are supported by their land at home to rotate their resources between source and destination, the left-behind family members are disposed to use NREGS and other local wage labor opportunities and ICT, growing private and public transport providers aid the process of temporary human movement in and out of the villages. Even as the households overcome the poor outcomes from agrarian occupations, using migration as a wheel of change, there are some severe lags in policy to execute the household’s long-term goals. Policy in India does not support out-migration; this is evidenced in the lack of reform for the benefit of seasonal migrants at destination. This is also evidenced through the precarious housing situation of migrants in metropolitan cities, where short-term and long-term migrants occupy or rent illegal public spaces to set up an informal place to live. There is a descending typology of informal housing in metropolitan cities such as Mumbai where pavement dwellers, squatters, slums and organized slums house migrants at different diminutive stages of their migrant life cycles. Therefore, non-permanence of the migration strategies is imposed, rather than a choice that migrants and their household members make. The jump from non-permanent to permanent dislocation from the villages is extremely unsupported. Moreover their socio-cultural identity embeds them in their rural communities.

To sum up, non-permanent migration strategies represent the changing livelihood scenarios in backward rural communities, encompassing different types of rural households using their endowments to influence their outcomes. The framework brings together the migration strategies by unpacking the contextual features of the

endowments, demonstrating diversity of strategies and outcomes. In conclusion, it can be theorized that non-permanent migration strategies are temporary but path-dependent mechanisms that depend on the household's initial endowments. In the next section, I will outline the course of the thesis.

1.7.1 Summary

The next chapter analyzes existing theories on out-migration strategies, including some of the pioneering anthropological work on the subject. The progression of the discourse on out-migration in India including the most current academic dialogue of the role of the different types of circular migrants in the informal economy is discussed. The chapter then examines and challenges the gaps in the literature on non-permanent migrants and their pathway to development.

The third chapter discusses the methodology used for the empirical findings of the thesis. In the first phase of fieldwork, I was involved in tracking migrants at source and destination to draw an understanding of migration patterns. In the second phase of fieldwork, I was involved in unpacking each of the migration types that were outlined in the first phase. Semi-structured interviews, participant and direct observation, and focused group discussions were used with purposively selected rural households in both phases. This research design resonates with the needs of the study, focusing on developing information-rich stories of migrants. The overarching themes are also analyzed manually to develop the main arguments of the migration patterns in the region.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapter presents the thesis findings. They are divided on the foundation of three migration strategies. By unpacking the individual stories of the rural households at source and destination, different themes emerge from the narratives, as the analysis uses story vignettes for migration strategies. This empirical evidence describes the functioning of the migrant strategies at source, in the informal economy--locating the different narratives within the conceptual framework.

The final chapter restates the findings and analysis of the thesis in two parts. The first part expands on the conclusive evidence from the empirical findings and the second part is an interpretation of data for use in public policy. Therefore, while the strengths and gaps in the analysis are examined, useful observations are made on the current policy for non-permanent migrants.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review: Conceptual & Empirical Considerations

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I review the literature on non-permanent out-migration that helps contextually situate it within the livelihood frameworks that were used to develop the conceptual boundaries of the thesis. The central research question that I analyze relates to the impact of initial endowments on the rural households and their out-migration pathways. The academic works that I critically analyze here will explore the conceptual dimensions of the endowments, advancing the key arguments of this thesis. The chapter consists of two parts: in the first part, I will analyze general literature on the capitals framework, highlighting the contexts and the methodology. In the second part, I will delve into conceptual analysis of the specific capital endowments that will help define the migration strategies.

The evolution of literature on out-migration published over the last few decades may be viewed through an historical lens. The field has been largely dominated by economists and geographers, however Castles (2003) draws attention to the contributions of the sociology of migration to understanding how social and cultural capital shape the social dynamics of migration processes³⁴. Three main philosophical positions are discussed here that reveal the complexity of non-permanent migrant labor in three distinct contexts of India.

Starting in the early 1960s, Breman developed a structuralist perspective emphasizing the dominance of structure over the migrant's individual or collective agency. Therefore, the underclass within rural labor in Bardoli district of Southern Gujarat, India was represented without legitimacy and dignity, while coexisting with the salaried, urban class in the informal labor economy (Breman 2008)³⁵. Breman's

³⁴ In fact, Castles explains how critical it became to studying the migration processes in conjunction with social transformation, which typically policy makers around the world fail to do. The long-term negative effects may permeate every facet of the society, without a solution in sight (Castles 2003, 17–26)

³⁵ Critics have argued that Breman's metanarrative of the rural labor in the informal labor economy is influenced by the Marxist ideology of rural labor as the proletariat controlled by the colonial feudal relations in early independence era and later by the capitalist regimes during their diversification in non-farm activities (Brass 2008). In this thesis, I utilize his ethnographic insights to understand the changing

anthropological position peered into the living and employment conditions of this underclass, revealing their shifting motivations and lack of control over the outcomes from their non-farm, out-migration strategies.

In contrast to Breman's position, Rogaly's work on the agricultural wage workers in West Bengal analyzed the role of wage workers from a heterogeneous point of view. His position presents the migrant as neither emancipated nor oppressed, but as a socially embedded agent partaking in the informal wage labor economy (Rogaly 2003; Rogaly and Coppard 2003). For this purpose, Rogaly used life histories as a methodological tool to show the impact of migration to throughout the lifetime of the migrating rural household and the resulting changes in their *jati* or social ranking.

Close to Rogaly's position is Gidwani's and Sivaramakrishnan's (2003) concept of "body politics"³⁶ that analyzes the role of out-migration in low caste and Scheduled Tribe (ST) rural households, and their ability to escape their caste identities due to their non-farm wage work, resulting in improved social status. Each of these analyses breaks new ground in the way they present the role of out-migration in rural communities.

There have been other works focusing on developing countries worldwide along similar lines that track non-permanent migrants, a process Prothero and Chapman (1985) termed "circulation of labor," while Gugler's (1981, 2002) work explored the "urban-rural links" between migrants and their home communities (Prothero and Chapman 1985; Gilbert and Gugler 1981; Gugler 2002). Thus, the reality and magnitude of "circular migration" became an important central and cross-cutting area that required an interdisciplinary approach, pulling together geographers, sociologists and development economists³⁷ (See for instance, Skeldon 2012). Moreover, the shift from

structure of the relationships between the rural labor and the employers in the farm and non-farm economy.

³⁶ They derive this concept from the feminist literature, implying that the human body represents signifiers and signification that supersedes its biological functions. Women's bodies are not seen as individuals but in conjunction with their role as servants to patriarchal institutions, and rural households are seen as an organic form of caste identity, "valued as the working body of caste groups." Therefore, out-migration helps lower castes and tribes to be liberated from the roles of servitude and specific consumption patterns that their caste identities assign them (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003, 193).

³⁷ Since the early 1970s there have been macro-economic theories from Harris and Todaro that posit that Less Developed Countries (LDCs) consist of a dual labor market where unemployed rural labor moves into industrializing, modernizing urban labor markets, representing a "push-pull" syndrome. The New

“permanent migrants” in the urban milieu towards the “non-permanent” migrants was critical to understand the vulnerabilities and challenges that the latter group suffered during the migrant process, in the informal labor markets and at destination. Most importantly, following De Haan (2002), I take a positive stance on non-permanent migration strategies as a way of reducing poverty and addressing household well-being (A. De Haan and Rogaly 2002; Ellis 2003).

In this chapter, the aim is to review the different approaches to out-migration from different contexts and highlight the factors that aid the livelihood outcomes of source communities. When I say factors, I am talking about household endowments that I analyze from Bebbington’s capitals framework and contextualized in the earlier chapter. Ellis (2003) views seasonal migration as a “coping mechanism” to counter seasonality and risk, where rural households on the brink of livelihood failure use migration to acquire cash income and provide food security to left-behind members. While this analysis is true, and has been analyzed in many research projects, there is little emphasis on other non-permanent migration strategies, especially on the migration strategy of “commuting” of rural labor and “semi-permanent” migration that does not necessarily lead to transnational movements. In fact, there is little emphasis on the changes occurring between each of these strategies. Deshingkar (2004) notes this in one of her papers, highlighting how in research studies, the distress dimensions of migration have now given way to understanding the aspects of personal motivation of migration among the rural communities (Start and Deshingkar 2003; Deshingkar 2004). In this thesis, I track the entire range of migration strategies from distress-driven to accumulative motivations, analyzing the socio-political changes occurring to migration strategies at source in general, in addition to the influence of NREGA and the growth of ICT. However, NREGA is not often projected as a *supplement* to the income from migration but as Das’ recent paper attempt, NREGA is viewed as an *alternative* to out-migration in 2010-2011 in rural West Bengal, Eastern India (Das 2015a).

There are methodological concerns in terms of how the “conditions” of the rural household are projected in macro-level surveys. During the early 1990s, Chambers

Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) adds the dimension of household decision-making process defined by household risks that pushes families into non-farm activities to insure their future in agriculture. The progression from Todaro model to NELM demonstrates a positive development in economic theories on out-migration processes but insufficient in their linkages to social networks and individual endowments that perpetuate these strategies (Hagen-Zanker 2008; Stark 1995; Harris and Todaro 1984).

(1995) initiated the notion that analyzing rural livelihoods through income falsely represents the rural household's perspective on well-being ³⁸ (Chambers 1995). For instance, the census in India analyzes the poverty-status of rural households on the basis of their income and consumption patterns. Not only can this likely lead to faulty conclusions, but also portrays a kind of static and steady view of the household's situation, where the fluctuations in their circumstances is not captured. The latest 2011 census survey, called the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC), tries to rectify this lack with results highlighting the poverty-status of households based on their caste, while including more qualitative indicators. But there have been doubts from concerned academics about how the SECC will be applied in future policy-making (Abhijit Sen 2015). As an alternative to understanding the household's poverty status, Krishna (2004, 2006) recommends a "stages of progress" (SOP) methodology where participatory methodologies involving the community helps capture poverty of rural households "over a period of time." ³⁹ For instance, during an SOP exercises in Kenya and Andhra Pradesh in India, participation of community members was facilitated in order to gain understanding of their perception of poverty. Following this, they captured data on the households from 25 years ago and present. They created a scale that classified poverty in households according to whether they escaped poverty or became poor over the given time period (Krishna 2006; Krishna et al. 2004). This methodology is relevant to the study of out-migration in regions with frequent migrant movements because it captures the impact of migration on the change in the household's initial condition.

Despite the availability of innovative frameworks, there are very few ways to capture the complexity of migration processes that are applicable in regionally diverse contexts around the world. Moreover, local level data often doesn't convert into a meaningful analytical frame of reference at the national level (Chambers 1995). Nevertheless, there are a number of qualitative methodologies that cleverly capture the impact of out-migration, resulting in observations relevant to national policy-making. Kothari (2004) reflects on the power of qualitative methodologies to analyze the lived realities of the participants, which can "challenge the conventional approaches to intervention and produce alternative versions of the process of change." For instance,

³⁸ Chambers defines well-being as a "good quality of life" (R. Chambers 1995, 174).

³⁹ They classified the SOP in the following 4 stages 1) household's ability to buy food 2) sending children to school 3) having clothes to wear 4) retiring debt.

using personal testimonies, Rogaly and Coppard demonstrate how the meaning of migration began to transform among wage workers in East India. These testimonies capture social changes across the lifetime of the migrant, including change in the patron-client relationships and use of remittances to service of some of the migrants' returns to their villages (Rogaly and Coppard 2003). In another example, Rogaly uses life histories to capture strategies that rural households were able to use to build assets over a period of 10 years through their participation in a microfinance project, a methodology that is both rigorous and replicable (Rogaly, Castillo, and Romero Serrano 2004).

The process of out-migration is complex and one that is functional in agrarian households due to different actors participating in the process. For instance, the narratives of women are essential to capture the complex roles that rural women embody within the largely male-dominated migrant streams⁴⁰. Similarly, welfare policies and civil society's roles constantly impact the outcomes of different out-migration strategies. These can influence how left-behind members and return migrants maintain or defend their endowments. Similarly, any aspect of good governance can considerably influence the "conditions" under which household members migrate. The introduction of mobile phones has had a major change on the landscape of non-farm employment and facilitated interaction between migrants and their left-behind families. In the next section, I will reflect on the specific factors that help indicate the way migration strategies shape up.

2.2 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Research on rural livelihoods was dominated by neo-Marxist theorists during the early 1970s and 1980s, as evidenced in the work of Breman on seasonal migrants in the agricultural economy (Breman 1978). During these inquiries, the structure of the rural order⁴¹ was emphasized where poor and marginalized households' capacity to transform

⁴⁰ Women's roles in each of the non-permanent out-migration strategies outlined in the thesis is critical, since it appears that their household duties expand significantly beyond the caregiver role (Odebode and Van Staveren 2014).

⁴¹ Ellis (2005) breaks down structure into three broad categories: 1) Social relations, composed of individual characteristics of gender, age, religion, ethnicity and so on; 2) Institutions, formal and informal, consisting of rules and customs, land tenure and markets in practice; and 3) Organizations, state and non-state agencies, local associations and administration.

their outcomes was undermined. While neo-Marxist analysis played an important role in investigating the changing nature of the socialist state around the world⁴², an actor-oriented approach in livelihood literature that analyzed the intra-household, action-oriented role of rural households on the social structure began to take its place during the 1990s. .

Scoones, along with other Institute of Development Studies (IDS) researchers pioneered the Sustainable Livelihoods Analysis (SLA) that developed an approach to studying the interaction of livelihood strategies with household capitals (Scoones 1998). In addition, SLA introduced the concept of “resilience” to describe strategies adopted by rural households to regroup their resources during crises while adapting their livelihoods to suit changing external circumstances (Thulstrup 2015). As such, the rural household is seen as playing a proactive role in changing their traditional livelihoods. They are not passive victims to structural and institutional changes: they use kinship networks, gender relations and non-farm opportunities to determine household strategies (Schmink 1984; Lauby and Stark 1988). Therefore, state welfare policies as well as international aid were forced to follow the logic and designs of the market economy, a consequence of neoliberalism, to which the rural households are rapidly adapting (Dressler and Roth 2011; Thulstrup 2015). BT cotton trade among small holders is an example of how the State started to promote BT seed manufacturing companies reaching out to farmers looking to diversify⁴³. Using an actor-centered approach advanced the causes of both the market-based economy as well as the diversifying rural households. This paradigm shift in how rural livelihoods were perceived in policy and practice resulted in development initiatives that promoted engagement and participation with local communities. NREGS reflects the shift in policy that views the actors in welfare schemes as participants.

⁴² The case of China is especially unique such that the role of the communist state was responsible for shaping the urbanism project. The current “hukou” system where permits are given for temporary rural laborers working in the city is a case in point. Lin (2007) analyzes the historical development of Chinese urbanism in tandem with the changing role of the communist state. (Lin 2007).

⁴³ The fact remains that the conditions of smallholder and marginal farmers in neoliberal markets is far more vulnerable than in socialist economies, since the state doesn’t look out for their long-term well-being.

In the light of the actor-oriented approach, rural livelihoods were defined as “capabilities, assets (stores, resources/claims and access)⁴⁴ and activities required for a means of living” (Chambers and Conway 1991, 6). This definition encompassed the determining factors that lay emphasis on the heterogeneity of the rural households and their circumstances. In fact, the reasoning for the use and popularity of the term “livelihood” over “employment” (Chambers 1995) emerges from a need to understand the diverse features that encompass the lives of the rural household⁴⁵. I have used *initial endowments*, a term taken from Sen’s conception of resources that means “rights and resources that are available to social actors” (Sen 2005; Sen 1997). Following Leach et al, I use the term social actors to imply rural households or individuals in the household sharing certain characteristics such as age, class, gender, caste. Social actor also indicates a variable power structure where some groups are able to make resource claims over others (Devereux 2001; Leach, Mearns, and Scoones 1997).

The concept of endowments is critical to understanding migration strategies because it describes the “initial conditions” of the household, such as land or labor power. While analyzing each migration strategy, I employ the process of “mapping”, as described by Sen⁴⁶, that helps track the household’s and their endowments ability to adapt to changes during their lifetime. “Mapping” is especially relevant when analyzing a household’s endowments along with its migration strategies because, the changes in the household’s “initial condition” predicts their outcomes from it. In fact, Sen refers to endowments leading to alternative utilities as “entitlements.” Entitlements allow the

⁴⁴ Chambers emphasizes that the poor use diverse strategies, that “their living is comprised of their livelihood capabilities, through tangible assets that are stores and resources and intangible assets such as claims and access” (Chambers 1995, 192–193).

⁴⁵ It is in this context that Dijk presents livelihoods as ‘arrangements’ because of the inherent need in human beings to fulfill their emotional needs on the road to achieving their material goals. Therefore, livelihood is an arrangement to balance the different needs and desires in order to help the human being achieve a healthy social self (Dijk 2011, 102).

⁴⁶ Sen used the concept of mapping to explain the phenomenon of the famines where it was not the paucity of food that led to mass starvation, but that there wasn’t enough to eat for some small groups of population, while others had enough. Nevertheless, access is often linked to competitive availability of resources, the emphasis here being on the unique role that the household’s endowments plays in their access to livelihood and well-being (Leach, Mearns, and Scoones 1997).

household to move from survival closer to well-being⁴⁷. Appadurai (2004) explains well-being as cultural map that is a “navigational capacity” where “the better-off are privileged to explore the future more frequently and more realistically, and to share this knowledge with one another more routinely than their poorer and weaker neighbors” (Appadurai 2004, 69). This cultural map thus describes the power relations between different “types” of households that is set by the difference in entitlements, which in turn, influence the migration pathways⁴⁸. In the following example, I will demonstrate how a household’s endowments transform through the lifetime and the impact it has on their endowments as the outcomes from the migration strategy collapse.

In the village of S, let us assume that M is a man, a primary breadwinner of a rural household that co-owns a vehicle repair shop with his older brother O at a commuting distance from his village. He invests the remittances he earns from his shop in improving the kharif crop’s agricultural yield that year. He is able to send his son to a private English medium school in the nearby town and has high status in his community. At this point, he has been able to convert his endowment into an entitlement, due to access to different kin networks and private institutions⁴⁹. During his shop’s lifecycle, there were losses one financial year during which O withdraws his ownership, blaming M for the fallout. M experiences a loss of access to many kin networks that were controlled by O, and on not being able to pay the loans acquired from the local leader, he has to give up his shop. Consequently, M withdraws his son’s admission from the private school, unable to pay the fees, and his wife is forced to work as an agricultural laborer on a neighboring farm to make ends meet. Through this series

⁴⁷ In fact, it is the household’s entitlements that ensure them livelihood security. As Dijk (2011) rightly argues that a household’s poverty must be associated with their lack of entitlements, rather than a lack of resources (Dijk 2011, 101).

⁴⁸ De Haan and Zoomers (2005) emphasize that livelihood frameworks fail to highlight the power relations between different social groups, an important anomaly in the analysis of outcomes. Following this, I use the migration framework to analyze how different migration strategies, pre-determined by the household’s endowment structure, reflect their outcomes, also a reflection of the unequal power structure in the society (L. De Haan and Zoomers 2005) .

⁴⁹ Here the endowment may involve financial assets that he has inherited as well as human resources in the form of labor from his community to work in his shop and gain secure employment in exchange. M’s entitlement to the resources results in financial inclusion in the formal banking sector as well as ability to use his labor in other miscellaneous tasks outside the shop.

of events, M's household experiences a loss of access such that his endowments, as entrepreneurial skills, hold little value to his family, and like others in his village, he has to begin looking for a new employment opportunity to reach his household goals.

The out-migration trajectory of the household in the above example highlights the importance of access, or endowment mapping, which passes through complex household situations. It is here that Bourdieu's concept of "habitus" helps contextualize how some households are better endowed than others to undertake out-migration strategies. "Habitus" represents the internalized behavior patterns or dispositions that individuals embody as they live within social structures, such that it makes hegemony—dominance of one social group over another—as natural. In other words, in the above example of M, the initial capital that the household owned in order to begin their shop was a result of their endowment structure in their community. This status sanctions household membership in kin groups enabling them to access informal financial services. In contrast, a lower caste or a tribal household at a lower level on the hegemonic ladder constantly struggles with mapping their initial endowments, with fewer opportunities to convert them to entitlements. Applying "habitus" helps us locate the role of structure in a household's endowments. M's family is able to undertake a particular migration strategy because they have better access to available institutions. Put differently, the "navigational capacity" of M's family is greater than a person from a tribal household. That the family suffers losses also highlights the vulnerability of their existing entitlements, a process that I will cover more closely in the empirical chapters. I will revisit the above example of M shortly, and analyze a different household arrangement in order to contextualize the relationship between endowments, habitus and social actors.

Using the same example of the bicycle shop owner, I want to identify him with a different social group. In this example, M belongs to the Other Backward Class (OBC) community of Meghwals in his village, a historically backward community. The family of M has access to free education, due to the affirmative action programs of the government, although his son drops out of school to help him in his shop. When M loses the shop due to the conflict with his brother, he is forced to take loans from a private money lender at a very high interest rate. He does not have any kin networks to turn to during this time of crisis. Instead he gives up his land as collateral while trying to pay the

money lender's interest. He is not able to access the formal banks because he is only primary-educated and cannot understand the paperwork.

In both the examples above, I have indicated what constitutes the household endowments: free education, land, kin networks. In the following section, I will analyze how these indicators have been adapted from the capitals framework.

2.3 Initial Endowments and Capitals Framework

Initial endowments that rural households have are tied to the communities that they are born into and follow a predetermined pattern, the technical know-how that has been passed on across generations, the cultural symbols and religious practices that are accepted, as well as financial capital, including inheritance and access to formal financial institutions. I have explained in the conceptual framework briefly the manner in which I have used Bebbington's (1999) capitals framework in order to draw indicators for the household's endowments in order to understand their out-migration pathways. In the following section, I will elaborate the manner in which different studies in the literature elaborate on each of the indicators in different contexts. In Figure 3 below, I highlight the four key capitals that explore the navigational capacity of the endowments to influence the household's well-being, as they undertake a given migration strategy.

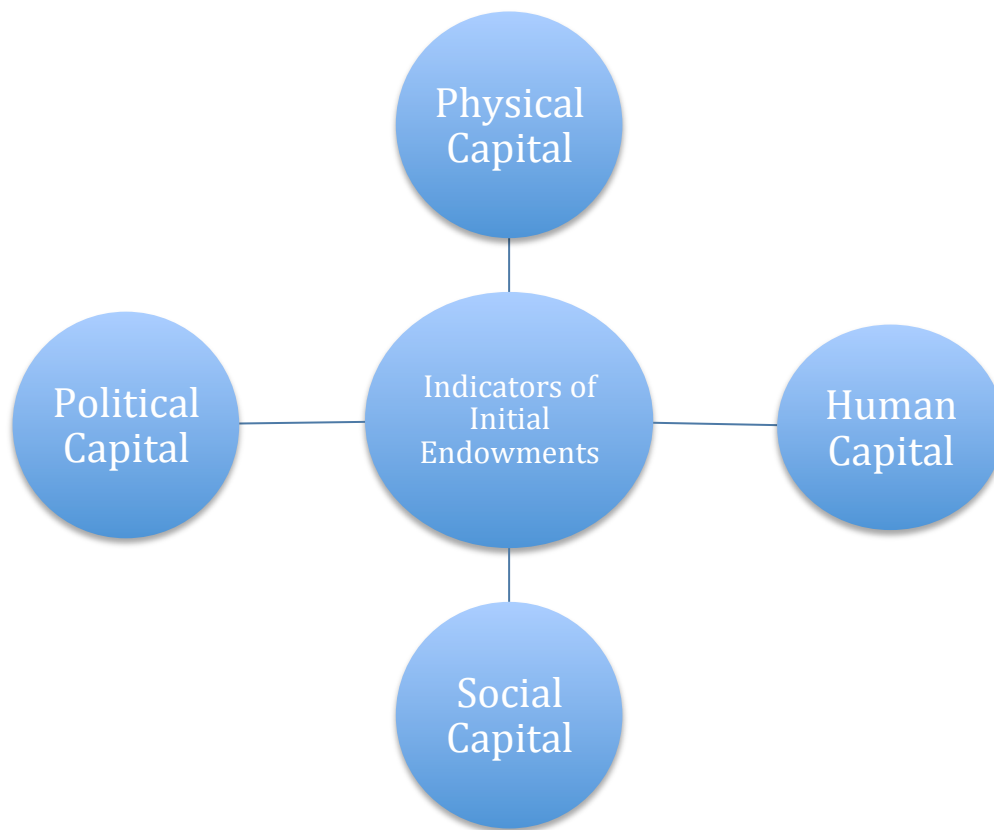


Figure 3 – The Four Capitals. Source: the author

2.3.1 Caste: Determinant of the Endowments

Caste remains a determining factor of the rural household's disposition but in the current form, it does not necessarily dictate their endowment structure. I do not analyze it as an endowment but a determining factor to the endowment structure. Caste consists of social class and status groups. Weber classified social class as a social group that shared a "specific component of their life chances," especially as determined by their economic position (U. Sharma 1999, 12). Therefore, the caste that the rural individual was born into would define their "life chances" and future economic position. There are three main principles of caste on which it rests:

- 1) Hereditary specialization of occupation where various groups are ranked according to the ritual rather than economic value of their occupation.

- 2) Hierarchy that places the Brahmans at the apex of the index.⁵⁰
- 3) Repulsion such that each group maintains its distance from other groups within the hierarchy through restrictions on social interactions such as intermarriage (Bouglé in Sharma 1999, p.13).

Technology and migration to urban settings positively influence the breakdown of caste-roles. Most importantly, availability of education and employment reservations through affirmative action in post-colonial India played a huge role in the social mobility⁵¹ of the poor after the introduction of welfare reforms for the scheduled castes (Sinha and Singh 1995). In addition, the influence of “market place, education, industrial enterprises and the model of agricultural farm” (Sinha and Singh 1995) brought about new opportunities for the lower castes to diversify from their traditional roles in their village communities. In a detailed study of the social mobility of the *Harijan* or the Scheduled Castes community in Bihar--there are 23 in all with sub-castes--Sinha and Singh (1995) highlight the differences in the social mobility patterns among SC households. Some communities such as the Dhobis, the washerman community, were able to improve their educational outcomes, thereby improving their social status. Other SCs such as Bhangis, the manual scavengers, remained backward and oppressed; work at best as agricultural laborers during off-seasons.

Moving out of caste-based occupations through agricultural labor was a big step in upward social mobility in Bihar during this period. That being said, there are sub-castes that are assigned specific informal jobs in cities as migrants, jobs that are largely influenced by their caste-occupations and later remain monopolized by these groups. For instance, the street sweepers in Mumbai belong to the SC *Chamars* of Gujarat, and thus

⁵⁰ Varna in the caste system consists of four orders: Brahmins, Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (businessmen), and Shudras (untouchables). Gupta like Sharma falsified the crystallization of caste in fourfold system, claiming that even though the hierarchy exists, it is not necessarily accepted or followed by the caste groups. He highlights how tribal groups and artisan groups, who were not, mentioned within this four-fold structure, moved between each order depending on the context and historical period that they were a part of. This is relevant to the conceptual framework, where the fourfold system of caste classification does not hold ground (Gupta 2000, 198; U. Sharma 1999, 24).

⁵¹ Here and elsewhere, social mobility is defined as a vertical movement in the rural household's traditional roles of “production, economic sustenance, status and fulfillment of meaning” (Sinha and Singh 1995, 4). Here, we are largely referring to the horizontal and vertical movements of status among different caste and tribe households in rural India.

formal sweeping jobs at the local municipal wards have been dominated by certain regional castes in the city from a long time. However, not all SC migrant workers are able to work as sweepers, turning to any kind of casual labor that is available. Above all, the virtues of a formal service job, despite it being low level of manual labor work, help lower caste households receive stable income and social security, even if the job does not enhance their social status or if it makes them vulnerable to airborne diseases (Chatterjee 2013).

Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan (2003) introduce the term “rural cosmopolitanism” to describe the cultural, political and economic resources that become available to rural households constant mobility. They argue that the availability of new consumer resources has emancipatory potential to lower caste/tribal migrants, enabling them to resist place-based caste identities and relations of subjugation. I address this point while analyzing commuting as a migration strategy, but conclude that the structural character assigned to each caste, giving them access to certain skills and economic activities (their endowments), makes access to resources for lower castes difficult to attain⁵². Nevertheless, rural households, irrespective of their caste, are able to influence and channel their historical advantage or disadvantage into education and improved social status, as affirmative action programs support the households trying to gain social mobility.

2.3.2 Political Capital: Political Power

Access is embedded in a web of relationships between people, resources and institutions. Access facilitates benefits from different sources. Taking Ribot et al.’s (2009) definition of access, I remodel and contextualize it as “political power”. Political power is thus the ability of rural households to exercise control over resources such as land, social networks and education. However, to show how complex the control and maintenance of political power are, I will analyze the different dimensions of the term in this section. Ribot et al. analyze and outline the different webs of access that allow households and communities to use resources available to them, facilitated by “power

⁵² On several occasions Breman clearly defines hierarchy as an inevitable structure for castes and their roles in the Indian society, however I am inclined to associate more with Gupta’s position that hierarchy and stratification in rural society are an artificial system that is not necessarily as linear as Breman makes it out to be (Gupta 2000; Breman 1985).

consisting of material, cultural and political-economic strands” (Ribot and Peluso 2009, 154). Political power as a household endowment aggregates various tangible assets such as land and property with intangible strands, explaining why certain people have access when others do not. Within the ambit of political power are also institutions and people going through changes or shifts over different geographical periods and historical influences. These changes may include a transfer of power from a colonial administration to a republic, or change of political leaders in the local administrations. Thus, political power as an endowment is not one-dimensional, but encompasses identities, institutional changes and commercial markets so that some groups or households are able to claim rights to resources while other groups remain outside the webs of access.

The key to control and maintenance of political power lies in the social relationships between households or groups and those in authority or power. Ribot et al. point out the problem of public policies that guarantee rights to marginalized groups as privileges, such that access is funneled through government-appointed executives who make decisions about when, how and in what way privileges will be provided. As such, access to rights as privileges is such an insecure arrangement that only good relations with decision-making authorities ensures users’ passage to the resources (Ribot and Peluso 2009, 163). This is especially true in many cases of India where rampant corruption facilitates the principles of welfare as privilege applied to marginalized groups, be misused by people from majority groups who have better access to political power. Moreover, the interaction between caste and political power complicates the relationship between welfare policy and rights-based entitlements. While historically, higher caste households controlled the local administration due to the principles of hierarchy and kingdoms, affirmative action programs reserve political leadership for SC/ST candidates. In sum, rights to government-issued entitlements are funneled through people in the position of power.

Households do not necessarily exercise political power through legal means. In fact, especially in rural administrative offices, political power often ensures welfare-based entitlements or benefits through illegal means, where despite no legitimate channels of access to public programs exist for development, good social relations and cash rewards that can facilitate access for households. A common occurrence in India is when a higher caste household converts their legal status to a Scheduled Caste in order to gain

access for reserved seats in public employment, with access facilitated by a public servant who agrees to provide certificates in exchange for immediate cash or to fulfill social obligations to kin. Similarly, access to information remains an important channel for a rural household with migrating members, with political power ensuring that timely information on missing persons.

Following Parsons, political power encompasses such things as money, institutionalization, abidingness or legitimizing relationships, equality of opportunity, political influence (Parsons 1963). Although not all aspects of political power override access to physical resources, they are both *means* of acquiring control over resources. In the discussion of other endowments below, I will clarify how political power relates to migration strategies.

2.3.3 Social Capital: Social Networks

Social capital and caste are strongly connected in many regions of India. Caste and clan provides rural households with access to social networks that can help them expand their livelihood choices. In this section, I describe social networks as a household endowment for out-migration. There are three kinds of horizontal and vertical social networks I focus on in this thesis: 1) social networks shared by rural households belonging to the same caste or clan or both; 2) social networks between the patron-client and the middleman-laborer; and 3) social networks between rural households in their village communities. The purpose of this section is to define intrinsic features of social networks, and address how they are able to influence out-migration outcomes differently among different rural households.

Gugler (2002) describes networks between the same clan migrants who undertake positive rural-urban migrant strategies. “The links to the people in the city and ties to the common home in the village are mutually reinforcing: each enhances communication and social control in the other context” (Gugler 2002, 24). Illustrating the networks of Golla caste in Telangana region of South India, Picherit describes how “access to this niche set of relationships in the clan is regulated through a set of informal, oral and dynamic rules and restriction of information” on employment (Picherit 2012, 147). Marriages are arranged between these networks, and rural households uphold these vows of loyalty, despite some of the household members’ daily involvement revolving around being in an urban setting. Gugler (2002) quotes studies by Epstein (1981) and Lambert (2002) demonstrating that ethnic associations are deeply involved in the affairs

of the home community, drawing support among members of kinship groups or village groups to pool resources for rural development projects or for forging political alliances in favor of their communities. This is especially resonant in positive and accumulation-inducing migrant streams. What forms the crux of the more positive urban-rural links is the constant and secure flow of information on employment and conditions of living for new migrants. In addition, kin group or village community members often cushion the low income-earners in cities during a crisis or sudden lack of unemployment. While critics often refer to a lack of social security mechanisms available in cities for migrants, migrants view the prospect of retiring in their home base taking pressure off the lack of social security available in the cities (Gugler 2002, 26). Non-permanent migrant streams are seen as positive outcomes from years of rural-urban migration, facilitated by social networks as a reliable endowment for households. As Gugler puts it, the non-permanence of migrating strategies is rooted in social networks that migrants take great efforts to maintain. Their social security is therefore ensured on their permanent return from the cities.

Epstein (2002) highlights the trajectory of social networks between seasonal migrants and their patrons. While higher caste patrons are strongly unified during crisis, low-caste laborers as migrants abandon their clan networks. She also argues that the fabric of village community, involving mutual insurance and support between patrons and agricultural laborers, started disappearing in the early 1990s. In the sugarcane industry in Mandya town in 1955, the higher caste peasants from Dalena village (her field area) found work during off-seasons due to intra-clan loyalties; however the poor SC households were not allowed access, despite the work being essentially unskilled. In the face of adversity and discrimination from the patrons, the SC as a community did not put up a united front. Instead they used a fellow SC's abandonment from his employer as an opportunity to gain employment for their own benefit.

Scott (1977) explains that subsistence farmers follow a moral ethic for seasonal migrants where wage laborers during off-seasons depend on the patron's social security to help the family stave off starvation⁵³. Epstein noted that the traditional patron-client

⁵³ Therefore in village societies, a clear hierarchy was established between the patron (owners) and clients (laborers). Social insurance in the form of grains from harvest and agency during emergencies were based on mutual benefit and trust, with the social and economic subjugation of clients as an accepted norm.

relationships were extremely fragile during the mid-1990s, with increasingly lower guarantees of social insurance for agricultural workers. Epstein (2002) states that no collective resistance to the lack of social security, and the introduction of cash-cropping have contributed to a change in the terms of social insurance to seasonal workers. Additionally, the gradual introduction of affirmative action programs alienated the higher castes from the government benefits, further spreading mistrust and undermining principles of reciprocity between the social classes in the village communities (Epstein 2007). In this background of growing disparities between different social groups in village societies, out-migration patterns leads to the improvement of family position within local prestige systems, but it led instead to a decline in the village as a reference point⁵⁴ (Osella and Gardner 2004, 18).

Breman (1994) provides an anthropological analysis of commuters and seasonal migrants that reflects how their social networks manifest patronage through non-farm labor opportunities. He identifies four types of personal intervention (or "*lagvag*" as it is called in the local Gujarati language) that forms an important channel for acquiring employment in informal labor. There is *lagvag* that OBCs apply in order to buy government jobs, and there is *lagvag* by higher caste households who use patronage as a strategy to improve their chances for self-employment in big cities. Breman proposes that for higher castes, the traditional configuration of the patron-client relationship in the agricultural farm context has been manifested in the system of patronage in big cities (Breman 1994). However, Deshingkar (2008) notes that nowadays there is a distinct lack of a "*mate*" or a middleman who provided information and insurance especially in seasonal and short-term non-farm migration among laborers as in the six village Central State of Madhya Pradesh. Instead, the laborers from Deshingkar's (2008) reevaluation survey in 2006/07 find that they are able to negotiate their wages with owners directly, especially in non-farm employment movements. This pattern was also noted in Coffey et

Under the traditional system they "seem willing to put up with its injustices for the compensating security" (Scott 1977, 37).

⁵⁴ This appears like a contradiction but is especially true of semi-permanent patterns of rural households where migrants along with family members live and are employed outside source communities for longer periods, resulting in the daily relationships at destination taking precedence over relationships in the village communities alongside enhancing their social status at home. An example of transnational migration from in Mirpur, Pakistan in Ballard (2004) demonstrates that prosperity of outgoing migrants is measured in local, Pakistani terms (Ballard 2004, 28).

al. (2014). Therefore, these findings also hold true in remote and resource-poor villages of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat (Deshingkar et al. 2008; Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014).

2.3.4 Physical Capital: Land & Type of Home

The relationship between land and rural household is an indirect one, yet critical to the health of their livelihood outcomes. Ferguson (2013) argues that land has multiple uses and is valued for more than its agricultural utility (Ferguson 2013, 167). This understanding of land forms an important background to analyzing why migrating members of rural households, smallholders or marginal farmers, follow out-migration strategies, despite the difficult conditions that they migrate under. Land symbolizes “collective identity, belonging, pride and liberation” (Ferguson 2013, 168) and thus defending it remains an important priority for rural households. Vanwey (2003) gives three important reasons for non-permanent migrants’ continuing relationship (he describes them as temporary migrants) with rural land: 1) current income or food the land provides; 2) security for retirement in old age that comes from the land, even if it may not support the family needs; and 3) owning land is symbolic of community membership via land holdings shared with clan members regardless of their physical presence on the land⁵⁵ (Vanwey 2003, 125). On the other hand, outcomes from land and members of rural household undertaking out-migration are interdependent where migrant remittances influence the manner in which the rural households use land. Non-permanent migration strategies are especially focused on how land is developed, defended and expanded by the left-behind members of the rural household. The relationship of land and gender is critical to the household’s land-based livelihood; in cases of some social groups, women are traditionally a lot more actively involved in harvest and maintenance of land and agriculture. The migration strategies that the household employs is therefore, defined by how the household arrangement culturally accommodates these roles.

Land ownership in India is strongly connected to social status, and the make and condition of the migrant’s home on their family land reflects a household’s social status. In the village community of Peddapur in Telangana South India, relationships between

⁵⁵ In fact, following Dercon, this paper theorizes that abandoning land would result in social “risk” resulting in collective boycotting from the community (Dercon 2006, 8–9).

communities are organized on the basis of caste and land ownership such that the landowning castes, the Reddys, maintain indirect control over labor issues in the region and direct control over public and private development projects. This is how the landowning communities create a nexus of access with land ownership and politics (Picherit 2012). The amount, tenure and quality of land⁵⁶ in source communities define how the households shape their living conditions. Rural households' living situations are favorable when they consist of steady, positive out-migration streams. Therefore, the pathways from out-migration reflect on the type of houses that reflect the household's prosperity. In the districts of Faizabad, Ballia and Siddharthnagar in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, India, the social transformation of rural homes is evident. "The poorest of poor have their houses made of thatched roof with mud walls, whereas the better-off in the village communities have homes that have brick walls and cemented roofs" (Paris et al. 2005, 2526).

The stagnation of steady income from the agricultural sector must be linked with the nexus of landowners and access in rural communities⁵⁷. Not only do lower castes and STs remain vulnerable to the vagaries of the agricultural economy but landowners' control of access to natural, common-property endowments such as fodder, water and common land limit options for diversification. Large landowners control material and material assets of village communities because land ownership results from economic power as well as from strong social networks. For instance, land is the main inheritable form of wealth for Bangladeshi households, and the main asset (besides labor) that allows people to invest in widening opportunities⁵⁸(Pitt and Khandker 2001). Land is

⁵⁶ Ellis states that the quantity and quality of assets make a big difference to the viability of rural livelihoods and in addition to land, good rural infrastructure and rural services allow rural household to expand and defend their livelihoods, whether it involves own-account farming, out-migration or a combination of diversification activities (Ellis 2000).

⁵⁷ Award-winning journalist Sainath (1996) in a book compiling his newspaper articles, tells story after story on the plight of the poor farmer in some of the most backward regions of India, where lack of institutional credit, growing household debt, declining investment in agricultural infrastructure, and lack of state subsidy is driving a national tragedy of farmer suicides (Sainath 1996). His main hypothesis is that natural disasters do not cause as much damage to the small and marginal farmers as do institutional and structural factors.

⁵⁸ Cattle owning, on the other hand, is a form of savings or liquid asset that helps households cope with risk (see Dercon, 1996 among others).

especially important because of its scarcity and because it is used as collateral in credit programs.

While land is valued, cultivation is not necessarily seen as profitable (Parry 1999, 117–118). The interaction of land owning class with non-farm occupations has led youth to resent agricultural work and prefer labor-intensive jobs that have cash income and are more liberating than organizing tools for cultivation. Parry (2003) argues that youth value income-earning opportunities in agriculture the lowest, business in the middle, and non-farm employment most highly (Parry 2003). As the interest in non-farm employment increases, the role of education is to increasingly direct the youth toward migrant jobs. In the next section, education as an endowment will be explored.

2.3.5 Human Capital: Education and Skills

Education is a relatively broad term that includes formal and informal school education, as well as formal and informal employable skills. Both these aspects of education are critical to agrarian households as they move into non-farm occupations as well as to their integration into the new information technology age and are presented with new modes of communication. While some rural households have begun to adopt it, other households still struggle with meeting their basic needs and are increasingly marginalized from access to the circle of education.

Robeyns (2006) sees education among low-caste families as a means to challenge social norms and bring respect, to not merely as an economic investment that ensures economic returns (Robeyns 2006). In keeping with the role of education as more than that of quantifiable human capital, the “perception” of education and skill-development among different groups of households is critical. Godinot et al. (2007) state that the rural laborer’s success in Burkina Faso is a result of two types of education: academic education in school and social education in the community⁵⁹. Reconciling formal and informal methods of education ensures that the household can fight poverty (Godinot et al. 2007, 285) and achieve periods of well-being in their lifetime.

⁵⁹ In another section of the chapter, they state that social education in Peru as informal education that the family provides often sets an example for children and helps a person to take on various responsibilities. This includes household tasks such as young girls looking after their siblings, mothers procuring wood for cooking, fetching water for household use and so on.

The family's need for additional sources of income often leads adolescents as to drop out of school.⁶⁰ (Shanahan, Mortimer, and Krüger 2002). School costs for girls in India are especially weighed against their daily household duties of feeding and fetching cooking resources. In contrast to this long-held view, Bhatta's (1998) analysis from different field sites in India argues that the lack of good quality schooling in India is the primary reason for education deprivation in India, not the poor economic status of rural households (Bhatta 1998). Lack of access to quality school education is not the only barrier -- the inability to connect school education with decent employment is an important hurdle that households and policy is currently struggling to overcome in India and elsewhere (Palmer 2007). There are few formal institutionalized pathways that provide employment for the educated in rural households. The role of the informal economy is crucial in this case, to provide a foundation to migrants for skill-training and vocational skills. However, casual laborers are especially absent from such training as they engage in unskilled labor for short periods of time.

The introduction of ICT to the daily life of rural areas has influenced how rural households perceive education. It has also influenced how children view employment. Since education is seen as a form of modernization, computers are seen as a medium to arriving at it. In a study conducted in South India among BPL households that had access to computer-aided learning (CAL), it was found that in the poorest households, technology is seen as a tool with the power to change their social and economic prospects in the future (Pal, Lakshmanan, and Toyama 2009). However, the endowment mapping of ICT as a transferable skill is still missing. There have been many fundamental changes in the perception of households towards education, for instance, long-term migrant families prefer private over public schools (Kingdon 2007), to better integrate farmers' children into the realm of non-farm employment. The shift in employment status was associated with bringing their households "respect" that short-term unskilled work was unable to bring.

Upgrading of technical skills in informal labor jobs is absent. It is a vicious circle in which the employed workers need to already have certain skills for entry into the given non-farm sector, while the unemployed remain unskilled laborers for much of their

⁶⁰ The midday meal program introduced by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in India, tried to address the dropout rates, especially for remote schools where kids walked long distances to arrive at school, where food was locally prepared and guaranteed to the children during school time.

career because they lack opportunities to learn employable skills. The paradox is that despite a labor surplus in the informal labor market, the supply of skilled laborers is limited. This lack of employable skilled labor is a much larger phenomenon in India, as in other developing countries. Barber studied workers in a car garage or mechanic shop in the city of Darjeeling in East India and found that informal skill training among the school dropouts who worked as mechanics was the most common forms of skill development. There are no formal apprenticeships and the tools for skill development in such informal setups are extremely limited. When compared to developed country models of skill training, the author found that technical skills were not easily adaptable to change, there were serious safety concerns for the operators, and there were no formal accredited schools that connected formal education with informal on-the-job education (Barber 2004). Such informalization of skills is accepted without any demand of formal education, leaving the workers insecure. Similarly, new workers are unable to break into the market due to the lack of institutional training of the existing pool of workers.

Jeffrey discusses the linkages between youth unemployment and attitude to jobs in a small town in the Northern state of Uttar Pradesh, India. He explains that the unemployed youth from low-caste households fit nowhere in the employment market despite having university education. Agrarian-based unskilled employment does not interest them and skill-based, formal jobs are inaccessible to them (Jeffrey 2010). Krishna (2014) highlights an important aspect of lack of information on career-related pathways among rural young adults (Krishna 2014, 25). While poor rural households are focused on meeting their needs in the present, using seasonal migration as the “last resort,” the lack of information on potential career pathways has an adverse effect on their children’s future. Krishna (2014) points out that the information divide on careers, technical skills, and career pathways is insurmountable between rural and urban areas. The migrating members of households become aware of this abyss during their sojourns in the metropolitan cities but are incapable or unwilling to move out of their rural residence. The social mobility of rural households is strongly linked with their ability to be educated and integrated into the social and professional changes occurring at the university level. The two simultaneous processes--introduction of ICT to non-farm work and lack of employment channels that link rural youth with education--seem especially to alienate rural households from pathways of development.

2.4 Migration Strategies

In the literature on migration patterns, there are limited empirical examples that connect the variable household-based endowments to rural households' and their out-migration strategies. I propose that migration strategies consist of specific temporal, spatial characteristics that are reflective of the household's endowment structure. The purpose is to propose a bird's-eye view to understand the place of out-migration in the rural livelihoods structure, as well as to individually understand each migration strategy in their specific contexts. In the next section, I will identify three main migration strategies as they are analyzed in the literature.

2.4.1 Seasonal Migration

Seasonal migration or out-migration during agricultural off-seasons or climate failures helps rural households cope with poverty; it is generally need-based (Deshingkar 2010). Seasonality is an important part of the migration strategy because seasonal changes push households to the points of serious risk and therefore to migrate under compromised circumstances. This may lead to uncompetitive wages during migration. Off-farm workers who migrate as sharecroppers are often paid in kind and thus income returns may differ considerably depending on seasonality (Ellis 2000, 293). For instance, Breman describes two types of seasonal migrants in Bardoli district, the tribal hinterland of southern Gujarat: harvest workers who migrate during early winter months⁶¹, and smaller movements of workers who migrate as casual labor all year round (Breman 1994). The only common feature of these migrants was that they were landless or smallholders but in addition to income differences, there are temporal and spatial differences between them. I am interested in exploring the factors influencing the two forms of seasonal migration. Studying this movement is significant as it is a temporary livelihood strategy for smallholding rural households that find agricultural and natural-resource oriented livelihoods as increasingly non-viable.

⁶¹ The rice-farming households in Eastern Uttar Pradesh follow seasonal out-migration, "when male family members leave the village after land preparation or planting season and come back during the harvest season or after the season as the women manage harvesting and threshing of rice" (Paris et al. 2005, 2523).

Seasonal migration over the years has led to a slow breakdown of the traditional *Jajmani* system, “the traditional patron-client relationship in pre-colonial and colonial rural India that was neatly divided between castes⁶² as a guarantee of economic labor in exchange for social security between the landlord and the laborer”⁶³. Epstein (2002) points out that in 1996 during her third visit of her longitudinal study of Dalena village in South India, frequent out-migration for seasonal labor was soon substituting for the *Jajmani* system subsistence farming values prevalent in 1955. She notes that “as the increasing village extroversion dismantled the structure of Dalena village society, concern for the less fortunate members of the community disappeared almost completely” (Epstein 2007, 210). Even as the reciprocal ties between different communities in villages begin to loosen, short-term out-migration movements remain popular among the youth.

Seasonal migration remains an alternative for poor households lacking access to sufficient land for farming, or to markets⁶⁴ and credit schemes (De Janvry and Sadoulet 2001). Cash income from seasonal non-farm employment provides poor households with the critical means of meeting their immediate household needs (Adhikari and Deshingkar 2015, 37–38). This strategy involves manual wage work carried out by poor marginalized groups such as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Rogaly explains two key reasons for a male-oriented, caste/tribe-dominated streams of seasonal migration in West Bengal: first, seasonal migration involves arduous work and difficult and often dangerous journeys (Rogaly 2003, 625), and second, poor Caste-Hindu households are stigmatized from participating or being hired in debilitating manual

⁶² Mayer and Fuller make some relevant points on the misinterpretations of the *jajmani* system in early literature of rural India. Mayer clarifies that *jajmani* system is not necessarily exploitative, even as he highlights empirical evidence of exploitation meted out by the landowning castes, but most of all, the system involves mutual benefit for all castes in question and payments, in cash and kind (Mayer 1993, 362). Fuller suggests that *jajmani* is not really a system, as it is a relationship between different village castes with principles of cash revenue and proprietary rights and since pre-colonial times, it has evolved and changed to suit the demands of the time (Fuller 1989).

⁶³ Srinivas called this the “vertical unity of the village” that sometimes extended beyond the borders of the village (Sinha and Singh 1995).

⁶⁴ Devereux states that informal market institutions accessed by poor households consisting of private vendors that provide financial services, agricultural inputs and other commercial services are slowly being promoted by international donors, as government policies to provide access to formal markets do not reap great results (Devereux 2001, 514).

work. Recent studies from survey data highlight that NREGS has been effective in reducing out-migration among rural households, even though there have been problems with effective targeting and implementation of the scheme to support the poor and resource-poor households (Das 2015a; Das 2015b). Kothari (2003) sums up seasonal migration “a means of being able to afford to stay put in the future” (Kothari 2003, 608).

Seasonal migrants find work through three main social networks: the “mates” who take the place of individual landlords, providing them with grain guarantees and social insurance during crisis. They are the poor migrant’s most crucial resource (Mosse, Gupta, and Shah 2005, 3032). There are also some seasonal migrants who establish personal relationships with the patron on smaller worksites; they are provided with cash wages and living amenities during the period of migration but this kind of an association leaves little room for bargaining or negotiating for workers’ rights⁶⁵. The third kind of channel for finding seasonal work is through the nakas or chauks in which casual labor is hired directly and paid a daily wage. It is clear that irrespective of how seasonal migrants are hired, their situation remains highly vulnerable. Breman argues that the term “pauperization” describes the position of seasonal labor in a highly competitive informal labor market, despite terminology absent in the official documents (Breman 2004). Seasonal migrants do not migrate merely for economic reasons. In Shah’s account of workers on the brick kiln in Jharkhand, the rural youth have access to freedom from “social norms” experienced in their village communities (Shah 2006). Shah quotes Parry (2001), stating that “it was within the confines of the labor camp that amorous relationships were expressed more fully” (Shah 2006, 102).

The women’s roles in households with seasonal migrants are critical: they make decisions about how resources are used -- sometimes participating in wage work themselves. For instance, in West Bengal, many couples migrate seasonally for work, often leaving behind very young children and other older adults (Rogaly 2003b). However, the decision about who is left behind and who migrates depends on household

⁶⁵ There is evidence of this in the case study of Bardhaman district, West Bengal where agricultural workers rely on local landlords to provide them with seasonal work from time to time (Rogaly 2003, 624). This arrangement is notorious for their bondage systems. Breman viewed the system of bondage due to indebtedness among the seasonal migrants as a result of unjust conditions of capitalism.

resources but the final outcome is gendered in favor of men⁶⁶. While left-behind women depend on social relationships within the community for help during emergencies (De Haas and van Rooij 2010), women participating in wage labor earn lower wages than men and cannot make decisions on how to spend their earnings. On some occasions, short-term migration that leads to smaller remittances does not benefit left-behind women, especially in Eastern Nepal (Maharjan, Bauer, and Knerr 2012). In addition to women as vulnerable groups, Breman (1994) notes that during his fieldwork in Bardoli district in South Gujarat children were often used as labor on agricultural farms during the sugarcane harvesting process, in exchange for vegetable crops or other household necessities.

As seasonal out-migration as a livelihood strategy expands, the relationship of the migrant with their soil has also changed: it is more oriented towards commercial cropping. Academics are divided on how they view the change. Breman argues that the smallholder's vulnerability to cash crop cultivation represents long-term class conflict between the bourgeoisie (big landlords and big HYV⁶⁷ seed corporations) and the proletariat (the landless as the underclass). In contrast, Epstein views the growth of cash crop cultivation as an improvement in the status of peasants across classes (Epstein 2007, 207) in Wangala village, Mysore district. In Wangala village, in irrigated land areas where the farmers undertook sugarcane and paddy production, landlords became wealthier and poor SC wage workers were able to meet their household needs through the additional wage that cash crops required from them. Nevertheless, the risk of cropping HYV especially the BT crop⁶⁸ carries severe risks for smallholders of losing soil

⁶⁶ There are a number of critical papers (Mazumdar and Agnihotri 2014; Agnihotri and Mazumdar 2009; Gulati 1997; Gulati and Gulati 1999; Harriss-White and Garikipati 2008) that highlight the plight of the lower castes and tribe women as the most vulnerable group of labor migrants working in the off-farm and non-farm occupations across different contexts. Not only do they receive lower wages as compared to men, but they also lack political rights within the informal economy.

⁶⁷ High-yielding variety seed production is associated with the Green Revolution, originally prescribed for the development of wheat and rice varieties but has subsequently spread to cash crop cultivations.

⁶⁸ BT cotton seeds combine a hybrid bacteria *Bacillus thuringiensis* has two main advantages as against a non-BT crop. It reduces the amount of the insecticide required for cotton production as well as amounts to an increase in gross margin due to higher yields of cotton crop using the BT seed. In fact, studies prove that BT cotton has greater economic advantages to the small-scale farmer in developing country (Morse, Bennett, and Ismael 2007).

fertility. Scott highlights the morality of the poor peasant is to minimize the household risks of starvation but not pursue profit maximization as the foundation of popularity of precarious trends such as these (Scott 1977). Breman is on point as he highlights the growing neoliberal influence on agricultural practices. McKinney's paper on the influence of genetically-modified (GM) crops or BT cotton on Adivasi small holders in Dungarpur emphasizes the unhealthy nexus between corporate seed companies and neoliberal governance forces endangering fertile land (McKinney 2013)⁶⁹.

2.4.2 Commuting

Commuting as an under-researched migration strategy, a result of two simultaneous processes in India: development of and investment in underdeveloped regions, and regional unemployment festering in metropolitan cities (A. Sharma and Chandrasekhar 2014). This implies that long-term migration is no longer most viable or profitable strategy and that non-farm opportunities at a commuting distance are providing a healthy alternative to households that have resources to diversify.

The rural is no longer agrarian and the rural is no longer non-urban either. Industries and factories are slowly moving towards rural areas, giving rise to urban-rural migrations and concomitantly, rural consumers are embracing "lifestyle and communication products" such as mobile phones and packaged food (N. Mishra, Shankar, and Mitra 2013; Rao 2000). Spatial and occupational interdependence of rural with the urban is essential to identify how "locals' space" is constructed⁷⁰. Migration is no longer an independent activity but relational to other simultaneous processes. Osella and Gardner (2004) place migration between the process of modernization and social transformation, each nudging the other towards transformation of livelihoods in rural areas (Osella and Gardner 2004).

The interaction of rural areas with non-farm investments has resulted in opportunities in casual labor and self-employment on offer to rural households, dependent on their endowment structures. Mondal (2015) argues that the commuters

⁶⁹ Mendola (2008) shows that high-income remittances from migrants, especially international migrants results in the household's use of modern HYV seeds on family farms Bangladesh. This is an important study that qualifies the widespread sale and use of HYV seeds across India, especially areas with large landholders such as the Northern State of Punjab where the Green revolution flourished.

⁷⁰ World Bank (2004) defines local space as a geographical unit of intermediate scale, above communities and below regional and national levels (Wandschneider 2004).

from Bardhaman district, West Bengal to Memari, the nearest town, consist of two types of households: big agricultural landlords and small, marginal landholders. The average age of a sample of 60 people is 48 years and these commuting streams are dominated by men (Mondal 2015). In a case study of the Valsad town, Southern Gujarat, Breman states that modern industry is no longer associated with rural areas, using industrial estates in Gundlav and Kailas Areas as examples of accommodating small scale industries and workshops, at a close distance from villages of Valsad (Breman 1994, 47)⁷¹. Nevertheless, literature on commuting is sparse, with especially little empirical interest in analyzing households undertaking commuting opportunities in block headquarter towns⁷² (Deshingkar 2010). Instead, much of the empirical work on commuting and its impact on households is focused on peri-urban areas that circle large metropolitan regions (Narain and Nischal 2007; Narain 2009; Cali and Menon 2013).

Commuting offers people the dual advantages of higher earnings from non-farm economic activities in urban areas while keeping one foot in the farm-economy and thus reducing both the risks associated with longer-term migration, and the expenses on food, shelter, healthcare and schooling by staying put in the village communities (Deshingkar and Anderson 2004, 3). The rural-urban interface in the form of new industry and market towns⁷³, expanding census towns⁷⁴ as spearheaded by successful return migrants, industry and public policy present exciting commercial opportunities for households in regional economies. Epstein presents a model consisting of a three-tier rural-urban

⁷¹ Parry examines the situation of commuting industrial workers in private sector factories compared to those in public sector factories. Not only is the work possibly more precarious in the private industries but there are no formal social insurance guarantees, providing no legitimacy or rights. Private workers use the remittances to build on their assets in their villages while planning their exit (Parry 2003b) whereas the public industry workers are privileged, constantly aiming to safeguard their jobs for the future.

⁷² Handschneider (2004) defines block headquarters as the lowest hierarchy in urban agglomerates in India; districts are divided into blocks for administrative purposes

⁷³ Roy (2003) explains that the “market towns” in West Bengal, the eastern district of India, were a result of urban oligarchs using petty traders in specific urbanizing blocks to exploit retail opportunities for themselves. Growth of market towns is largely contextual and the case of communism in West Bengal for over half a century reflects the construction of its urban space and its *bhadralok* (the political leaders/intelligentsia).

⁷⁴ Census towns are administrative setups for towns with a population of more than a 10,000 people with certain indicators of urban services.

partnership, linking rural areas with rural growth centres with urban centres⁷⁵. If such a model were applied, variable to context, the opportunities of local growth would improve and the migrants would be able to integrate in economic growth in their home villages. While some nodal towns or “rural growth centres” connect metropolitan cities to backward villages are able to adapt to this model, the real challenge lies in connecting the resource-poor households with local growth. Despite improved road access between villages and nodal towns, the transport facilities prove to be inadequate, expensive and unsustainable, proving especially detrimental to women’s commuting potential for non-farm employment (Mondal 2015, 59).

Commuting involves repackaging of skills to suit market conditions. It is an attractive opportunity for well-entrenched households to promote their entrepreneurial skills in a new market that is heating up to new consumer demands. There are certain groups, characterized as backward groups in the original caste structure of the rural village, that are able to adapt better than others to new conditions of non-farm employment and local entrepreneurship. For instance, in the case of Punjab, Saberwal (1970)⁷⁶ describes Ramgarhias SCs, the carpenter and blacksmith community, where they were able to use the new economic openings in the neighboring town of Modelpur. Comparing the Ramgarhias to two other SC communities, Saberwal highlights how the rural communities that are socially mobile are also physically mobile. Sharma in Osella and Gardner (2004) highlights that the role of women in maintaining social and economic links with source is central to the household’s social mobility strategies through out-migration (Osella and Gardner 2004).

⁷⁵ In contrast, Lin describes Mao’s urbanism model in 1970s China where urban planners were recommended to develop a “model of production” in the cities, rather than a “model of consumption” such that only productive residents were allowed entry into the big cities, and smaller towns around the cities were used to disperse off population that did not contribute to the productive economy (Lin 2007, 16).

⁷⁶ In this paper, Saberwal (1973) discusses the historical growth of this community, whose fortunes began at the turn of the 19th century, where some of the community members began migrating outside their source, acquiring a casteless identity and establishing their apprenticeship, renaming themselves as Ramgarhias. Some of the elites of the community that have migrated back to Modelpur are now considered on the same social position as the high caste elites (Saberwal 1973, 237).

2.4.3 Semi-Permanent Migration

Semi-permanent migration or long-term migration refers to migrants who are self-employed workers in the urban, metropolitan informal industry and will likely stay away from their families for six months or more at a time when employed. Epstein (2007) describes semi-permanent migrants as persons who “have the best chance to raise their economic status in the city. They are healthy young males of the regional dominant caste who have some education and skills and who have the patron in a position of power” (Epstein 2007, 216). Patronage remains a dependable system for migrants to acquire employment and social insurance at destination. For instance, Osella’s book chapter in Piliavsky (2014) demonstrates that despite a corrupt mate, in the form of a sponsor, the social networks between Malayali migrants in Gulf countries carries forward relationships, employment and well-being in home communities and at destination (Piliavsky 2014, 17–19).

Rural-urban migrant strategies involve identifying jobs in the informal sector that are skill-based and kinship-defined. These jobs include low-skilled service jobs such as hawking and street vending as well as low-skilled manufacturing jobs such as industrial labor⁷⁷. In a comprehensive list of services provided by street vendors in Delhi, from food, drinks to newspaper and magazines, followed by household services and transport facilities, the range of workers and their daily/monthly wages differ from Rs.600 (\$10) to Rs.8000 (\$200) per month (Dasgupta 2003, 57). The ethnic networks that facilitate labor in these low-skilled jobs are tightly knit. This owner-migrant carefully curates this space⁷⁸ through his social networks of immediate kin, and entry is highly regulated. Parry (2003) highlights how these networks function for the migrants who populate the manufacturing jobs at the Bhilai Steel Plant in Central India (Parry 2003). Industrial workers are employed in particular jobs at the plant arrive at the location and skills due to their familial networks and within the universe of industrial workers, and rotation cycles of migrants follow a pre-determined and universally-accepted hierarchy. Migrants from prosperous strata of the villages were employed as plant operatives whereas the poorest and least educated strata were employed as construction site coolies (Parry 2003,

⁷⁷ Dasgupta (2003) describes how manufacturing jobs are widely covered in the literature; service jobs in urban areas are not fully covered (Dasgupta 2003).

⁷⁸ Here, space implies the physical space or “spot” where the migrants hold their businesses as well as the employment skills and niche generated by the migrants at the spot over the years.

227). As in the case with service-based jobs, migrants' urban-rural linkages are a result of their association with a certain lever in the industrial hierarchy.

According to De Haan and Zoomers, accumulation from semi-permanent strategy is usually guided by a long-term strategic view of future income resources (L. De Haan and Zoomers 2005) and not just "staying put" in the village. Personal testimonies of long-term migrants in the industrial city of Bhilai in Central India indicate that their strategies are shaped by social factors such as family feuds over property or escaping an outcaste marriage, factors that are "mostly individualistic" than economic in nature (Parry 2003, 230). The impact of long-term migration strategies results in their rural households choosing another lifestyle, exploring entrepreneurial skills and charting a different non-farm pathway for the future⁷⁹. In the urban informal markets, the marginal peasants as semi-permanent migrants represent unskilled and semi-skilled labor groups that form a reserve of development resource (Nyberg-sørensen, Hear, and Engberg-pedersen 2002) and they embody different employment roles that are pre-determined by the agency of their migrant stream at destination. Even as the duration of semi-permanent migration consists of long-term strategies, it is not seen as a radical break from the place of "rural origin".

Men dominate migrant streams that lead to semi-permanent patterns. These out-migration strategies require that the left-behind⁸⁰ women embody diverse roles in the household in the absence of men. The agricultural workload intensifies for women in nuclear households. In addition, the effects of male out-migration, especially the semi-permanent streams, can reflect on lower agricultural production for rural households with sizable landholdings, as the women depend on hired labor for tasks such as plowing involving manual labor, the supply of which may not be consistent (Paris et al. 2005,

⁷⁹ Nelson (2010) presents a theoretical model based on Stark and Taylor's hypothesis that follows that under-developed economies go through a "migration hump" where less development results in less out-migration. However as migration increases, it encourages more out-migration streams. Thereafter, there is a point at which out-migration stops and domestic economy begins to provide employment to the locals (Mendola 2010, 106–107). This macro-economic view has been popular, even as it is extremely narrow in its analysis of the social groups that undertake out-migration in the informal economy.

⁸⁰ The use of the term "left-behind" in the place of "staying put" is relevant to the male-dominated migrant streams here. Staying put for women implies freedom to partake in the household strategy to stay behind, whereas left-behind has a reference to the lack of freedom and power for women to participate in the household decision-making.

2527). This migration strategy is the most widely researched, especially on themes such as returns from international remittances with its influence on social status of rural households.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have covered some salient concepts and theses that connect the central research concern: the impact of rural households and their endowments on the out-migration pathways. I argue that the framework, adopted from Sen's concept of endowments or initial condition of the household, alongside the existing livelihoods literature, is instrumental in describing the household's non-permanent migration pathways. I have also highlighted the specific indicators of the forms of capitals from the available literature. This trajectory directs the reader towards the dimensions of household endowments, which I explore briefly in the analysis of the migration strategies. I have highlighted the features and contours of each of the migration strategies, highlighting available literature on each of the different strategies. The aim is to facilitate the understanding of why the migration strategies are different from each other, and what are the factors that influence the households to undertake them. It is also essential to contextualize how out-migration takes shape in post-colonial India, in the background of ICT, pro-poor policies and changing market conditions. Through this analysis of out-migration, it is possible to describe the outcomes of the rural households in the future. In the following chapter, I discuss how the empirical study was conducted in rural Rajasthan, with an overview of the methodological tools that explore the dimensions of the research questions.

Chapter 3 – Methodological Strategies: Tracing the Migration Patterns

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used to systematically answer the research questions. There are different migration trajectories that rural households adopt that influence their initial situation or “endowment” structure. In order to carry out this analysis, I adopted a methodological design that explores how stories migrants tell about their households describe and discuss the household’s out-migration pathways. Toward this purpose, I undertook extensive fieldwork between 2010 and 2012 in the districts of Udaipur and Dungarpur in Southern Rajasthan--moving between rural and semi-urban locations to understand out-migration pathways of different households. Using this methodological structure, the thesis delves into why certain households favor specific out-migration pathways and how they are able to benefit from them. The methodology design can be more or less characterized as qualitative, with elements of hermeneutics⁸¹ employed during data analysis. The methodological tools used during fieldwork include 15 semi-structured interviews with household members⁸², several informal discussions, and interviews with fieldworkers and health staff at primary health centres, Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), direct and participant observation⁸³. These choices allowed me, as a researcher and an outsider, to step inside the community as a participant-observer, thus understanding the layer of knowledge that belongs to the selected rural households or their “habitus” as characteristics embodied in their daily activities (Throop and Murphy 2002).

This chapter presents two main discussions; the first is a discussion of how the different methodological choices have been made, including a description of the two main phases of the fieldwork. Each phase has been described, reflecting on how the research questions have been answered. The second is a discussion on the methodological tools, the role of the researcher in data collection and the analytical

⁸¹ I use the term hermeneutics more generally to refer to the interpretative aspect of qualitative work where the construction of meaning of the sociological texts lies in the hands of the researcher.

⁸² Refer to A18 in the Appendix to view the rough structure of the semi-structured questionnaire

⁸³ In fact, I also found that direct or non-participant observation is an important method in this methodology that helped in validating or falsifying standard responses during interviews.

framework used. The research design discussed is centered on the empirical inquiry of the internal migration patterns that involved undertaking fieldwork in select rural communities of Southern Rajasthan.

3.1.1 Fieldwork Choices: Multi-Sited Approach

The implications of out-migration as a livelihood strategy require that different narratives from within households or between households in rural communities be carefully studied. When the process of out-migration is non-permanent in nature, the approach that captured the distinct narratives appeared to be a multi-site approach, a popular methodological strategy in empirical works of migration studies⁸⁴. Miles and Huberman recommend specified forms of pre-structuring research design studies that use multiple sites as against single site, the position of my research design agrees with Maxwell who challenges this positivist notion of research design (Miles and Huberman 1984; Maxwell 1996, 64) Multi-sited approach to fieldwork has been primarily been derived from ethnography (M.A. Falzon et al. 2009)⁸⁵. Multi-sited approach involves tracing the locations where the migrants live and work in, including at least two locations during the fieldwork process. The two locations in a study on circular migrants are defined: source and destination, and for this purpose, multiple field work sites were selected to study the different migration patterns more closely. As source communities, I alternated between choosing tribal villages on the hills and mixed-caste villages on plains. As sites for destination, Udaipur city in Rajasthan state and Ahmedabad city in Gujarat state were selected. It is important to add that the locations were purposively selected, driven by the strategic interest of the location to the needs of the study. Based on my previous experience working in the region of Southern Rajasthan, as well as consultation with NGOs working on development and migration with rural communities, the sites were chosen. Below, we will highlight the real-time trajectory of the fieldwork.

⁸⁴ In migration studies, empiricists apply this approach to carefully trace the migrants to their homes and work places leading to multiple field sites. In this case, I have only loosely derived that strategy in the second phase of the fieldwork (See Section 3.4).

⁸⁵ Multi-sited ethnography has been articulated in different ways in this book, with many migration studies redefining the idea of “multi-sited”, using the term to denote different perspectives of informants, locations, spaces and places.

Figure 4 is the Dungarpur district map and Figure 5 is the map for Udaipur district. I started my fieldwork in December 2010 in Udaipur city, which happened to be my base. From the city, I regularly traveled every week to specific village communities in Kherwara district (south) and Kotra district (West). During this period, I acquired some help from local fieldworkers in order to find locations to help me understand diversity of the migration strategies. However, the focus of this fieldwork was to understand seasonal migration more closely. Therefore in 2011 and 2012, I moved base to Aspurs block in Dungarpur district, a location that is south of Udaipur city. Within Dungarpur district, I commuted to some village communities in Aspurs and Sagwara block along with a local fieldworker. For three months in 2011 and 2012, I lived in Aspurs “market town” in a rented accommodation along with other locals/commuters. During this period, I uncovered the more patterns of out-migration between the OBC and higher caste households that involve building on reserve capital.

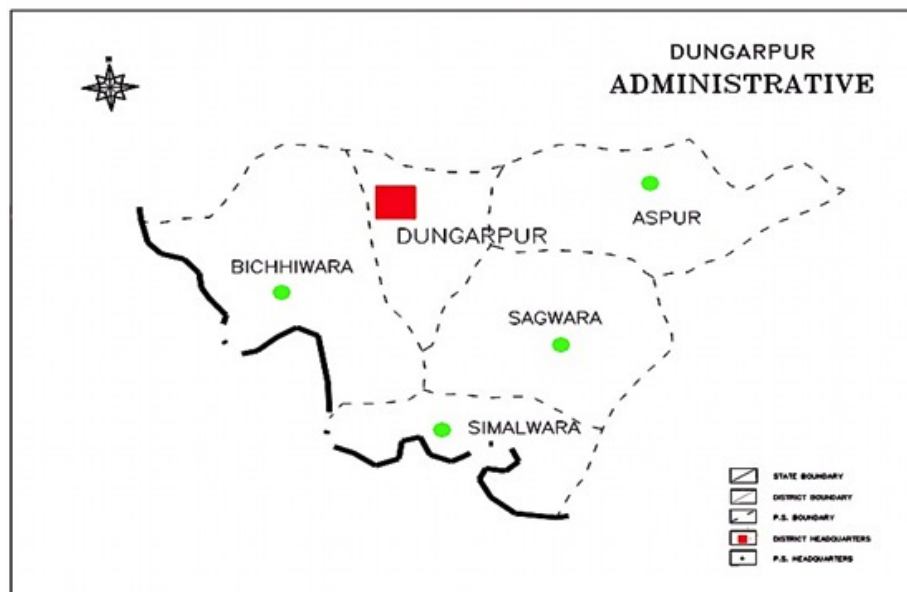


Figure 4 – Map of Dungarpur District

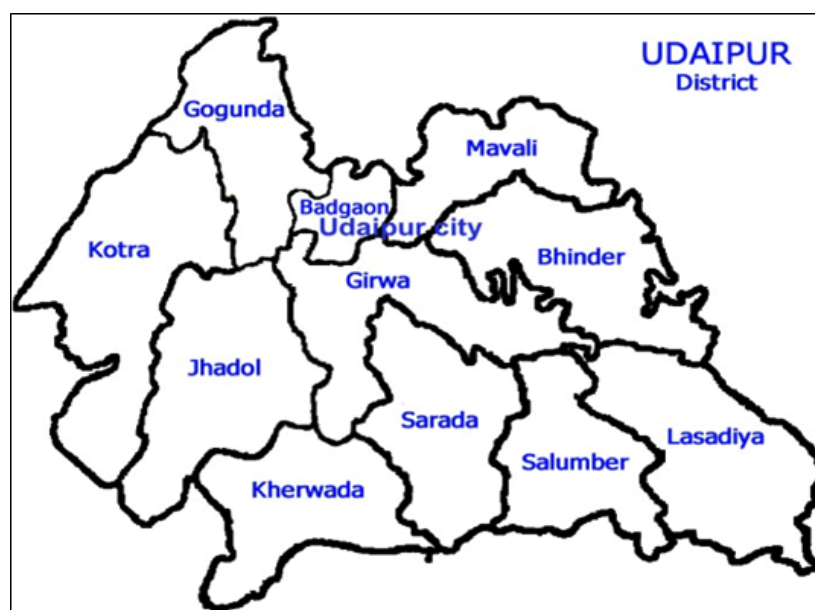


Figure 5 – Map of Udaipur District

3.2 Research Design

The main research question of the thesis aimed to study the influence of the initial situation (or endowments) of the household on migration pathways. In order to capture the essence of the research question, I deduced a set of simplified interview questions⁸⁶ but as with every fieldwork process, they evolved over time with the data gathering process and adapted to the new conditions of fieldwork. In effect the data from the field was used to refine the questions and strengthen research arguments with every consequent field visit. Despite a clear research question at the outset, the methods of data collection and the depth of research questions were constantly in dialogue⁸⁷.

In order to uncover the logic of specific households, I used a purposive sampling strategy such that unique migration pathways may be sought and captured in the field area. Therefore, with the aim of finding representative samples, I employed multi-sited approach very early in the fieldwork. During the field visits to different sites, the need for

⁸⁶ See Appendix A18

⁸⁷ In fact in an important contribution to the methodological choices in capturing intimate social practices during fieldwork, Bleek presents his post-positivist view in favor of qualitative methods that openly demonstrates its effective ability to expound and present truism in field data, based on the relationships that the researcher achieves with the participants as well as on the ability to question survey results with informal data during fieldwork (Bleek 1987, 320).

employing purposive sampling became especially relevant. Purposive sampling involves selecting information-rich cases strategically and purposefully; with the type and number of cases dependent on the requirements of the study (Patton 2002, 243). Thereafter, I started to interview rural men of all ages, whoever was able to articulate their past, current or future migration trajectories. Following this, I interviewed left-behind women, not necessarily in the same home where the men were interviewed. I selected school teachers, NGO workers, immigrants, and government officials in order to derive a holistic, all-encompassing point of view of the impact of migration strategies on the households. How the household samples were selected in each of the two fieldwork phases in the next section (Section 3.3 and 3.4). Note that although the fieldwork strategy is derived from the purpose of the study but it is also result of the resources and constraints of time at hand.

Below, Table 4 highlights the purpose of each phase, the key informants during the process of fieldwork as well as the timeline of the fieldwork activities. This table will be followed by detailed descriptions of each phase and how the methodology was actually conducted.

Table 4 – Fieldwork in Two Phases

Phases	Locations	Key Informants	Timeline
Phase I	Exploration of the migration strategies in Kherwara and Kotra blocks of Udaipur district; nakas of Udaipur city.	Field offices of Seva Mandir in Udaipur district.	December 2010 to January 2011
Phase II	Aspur block of Dungarpur district; village communities in Sagwara block, Dungarpur district	Self-selected key informants in villages; Field offices and NGO fieldworkers of Aajeevika Bureau in Dungarpur district.	June – September 2011 June - August 2012

The two main phases of fieldwork distinct in its outcomes but also they were undertaken in different locations. The first phase of fieldwork was a pilot study in Udaipur district. It involved an exploration of migration strategies, an understanding of how and in what way the households use migration as a livelihood strategy. In this phase, I have specifically focused on understanding the role of migration in the traditional agrarian structures, focused on smallholder households uncovering different stories on seasonal migration, stories that articulated short-term migration strategies as

survival strategies. The second phase of the fieldwork required that the different variations of non-permanent migration be fully explored. In this phase, I discovered households that used different strategies for migration that did not result in necessarily survival but arrived at well-being and development. Over a period of two years, I revisited the same field sites in order to understand the delicate juxtaposition of different rural households against their migration strategies. Phase II helped analyze the factor endowments that were responsible for migration strategies as well as uncovering the potential pathways of the household undertaking the select migration strategy. To sum up, the two phases of fieldwork helped clearly answer and articulate the migration strategies and their differential outcomes. In the following sections, I will highlight specific details on how the methodological choices were made in the two phases.

3.3 Phase I: Locating the Source and Destination

During Phase I of my methodological strategy, I dedicated my time to the first research question: understanding the different kinds of migration strategies of the non-permanent nature that exist in the field area. In order to achieve that, I started studying two simultaneous processes: the tribal communities in the remote areas of Udaipur district and the *nakas* or *chauks*⁸⁸ in Udaipur city⁸⁹. I located the tribal communities from the field offices of Kherwara block⁹⁰ and Kotra block of the local NGO Seva Mandir (See Figure 4 above). The NGO fieldworkers would drive me to remote locations due to their inaccessibility to me, which is how I held interviews with the tribal

⁸⁸ *Naka* or *chauk* can be defined as a street corner that is an open marketplace for casual laborers in a city. We will describe this more closely in the context of Ahmedabad where FGDs with different types of migrants was undertaken.

⁸⁹ It is necessary to state here that the knowledge of migration strategies will be derived from my growing up years in Mumbai city where the migrants contributed towards building much of the urban and metropolitan milieu.

⁹⁰ Kherwara block in Udaipur district consists of 62 *panchayats* and 251 villages that are predominantly rural in nature whereas the Kherwara block office shows signs of rapid urbanization, with the proximity of much of the centre of the block to the state highway that runs across Gujarat state in the south. The highway NH8 that runs across the Rajasthan state into Gujarat provides an important employment pathway for the unemployed youth of Kherwara block.

communities of *Bhils* and *Minas* in order to study their migration patterns⁹¹. The purpose of this exercise was to find out if a pattern emerged between them, and what kind of descriptions could be derived from the two processes. I made an important discovery during this time: the migrants who migrated to *nakas* in Udaipur city were not the ones that lived in remote, tribal *phalas* of Udaipur district. Therefore, I undertook Phase I to understand the migrant patterns that these two migrating groups undertook, and how their household's initial condition reflected their migration pathways.

The process of village selection in Udaipur district was a result of the needs of the study and the information provided by fieldworkers, managers at the NGO Seva Mandir. Along with the local fieldworker, I decided to undertake field visits in two villages in Kherwara block, at first; one was a tribal hamlet, Kakan village where the households undertook a more seasonal kind of farm and non-farm migration. The second village that furnished me with insights on primarily off-farm out-migration strategies was Sada village in Kotra block. Below, I will carefully examine the process of interviews and household selection, to provide the reader with a glimpse of the fieldwork.

3.3.1 Udaipur District: Kotra and Kherwara Blocks

In Kherwara block, I selected Kakan village in Sagwara panchayat in order to study the migration patterns of the Bhils and Minas. In Kotra block, I selected Sada village in Sada panchayat to study the migrant patterns of the same tribal groups. And finally, I selected Khojawada village in Kherwara block to get a glimpse of OBC communities in the region. As most tribal villages in Rajasthan state, Kakan village in Sagwara panchayat was segregated into three *phalas* or administrative sections but the way many tribal villages are placed, every *phala* consisted of about 50 households segregated across a large expanse of the village, at about two to three kms from each other whereas the homes, made of cow dung and thatched roof, were mounted on hills (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997)⁹². As my first interview, I selected a household that was

⁹¹ In contrast, villages on plains and *nakas* in Udaipur city were easier to access for a single researcher on foot or using public transport such as public buses or private transport. Since I did not own or drive my own vehicle, it was harder

⁹² Unnithan-Kumar (1997:viii) in her description of living in a tribal Girasia village explains her isolation of doing fieldwork in a tribal village where tribal huts are “so scattered that it is difficult to get a sense of

one of the key participants in Seva Mandir's sustainability project, a tribal household that grew some wheat and other seasonal crops and the man of the household was also a panchayat council member. This was the only household that was first to begin BT cotton cultivation in two hectares of land⁹³ in the entire village. As I interviewed other households it became clear that the resource base among the households was comparable. Seasonal migration was a common migrating strategy for them. They owned less than 2 hectares of land per family; while practicing mono-cropping, sometimes dabbling in vegetable crops on the side, in the cases of non-drought years. In addition to these factors, I found in the more remote *phala* that were closer to the forests that households consisted of a higher number of children but limited number of adults, indicating that the adults were out migrating to other farms with left-behind children in the households. Since 2010 was a drought year, seasonal migration was more a norm than an exception. There were also some *kachcha* homes where there were latches at the gate with a dog guarding the fence and the fieldworker informed me that these households migrated for piecemeal wages to nearby farms. Off-farm wage labor was common as well. There were other local villagers, some of them frequent temporary migrants that I interacted with, of whom one of them was called "mate" or the middleman who facilitated migration of children and adults to other far away farms during lean drought season. There were other men who were returning from a short stint in migration on construction sites to the cities due to health problems but they expressed their need to return to the informal sector for more work in the construction industry.

Similar to the experience of Kakan village was the experience of Sada village in Kotra block⁹⁴. NREGA work had been stopped due to a change in the local supervisor. There were glimpses of unemployed households, some undertaking agricultural labor on

the village as a geographical and social unit." A tribal woman explained one of the reasons why the houses are constructed this way: so they can see who is walking towards their home from a far distance.

⁹³ In many such tribal villages, there were small holder households that we interviewed that had begun BT cotton seed cultivation on their lands, after having undertaken seasonal migration for many years on other BT cotton farms in Gujarat but their family members seasonally migrated alongside from time to time.

⁹⁴ Kotra block in Udaipur district is completely rural, the most underdeveloped blocks that exists in the district. It consists of 31 panchayats and 262 villages; it is located at a distance of 75 kms from Udaipur city. While Udaipur district as a whole is tribal dominated, Kotra block consists of 89.3% of ST population (Bureau 2010a).

a regular basis, however unlike Kherwara block development town which was growing rapidly, the Kotra development town was tribal, non-descript with no sense of urbanization or development. Nevertheless the households displayed some recurring features: tribal men and sometimes families undertaking farm-based migration, there were beginnings of BT cotton cultivation in small land areas, young children were sent through “*mates*” or village middlemen as migrants to BT cotton farms in Gujarat, in order to involve them in the artificial pollination work in BT Cotton farms (Dube and NCPCR 2011). Apart from Sada village, I undertook some short field visits to some tribal villages in Kotra block, a backward and logistically unviable location. In the villages of Kanaapaadar and Umripaadar of Kotra block, similar narratives of exploitation of off-farm labor at migrant locations were unearthed. Most of all, the stories of wage laborers and sharecroppers, as well as BT cotton farmers in these regions alongside temporary non-farm jobs opened a plethora of information on migration strategies that were being adopted by different migrants. I was able to establish a relationship between the migration strategies, endowment structure of rural households and the motivation driving the changes among them. In the meanwhile, it was time to go back to Udaipur city and figure out the kinds, types of non-farm jobs available for the migrants at the *nakas*.

In a completely divergent migration strategy to the tribals in Sada village and Kakan village, I was acquainted with some OBC households that undertook international migration to the Gulf countries in the village of Khojawada in Kherwara block with the help of a local fieldworker. The demography and climatic situation of Khojawada was also unique to other regions in Udaipur district. Khojawada village had received moderate rainfall that drought year and many households with access to water sources were harvesting their Rabi crops. Here, I interviewed some families known as Patels in the village that owned very big homes, along with large agricultural land. Patels belong to the OBC⁹⁵ category of castes, that which received government benefits through reservations in jobs and education institutions but in reality, were better-off than higher castes in the village. These households had members who were migrants in the Gulf

⁹⁵ As compared to other caste listings for government benefits, OBC or Other Backward Classes have recently been added in the administrative listings due to historical characteristics of some of the castes within this mold that have demonstrated social and educational backwardness. In terms of caste hierarchy, they neither belong to upper caste, nor do they belong to SC or STs.

countries where they worked as manual laborers or contractors but sent back a lot of money through *hawala* or informal cash transfers. Now they have built big concrete homes in the village. Moreover, their children went to English-medium schools in the nearest market town, Kesariyaji and the families leased out their farms, permanently moving out of full-time farm employment but maintaining their own lands. This accumulation-inducing migration strategy familiarized me with another dimension of out-migration, one that had a greater impact on the household arrangements. I had read in the literature about semi-permanent migration strategies, but there was a need to consolidate more information on these kinds of rural households, explore their household conditions more closely. It was also necessary to understand the reasons and their perceived and demonstrated outcomes resulting from undertaking the strategy.

3.3.2 Udaipur City

I dedicated my time in Udaipur city to understand the types of migrants that lived and participated at wage working sites from time to time⁹⁶. In the following sections, I will explain the different patterns that emerged from Udaipur city and directed me to trace the rural households that undertook these migration practices to the city. In Figure 6 below, the map indicates important city neighborhoods that were also labor *nakas*. For instance, Sukhadia Circle and Udaipur bus depot on NH-927A in Udaipur city were common stops where labor *nakas* and commuting people overlapped.

⁹⁶ Bautes presents a hypothesis that urban space in Udaipur city is organized around the demands of tourism activity in the city (Bautes 2007). This is a critical argument to analyze the negotiation of urban space in the city general, and how the nodal points for *chauks* exist in the city.

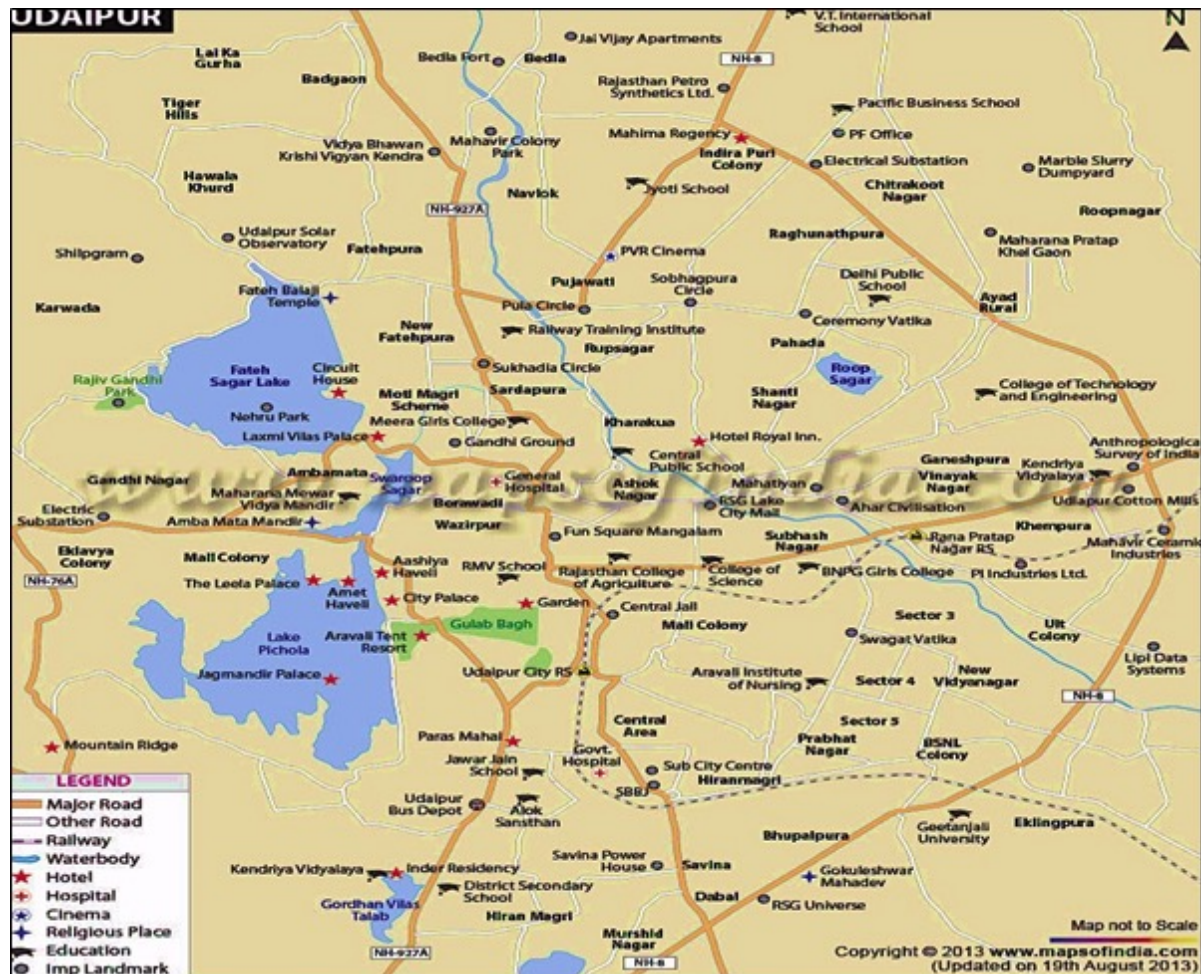


Figure 6 – Map of Udaipur City

I discovered that Udaipur city was a melting pot of all kinds of temporary migrants but it was clear from the stories of households in source communities that they followed different migration strategies, largely dependent on their needs and their existing resources⁹⁷. While some of the temporary migrants were long-distance travelers, others were commuters and the meeting point for them remained the public transport services in the city. They gathered at *chauks*⁹⁸ alongside locals and tourists to access the private auto rickshaws that allowed fare-share among passengers. Some of these *chauks*

⁹⁷ Resources here refer to their physical and material endowments including cash money, household items, food and place to sleep, contacts at destination among other things.

⁹⁸ Here the *chauks* that were previously noted as meeting point for casual work are seen as designated city corners where people are gathered for access of public transport.

are also public bus stops⁹⁹. It is likely that the private transport system (including fare share taxis) revolves around the casual migrants that circulate in the city based on their return movements. Unlike the regular buses that run on a fixed schedules with timetables and designated stops, private fare-share three-wheeled auto rickshaws or taxis have no such maps, they usually take their most successful driving route through market areas with large crowds where there was a possibility to find an easy *sawaari* (passenger). Knowing these nodal points and the transport infrastructure around it was important to the methodological strategy because the interactions with migrants, willing participants happened while tracking these routes.

The distinction in the social and cultural traits of the migrants became visible to me during this time of sharing transport with them. Similarly, the most common kind of migrant streams emerged as well. They were wage laborers that worked in the marble industry in Udaipur city or the neighboring Rajsamand district; unskilled and poorly educated, working in some of the most risk-averse employment sites of the Udaipur city and lived in squatters or pavements. Many of these were *Mina* tribals or *Bhils* as I discovered but they belonged to adjoining Gogunda or Badgaon blocks. Nevertheless *Minas* were very distinct in their social behavior from other migrants; their demeanor especially diverged from the urban residents. Any interaction with them involved speaking in Hindi or Mewari and them responding in Vagadi, their mother tongue. Apart from tribals, there were other SC groups that migrated to the city for casual labor jobs as well.

In contrast to the groups of tribal wage laborers, I interacted with the rickshaw drivers who belonged to the OBC or higher caste groups; many of them were commuters. The private auto rickshaw driver¹⁰⁰ that did not have similar characteristics of non-permanence as the tribal wage laborers and yet the two ubiquitous groups lived in the city as migrants, under different work and living conditions. Like the temporary wage laborers, they were all mostly poorly educated. The auto rickshaw drivers who

⁹⁹ I often asked new migrants in the city how they located the “*chawks*”, many of them claimed that they located public bus stops, especially the more crowded and centrally-located ones where a *chauk* was likely found.

¹⁰⁰ Many of them paid a daily rent for driving the auto rickshaw, which their earnings from the daily drive of transferring daily commuters around the city helped them pay, in addition to a small profit. Very few of the drivers were auto rickshaw owners, in which case they made a substantial profit from their business as auto rickshaw drivers.

were migrants worked as contractors, living for sporadic periods of time between their villages and their jobs as drivers in the Udaipur city. Some of them lived in temporary shelters in the city, while others commuted to their village homes frequently or at least once a week. They did not necessarily own the auto rickshaws but they were responsible for driving it¹⁰¹. Many of the drivers embellished their vehicles with music and shiny bright lights; there was loud folk music in Mewari language. They often spoke to the wage laboring migrants in their dialect, sometimes mocking them, sometimes chiding them when they did not pay the fare or tried to strike a cheaper bargain. On the other hand, the auto rickshaw drivers sometimes picked up some of their “friends” or people from their native village in between trips, and dropped them off at the next stop, without charging them a fee.

A common feature among the tribal wage laboring class was that they were always found in groups, either couples or a group of men or a family with children. Most of them were young or middle-aged men but most of them, stunk of heavy tobacco and sometimes of alcohol. Many of them would carry cell phones, often speaking loudly on the phone. All their belongings fit in their *potlis*, a piece of long cloth that was substituted for a suitcase, consisting of items such as food and clothes that the migrants tied together in a knot across a long stick. This made it easy for them to carry their belongings across their shoulders and kept them extremely mobile.

Many of the observations were noted in my fieldwork diary or recorded on my phone in the form of videos and audio files during this time, due permissions were taken every time. However, I recreated many of the informal conversations with the auto rickshaw drivers as well as locals at the end of my fieldwork to make sense of the entire fieldwork trajectory. Living in Udaipur city allowed me access to glimpses of information on the existing migration strategies, but not the motivations or their household situations that existed during the process. Nevertheless, the experience of living in Udaipur city also helped me to scope out experts on migration, information on the NGOs and their locations for intervention and training in the neighboring

¹⁰¹ It is important to clarify here that not being able to own a rickshaw has more than a financial rationale. Many of them do not necessarily aspire to stay in the city all year long; in fact many of them remain temporary migrants due to forced temporary residence in the cities, and some of them adhere to the compulsions to spend more time in their village homes, paying substantially large number of visits to their villages every year (Sood 2012, 99).

districts¹⁰². At the end of Phase I, I made two important decisions: first, I needed to move base from Udaipur city to more rural location that housed mixed caste communities where the different factors and motivations for out-migration among households would be clearer. Second, I needed to change my key informant, an NGO that provided me the right kind of guidance on migration issues in the region. Therefore, this remained an important reference point to scope out locations for my fieldwork in Phase II.

3.3.3 Reflections

Despite studying the household as a unit of inquiry, Phase I of the fieldwork focused more on interviewing only migrant members without focusing on uncovering the “household arrangement” during the migration process. Moreover, the gender point of view of women and men in the households in the migration cycles was not systematically tracked. In the beginning, my gender automatically allowed me easy access to women more closely, whereas the conversations with men were sometimes brief. However, these biases were acknowledged and addressed in Phase II (See 3.6 below). Interview questions during the first interactions were revelatory in Phase I. The interview guide was constructed on the basis of some preliminary questions to study the internal logic of households when I began fieldwork in Udaipur district in Phase I, but in reality, my understanding evolved alongside the interviews and informal interactions. Understanding the different aspects of the household characteristics was a gradual process. It helped me arrive at understanding household “endowments”. Understanding of the patterns of the migrants emerged from the observation of the informal economy in the cities but observational methods were not sufficient. There needed to be more FGDs and a systematic multi-sited approach that I needed to develop. Finding representative households following specific migration strategies became an important methodological approach that I decided to undertake in Phase II.

¹⁰² In fact, purposive sampling requires that the sampling decisions be made - having acquired considerable knowledge of the settings of the study so as to adequately capture the heterogeneity in the population or maximum variation (Miles and Huberman 1984; Maxwell 1996, 72). Therefore, I became aware of the migration strategies through the experience of field work in Phase I. Moreover, it gave me an opportunity to reflect upon questions of feasibility during data collection, validity and ethics in terms of sampling that subsequently helped Phase II.

3.4 Phase II: Defining Factors that Influenced Migration Strategies

In Phase II, the methodological strategy was more focused on capturing the factors that aided the rural households to undertake the different out-migration trajectories. In addition, I wanted to uncover and validate the diversity out-migration strategies in the region, some of the strategies that I only had a glimpse of in Phase I. To address this, I decided to move base to Aspur block in Dungarpur district: it was primarily a rural location that was connected to other tribal blocks of the region, and I also found a local NGO Aajeevika Bureau's field office that was able to guide me with everyday information on the locations.

Aajeevika Bureau (AB), a small organization based in Udaipur city has 3 field offices in the region of Southern Rajasthan (Salumbar block, Udaipur district; Aspur block, Dungarpur district; Banswara town; Banswara district). They provide service-based training and awareness for migrant rights, especially dealing with long-distance migrants in Ahmedabad and Mumbai. The change in the key informant occurred organically, as the scope of the thesis questions widened, I used purposive sampling to explore all probable samples to include non-permanent migration strategies among the rural households. In the following section, I will describe the process of field selection and the exploration of migration strategies in these field areas.

Rural Dungarpur, which lies in the south of Udaipur district, consists of 65% dominated by Scheduled Tribes according to the 2001 Census (Institute of Development Studies 2009a) but alongside demonstrates a heritage of dominance by some Rajput clans. Households in the mixed-caste and tribe village community of Nandli Sagora in Aspur Block on the east and tribal-dominated villages of Boriya Fala and Rangeli in remote Sagwara Block were selected over a course of 5 months in 2011 and 2012 to study the interaction of different caste groups with out-migration outcomes. The selection of the households in the village communities was influenced by interactions with household members, interactions with other external actors in the region as well as the available data on the region from the local NGO's. I was primarily based in Aspur block, but in keeping with the multi-sited approach, I tracked the migrants from the village communities to their worksites in Ahmedabad. Two important FGDs in this phase were conducted in Ahmedabad city; one with the temporary labor and the second with the contract labor in a small textiles industry.

In the monsoon 2011, I began the Phase II of the fieldwork in the Aspur block in Dungarpur district. Despite being resource-scarce and predominantly poor, Aspur block is considered to be richer in natural resources¹⁰³ and consists of a growing market-town. I used my time of living in Aspur town to explore the commuting characteristics of OBC communities in the region. Moreover, the largely tribal district of Dungarpur¹⁰⁴, blocks with mixed caste villages had dynamic political climate such that major political parties (BJP and Congress) that made Aspur their stronghold.

3.4.1 Aspur Block: Nandli Sagora Village Panchayat

Nandli Sagora (NS) is a revenue village. It was not hilly in nature; this made field visits to different households a viable option. It had a mixed caste profile, with Rajputs of the village (the most powerful caste, previously feudal landlords) dominating much of the political dice in the region¹⁰⁵. During the first brief visits to the village, it became clear that each of these castes and tribes undertook or aspired to undertake migration to cities. Nandli Sagora village consisted of two *phalas*, consisting of 250 households each. The main phala consisted of the households of higher castes (Rajputs, Brahmins, and Other General Castes) and a few pockets of lower castes and tribe households (Chamars, Mina Adivasis among others). A majority of the higher castes owned big pucca homes or semi-pucca homes, whereas a majority of the SCs and the STs lived in cow dung homes. Moreover, much of the higher-caste households, barring a few exceptions, earned or aspired to earn a living from semi-permanent migration from the metropolitan cities of

¹⁰³ One of its biggest water sources in Aspur block is the Som Kamla reserve dam that is situated at 10 kilometers to the west (SH 54) of the Aspur headquarters. However, during drought years such as 2009, most rivers run dry and replenish water reserves. Similarly, there is a still hope for groundwater and surface water exploration in the block until 20, whereas in other blocks especially Sagwara, the groundwater resources are slowly getting replenished (Institute of Development Studies 2009a) with a high fluoride content.

¹⁰⁴ In fact, the southern districts of Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara have been included in the Sub-Tribal Plan (STP) of the state for the special development of the tribal groups. STP was initiated in the Fifth Five year plan by the Indian Planning commission ensuring that the socioeconomic conditions of the tribals be ameliorated.

¹⁰⁵ It was here that I met with a Rajput gentleman called Zoravar Singh who was an important leader in the right-wing politics of Aspur block, having been the elected member of BJP from the block during some local elections. He owned sizable land (50 acres on his own count). Interactions with him allowed me an understanding of the politics of the region, however he was notorious for his corrupt ways in the village.

Mumbai and Ahmedabad. My interaction in NS with the higher castes that practiced SP migration to metropolitan cities helped me explore the initial condition of the household and how it has changed since the time of migration as a consistent, full-time activity.

Purposive sampling was used to select rural households in NS that specialized in the three types of migration strategies that were identified earlier. Through this process I discovered that the Rajput communities that undertook SP out-migration from specific village communities of Aspur owned and employed labor at their tea stalls in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. These communities did not engage in any other self-employed activity except owning tea stalls. Nevertheless, many of the interviews undertaken with Rajput families followed a similar pattern, even while the outcomes from the interviews were unique to the household's situation and the men's migration trajectory. The presence of clans among the Rajputs allowed ease of access during interviews: one household was able to furnish me with information on the other, providing me clues on the characteristics of the household. There were other key informants in the village such as the local nurse as well as a local fieldworker who provided me access to information on the migrating behavior, including their outcomes of the rural households.

The chance encounters of meeting the school teachers of the government school in NS helped me connect information from selected households to their children who attended the school. In fact, speaking to the children at the school was insightful – their perception of their future led me to select/deselect their households from my sampling strategy. There were important interviews that were conducted with returning SP migrants, mostly men who ran tea stalls in Mumbai. I also held many informal discussions with the women in the household, sometimes outside their homes or at the common water source in the main phala where they came to collect water. The informal discussions often yield more information on household migration strategies – on their current circumstances than the formal interviews did.

A village mapping exercise was conducted in the village school during which, it was discovered that a majority of higher caste youth owned at least one bike per household. There were many more personality insights of higher caste young boys alongside lower caste and tribal children. Figure 7 is a photograph of one such map that was produced. Through this exercise, it was observed that participatory exercises offered exciting opportunities to challenge conventional roles and hierarchies among the children by creating an opportunity for them to plan and analyse for themselves, how

they perceive their consumer habits (Abbot 1999, 234). I do not wish to overemphasize the role of participatory tools in this methodology, as the purpose for its usage here was basic, not interventionist; it was merely to understand the voices of the different caste groups on education. Moreover, it was an entry point for me as a researcher to be accepted in the village by the households. MacDonald (Atkinson et al. 2001, 61) while quoting Malinowski, asserts that participant observation forms one of the central methodological tools in the practice of ethnography, but ethnography as a whole consists of many more methods and techniques that allow the process of theory building. Nevertheless participant observation forms one of the “starter” tools that allowed me to engage directly with the communities.

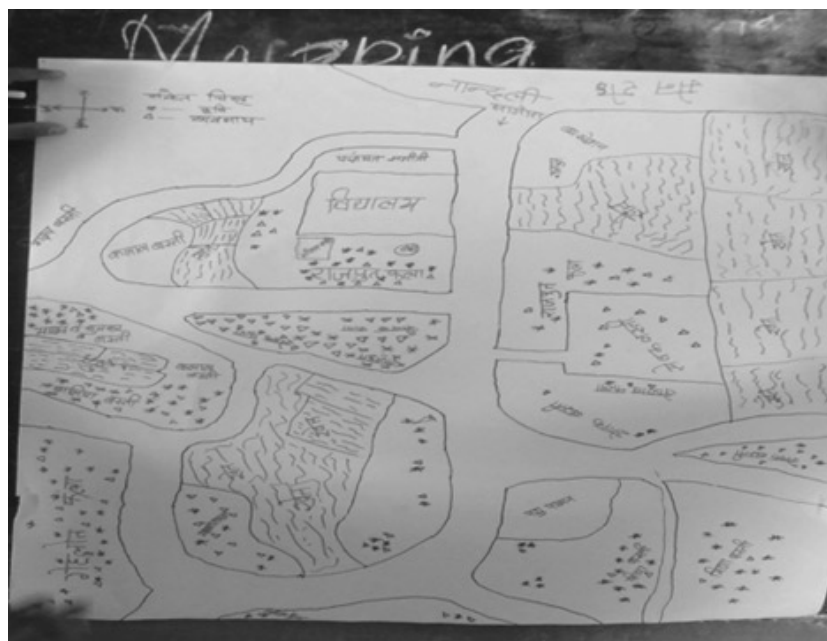


Figure 7 – Group Exercise - Map Showing Bikes in different phalas.
Source: author

3.4.2 Aspur Block Development Town

The OBCs that engage in skill-based entrepreneurial work formed an exclusive group that I aimed to study during Phase II. However there are specific reasons why this group was difficult to locate during fieldwork. There is an inherent bias in the techniques of purposive sampling of households such that it can lead to the exclusion of certain samples (Patel 2011, 74). The sampling scheme in villages that lived in mixed-caste villages, live in clusters and clans, depicting a particular pattern of social living. In such conditions, it was imminent to use these networks to delve deeper into the migrating patterns of the rural households. Therefore, while I was immersed in uncovering the

migrating patterns of higher-caste households, it was much later that some rural households that practiced commuting in the skilled non-farm work began to emerge as an important migrating trajectory of the rural households¹⁰⁶. Not only that, in Aspur block, the strong correlation between a retail market and self-employment opportunities for skilled workers became an important opportunity. Commuting opportunities for wage labor was a growing trend as well, due to new construction and infrastructure projects in fast-growing rural areas¹⁰⁷.

Interviews with many OBC households in Aspur block allowed for an analysis of commuting households that practiced skilled labor in a location closer to home. There was a strong correlation in the generational skills that were passed on to some OBC households such as *Darzi* (tailor) and *Suthar* (Carpentry) that they practiced for self-employment or in collaboration with members of the cluster. During interviews with OBC households, some were more open about descriptions of their skills and the future of migration; others were cynical about the state of rural livelihoods in these communities. However, more women were interviewed in OBC households than men since they were educated and fluent in Hindi. I also noticed that commuting is a broader type than temporary migrants or SP migrants, since it includes contract laborers, mining labor and so on. Since commuting in underdeveloped regions were only linked to retail and construction industry, an FGD¹⁰⁸ in Ahmedabad city, where I interviewed contracted labor in small-time, textile industries, a different aspect emerged. There were long-time migrants; some of them commuted while others lived in squatters in the industry complex. There were important points that were gleaned about the ownership of skills in industries, and their perception of contract labor in the metropolitan cities. In another case, I interacted with local labor on a mining site in Ghodach village in Dungarpur district– some of them who commuted from neighboring villages and since

¹⁰⁶ Patton describes this as opportunistic or emergent sampling “where the researcher takes advantage of whatever unfolds as it unfolds” It may not include a target number of interviews but it involves using the emerging data to undertake impromptu interviews.(Patton 2002, 240)

¹⁰⁷ In Phase I, there were similar instances where villages in Kherwara block of Udaipur district had an active commercial market, possibilities of commuting for non-farm wage labor or entrepreneurship was increasing as against opportunities for commuting among rural households in extremely rural and non-commercial regions of Kotra.

¹⁰⁸ FGD is “a method of group interview which explicitly includes and uses the group interaction to generate data”(Pope and Mays 1995, 44).

the mining site had been relatively old, they were content with the work assurance at the site.

3.4.3 Sagwara Block: Boriya Fala

I interviewed seasonal migrant households in remote village communities of Dungarpur district such as Boriya Fala panchayat including the villages of Boriya Fala and Gamela Fala. Alongside I also interviewed households in Rangeli village and Tekla village – both remote, tribal-dominated villages. Much of the information on these communities came from fieldworkers from Aajeevika Bureau. There were two interesting FGDs conducted with tribal women in Tekla and Gamela Fala, many of them were left-behind women whose husbands migrated for non-farm work from time to time. The exercise of doing FGDs with tribal women, allowed me to explore another important voice in my research universe: the differential impact of migration strategies on the women. Moreover, how and in what way the remittances helped the households started to unravel during this process. There were also discussions on women's health, mental health in particular as well as service providers, their idea of their future – all of these discussions helped propel the narrative on the role of women in the migration process as a livelihood activity for rural households. The case of interviewing the tribal households in Dungarpur district had been critical to the understanding of migration outcomes in these regions. Even though, they were often homogenous village communities, especially of *Bhils* and *Mina* tribals but there were some interesting insights during the interviews. Even though a majority of tribal men at source were unable or unwilling to openly discuss the concerns of seasonal, short-term migration, it was equally common to encounter tribal men and women as political leaders or social workers (or *karyakarta*¹⁰⁹, as they are called) who repeatedly stated that migration was the only viable opportunity for them to escape poverty.

¹⁰⁹ While local political leaders came to be identified only on the basis of caste earlier, the new *karyakartas*, as Krishna (2003) explains, are also identified on the basis of their accessibility and their ability to generate maximum funds for the village development. The *karyakartas* may not represent a majority of the households in the area due to their access to education and other stakeholders, such as NGO workers or government agents.

In an FGD that was conducted with tribal men in Ahmedabad city, there were many insights on the experience of migration that were revealed¹¹⁰. The discussions during the FGD with migrant labor involved a different set of questions from the village study; many of the topics discussed the conditions of work in the city. In short, there was a lot of information forthcoming on their role in the informal labor economy. Along with another fieldworker, I probed more on the social, economic and cultural changes they experienced in the city. Most of them worked on a daily wage and migrated back and forth every two-three months. The migrants that we interviewed lived together as a closed community of a small slum and remained carriers of remittances between households for each other. Most of them worked on the construction sites and were involved in brick-breaking and brick-carrying jobs. Many of the participants in the FGD were new migrants in the city and they were barely skilled. A local fieldworker¹¹¹ remained the key informant of this FGD.

3.4.4 Reflections

The criteria of selecting the households in Phase II were based on the reflections of Phase I. Therefore, using purposive sampling, I selected representative households were based on the condition of diversity of households, their willingness to participate and the quality of the data during interviews, informal discussions. With diversity of migration strategies, I also focused on systematically uncovering the gender perspective – understanding how the men and women in different households viewed and influenced their household arrangement during migration. Having more information through the data also helped me make conscientious choices regarding key informants in Phase II, which means that there were a few people that I could trust with directing me to some

¹¹⁰ This FGD was a result of tracking exercise where a tribal man Khemji was encountered in his village Boriya Fala, and thereafter I met him at the naka, along with another fieldworker. We then followed him to his kholi in Ahmedabad city, Gujarat where he lived with other migrants from his village and other villages of Dungarpur. It is here that we undertook the FGD.

¹¹¹ Sadhanaji remained a reliable and the most fluid information agent and a friend to me during the fieldwork process in Aspur block. A veteran in fieldwork, having worked in health and women's outreach programs for over 20 years, we exchanged ideas, skills and food. She was a migrant herself who came from her home in Pratapgarh in the north of Aspur block and commuted there to meet her family during weekends.

households/villages over others. Moreover, interacting with fieldworkers from Aajeevika Bureau in Aspur town, who were aware and passionate about migration in the region, provided me with the right frame of references from time to time. Nevertheless, as any fieldwork process, it was tedious and confusing. The quality of interactions with the households was never static; it depended on the availability of the participants in the discussion, knowing that my time was also finite during field area.

The use of the methodological tools varied across the two phases. The main research tools in Phase II that was used was interviews and informal interactions, spending time with the village community and in order to consolidate some observations that were analyzed during interviews, I conducted FGDs across different migrant types. Interviews and observation remained the common set of tools that were used across the two phases. In Phase I, I had not yet located my field communities; I was exploring the dichotomies of field realities between Udaipur city and rural communities of Udaipur district. In contrast, in Phase II, I probed into the daily activities of the rural households, using the interviews and interactions to build rapport with the community as well as use the different interactions to expand the information base with the communities. In the following section, I will study how each of the tools were adapted to the field settings. I will also briefly discuss the ethical concerns that were addressed during fieldwork.

3.5 Methodological Tools

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The main criteria of a semi-structured interview is to allow the researcher to open up surface-level responses and allow the participants to articulate the meaning of their response, including their beliefs, feelings, emotions and gestures (Legard, Keegan, and Ward 2003, 141)¹¹². During my interviews with the participants, I used a rough checklist of themes, and then the conversation unfolded on its own. The checklist includes points of inquiries that were based on the research questions but adapted to suit the form of an interview. 15 semi-structured interviews were undertaken during Phase I

¹¹² It is not surprising that the outcomes of interviews are unique to each fieldworker. In fact, depending on how long and intense the interaction lasts between the participants and the fieldworker, the former reveals the processes that constitute an authentic interior self in the manner that they know (Hockey and Forsey 2012, 84) to the latter.

and Phase II. Young adults, older return migrants and left-behind women were interviewed across the fieldwork. The most common tools used for recording conversations during in-depth interviews are notepads however in this case, those were forsaken for voice recording – with due permission from the participants, such that there would be unbiased conversations¹¹³.

3.5.2 Informal Interactions and Observation

Even though it is possible to gauge a lot about a household through a semi-structured interview, sometimes an informal interaction can prove to be more insightful to the propel the fieldwork forward. Informal discussions helped me find new information as well as to cross check the information that participants provide in the interviews. There were many examples of informal interactions in the villages where the young girls were able to openly discuss during or after interviews such as their impressions of living in cities while visiting their husbands or fathers, or their perception towards education in the future. And the fact that they varied across the different caste clusters made for an interesting caveat to the migration strategies. Similarly, there were many other chance discussions, informal conversations with local leaders and government officials, conversations during commutes that occurred in between interviews that provided unique insights into the recurrent health problems among higher castes or the latest consumer trend that was popular trend among certain caste clusters. I could undertake direct observation in Phase I through the NGO's offices or through their local informants. It was not participatory in nature; my role was curtailed to observing details of daily life of the rural communities with limited interaction and participation from the community. During Phase II, I chose two villages as the centre of my work. While direct observation was possible during the initial days, over a period of time – the members of some households would willingly participate in small talk especially young children from the government school. One of the biggest contributions of direct observation and informal interactions were that the information from these activities enhanced the interviews with household members – they gave me as a

¹¹³ This was an important strategy especially during interviews in mixed-caste village communities where there was mutual suspicion between groups. The role of the interviewer as a new entrant is extremely fragile in such a situation, and in order to prove the stance of neutrality between different groups in the village, it became important to discard things like notepads – often used by government officials during official surveys.

researcher an identity, sometimes a “reputation”. When these new information were brought up during interviews, the sense of familiarity enriched much of the data from the different households.

It is important to clarify here that while the fieldwork in Phase II has some components of ethnographic work in it such as direct observations and informal discussions, it is misleading to label the entire approach of fieldwork as ethnography. The approach of the thesis was multidisciplinary and focused on adapting the available methodological devices to the fieldwork that helps answer the research questions.

3.5.3 Focused Group Discussions

About seven FGDs have been conducted during Phase I and Phase II of the fieldwork. There have been sufficient descriptions in the previous sections about the contribution of some of the FGDs that helped in the expansion of the worldview of migration strategies. There are three important points that highlight the importance of FGDs as a qualitative tool. Firstly, it allows for a breakthrough when dealing with a new community, or a new theme that has not been previously ventured into. Secondly, FGDs when facilitated correctly, can allow a multiplicity of perspectives within the group to be heard. This was palpable in some of the FGDs that I conducted in Ahmedabad city, along with the NGO fieldworkers. Thirdly, FGDs can be instrumental in identifying leaders for more focussed interviews or one-on-one informal interactions. In other words, FGDs provided a vast canopy of information - or little information in other cases when FGDs were not rightly moderated or the group was not rightly matched¹¹⁴ - during fieldwork. Nevertheless the results of an FGD depended on the role of the moderator largely. To sum up, FGDs can prove to be an effective tool to get an overall snapshot of the fixed perspective of different types of community members, sometimes there are important insights that can be derived from these discussions. Nevertheless, FGDs when combined with interviews proved to be a rigorous enough analysis for the purpose of this research.

¹¹⁴ An example of this was the FGD at the government school of Nandli Sagora in Aspur block in Phase II. They were interviewed together in the school staff room but it could not qualified as an FGD, since many of them either left the interaction midway or some new teachers did not contribute, claiming lack of knowledge.

3.5.4 Role of the Researcher: Research Bias & Ethical Considerations

In this section, I will reflect on the experiences of undertaking qualitative research during field research. As a qualitative researcher, there are some challenges to their role that remain common across different field situations. First of such questions begins with the fieldworker's problem of legitimacy in the field. In order to overcome this barrier, there are few things that the fieldworker can do except hope that the community slowly begins to accept his/her presence. Not only that, it is important to position oneself in the role of a friendly outsider who is sympathetic to the needs of the community¹¹⁵. During my first experiences of undertaking field research in Dungarpur, I could not infuse meaningful participation from the community members until their curiosity of my identity was gratified. They were curious to place me within the traditional caste structure, constantly trying to understand how to correlate my social identity with theirs (Srinivas et al. 2002, 4).

Ensuring the participant's anonymity and eliminating bias is extremely critical to the research process. As in Patel (2011), the respondents have been given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity; these pseudonyms reflect their gender, ethnic identity, and nationality, just as their real names do (Patel 2011). Many of the aspects of the six biases that Chambers' articulates in his work is adopted in relation to this thesis (Robert Chambers 1983, 14; Boshier 2005, 80)¹¹⁶. When I analyze spatial bias in the fieldwork, the physical distance of much of the locations were based on the needs of the study. While most of the villages that were chosen were accessible by road, most of them lay on

¹¹⁵ For instance, many poor households complained of lack of access to anti-poverty schemes that were targeted for them but due to rampant corruption, the benefits were often funneled into the pockets of the rich and powerful in the village. I empathized with their concerns, acknowledging how the situation can be desperate for them but in the end, I had to emphasize my role as an outsider that had no power or control over their resources

¹¹⁶ The 6 biases that he talks about include: spatial bias (have the remote locations been avoided to suit the needs of the researcher over the needs of the research questions?); project bias (are only villages that present the positive trends from the investment presented?); person bias (are there only perspectives of accessible people during fieldwork, elites or older men that are available? Are there attempts made at addressing the needs of marginal voices?); dry season biases (when are the villages visited? Are monsoons avoided due to lack of accessibility?); diplomatic biases (are the most poor and marginal avoided because of timidity to enter such communities? Are channels of diplomacy with the community broken to study the poorest?); professional biases (Are professional interests disallowing researchers the need to specialize in the interests of a cross-section of the village communities?)

kutchha (unpaved) roads. In order to study the remote communities Phase I and Phase II, I always used public transport or private shared rickshaws to undertake interviews or observational activities. Nevertheless on some occasions, I was accompanied by fieldworkers on certain days if we were engaged in the same location. That being said, as a single female researcher there are some constraints on *when* to undertake a field visit: mornings and afternoons being the safest option. There was an active NGO presence for development or agricultural projects in Udaipur district but surprisingly limited project-related work in Dungarpur district. However, I was never involved in any project-related work with the NGOs that remained my key informants, in Phase I – I helped train some fieldworkers in interviewing tasks, providing some project-related insights to the managers whereas in Phase II – I helped the managers to put together a report on Aspur district based on my own personal findings. Therefore, Project bias in the village communities of the two districts was duly addressed. Person bias was a very critical bias that my fieldwork attempted to overcome at every step since the foundation of the research rested on encountering and analyzing the maximum diversity of field participants. Gender bias was especially carefully addressed – especially in Phase II, as it was tricky despite undertaking interviews in a cross-section of members from different groups in the caste clusters.

During my fieldwork in Aspur, a secure accommodation was arranged for me in a brick house of a higher-caste *Rajput* landlord. Brick houses were a few and notable presence the block, in fact in 2002 there were only 7 brick homes in Aspur block (D. Sharma 2002). Therefore, this resulted in a distinct social identity that I embodied during field visits. There were sufficient attempts to adopt an inclusive approach through interviews with marginal and poor SC/ST groups during fieldwork. There was a final bias that was tackled during fieldwork that dealt with my identity as an urban middle-class¹¹⁷ researcher. In his monologue, Joshi (2002) points out the wide gulf of knowledge between the urban and the rural people and a need for new academia in field research to challenge the existing perceptions of the peasant society that remained inaccessible to the urban Indian (P. Joshi 2002). An important point that relates to urban biases also deals with the singularity of opinions that the urban researcher maintains of much of the rural folk whereas field interviews dispute this misconception at every stage. Some *Bhil, Mina*

¹¹⁷ There is insufficient debate on the extreme insularity of the urban middle-class, where not only do they shun ideals of public good but lack engagement with urban poor in common public spaces (Varma 2007).

tribal communities in remote village communities were less watchful about expressing their rurality¹¹⁸ to an urban outsider whereas the higher caste households such as Rajputs may have projected a more “modern image” to an urban fieldworker.

There are some basic ethical considerations that were adopted in order to conduct the fieldwork. These considerations allowed for the role of the field participants as well as the researcher to be clarified. Firstly, there was honesty of purpose and of the goals of the thesis. At every step, the NGO fieldworkers as well as interview participants were told in advance of the conditions of the research, including information when asked, on how the data will be used. Secondly, complete confidentiality regarding the contents of the interview was ensured, such that the participants did not feel threatened about sharing details. Since the themes of much of the thesis were not very controversial, the tougher task of declaring the security of the content was critical point for them to develop trust. Thirdly, I have constantly tried to remain a relatively independent and an impartial facilitator in the field since it ensured that the field data could be analyzed rigorously and objectively. Again, the non-controversial stance of the research topic¹¹⁹ ensured that I was not in any pressure to take sides but grasp the point of view of the people, distinct as they were.

I have used purposive sampling in order to select the households. There are some advantages and disadvantages that the sampling strategy. Purposive sampling was a sampling strategy that was used strategically to find villages or panchayats, as well as to find households that were interviewed. Moreover, in villages where many of the households (especially the high caste *Rajput* households) are tied by lineage and history and stratified into different clusters, purposive sampling happened to be the most effective technique to undertake semi-structured interviews. I used key informants at every stage of the fieldwork, while some of them were NGO fieldworkers; in Phase II, I used local youth, *Anganwadi* teacher or a local nurse in order to acquire information on households. The government school in Nandli Sagora (Phase II) remained an important

¹¹⁸ By rurality, the implication is on the rural way of life, steeped in their livelihoods as shepherds and forest gatherers, undertaking agriculture for subsistence and following age-old customs and norms.

¹¹⁹ By non-controversial, I mean that for subjects that deal with religion or politics, which are more personal and complex to share, there could be severe challenges to maintain impartiality but in this case, the narratives of the people defined the worldview of the research and my involvement to it was minimal.

site of inquiry, where some surprise participants¹²⁰ of the study emerged. There are legitimate concerns of validity of data in qualitative research, and especially when the medium of information include narrations from participants of the study. For this reason, I have used reports, local documents to back up the narrations. Much of the information obtained from the data on interviews is often questioned on its scientific value (Bosher 2005, 94) and truism. However, in order to counter that – I have used about five-six representative samples that fit the criteria of the migration strategies that have been conceptualized in the thesis. Recurring and new information from the same household types belonging to the same cluster, allowed us to describe the variables of different migration typologies.

3.6 Analytical Framework

The conceptual framework and research questions have influenced the analytical strategy of the data. I have used thematic analysis in order to analyze the data while I have produced “*vignettes*” for data representation based on my extended interactions with the participants.

3.6.1 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis involves “careful reading and re-reading of the data” (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006, 4). Therefore, despite the effectiveness of software to code and distinguish key themes from the data, I adopted an approach that involved manual sorting of themes. This means that, I recorded testimonies of members of rural households and other actors in the field area, transcribed them and thereafter, devised themes and vignettes, relating them to the research questions and the conceptual framework. Boyatzis (1998) describes that decoding data into themes is a complicated process, one that is “influenced by the researcher’s projection, sampling strategy and the mood and style of the research” but that requires their “discipline, practice and openness” such that the reliability of the interpretation remains as true to the material as possible (Boyatzis, Richard 1998, 8–15).

¹²⁰ Kishen in class 9th of the government school was an important informant during the fieldwork in Nandli Sagora in Phase II. He was a brilliant kid, wise with his observations, innocent in his analysis and reticent towards children his age. Nevertheless, in keeping with ethics concerning children (Punch 2002), I consulted his mother to engage with him.

3.6.2 Data representation

Miles and Huberman (1994) define vignettes as “focused description of a series of events taken to be representative, typical or emblematic in the case you are doing” (Miles and Huberman 1994, 81). As thematic analysis involves re-reading the data, constructing *vignettes* involves “rewriting” transcript data into a narrative style that is rigorous and analytically sound. The researcher himself/herself typically is responsible for producing *vignettes*; sometimes using dialogue or the informant’s words to demonstrate data, providing pseudonyms is an important exercise here. The *vignettes* that are not representative can run the risk of misleading the reader, despite being compelling in its narrative value (Miles and Huberman 1994, 83). As an analytical tool I have used a standard outline for a *vignette* providing a contextual frame, providing multiple *vignettes* wherever necessary and providing an accompanying summary and an analytical device to facilitate the reader to make sense of it.

3.6.3 Summary

This chapter aimed to present a background and processes of how the methodology was conducted, as well as how the research design was visualized. It is important to emphasize that the process of building the migrant strategies was gradual, one that evolved along with the discovery of typology of rural households, distinguished on the basis of their available resources. In terms of methodological choices, Phase I remained more exploratory in nature, the discovery of the existing migration strategies in the region occurred during field visits and observation activities in the city. Phase II involved deepening the methodological strategy to rigorously study the research questions in another field area. In order to achieve this, I used different qualitative tools including semi-structured interviews, informal interactions and FGDs with selected households in two village panchayats. I have provided detailed descriptions of the fieldwork activities conducted in the two phases of fieldwork and highlighted how they have been different. I have explained why and in what way the key informants were selected, how the households were identified and what they added to the data. There are also explanations of field decisions that help capture the different components of each migration strategy that rural households adopt. I have highlighted the ethical considerations including problems of bias that are commonly encountered during the research methods. The role of the researcher during qualitative methodology is

extremely critical due to its inherent interpretative character. This is because, the qualitative data relies heavily on the choices, some pre-determined and some spontaneous, that the researcher makes when undertaking fieldwork in order to address their research questions. Finally, I have highlighted the analytical framework to analyze and represent the data from the fieldwork that will be followed in the next chapters.

Chapter 4 – Seasonal Migration & Household Endowments: An Analytical Commentary

4.1 Introduction

In the following group of three chapters, I introduce the key findings and evidence on the manner in which household endowments play out against out-migration strategies. The main focus of these chapters is to understand the relationship between rural household types and path dependencies that develop as they undertake specific migration pathways. Chapter 4 presents empirical analysis of seasonal migration, Chapter 5 of commuting and Chapter 6 of semi-permanent migration. In these chapters, I will analyze individual stories as “vignettes” that describe households’ initial endowments distinguishing one migration strategy from another. This will help differentiate between and correlate the endowments and the migration strategies. I also describe how the different outcomes from migration strategies can be traced back to household endowment structures. The purpose of these chapters is to challenge and re-articulate the process of rural out-migration within the different rural households, providing a unique frame of analysis based on their stories. The “main story” that resonates throughout the narrative is rich in description, contextualizing the interaction of the migration strategies with the household endowments, and contextualizing their impact on the changes woven throughout the landscape of rural livelihoods in regional pockets of India.

Micro-level studies of migration in India find that there has been a sharp increase in population mobility and not a decrease, as NSS and the census reports suggest—for long term and temporary migration and commuting (Deshingkar and Anderson 2004; Bird and Deshingkar 2009). Seasonal migration usually results in rural labor moving from resource-poor households during agricultural off-seasons to off-farm and non-farm locations. It is a temporary, ad-hoc solution to meet the household’s immediate demands. Commuting is the result of long-term, non-farm solutions for rural households, resulting in self-employment in market-towns in traditionally skilled and socially connected roles that are profitable but not necessarily accumulative. Semi-permanent out-migration proves to be an out-migration strategy used by high-class elites for self-employment involving long-distance travel that results in asset accumulation for the household in their village communities. These brief descriptions introduce the general

characteristics of each migration strategy, but the specific themes that I present in the following chapter will challenge the established myth-perceptions on each of the migration strategies.

The findings present here suggest that out-migration strategies result in different trajectories. Seasonal migrant movements result from a trade-off between immediate needs and future resources, forgoing school education for off-season migration during an ongoing school year. Commuting occurs due to the ability of rural households to combine two resources to the benefit of their future resources, combining skills with entrepreneurship to improve future education outcomes. Semi-permanent migration uses the strongest available household endowments to orchestrate a long-term benefit to the household condition, using social networks in big cities to improve physical assets such as land and access to institutions at home.

The framework for non-permanent migration of rural labor compares the migration strategies against a rural household typology defined by their endowments. Among the endowments, caste and gender are cross-cutting indicators that influence the capital structure of the households in very different ways. While caste is a determinant in the capital structure of the rural households, gender forms an important approach that manifests differently in different household types. Figure 8 below represents the relationship between rural households, their endowment structure and their out-migration strategies. Figure 9 expands the framework by presenting the indicators of the capital structures that form the endowment structures of rural households. The interaction of the four capitals to influence migration outcomes is implied.

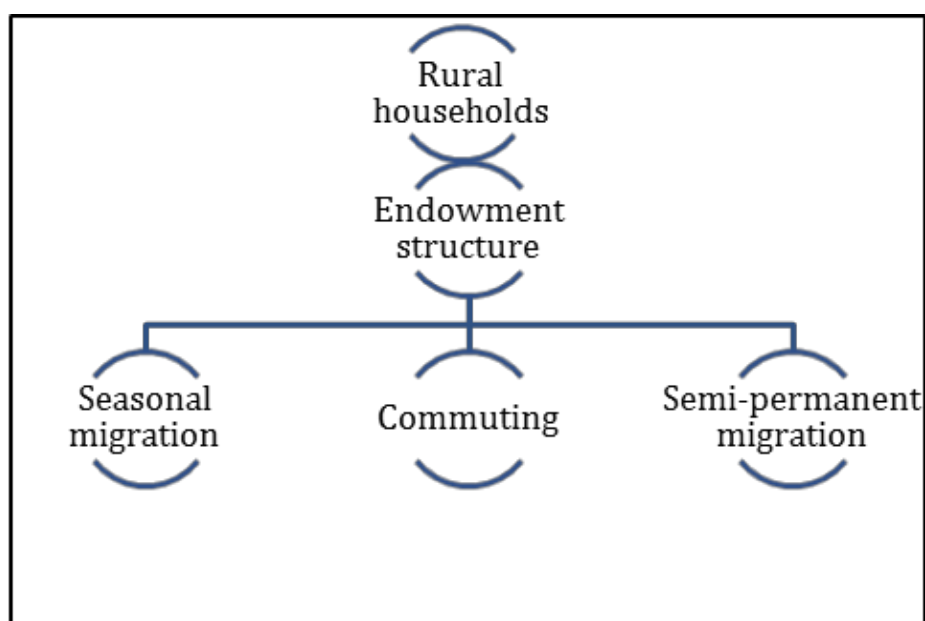


Figure 9 – Relationship between Migration Strategies & Rural Households

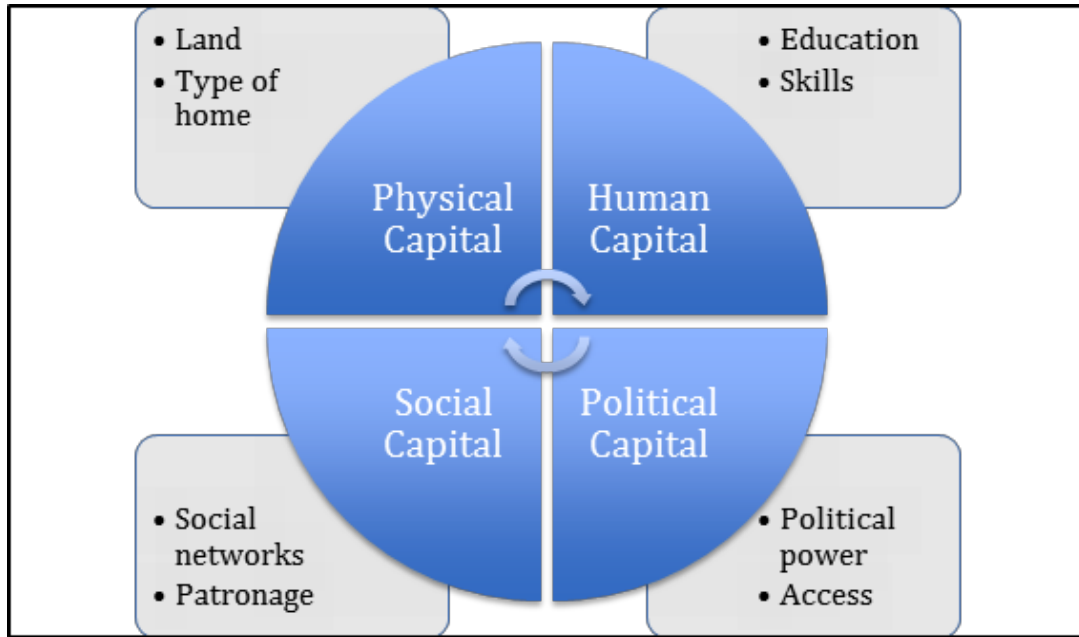


Figure 8 – Endowments & Indicators

In this thesis, I analyze the household's endowment structure based on the indicators that have been adapted from the capitals framework (Bebbington 1999). As represented in Figures 8 and 9, I illustrate the correlation between seasonal migration and household endowments, which then reflects on their outcomes. In Section 4.2, I present an introduction of the findings from seasonal migration, presenting an outline of the key features of the analysis, Section 4.3 describes the interaction of rural households with their endowment structures, contextual features and available empirical data; and in Section 4.4, I explore six or seven vignettes as illustrations, along with an analytical commentary that studies individual seasonal migration movements in the context of household endowments.

4.2 Seasonal Migration Strategy: Initial Findings

Seasonal migration as a migration strategy is a temporary household arrangement, which is primarily a way to diversify income. Along with seasonal migration as an income diversification strategy, households have also participated in NREGA since 2005-06, which guarantees daily wage labor in their local village panchayats. I analyze the manner in which seasonal migration plays out against different

endowments between tribal Bhil and Mina households in three *phalas*¹²¹ of the village communities of Udaipur and Dungarpur districts respectively. Following are brief descriptions of the specific household endowments and their contextual features that distinguish seasonal migration as a migration strategy from the other two identified in this study, commuting and semi-permanent migration:

- 1) Social networks: characterized by their clan networks, relationship with the “mate” and the egalitarian distribution of household roles between the sexes result in advantages to the ST households that undertake seasonal migration.
- 2) Land: ST households own small landholdings, practice subsistence agriculture and almost always live in mud/cow-dung homes made of tin roofs and dirt floors.
- 3) Political power: Rural households across ST groups have political power available to them through affirmative action and welfare policy programs. NREGA especially targets these groups.
- 4) Education and skills: Cultural and historical factors notwithstanding, ST rural households continue to remain less educated than other social groups. Their access to formal education has improved but they focus more on employable non-farm skills.

During a three year period, I studied seasonal migration in Bhil- and Mina-dominated villages, and although there were mixed-caste villages with tribal populations that undertook seasonal migration, the remote villages in the districts are mostly tribal and homogenous. My findings on seasonal migration as a livelihood strategy undertaken by Bhils and Minas consist of interviews undertaken in three different villages: 1) Kakan village, Kherwara block, Udaipur District; 2) Sada village, Kotra block, Udaipur District; 3) Boriya Fala, Sagwara block, Dungarpur District. In these three villages, I interviewed seven household members, using their testimonies along with vignettes of interviews with fieldworkers and other community members as illustrations of their seasonal migration trajectory. In each of these stories, I will explain how the household's endowments play out against their migration pathways.

¹²¹ It is known as *phallis* in Merwari and *phallyos* in Vagadi, *phala* is in Hindi; I have used *phala* across the thesis, for simplification. Each *phala* consists of its own sub lineage, with its own leader and ritual mediator.

In Sada village, I interviewed Ramjibai where she described the process of her teenage daughter migrating for winter months to a farm in Gujarat for BT cotton plucking. In a second illustration, I describe Kanha from Kakan village and demonstrate how the household diversified their income-sources during 2010/11 to overcome drought. In a third example, Raman from Kakan village describes his migration trajectory, and how his family was able to incorporate BT cotton cultivation into their cropping that year despite the drought. Two women, Ghumlibai and Meenu from Boriya Fala, describe their migration and skill-building experience and how it influenced their view of migration and their household's well-being. Khemji and Baku discuss their casual labor work in the city and reflect on their own experience of seasonal migration and its effect on her household's well-being. In Table 5, I present the list of participants whose stories are illustrated in the final section of the chapter.

Table 5 – Migrant Stories for Seasonal Migration

Interview Participant	Village	District
Khemji	Boriya Fala	Dungarpur
Meenu	Boriya Fala	Dungarpur
Baku	Kakan	Udaipur
Kanha	Kakan	Udaipur
Ramjibai	Sada	Udaipur
Raman	Kakan	Udaipur
Ghumlibai	Boriya Fala	Dungarpur

Each of these interviews was undertaken in order to capture and track the process of “endowment mapping” as the household members described their process of seasonal migration. Endowments encompass a range of endogenous and exogenous factors that modify access and provide context to the household (Ontita 2006, 17; Ellis 2000). In this thesis, I use endowment mapping to track the interrelationship between household endowments and seasonal migration over the different life stages of the household. This means that each of the households and their household members have played a significant role in developing their own out-migration trajectory and represent their present condition in their stories. Above all, the main purpose of using this structure of “endowment mapping” is to present the shifting motivations and “habitus”. It is this process of tracking resource changes at the household level that influences their

household arrangement, determining their decision to migrate and the path-dependent condition of their out-migration trajectories.

Connecting the stories via the endowment mapping exercise, I find that seasonal migration can be classified into two sub-categories. In the first sub-category, seasonal migration stands for out-migration undertaken by resource-poor households during agricultural off-seasons. In the second sub-category, households undertake seasonal migration during crises as a “coping mechanism”. While the two sub-categories may overlap, they distinctly differ due to the conditions they present to the household. This means that while some households regularly migrate during off-seasons, others are forced to migrate during agricultural seasons. According to the latest 64th round of NSS-EUS survey, 80 percent of the households undertake seasonal migration, spending less than six months away from their village (Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014)¹²². Seasonal migration refers to two kinds of migrant movements: off-farm wage labor which involves doing agricultural labor on another’s farm during off-seasons, and non-farm wage labor that involves manual labor on construction sites, mining sites, brick kilns, and so on. Unnithan-Kumar (1997) sums up the essence of the ST household’s out-migration strategy:

There is a greater risk to search for employment in the seasonal market but the tribals do not prefer longer term or more permanent employment, as it does not fit in with their agricultural and ritual cycles. In this sense they approach the market as sellers to ‘collect’ earnings in the same manner as they gather forest produce or harvest crop according to the season. (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 186)

4.3 An Interface of Seasonal Migration and Tribal Households

Rural households that undertake seasonal migration are heterogeneous but share a comparable portfolio of resources, meaning that their individual circumstances may be unique but their endowments correlate with their migration strategy. They own limited physical assets. Most households own anything between two to six *bigha*¹²³ of land¹²⁴,

¹²² They identify seasonal migrants as short-term migrants who spend anything between 30 to 180 days away from home.

¹²³ One *bigha* land equals to 0.4 hectares of land.

depending on the quality of land and availability of water and fertilizers, they use for subsistence cultivation¹²⁵. In fact, the latest NSS results confirm the inverse relationship between landholdings and propensity to migrate, and direct relationships between lower education and propensity to migrate (K Keshri and Bhagat 2012). There are many social groups that fit into this “type” of households but I am especially interested in and focus on the Mina and Bhils tribals in Southern Rajasthan. Bhils and Minas are the biggest population majority in Udaipur and Dungarpur district¹²⁶.

4.3.1 Intra-Household Roles in Seasonal Migration

The Mina and Bhil-dominated villages (“tribal” villages henceforth) are divided into three standard *phalas*, *neechalo* (lower), *beechalo* (middle) and *uppalo* (higher, indicating an ascent into the forests), and it is usually understood that the older members inhabit the *neechalo* phala (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 97). A Bhil or Mina household may include a nuclear family, including a couple and their children, or it may house a joint family, including older parents or children. The role of women is symbolically subordinate to that of men, but both the sexes contribute economically to household income. Mosse et al (2002) noted that there was a high level of female migration among Bhil households. In their survey of 2588 Bhil households across 3 states in 1995-96, 42 percent of the women migrated seasonally with men in one year whereas the older people stayed back to look after the cattle and agricultural responsibilities (Mosse et al. 2002, 67). Most households are unable to access formal financial institutions such as

¹²⁴ However, unlike in Caste-*Hindu* households where each of the landholdings are maintained separately, in the tribal households despite difference in ownership, brothers in the families hold joint tenure, sharing resources such as water and labor on the land. (See also, M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 160-167)

¹²⁵ Their monsoon or *kharif* crop is corn, which forms an important part of their diet. In fact, in Unnithan-Kumar’s account of the Garasia tribe, a good economic position among the households is considered when they get two meals a day all year round, one of which includes “makka-roti” (flat bread made from maize flour) (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 158)

¹²⁶ The latest SECC census data 2011 has not yet released the district-wise data; an earlier survey did not indicate specific socio-demographic data on specific communities. Based on the 2001 data, 65 percent of the total population in Dungarpur district consists of ST groups including Minas and Bhils, among others (Institute of Development Studies 2009b) whereas 60.56 percent of the total population of Udaipur district include ST population, according to the 2001 census data.

NABARD¹²⁷ and many of them do not yet own a bank account. Mortgaging of jewelry, cattle and land during cash crisis to better-off members of the same community or participating in indigenous financial institutions such as *chandla* (community members donating money to a family/member of the community for a cause) are seen as better customs to raise one time expenditures such as marriage (Mosse et al. 2002, 70–71).

4.3.2 Culture and History: Scheduled Tribes

Natural resources, especially forests, were the strongest livelihood generators for Minas and Bhils. The core institution of Bhil social organization formerly defined rights over land and trees (Mosse et al. 2002, 62). It is important to highlight the historical relationship of the tribals with natural resources because it is the very breakdown of this relationship that motivated seasonal migration and other income diversification strategies. Unnithan-Kumar (1997) presents an account of the Taivar Girasia community in the Sirohi district of Southern Rajasthan, classified as Bhil-Girasia, a sub-clan of the Bhils according. These groups, along with other ST groups, experienced a systematic alienation from their resources during the colonial and post-independence experience. The Girasia tribal community that relied on forest produce during the princely regime under kings and *jagirdars* (feudal landlords) were forced to pay revenue for forest tracts in use during the British colonial administration. Thereafter, the Indian State began to monetize the forests, using indigenous knowledge to lure commercial industry. But during this whole process, the common property land that the Girasias maintained for centuries was never legitimized, rendering them resource-poor and alienated from the rest of Hindu society (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 85–90).

There are patrilineal sub-lineages among the Minas and Bhils called “*hojvan*” that consist of their immediate social networks. Despite living in close proximity to other family members, during cash crisis households borrow money from a local moneylender in the village and not from family members. Since the Bhils and Minas began finding seasonal wage work, their movements were facilitated by a “mate” who is usually a person from their community. The relationship of the mate or the contractor is the most important one in seasonal migration practices. However, having a mate as the only

¹²⁷ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is a development bank, offering free credit to farmers for farm and non-farm activities. Its key role is to address the financial inclusion of the farmers.

channel for acquiring work is on a decline among seasonal migrants (Deshingkar et al. 2008). Coffey et al (2014) see this as a positive change occurring during the last 15 years, since mates are also known to be exploitative. In their household survey of 705 houses in 70 villages, Coffey et al (2014) find that only about half of the seasonal migrants worked for the same employer for the whole trip, but for the most part, the migrants in their sample traveled to an urban spot market or a “*naka*” for daily wage employment (Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014, 12).

4.3.3 Political Power and Welfare

Welfare programs in post-independence India target SC, ST and OBC households, aiming to build on the “political capital” of ST groups who remain marginalized from the process of development and growth. Households are not always able to convert endowments into capital, even as their access is often controlled by other factors. Programs such as *Anganwadi* (a government-sponsored day care and nutrition centre for children from 0-6 years and lactating mothers) and *Indira Awas Yojana* (a scheme that provides financial assistance to build a safe shelter for the household) have induced positive changes in the socioeconomic status of tribal households due to affirmative action programs as well as NREGA. Since many of the households qualify for Below Poverty Line (BPL) benefits, through local institutions they are guaranteed relief in terms of food and free seeds, fertilizers during droughts.

Bhil and Mina households regularly undertake NREGA work as an alternative to seasonal migration. The introduction of NREGA in 2006 became a relevant anti-poverty policy focused on keeping the exodus of seasonal rural labor in check, especially the distress-driven migrant movements. In Phase I of NREGA implementation, Planning Commission of India selected Udaipur and Dungarpur district, along with 198 other districts based on their backwardness¹²⁸ to implement public works in select areas. The year 2006-07 resulted in many positive changes due to NREGA: there was high participation from SC/ST groups¹²⁹, and maximum participation on the part of

¹²⁸ Planning Commission used indicators such as incidence of poverty (based on the poverty line), socioeconomic indicators such as education, and incidence of droughts and industrialization were used to measure backwardness (Centre for Science and Environment 2006).

¹²⁹ The first beneficiaries of the scheme in Southern Rajasthan were selected on the basis of their 2002 (Below Poverty Line) BPL Status, which was detrimental to SC/ST households who did not have the BPL status but required to work in NREGA (V. Joshi, Singh, and Joshi 2008).

women¹³⁰ and public works was deemed beneficial, especially road works for connecting remote *phalas* to the plains (Dev 2011). The key purpose of NREGA as a deterrent and alternative to out-migration has been ineffective in districts of Rajsamand, Udaipur and Dungarpur. However, NREGA has provided work to left-behind women and older return migrants (Verma and Shah 2012; Press Trust of India 2010). NREGA has been instrumental in the decline of distress migration in tribal belts of India (Reddy, Reddy, and Bantilan 2014, 269). Coffey et al (2015) quoting Anonymous (2012) study found that NREGA was instrumental in reducing out-migration during summer in Southern Rajasthan (Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014, 20). But the performance of the scheme itself has remained inconsistent over the years (Shankar, Gaiha, and Jha 2011)¹³¹. It appears that the deepest impact of NREGA is visible in the tribal women's status in the household, because wages provide them with better bargaining capabilities at home, freeing them somewhat from migrant income during off-seasons¹³². The trajectory of NREGA has influenced the livelihood results of the households but in different ways. In the illustrations of the initial endowments with the migration strategy (Section 4.3), I will systematically explain the impact of NREGA.

4.3.4 Seasonal Migration & ST groups: Unpacking Seasonality

In one of the first studies in the region, Haberfeld et al (1999) found that ST Mina and Bhil households had a high propensity to migrate seasonally based. This was based on their fieldwork in 624 villages in Dungarpur district, Rajasthan. Eighty-nine percent of the households that engaged in seasonal migration were ST Bhils and Mina

¹³⁰Sudarshan et al (2010) highlights that Rajasthan registered 33 percent of work participation of women in NREGA in 2008-09, implying that comparing the participation of women in wage work from 2001 census, NREGA was influential in enrolling non-working women. The women used the wages from NREGA for personal expenditure (Sudarshan, Bhattacharya, and Fernandez 2010).

¹³¹ From the data on the official NREGA website, average number of work days per year in Rajasthan, from 2009-10 to 2010-2011 dropped from 65/100 days a year to 36/100 days a year (Jha and Gaiha 2012, 19). See Appendix A8.

¹³² Mosse et al (2002) conducted their research in the pre-NREGA period of 1995-96. They point out that due to the limited participation of women and older people in wage labor, their access to entitlements was reduced. They had to depend on their husbands or sons to provide cash for their health care and other household priorities, burdening the households with more responsibilities due to migrating husbands but leaving them without immediate access (Mosse et al. 2002, 83).

households. Haberfeld et al (1999) characterize seasonal migration as a compensatory mechanism for households in ST groups who are at a “structural disadvantage,” being inferior in education and agrarian outcomes because they live in remote geographical locations. They show that the contribution to the family’s annual income from two months of seasonal migration is almost equivalent to the contribution of one hectare of cultivated land (an average landholding in Dungarpur district) (Haberfeld et al. 1999). Compared to other migrant streams, the cost of seasonal migration is low, especially for seasonal laborers from select regions in Banswara (South of Dungarpur district). They spend Rs.128 (a day’s wage) to migrate to an average distance of 304 kms from their village (Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014, 11) to cities and towns of Gujarat.

Seasonality of migration strategies and weather variability are naturally interconnected phenomena. Droughts are a common feature in Rajasthan state¹³³ and agrarian livelihoods are generally rain-fed across the state (Bokil 2000, 4171) however during uneven rainfall and drought years, some regions as the tribal villages in the region of South Rajasthan are not accessible through irrigation canals (Khera 2004)¹³⁴. Coffey et al (2014) identify migrating characteristics of households during the three seasons (summer, monsoon and winter) of 2009 in their household survey in Central and Northwest India, including the district of Banswara, south of Dungarpur district. They found that households are unwilling to send migrants during the monsoon, however summer season, when rainfall is especially limited most of the adult and able members of the households migrate for farm labor. Households that have access to irrigation channels in winter season are unwilling to send members to migrate but the situation is reversed for households without access to irrigation (Coffey, Papp, and Spears 2014, 16). Members or entire families among some households regularly migrate during off-seasons, such as the *Rabi* season, for non-farm work, whereas other groups of migrants

¹³³ Droughts are divided into three categories per the National Commission of Agriculture (NCA): 1) agricultural drought, resulting from variable rainfall causing crop stress, 2) meteorological drought, where there is sudden decrease in rainfall (25 percent), 3) hydrological drought, prolonged drought leading to depletion of water sources including groundwater (Bokil 2000; Khera 2004).

¹³⁴ There has been a significant change in the water table of the region of Southern Rajasthan in the last six decades, indicating a long-term impact of natural-resource based occupations due to rapid deforestation, shifting cultivation or *valra* practiced by native Bhils (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 86–87), involving burning forests and recasting seeds and infrequent rainfall (Rathore and Verma 2013).

who are triggered by a sudden crisis often resort to “distress-driven migration”¹³⁵. Distress-driven migration forces households to migrate during agricultural seasons, compromising their household priorities.

4.3.5 Seasonal Migration: “Idiosyncratic Shocks”

Regular droughts induce additional stresses on small and marginal farmers. However, I propose that the impact is dependent on the interaction of the seasonal migration with household endowments. Van Dillen (2008) makes an important distinction between droughts as shocks and the impact of “idiosyncratic shocks” on households in drought years¹³⁶. Households with risks to their immediate resources such as crop failures cultivation and death of farm animals can lead the household to concede to undertaking seasonal migration for meeting their immediate needs as a trade-off over their year-long outcomes from cultivation. Because these households’ conditions are dependent on variable factors such as years without drought, the temporal and spatial elements of the seasonal migration strategy take shape as a consequence of these dependencies. For instance, Mosse et al (2002) observes two groups of Bhil migrants: the first group migrates short distances seasonally for short periods of time, the households migrating due to “idiosyncratic shocks” or compromised situations travel long distances, resulting in families migrating together. Their data also show that *poorer women* from families tend to migrate seasonally more often (Mosse et al. 2002, 69). It appears that there are significant economic triggers that induce out-migration, however there are other motivations. Out-migration also allows tribals to experience a life outside the village, overcome caste-based occupational barriers, and improve cash flow to the household.

Tribal migrants undergo tremendous hardship during the process of migration, but they are more inclined to migrate during a young age. Children contribute to

¹³⁵ Khera (2004) in her study on droughts in four districts of Rajasthan (including Udaipur district) studied the severe drought year of 2000 and made a brief empirical distinctions between seasonal migration that occurred during the drought year and 2001, which was a typical year with average rainfall (Khera 2004, 16).

¹³⁶ Van Dillen (2008) argues that the impact of a drought on household incomes is marginal. Studying a drought year 2000 and normal rainfall year 2001 in tribal districts of Orissa, she argues that “shocks” are a result of the household’s condition and endowments; she calls them “idiosyncratic shocks” resulting from illness or loss of crops or lack of irrigation facilities and so on (van Dillen 2008, 592).

diversification practices from a very young age across tribal households¹³⁷. Migration is viewed as a period of opportunity to experience life outside their village, especially in remote and culturally homogeneous hamlets typical of tribal households. Their life as a seasonal migrant in a foreign location allows time for leisure, visiting tea stalls and the cinema. They are able to switch to trousers and shirts from their traditional village attire (Parry 2003). These signifiers of expressed desire for seasonal migration are significant to the discourse of migration and help understand emotional needs as strong motivations for migration. An underlying reason for escaping the village societies also lies in the migrant's need to break away from the occupational barriers dictated by caste¹³⁸ and this especially holds true for backward communities of SCs and STs. There are also health risks of injuries that non-farm sites carry, and there are risks of bondage and physical exploitation as off-farm migrants, which also influence the labourer's future and his livelihood. Despite that, seasonal migration provides the best chance for tribal migrants to improve their social status, and to invest in their social networks during festivals and other occasions.

4.4 Illustrations: Seasonal Migration

In the previous section 4.3, I have outlined the key characteristics of seasonal out-migration. I have also underscored specific household endowments that tribal households have at their disposal during the process of seasonal migration. It appears that tribal households are endowed with specific resources, including 1) access to natural resources, 2) social networks via *hojwan* links, 3) political power through the access to welfare policies, NREGA, and 4) an egalitarian distribution of work amongst the genders at the household level. Each of these factors interfaces with outcomes from seasonal out-migration. Drought years are a common feature in Rajasthan, making seasonal migration common practice, but seasonal migration strategy is still determined

¹³⁷ In fact, Unnithan-Kumar points out that there is no word for a “child” in Mewari and Vagadi language (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 105). Instead, they use *sora*, which simply translates as a youth or unattached young adult.

¹³⁸ The implications of tribal migrants embodying an urban personality are a manifestation of their need to escape their “inferior” status within the caste and village hierarchy that has existed for generations. This analysis from Parry is in line with the concept of “body politics” that I have explained earlier in 2.2 (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003, 193).

by individual circumstances and “idiosyncratic shocks” that influence the migration trajectory of some households.

Having identified each of the above specific, contextual features, I illustrate the migrant stories that represent multi-dimensional facets of the household and their seasonal migration trajectories. Many of the stories capture the life changes occurring at the household level during the process of migration. These stories explore the path-dependency that the households experience despite differences, changes in individual circumstances and so on. I analyze the outcomes from the migration trajectories against 1) social networks that are embedded behavior patterns or habitus (Section 2.1), that arises from their kinship and village associations that facilitate the household’s outcomes from seasonal migration, 2) “political power” as a household endowment, including political representation that helps households capitalize their gains from seasonal migration, 3) role of education and non-farm skills on migrant pathways; 4) role of land, to defend and sell property in order to develop and expand seasonal migration pathways. Each of these endowments plays out in a sequence, manifesting in different forms, sometimes one dominating the results from the out-migration strategy. A combination of these endowments results in households undertaking seasonal migration as a coping mechanism or as a routine off-season activity. Therefore, it is this combination of Mina and Bhil kinship networks, welfare schemes at home, small land holdings and low levels of formal schooling that is responsible for constructing seasonal migration as an income-diversification strategy among the households. This combination is also makes it possible for the households to be able to undertake seasonal migration and no other migration strategy within the given context and household arrangements.

The contextual factors, such as the cultural features which are the motivations for out-migration that influence the endowment mapping, remain critical to understand seasonal migration trajectories. Eventually the outcomes are a result of every migrating household’s journey or “navigational capacity” against the endowment-mapping through different life stages. Women’s roles are also critical to the study of households and their endowments. I find that the testimonies of households that I present highlight the process of the household’s endowment mapping that in turn will help the reader contextualize their outcomes. In the following section, I show in what ways the initial condition of the household influences their seasonal migration pathway.

4.4.1 Illustration 1: Khemji

In this section, I highlight the manner in which Khemji's household was able to balance seasonal migration alongside the household endowments available to them. Khemji lives in Boriya Fala, a village community in Reecha panchayat, Sagwara block, South-East of Dungarpur district. In the Map A11 in the Appendix, note the location of Kherwara on the North of the Dungarpur district. In A12 in the Appendix, note that an image of Sagwara tehsil is generated with a glimpse of the market town of Sagwara, a backward-tribal community dominated by Bhils.

Boriya Fala lies in the Sagwara block of Dungarpur district; it is a remote village, where the main phala has been connected with the State Highway in the last decade or so. The village has about 400 households and most of them are *Minas*. I meet Khemji in his home with his family in 2011, as they are processing wheat bought from the market. Khemji's home is in the "*neechalo*" *phala*, centrally located and right next to the only pucca home in the village that belongs to the local MLA¹³⁹. It is a family of five with two sons and a newly born daughter; Khemji is a young man in his late 20s. Khemji seasonally migrates to Ahmedabad city; he has attended primary school in his village but he tells me that he has acquired a lot of learning on his visits to the city as a migrant. His family land is divided between his brothers, and although they produce a good *kharif* crop every year, their land is rain-fed. He started migrating to Ahmedabad once the road and transport connectivity improved between the city and his village; otherwise he used to seasonally migrate as a child on cotton farms to Gujarat. He invites me to visit him at his "*naka*" in the city, where I can talk to other migrants from other villages.

In August 2011, along with another fieldworker, Sadhanaji, we take an overnight public bus spanning five hours to reach Ahmedabad¹⁴⁰. We meet Khemji at the Vastrapur nagar *naka* in the

¹³⁹ MLA = Member of the legislative assembly

¹⁴⁰ The trip cost us about Rs. 150 each one way. I also find that alongside a public bus that runs once every four hours between Dungarpur and Ahmedabad city, there are also other transport options available such

city, but he is like a different man in the city; he is wearing a tight red T-shirt, parted his hair sideways instead of the traditional middle parting that he maintains in his village, and he is wearing jeans. When I meet him, he is followed by at least 10-15 other workers. It appears that he is a kind of an informal leader of the group--although they all belong to different villages they share the same housing. Khemji tells me that in return for organizing a group meeting with them to know about them, he would like to find out information on how to open a bank account from the fieldworker who is accompanying me. He explains that his co-workers and co-residents also would like to benefit from it, as well as any other schemes that can help them.

There are hardly any women at the *naka*. Approximately 2,000-3,000 casual laborers are waiting for contractors or potential employers to provide them work that day. I wait until 10 am but only half of the workers appeared to have found work. A majority of the workers were still waiting without much hope. I asked the fieldworker what they do on an unemployed day,

“It is getting harder and harder for daily laborers to find work at the *naka*; most of the contractors/employers expect them to come to them when they are unable to find work but they are paid a significantly reduced wage rate. When they don't find work, they just move to some other corner in a group and drink alcohol, play cards sometimes.”

Khemji and other laborers live in a 10x15 foot room that he had rented with five other fellow laborers. Khemji explained the rituals of shared living and labor work to us. They pay Rs. 2,000 a month along with cooking responsibilities divided amongst them. Khemji provides examples of occasions when he sends money home: festivals, health-related crisis, and lack of food. Since they migrate back home every month, he always makes himself available for occasions such as marriages and death ceremonies. From 2008 onwards, his wife has

as private Volvo bus services from the local Aspuri and Sagwara market towns, however they cost three times the cost of the public bus.

never migrated with him but she participates in NREGA employment at home. She is illiterate and takes care of all the responsibilities at home, including sending her children to school regularly. He explains that a majority of the men from his village are agricultural wage workers on Patel's farms¹⁴¹ in Gujarat, but he has always aspired for more. In Ahmedabad, he sometimes helps his fellow workers to acquire their wage or compensation for injuries from owners. He sees his role as that of a visionary, making sure that none of his cohabitants "falls out of line" in terms of sending timely remittances, or not falling into bad company. He narrates an incident of a *Mina* man from a village in Banswara district who abandoned his wife and kids to live with another "fallen" woman in Palladi suburb of Ahmedabad city; he convinced his friends to not keep any ties with him. They support each other a lot; his group and they are usually informal carriers of remittance money.

During our discussion, there is also some talk on the taboo subject of the migrant men visiting the red light district in Ahmedabad and Khemji admitted that some of his friends did go "there" occasionally. Similarly he admitted that tobacco use and regular tea-drinking during the day is a part of everyday life of the migrant, which they use to kill hunger through the long strenuous working hours. He tells me that he has been using a mobile phone for a long time and the last time, he sent a mobile phone to his family. He now keeps in touch with his family members, especially his sons, so he knows that they are going to school. He talks to his wife regularly so he feels reassured of her safety. *"If I had not come to the city and seen all these big people, I would have never understood the way people live in pardes,"* he admits.

Analysis: I describe Khemji's story from his perspective, which results in the articulation of his household's condition and seasonal migration pathway from his point of view. This is a deliberate choice because I was interested in tracking the migration process from source to destination. The rest of his family is non-migrant. It appears that

¹⁴¹ A rich community of landlords in Gujarat, Patel stands for their last name and caste identity

although Khemji's migration pathway parallels others in his group, including the men he shares the apartment with, he uses his "navigational capacity"¹⁴², which is an ability that allows him to move from off-farm movements to non-farm work at *nakas*. Khemji's ability to overcome his poor circumstances is also reflected in his ability to find work on the given day at the *naka*, and allows him to buy a mobile phone for his left-behind family. Khemji's story is also embedded in the positive spatial-circumstantial situation of his household--he lives in a *phala* that is connected to the main road and his house is next to an MLA's *pucca* house, providing him with a view of "development" that differs from his values. His wife's participation in NREGA provides them with access to some cash income from time to time. His is a young family, which doesn't yet pose any questions on his return migration or the future of his children. Using his social networks, including his clan networks, he is able to send cash remittances on time to his household and within these networks; he is able to focus on maintaining his "value-structure". There is certain forcefulness in how he rejects a fellow migrant's permanent move to the city suburb, especially when he describes his ties with his family and his responsibility towards them. Nevertheless, there are certain changes that he accepts in the city, keeping his role of temporary urban resident in mind, such as adopting jeans for his daily labor. Note also the cruelty of the life of casual labor at the *naka*, on not being able to find work of a daily wage, a reflection of poor results from poor social networks even as it manifests in lower bargaining capacity in some cases, in the form of reduced wage rate.

4.4.2 Illustration 2: Meenu and Baku

Migrating members of households from tribal families are less likely to be formally educated. The reasons for this are rooted in the bad quality of education, long distances between remote *phalas* and public schools, disinterest of tribal youth in education and above all, inability of children to link education with employable skills. In this section, I will present two separate stories of seasonal migrants: the story of Meenu and Baku. Despite being a middle-school dropout, Meenu from Boriya Fala was able to learn a skill, which contrasts with the case of Baku from Kakan village, who describes the change in his household's position due to learning advanced technical skills on the job in Ahmedabad city, Gujarat. The changes in their household and individual

¹⁴² Appadurai (2004) calls "navigational capacity" as a capacity to aspire and ability to diminish the circumstances that perpetuate them, from time to time (Appadurai 2004, 69)

outcomes are a result of their migration strategy interacting with skill-development at destination.

I met with Meenu when she had returned from attending a short training course in Udaipur city for turning into a “beauty stylist”, an occupation that highly looked down upon in the region. I meet her in Boriya Fala where she has been called to encourage other women to join skill-training workshops. Since women in the tribal households are not encouraged to attend school, most of them are primary school drop-outs too (a local office of the NGO Aajeevika Bureau was working in the remote villages to encourage young women to participate). Meenu is 18 years old, belongs to Tekla village, a village that is 100 kilometers away from Dungarpur town, and her family belongs to the Bhil community. Her daily activities before she attended the workshop included rearing her family’s five sheep bought from her father’s remittance income. Many girls Meenu’s age have been married but her family cannot shoulder her wedding costs, so she migrates seasonally as wage labor with her father. When I met her, I made some observations about her as she addressed a small group of women.

Meenu is wearing a short-sleeved blouse and has painted her face stylishly with kohl and lipstick. She has just returned from rearing her cattle, and tells us that one of her sheep has suddenly taken ill. When all the women are gathered together, she convenes the meeting by introducing herself in loud and clear Hindi (not *Vagadi*, which is the local language there) that she had learned to speak during the beauty workshop, maintaining eye contact and encouraging women who were hiding behind their *ghoongat* (scarf covering their face) to speak up. When Meenu speaks, other girls in the background snigger or laugh nervously. Some of the girls are cynical about it: “*What is the need to go out? There must be something wrong with her.*” Meenu talks about her experience in the workshop in Udaipur city, her first time in a city. She talks about overcoming her shyness in the first week, and describes how she aims to open her own beauty salon someday in the village, and teach other Bhil girls about looking beautiful. She admits that not going to school has been detrimental to her growth but she intends to develop skills that will help her overcome any financial troubles in the

future. She also encourages mothers to send their young girls to school: “*Don’t let them remain murkh (foolish)*”

Analysis: It appears that the connection between Meenu’s migration pathways has been intersected by the possibility of learning a skill, one that may create better implications for her future life-stage. Nevertheless, there exist structural characteristics that make many cases such as Meenu’s as path-dependent, allowing small changes that may not reflect in a transformation of their endowments. These structural constraints arise from her function as a woman in a male-dominated society, which blocks access to many migration pathways, as well as her position as a tribal woman that disempowers her from making investments in her entrepreneurial venture, or acquiring a formal sector job due to her lack of formal education. Nevertheless, like in Khemji’s case (4.3.1) she demonstrates the ability to aspire, or show a “navigational capacity” that temporarily allows her to ameliorate or adjust her expectations from future employment. The presence and intent of the NGO’s fieldworkers proved to be an advantage to Meenu, empowering her and her family to give up her immediate responsibilities in the household for the month to do the beauty course in Udaipur city. She is advancing her vision of the expected circumstances, but back in the village, she also follows the norms expected from her as she rears her sheep. In short, young women like her also encouraging other young girls to rethink their value structures, even if in the end they may not reject it.

In tandem with Meenu’s situation, I came across the case of Baku who has been a long-time migrant to Ahmedabad. Baku lives in Kakan village (See A15 and A12 in appendix), a Mina-dominated village with no electricity and where cell phone connectivity is only a recent development, especially the ones with recent migrants. Due to new funding from an NGO, solar energy panels are seen in some households in the *main phala* to generate electricity. The households consist of big families and at least five children per couple. The farming households cultivate corn and also breed small livestock such as sheep and goats. A majority in this village are subsistence farmers who share income and household responsibilities.

Baku is 40 years old. He does *kadiya kaam* which is renovation and repair work in the construction industry in Ahmedabad, and gets paid Rs.400 as a daily wage. His family of six children values his remittances. His sons want to migrate with him, he says. They are not

interested in schooling. His wife takes care of their two *bigha* farm, but she has never migrated with him to Ahmedabad. Baku began migrating at 17 years as an unskilled laborer. He would do anything that was offered to him but slowly and he learned a skill from Kalu, another Bhil man he met in the city. There was no formal training though. One day he was given a welder and after a few injuries, he started watching Kalu and learned little by little. While regular migrants in nearby towns get paid Rs.150, he gets a very good wage rate because it's a big city. He dropped out of school at a young age but he admits that it is a mistake. He has been migrating for 20 years, and in his years as a migrant, he has suffered some severe injuries. He counts himself lucky--should he meet with any injury, his current employer "Seth" who he knows for over three years, promises to cover the cost (but nothing is ever in written form), but if the injury happens outside work hours, then the employer may not be responsible. He explains how this form of social insurance makes him feel secure. In the city, Baku spends one-third of his income on food and accommodation in Ahmedabad city. Baku admits that he drinks alcohol with his friends but "*does not need to*" when he comes home. He explains that due to intense and long hours of work, labourers often drink every night and high-risk behaviour is a common occurrence. Moreover, the State of Gujarat bans the sale of liquor and therefore they often fall prey to bad quality of liquor or "*desi daru*" (local beer) that increase health risks.

Analysis: Baku's migration strategy interacts with his skill-development in a way that it guarantees upward mobility for his family. While there is little information in the story about the outcomes of Baku's strategy on the household arrangement, the probable long-term livelihood outcome of seasonal non-farm wage labour is evident in Baku's sons wanting to follow his migration trajectory. Here again, the presence of informal social networks in the form of Kalu's help, proves to be an important strategy for Baku to navigate the non-farm employment trajectory in Ahmedabad city. In Baku's story, the interaction of different endowments that have aided his migration trajectory relate very differently from Meenu's. First, there are gender differences affecting how skill-training

occurs and second, it is also Baku's agency as a male member of the household that facilitates his skill-training, even without complete support from other members of his family. Meenu's skills are considered marginal to her responsibilities at home. Meenu's trajectory from skill-developing into non-farm migration is not yet charted out, but Baku's income from long-time seasonal migration is extremely critical to his household's well-being. Baku is unable as a migrant, on the other hand, to influence the endowments at home, including land and livelihoods, as well as the immediate outcomes of the cash remittances in education. Similarly, there are risks involved: the same social networks that help Baku find employment can encourage him to follow bad habits such as drinking heavily.

Based on the specific point of views of Baku and Meenu, it is clear that there are discrepancies in the same "type" of the tribal household due to the differences in gender roles in tribal societies, but they somehow lead to similar path-dependent migration trajectories due to the limited education, exposure and political capital that the households have access to during the process of the migration. Meenu's conduct is like that seen in Robeyns' (2006) articulation of the role of education used to question one's collective identity, that there are different ways of looking at the same world we inhabit (Robeyns 2006). Given that the tribal culture and society does not yet support her formal education, it appears that informal education acquired from migration and other alternate sources may require a different framework as Barber recommends, notwithstanding its risks and tacit learning process (Barber 2004). Therefore, to improve the outcomes from seasonal migration, it can be concluded from the cases of Meenu and Baku that within the margins of tribal communities, good networks and skill-development can improve temporary results that reflect on household circumstances.

4.4.3 Illustration 3: Kanha and Ramjibai

In this section, I will discuss the story of Kanha, who uses his social networks to diversify his income sources during a drought year. I will also highlight Ramjibai's case where seasonal migration is used as a coping mechanism to recover from the drought. Ramjibai's story represents "idiosyncratic shock," compared to Kanha's story that involves loss of entitlements and extreme vulnerability, makes coping from drought even more problematic.

In 2010, I meet Kanha in Kakan village that describes how seasonal migration manifests in their joint family setup. He is 70 years old and lives in a mud home consisting of 12 members including four sons and one grandchild. He is a long-time seasonal migrant who is too old to migrate for daily wage labor, but his sons migrate. One of them works as a wage laborer in Ahmedabad while one works in the diamond polishing business of Surat, again as wage labor. His son from Surat has been of help to him this year, his remittances bringing at least Rs. 2,000 more every month that helps them buy food from the market. While we are talking, a local man comes and gives him a packet; they are remittances from his son in Ahmedabad that he has sent through the government bus driver, who is a common remittance carrier for them.

When I meet him, he is with his older son who is trying to fix the angle of a water pipe to water the onions on their land. He tells me that they decided to plant onions this year, the main ingredient in their food, because they cannot afford to buy them from the market. It is a drought year and their farm has remained inaccessible to the irrigation channel that other households on the plains have access¹⁴³. They had rented the water pump from the village agriculturist at a rate of Rs.60 per hour. “Most people still use bullocks in this village but our bullock died this year and we cannot afford any mechanization tools for cultivation”. Kanha confesses that they were not very hopeful to be able to produce for self-consumption this season, but since his wife and daughter-in-laws started working in NREGA this year, they were able to improve their household’s condition. They confess that although they don’t get their wages on time, their income from it has helped them get cash to buy fertilizer and pay for renting agricultural equipment. Kanha explains that many other women in the village have

¹⁴³Like any tribal village, Kanha’s farming land is located at a height on separate hills. Due to the drought, he is having trouble watering the harvest. There is lack of irrigation infrastructure and continued lag of agricultural mechanization making it problematic for poor rural households such as his to cultivate without increasing costs.

not received work this quarter but since he knows the NREGA site supervisor, his uncle's nephew, he makes sure that the women in his household get timely work; he even negotiates their rightful wages sometimes. He mentions that because of his "good name" in the village, despite his family being poor, his youngest daughter will be married in a wealthy home next year, where the *sora* earns a good income from wage labor in Ahmedabad. The wedding cost comes to Rs. 50,000, which he hopes to borrow from a local moneylender.

Analysis: Kanha's social networks underscore his apparent difficulties in coping with a drought year. Similarly, his son's migration remittances help balance their immediate needs: being able to continue subsistence agriculture proves to be an example. It appears that his social networks have helped the household "survive" through idiosyncratic shocks such as a bad agricultural year; seasonal migration proves to be a timely strategy that emphasizes the role of diverse income sources for tribal families. Moreover, Kanha's family also relies on his kinship relationships to acquire access to NREGA work, one that is legitimate but yet not always inaccessible to other households¹⁴⁴. I conclude here that since the breakdown of the patron-client relationships in village communities (Epstein 2007), households that are recovering from droughts can no longer depend on the benevolence of a "patron" but rather on the "good relationships" with people in the village. The continuing of subsistence agriculture at home, as the younger men of the household migrate and the women work in NREGA, provides for a good example of a typical household in a drought year, where despite structural problems that embed inner shocks and inadequate responses, the presence of enough labor at home alongside available opportunities in the village, helps the household scrape by that year.

I will contrast this story of Kanha with that of Ramjibai, whose strongest capital is her knowledge of the "mate", a man she knows from her village.

¹⁴⁴ This is especially in contrast to another view I heard from a villager who worked on the same worksite as Kanha's family members. They were not paid for some days, close to Rs.1500 each. On asking for their payments, the "mate" dismissed their claims, asking them to go away. The woman worker's daughter dropped out of school in order to rear their sheep; "*we really need more cash income that year*" she hurriedly told me.

Ramjibai lives in Sada village (See Map 5 in the Appendix), in the *uppalo phala*. Sada village is fairly small, tribal village that is spread out in three *phalas*. According to data from an independent NGO Aajeevika Bureau, only 3 percent of the households in Sada village *panchayat* undertake non-farm seasonal migration, of which 99 percent of them migrate to Gujarat alone (Bureau 2010b)¹⁴⁵.

It is early morning in January 2011 and Ramjibai is surprised that I have come to meet her. She barely sees anybody apart from her neighbors and members of her *phala*. She is 25 years old woman, illiterate and living in a remote *phala* of Sada village. She lives in a small *kachcha* home with her 13 year old daughter. I find her near a well and she tells me that the water has dried out this year. She doesn't understand my Hindi very well but she understands Gujarati – a language she learned when she traveled to Gujarat on a farm as a wage laborer two years ago with her husband. Ramjibai's husband passed away from a disease that “*no witch could decipher*”¹⁴⁶ and therefore their livelihood is based on wages that she can earn during off-seasons. She owns only two bigha land that her brother-in-law is now trying to take over since her husband passed away. She tells me about her daughter Nausi who is a migrant too. Nausi had gone along her the mate to a neighboring village for BT cotton harvest in August 2010 and returned with two months ago. The mate had paid the mother Rs.500 as an advance along with a promise to take care of her food and shelter. Ramjibai tells me that she has no choice; Nausi does not go to school since the higher secondary school is two kms away. “*Who knows what kinds of people she will meet on her way to school?*”

¹⁴⁵ Their data is analyzed from 2001 Census data as well as verified through small samples of qualitative data, gathered over a period of two years. Here, they have accounted for the Sada panchayat – not the village. It consists of three revenue villages and 879 households, population of 4900 residents and migrants.

¹⁴⁶ I had heard this many times, they call it “*mataji chadi gaya hatha*” meaning that an old deity had taken over him, causing him to lose his mental balance. In fact, such diseases persist longer than others; and many of the tribal households are convinced that no modern medicine can resolve it.

Analysis: It appears that Ramjibai's story is similar to that Kanha's household but there exists a severe case of "*idiosyncratic shock*" including a recent death and lack of sufficient human labor that further makes her vulnerable. Similar to Kanha's case, it appears that Ramjibai is trying to utilize people's goodwill, a "mate" in this case, without having any bargaining capacity to negotiate her daughter's pay or good living conditions. Ramjibai's initial situation is vulnerable, one that is not supported by any alternative income opportunities or productive physical endowments. Seasonal migration allows her household to momentarily climb out of living in abject poverty, but without education or information on migration jobs, her relationship with the mate holds the only channel of immediate information and insurance for her. Nevertheless, her outcomes from seasonal migration are dependent on her only endowment: her daughter's skills on the farm, but that carries serious risk of exploitation from the mate (Rogaly 2003, 624), as well as external risks, such as another drought. There is evidence from De Janvry and Sadoulet's paper on indigenous *ejido*¹⁴⁷ households in Mexico that relates to Ramjibai's testimony about her daughter dropping out of school. In the Mexican households, off-farm migration lead to poorer outcomes from education as compared to non-indigenous households that undertook non-farm migration whose family members were better inclined to formal education (De Janvry and Sadoulet 2001, 479). As for the condition of the child migrants that compromise their future, it appears that their experience of migration helps them build personal relationships, but these relationships are not permitted within their structural arrangement. They use the help of the mate to undertake migrations but their decisions are many times self-motivated (Refer to Appendix A10).

4.4.4 Illustration 4: Raman and Ghumlibai

In this section, I summarize Raman's story, an ex-migrant who undertakes dual cropping this year. Along with Raman's story, I also discuss Ghumlibai's story, a left-behind woman who tends to her farm. Raman has sowed BT cotton seeds for cultivation for the first time in 2010 to make ends meet during a drought year. His son is a seasonal migrant who has returned from a severe injury. Raman has also taken up the job of a NREGA supervisor to support his household.

¹⁴⁷ Ejido stands for peasant households but in this case, also indicates land-poor peasants who had land allocated to them during the land reform period in Mexico in 1910.

Raman works as the mate for NREGA. He is 65 years old. He is supervising a road construction project. Raman has been unable to migrate from the last five years but his brothers have gone to Ahmedabad for daily wage labor. His son Mohan, who used to seasonally migrate to a marble quarry in a mill, met with a severe accident early this year and is now physically challenged. Raman looks after him and his family. His older daughter attends senior secondary school in a nearby village. Raman has been migrating for over 45 years but is illiterate. He finds that despite educating his children, there are no opportunities for them in the village. His son studied up to the first year of college, first to ever attend college in his village community, but he had to undertake unskilled employment to run his family. He has collected some small capital from his time as a seasonal migrant over the years that he wants to invest wisely. The right opportunity lies in cash crop cultivation, he believes.

Raman is a smallholder but in charge of a total one hectare¹⁴⁸ of land, including his brothers' lands. He repays them in $\frac{3}{4}$ of the harvest share, leaving the remaining for him or to sell in the market. Raman's family owns a well in his part of the land, which makes farming easier; it helps him counter the aridity of land in the area. This year he decided to grow BT cotton on two bigha of their family land. Some Gujarati businessmen from Ahmedabad, who have accepted a written contract that ensures that the cotton harvest goes back to them, have provided the BT cotton seeds to him without interest. Based on the quality of the cotton harvest, they will pay him for it after having deducted the cost of the seeds that were given to him for free.

Raman employs three farm laborers from neighboring *phalas* to work on his BT cotton plantation; he pays them Rs.55 per day. He has taken a debt from his brother to pay their wages. *"Does he recognize that sowing the BT crop may render his land infertile?"* is my question. The

¹⁴⁸ One hectare is equal to 2.56 acres of land.

fieldworker repeats the question¹⁴⁹, half mockingly to Raman who only laughs. *“I had heard about this crop from my experience as a wage worker on a BT cotton farm in Gujarat, and also from other BT farmers in the phala but the soil was dry, not suitable for vegetable crops anyway,”* He admits later that he undertook the BT cotton crop because he urgently needed the money to set up a grocery shop for his son Mohan, so his future will be secure. *“If it works and I am successful, I will harvest more BT cotton crop next year.”*

A fieldworker, Narayanji, firmly points to the problems of water management and land fertility in the region that will push the farmers further into the circle of poverty, rendering their land infertile over the next decade or so.

One of the biggest concerns in the Kakan village is people's inability to come out with good quality farm output. The BT seed providers are not able to address problems of water management. On one hand, the frequent droughts in Southern Rajasthan pose a problem of land fertility and new agricultural pursuits, and on the other hand, there is a lack of price inputs necessary for digging deep wells to reach the groundwater for irrigation. The investment from private or government institutions for groundwater machinery is limited to only certain centers in the Kherwara district, which does not include Kakan village. The money allocated under Indira Awasz for digging wells is often usurped between the village heads and the contractors. The dam situated at a close distance to the village also has turned out to be very dry this year, and homes connected to the irrigation channels have therefore not benefited from it.

Analysis: Raman's household situation is dire, because a part of his land is at a probable risk of permanently losing fertility due to the BT crop cultivation. I argue that his or his household member's inability to seasonally migrate has resulted in him

¹⁴⁹ I speak to the participants in Hindi, a commonly used language in North India but in Udaipur district, they speak the dialect Merwari and the Minas speak a rustic form of it, so the fieldworker, who has accompanied me on this visit, repeats my question in their dialect to ensure that they have understood me.

forsaking a part of his land for immediate gains. Moreover, it appears from the fieldworker Narayanji's testimony that Raman's household suffers from a structural disadvantage in terms of long-term probable aridity of land and potential depletion of groundwater, a major source of water for the farmers in the region. BT cotton seed ensures high yield with low insecticide use, making it seem especially beneficial to smallholders like Raman (Morse, Bennett, and Ismael 2007) but there are empirical papers that report the crop's unsustainability for the farmers, even making the BT variety culpable for large scale farmer's suicides in parts of Maharashtra in Western India (Shiva, Emani, and Jafri 1999.)

Land forms the most dependable assets for tribal household, as the other natural-resource based livelihoods remain uncertain sources of income and wellbeing. Raman sees BT cotton cultivation as a potential long-term alternative to the vagaries of the weather as well as seasonal migration, due to lack of any other male members in his immediate household. He also appears to have a more forward-looking outlook, having successfully educated his children until high school and he seemed to view BT cotton as a window to the future of the cropping design in his village. Moreover, he prudently experiments with BT cotton on land that he believes has been fallow for a few years, to understand how the cropping pattern functions and its requirements. There are many more farmers as him who are investing their agricultural infrastructure in BT crops; some of them view it as a positive alternative to sending their young children as migrants to BT cotton farms in Gujarat (Kujur and Kumar 2015). It appears that the relationship between cash cropping, land and seasonal migration is in conflict. There appear to be trade-offs between endowments in order to orchestrate a change in the household's immediate condition. In the long-run, it appears that compromising land over BT cultivation may lead any household to the path of chronic poverty much faster than undertaking seasonal migration or being able to use any other alternatives.

In the story of Ghumlibai, who used to be a seasonal migrant with her husband, it is the farming responsibilities and the take of protecting the farm that lead her to return home.

Ghumlibai is an illiterate tribal woman I meet in Boriya Fala in Sagwara block of Dungarpur district. The interview was conducted with her in her home in September 2011. She is also four months pregnant. They own about two hectares of land on which they

cultivate corn and vegetable crops. They share a hand pump for water with four other households. *"It is my responsibility to make sure we have food for subsistence as my husband migrates."* She narrates her trip as a wage worker in Mehsana, a northern town in Gujarat. A local mate had told them about this location. She declares that women migrating with men are highly looked down upon (*"Women are seen as irresponsible and uncultured."*) in their community as the elders are at home. They say that it is a much bigger responsibility for them to take care of household responsibilities, including rearing cattle, giving birth and most importantly, doing agricultural work in their fields.

As a migrant, the nature of her work involved long hours of tile fitting in under-construction buildings, but she was paid three times less wage than her husband for the same kind of work. She was only paid Rs.150/- as a wage for her labor. Their working hours were relatively flexible, involving three or four hours every day. At home, she never stops working. Nevertheless her husband protested to the contractor for the low wage, he then immediately increased her wage but well below the average wage-rate given to daily laborers in Gujarat. Her husband was being paid Rs.400 per day while she was paid half that, along with other female workers.

Ghumlibai understands the limitations of low wages, but she admits that she was happy to stay in Mehsana until the contractor gave them work. She enjoyed some time with her husband in the city. She says that her son was also born there and lived with them until they moved back to the village after losing the job. Around the same time, her sister-in-law fell sick and her father-in-law asked her to stay behind. Her husband still migrates regularly for wage labor, which allows them to send their son to the government school. Since her husband is always looking to migrate, in his absence the burden of managing their own agricultural land and sharing labor on their family's land falls on her. *"Or else the weeds will grow on them, what will do then?"* Her children are still too young to help her. She tells me that she has to prioritize her own agricultural work over work in other people's fields or

working for NREGA, although during some off-seasons, she undertakes wage labor on another's farm so she can feed her family and cattle.

Analysis: Ghumlibai's story is pertinent to understand two significant factors: the relationship of the migrant with the land and that of a tribal woman with the land, with the analysis of the gender roles within the framework. It appears that in the present condition, the household's situation is more stable than earlier when she migrated with her husband to do wage labor. As other tribal homes, subsistence agriculture and maintaining cattle appears to be an important mechanism to follow tradition at home. Acknowledging that female wage laborers remain marginalized in the labor market, Ghumlibai's story of being a migrant conveys that "the poorest are in a trap: they migrate most, work hardest and yet, because of their weaker bargaining power, get paid least and save next to nothing" (Mosse et al. 2002, 71). Ghumlibai's return also demonstrates a tribal woman's role within the household: she embodies the social ties of the migrants with the land and their household customs. Women from Bhil and Mina communities have historically been income-earning members and decision-making members, but their role is more clearly marked as subsistence- and farming-oriented, their participation in the non-farm economy is still not openly accepted in the society. Nevertheless, Ghumlibai's testimony provides a hint into the household's future. Despite the hardships in the non-farm work as well as discrimination in her daily wages, she liked living in the urban setting, due to the "free time" that it allowed her and her husband.

From the two stories of Raman and Ghumlibai, it seems that the relationship of the households with the land appears to be changing, along with some people's ability to use their agency to orchestrate change on their outcomes from land in the absence of seasonal migration. Raman uses his experience as a NREGA supervisor and a leader to make connections with a BT cotton seed manufacturing agent. In Raman's case, in the absence of productive men at home, he experiments with cash cropping to compensate for the lack of income from seasonal migration. In contrast, Ghumlibai as a return migrant, views a kind of path-dependency in her and her husband's seasonal migrant pathways where the call of "land production" and other responsibilities at home, force women in and out of their homes to continue to maintain their tribal customs in their communities.

4.5 Conclusion

The illustrations in this chapter of seasonal migration pathways present specific generalizable characteristics of the process of out-migration, the endowments available for migration and their transformation through the outcomes.

- 1) It appears from Khemji's case that the "navigational capacity" of the migrating member of the household at destination, as well as the ability of the left-behind household members to direct the remittances in a positive direction. Both these movements are a result of the household's social networks, their positioning of power at both locations and the capability to overcome the setbacks during the process. However, this strategy does not ensure the household's social mobility, and travels through many precarious situations that can influence the outcomes negatively.
- 2) From Meenu and Baku's case it appears that skill-development is a way for tribal households to overcome their structural inadequacies such as lack of education. In addition it appears that improving tacit learning, improving the linkages of households with available public policy and civil society initiatives can strengthen their human resources, leading to improvement in their outcomes from seasonal migration
- 3) In the story Ramjibai, it appears that "idiosyncratic shocks" lowers the ability of the household to meet their immediate needs. In addition they require that the household capitalize on their available resources, leading to extremely vulnerable situations of young adolescents migrating seasonally, a movement often referred to as "distress-driven migrations". In the contrasting case of Kanha, it appears that the households cope with the drought by pooling all their resources together, without having to trade off any of their immediate assets.
- 4) Based on Raman and Ghumlibai's story, it appears that their endowments are compromised due to the inability of the household to migrate seasonally; smallholders practicing BT crop cultivation are endangering their long-term livelihoods whereas tribal women form the poorest members who migrate at lower wages or stay-behind, dependent on the immediate needs of land and social customs. Nevertheless there make this decision to improve their immediate

situation, reflecting their vulnerabilities to future livelihood trajectories but the improvement in their current condition.

In addition to the above findings, there are also individual changes within each of the vignettes that present interesting paradigms of study. For instance, the story of Meenu reflects the impact of skill-training and exposure of an urban environment on the ability of women to temporarily challenge deeply-embedded structures. Similarly, the impact of Khemji's exposure to an urban environment during seasonal migration on his perception of education, hints at a positive effect of seasonal migration of individual personalities. Despite these individual differences, it appears that based on the available endowments at the household level, seasonal migration trajectories that tribal households undertake are path-dependent. A universal lack of higher formal education or mechanisms to undertake it proves to be a major structural advantage to many tribal households. They are unable to lobby for better wages, redress conflicts during payment or sometimes, envision a better future for themselves or their family. Seasonal migration cannot be seen, in conclusion, as a viable livelihood option for rural households, as they must be evaluated as viable solutions to address immediate household vulnerability instead. In fact, in many cases it appears that seasonal migration can compromise existing resources as in the case of Raman. In none of the stories that I presented, does seasonal migration seem to ameliorate future household situation but instead presents directions through cash remittances to improve their present conditions.

Chapter 5 – Commuting & Household Endowments: An Analytical Commentary

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze commuting streams undertaken by rural households looking for non-farm, permanent opportunities in nearby market-towns. The central goal of the thesis is to analyze how the initial endowments of rural households influence their out-migration pathways. In small-time market towns at the block level, there are self-employed commuters who engage in petty entrepreneurship ventures, and wage-laboring commuters/migrants working within the informal labor system. I have explored the stories of seasonal wage labor in the previous chapter, analyzing the interplay of household endowments with their migration trajectory. Here, I am interested in how self-employed commuting households use their caste-based networks and occupational skills to chart their migration trajectories, and in how they influence these household resources in the process. The key reason rural households undertake commuting¹⁵⁰ is to advance their endowment-mapping process, focusing on building capability through self-employment. This chapter tracks changes occurring at the household level as members undertake commuting as a central strategy, focusing on motivations, processes and possible outcomes. The relationship between commuting as a migrating strategy and rural households is studied in the context of specific rural households, some of them belonging to OBC castes, who occupy self-employed trades in Aspur block development town, Dungarpur district, Southern Rajasthan.

Rural households that undertake commuting as a migration strategy are better endowed than tribal households that undertake seasonal migration. Of all the castes, I identify that some of the OBC households are more likely to undertake commuting due to their ability to capitalize their skill-sets while undertake petty self-employed ventures. They are able to undertake self-employment due to the use their reserve capital, build on their current skills and advance their household goals. However, commuting as a strategy may positively influence the household's initial endowments, dependent on their individual circumstances and changes over different life stages. I have suggested that the

¹⁵⁰ This refers to commuters that undertake self-employment, and will be called commuters or commuting henceforth, signifying self-employment.

strongest resource available to some of the above households is non-farm trade skills or education, and based on their success with them, they are able to transition into full-time employment.

Household members that commute, a migrant stream that is largely male-dominated consist of either return long-term migrants or non-migrants with substantial political and social capital in the district towns. In this sense, their resources are comparable to those of households that undertake semi-permanent out-migration. The strongest outcome of from commuting is the contributions made by rural household toward advancing the urbanization process in underdeveloped rural areas¹⁵¹. Middle aged and older migrants are the average demographic undertaking self-employment activities at a commuting distance, but the commuting population may also include young families with financial capital to undertake distant self-employment. This group of commuters follows a path-dependent migration pathway. They follow certain trajectories based on comparable resources and individual circumstances, but their outcomes are a result of similar socio-cultural practices and contextual features. In section 5.2, I discuss the initial findings from the empirical data; in 5.3 I describe the commuting context within the process of urbanization, household resources and change; in 5.4, I present the main stories with a brief analytical commentary; and, in 5.5, I present the chapter conclusions.

5.2 Initial Findings

Aspur block of Dungarpur village, where I conducted two years of fieldwork in 2011 and 2012, was my main study site for researching the commuting components of self-employed people. Although there is not much national census data classifying communities and their populations on the basis of caste or employment trajectories, Aspur block clearly does not have many OBC communities. The only credible micro-level longitudinal study on the relationship of castes with current occupations that I've found is from Jones (2008) who tracks the changes, or lack of them, in the occupational structures of certain OBC, communities in Chandrapur village, Dungarpur. He finds that a majority of the higher caste men have migrated away from the village in the last 25

¹⁵¹ I have discussed Epstein's model of rural towns as nodal points for villages in remote areas. To connect it with urbanization and growth in the chapter on literature review, here I will explain how opportunities become available for specific groups but not for others.

years except for Bhoi (gardeners), and all other artisan castes have capitalized on the needs of the district by permanently diversifying into non-farm activities in the revenue villages or closest market towns (Jones 2008). Therefore, it is probable that some of the OBC communities consist of caste groups that are likely to undertake commuting. Aspur block consists of 49 *panchayats* and 174 revenue villages within its geographical area (of India 2012; Institute of Development Studies 2009). In this chapter, I analyze the dynamics and conditions of households that undertake commuting as a migration strategy in Aspur block development town.

Aspur block development town is an informal market. There are no formal boundaries spatially separating it from other parts of the block. However, the trading community and their stores, the contractors and the small-time hawkers operate within the same location. The main “junction” that marks the beginning of the Aspur market town is the “Aspur central bus station” where all the district, state and inter-state buses make multiple stops during the day. The Aspur “market area” also houses the official government homes of the administrative employees of the block, including the block development officer, the agricultural officer and so on. The market area is located within a five kilometer radius where at least three to four blocks are lined with shops, restaurants, and coaching classes.

Within the district of Dungarpur, Aspur block, along with Sagwara block in the east, present the strongest urbanizing trends¹⁵² whereas the other block development towns in Dungarpur district relatively less so. Aspur block has an area of 675.95 sq. km. In Figure 10 below, I have represented data on households from 11 panchayats from Aspur block collected by the NGO Aajeevika Bureau, collected in 2009-2011. This figure shows major migrant destinations. Note that the OBCs have low mobility as compared to the Upper Castes or even the Tribal Mina households.

¹⁵² In fact, according to the latest 2001 Census, a basic data sheet highlights that Sagwara forms one of the three main urban towns in the Dungarpur district with a population of 31, 127 residing within a radius of 10 kilometers (View Appendix. 1 below). The data from 2011 Census on the census website does not contain any specific data on the urban agglomerations or change in the status of the towns in the Dungarpur district.

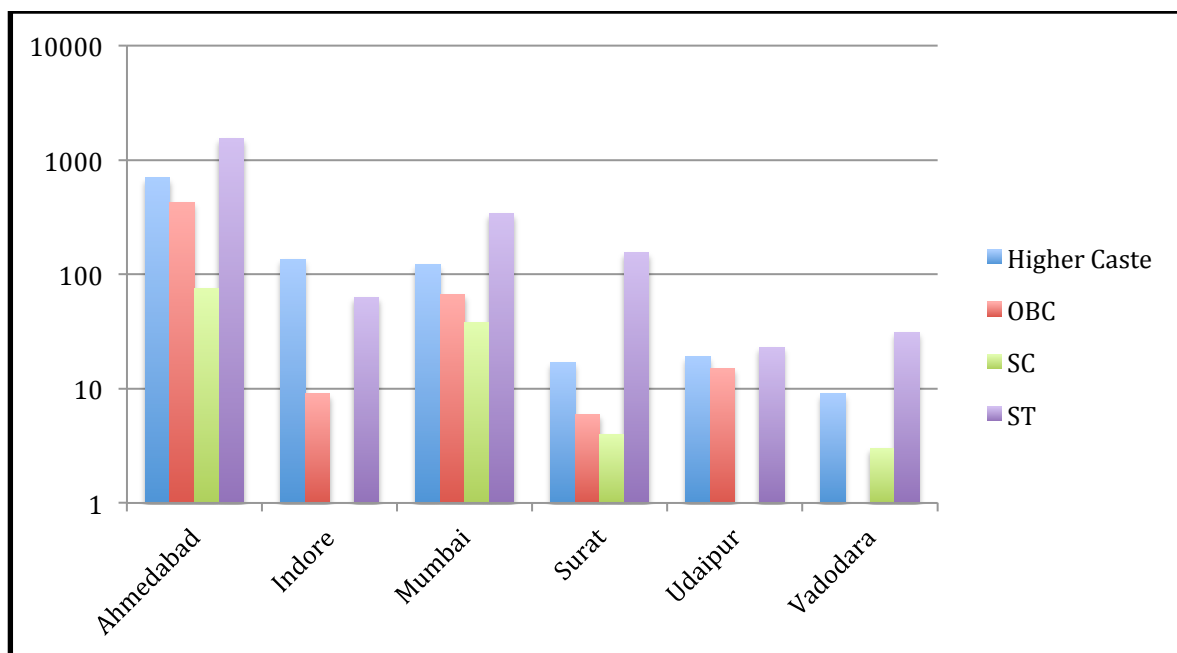


Figure 10 – Select Households with Migrant Destinations
(Data Source: Aajeevika Bureau, Analysis: Author)¹⁵³

The rural households in my sample with a commuting strategy have comparable resources to each other. Because many of these households tend to take on certain occupations that are passed down through the generations, they are skilled. These households are naturally heterogeneous; some following generational non-farm occupations while others have diversified into skilled non-farm occupations and learned a new skill. -- I classify those commuters in the generational non-farm occupations as semi-skilled and skilled in their traditional crafts but not necessarily highly educated. – In Figure 11 below, I have analyzed eight main OBC groups based on 2009-2011 data from Aajeevika Bureau, Aspuri block. These data show the changes occurring at individual OBC caste level. As an example, note the work sectors in which *Nai* (hairdressers/Barbers) and *Patidaar* are involved. While there are a huge amount of self-employed among *Nais*, presumably having continued their generationally transmitted professions, *Patidaars* have diversified from land holding and facilitating tenure to hotel and restaurant-based jobs.

¹⁵³ Refer to Appendix A6 to see a caste-wise distribution of migrants analyzed by work sector

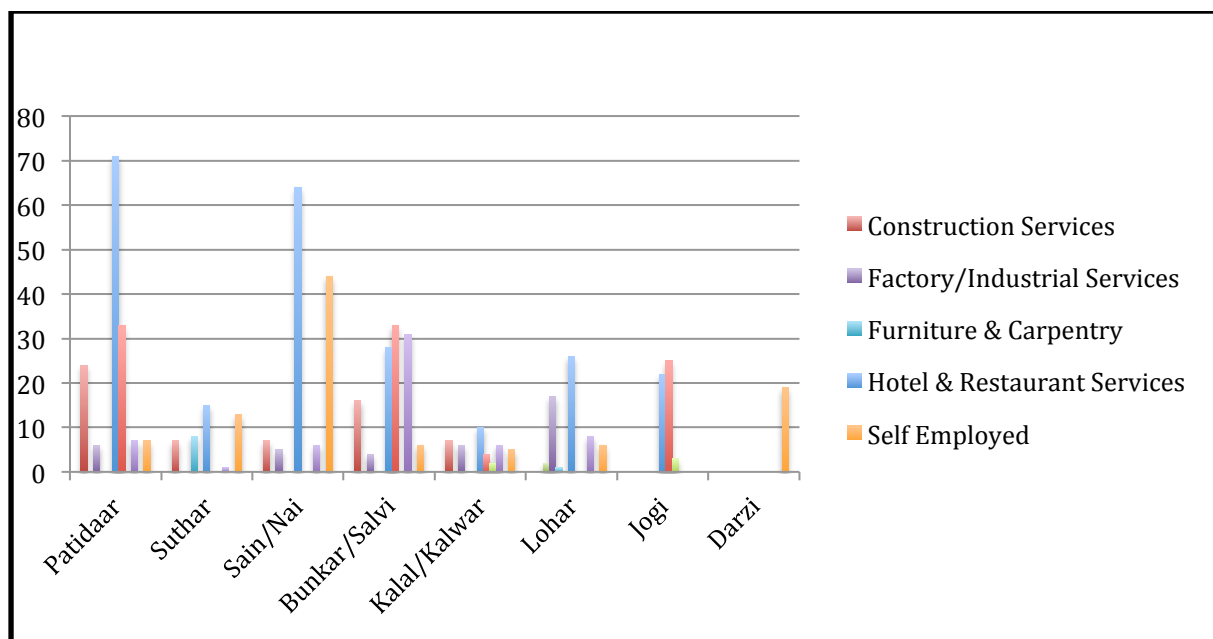


Figure 11 – OBC Castes from Aspur & Work Sectors
(Data Source: Aajeevika Bureau, Analysis: Author)

I will now discuss the dimensions of each of the household endowments based on the empirical data. The following are definitions of each of the endowments that I have analyzed in each of the story vignettes in this chapter.

- 1) **Social networks:** A caste-based or family-based network helps the households arrive at entrepreneurial goals; horizontal networks provide social insurance during times of crisis. The household arrangement is centered on accomplishing patriarchal goals, like a majority of Caste-Hindu¹⁵⁴ households; the woman's position is relegated to roles that focus on the making the best of their family outcomes from available remittances.
- 2) **Land:** OBC households are small/marginal farmers who undertake small-scale farming. During good rainfall years, they look to gain a profit from the *kharif* crop. They rear big cattle that help in tilling the land, instead of small animals. In many cases, they own *pucca* homes; their lifestyle is comparable to the higher castes.

¹⁵⁴ Caste-Hindu households imply all the social groups that fall under the Hindu Varna system. These include SCs, OBCs, middle and higher caste (General Caste) households, as per their administrative categories, mostly created for distributing welfare entitlements.

- 3) **Political power:** Their small numbers in a tribal-district such as Dungarpur garner them little political power and their political representation in local municipalities is weak (Jaffrelot and Robin 2009). Some OBC households are eligible for affirmative action, including reservations in public employment posts, resulting from the Mandal Commission Report of 1990. They may also access NREGA employment.
- 4) **Education:** Many OBC household members are likely to have at least a high school education; they are predisposed to formal employment and schooling. Some of them are semi-skilled.

From my empirical analysis, I present four stories of commuting households: 1) A *Suthar*'s wife (OBC) who owns a furniture shop in Aspur town, 2) a *Nai* household (an OBC) that owns a small haircutting salon in the Aspur town, 3) a *Vaishnav* (General caste) household where the male member works as a school teacher in the school, a trend that is not common in this group 4) A *Parmar* (OBC) man who owns a tea stall in Aspur market town. See Table 6 below for a list.

In each of these stories, I present the changes that have occurred over the lifetime of the household and as well as how they describe their present condition, in interaction with the environment to which they migrate. In the vignettes of Mamaji, Surabhi and Neetabhabhi, I analyze the interaction of their self-employed trades with their household endowments in Aspur block development town and add to this mix the story of Renu, whose husband follows a formal employment pattern in which the man commutes to a local school as a government teacher. Renu's household's story is an important example of the probable pathway for commuting households, one where education forms the key endowment that steers the commuting strategy.

Table 6 – Migrant Stories for Commuting

Names	Occupation	Place of Work
Surabhi	Husband is a furniture-shop owner in Aspur block	Aspur block development town
Mamaji	Owner of a tea shop in Aspur block development town	Off-center to Aspur block development town
Neetabhabhi	Husband owns a barber's shop in Aspur block development town	Aspur block development town
Renu	Husband is a school teacher with a government job	Remote village in Sagot block

In each of the above stories, I highlight the specific contexts that influence the commuting pathways for these households and how each household's endowments intersect within the context of Aspur block. Based on my analysis of these households, I classify this type of household as OBC households in the conceptual framework but note that this classification is relatively broad and defined by political parameters. Each of the select households in my empirical study belongs to different castes, but in terms of physical assets, despite differences between them in occupational attributes, the households share comparable resources. Note that overall, the migration trajectories of OBC households are closer to those of the higher castes as evidenced by its strategy and use of endowments, whereas Scheduled Castes (SC)¹⁵⁵--another Caste-Hindu group--share migrating characteristics along with endowments that are comparable to STs. The key goal of this thesis is to trace the interaction of different endowments leading to a similar commuting strategy for these households, characteristics that can hopefully be generalized to other similar households. Similarly, many of these commuting trajectories indicate probable pathways in the future, especially when combined with specific endowments that advance migration strategies. In the previous chapter, I discussed the process of endowment mapping. -- Here I also evaluate each of the above stories based on the interaction of the endowments with the outcomes from commuting.

5.3 Interface between commuters and households

Commuting as a migration strategy is at the interface of rural households with their available endowments, reflecting internal and external changes. In the following section, I highlight how rural households that undertake commuting, while applying their available resources involved in self-employed trades, influence the growth of semi-urban spaces, including block-development towns. Block-development towns are the most prominent spaces in which households in the surrounding villages establish rural-urban linkages (Wandschneider 2004). I also study how the household's contextual

¹⁵⁵ Scheduled Castes form an important demographic in the region of Dungarpur; these are castes that were added to the constitutional list of backward castes when the Indian republic was formed. Many of these castes were involved in scavenging occupations or footwear making, while many of them were seasonal wage laborers. Some households still practice their ancestral occupations. A majority of these households are impoverished groups that have little or no household assets despite the affirmative action programs having supported them through six decades.

features evolved during this time, including changes in the caste roles, consolidation of employment types in market-towns, and the evolution of consumer demands. All these contextual features coincide with the development of the households' resource structures that is likely to make their migration patterns path-dependent. In addition, they contribute to shaping the household arrangement of commuting households to suit the changes occurring in the non-farm market space.

5.3.1 Market-Town: Social Groups that Commute

The shops and trades in Aspur market town cater to the needs of Caste-Hindu consumer demands. The other place I frequently did fieldwork was the Sagwara market town. However, Sagwara block consists of a predominant Bhil and Mina consumer base. Unnithan-Kumar's (1997) account of the Sirohi market correlates largely to the description of Sagwara market--the changing needs of the tribal households affect participation of small-time entrepreneurs. She notes that businessmen focus on the demands of tribal households such as in the case of the *meghwal mochi*¹⁵⁶.

Market towns in tribal-dominated regions are places of open interaction and freedom for all castes and social groups. As such, these are spaces where the rural-urban interface takes a different form, where the interactions between different social groups are elaborated and changes in consumer demands come to light. It also demonstrates the critical question of which different types of households intersect based on their resources and representing different pathways. Unnithan-Kumar (1997) observes that tribal men at the Sirohi market commute to the market to sell their forest produce, after which they go socialize with the other tribal men over *beedi* (locally-made tobacco) and pan (betelnut and leaf to chew). However, the OBC businessmen acquire a lion's share of their income, capitalizing on the benefits of the market. Similarly the Caste-Hindu women with their cultural norms distinguish themselves from the tribal women, the latter openly engaging in easy banter with men that are not their husbands (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 184–188). Commuting and consumer needs are strongly connected, but

¹⁵⁶ In an account of the OBC mochi community in Abu town, the closest town at a commuting distance from the tribal Garasia villages, Unnithan-Kumar highlights the testimony of a man who once made many sturdy and long-lasting shoes for the tribals for Rs. 60 to 100, but with the introduction of cheap plastic pairs for Rs.15, this trade suffered. The only other leather items that the tribal community bought included - leather plough harnesses, leather mouth and horn pieces for oxen, and slings (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 184–188).

households with commuting capacities use these opportunities to take care of their own—and others’--consumption needs to expand their capital asset base. Thus the role of the enterprising rural households is constantly evolving in response to the needs and competition of the market, and when the caste-based roles are focused on entrepreneurship, there are apt to be successful results.

I propose that there are two simultaneous processes involved for the households undertaking commuting strategies: First, households use their trade skills to adapt to the newly forming and evolving Aspur block development town, using their endowments and capitalizing on opportunities presented to them. Second, there are temporal-spatial characteristics pertaining to this commuting movement that may be generalized to other contexts (See Narain and Nischal 2007).

5.3.2 OBC Groups: Socio-Cultural and Political Attributes

Below I will argue the key reasons why OBC caste households are more likely to commute to market towns than others. OBCs are administrative categories of social groups that were socially and economically backward in the time of pre-colonial and colonial India. OBCs are producing classes “either in agriculture or secondary manufacture of household handcraft production or guild of goods that were of use for the ruling classes”¹⁵⁷ (Sreeramulu and Dattatreya Mohite 2013, 13). Many of the OBC caste groups are culturally different from tribal households. These differences may include language, physical appearance, occupations and women’s roles. For instance, tribal households demand a bride price from the groom’s household because the loss of a daughter is considered a huge economic loss for the household. In contrast, Caste-Hindu households give a dowry to the groom’s household (R . Mohanty and Biswal 2007, 58–59).

According to the 55th round NSS EUS Survey, it appears that that the OBCs, along with SCs and STs, do not consume as much, on average, nationally, when compared or relative to Upper-Caste Hindus (UCH) but OBCs consume marginally less on average when data for the in rural areas is examined. Compared to UCH, OBC households have the lowest school dropout rate, at 2.3 times lower (M. Mohanty 2006).

¹⁵⁷ Within the caste hierarchy, they are placed above the SC or untouchables and below the three reborn high castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas), or general category as they are called in the idiom of the reservations.

OBCs are usually small, marginal landowners with significant political clout in the village communities, but compared to UCH, they own significantly smaller landholdings (M. Mohanty 2006, 3786). Nevertheless, some of the OBC groups are seen as gathering political clout since the early 1990s¹⁵⁸. Typically, there is a hierarchy between them but with the advent of market-towns and industrial jobs; some households that are traditionally backward castes under OBCs have achieved higher social status. In other words, due to the household endowments available to some of the OBC castes, they are more likely to participate in non-farm, skill-based jobs than others. Jones (2008) noted that some caste-based groups have more of a tendency to remain in the profession than others, especially the castes that are relatively more successful. In Chandrapur village, where Jones (ibid.) conducted research in 1970-71 and then 2001-02, the artisan castes of “*Darzis*” (tailors) and *Panchals* (traders) tended to stay in the same profession (Jones 2008).

There are symbolic differences between the OBC castes that often manifest in their migration trajectory or their choice of non-farm occupation. I discuss this starting in household stories 5.4 onwards. There are many different backward and general castes with unequal control over assets, largely as a consequence of the post-colonial experience. For instance, among the OBC, certain caste groups of *Malis*, *Gujjars* and *Meghwals* are known to have more political power¹⁵⁹ in terms of election wins during the last decade or so, but SC *Shudras* have not been able to attain any (Jaffrelot 2000, 100). Sharma (1996) notes that the religious temples in Mohi village, Udaipur district are separated among Caste-Hindu households, also a representation of political power between higher castes and OBCs (C. Sharma 1996, 24). Despite their obvious backwardness in the Caste-Hindu setup, some of the households occupy “a dominant

¹⁵⁸ Jaffrelot (2000) notes that OBCs in village communities began to gain political clout in the wake of the landmark Mandal Commission Report in 1990 released by the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) led coalition. From this point on, there was a clear division in North-India: populous states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan with lower/backward castes, now including SCs, STs and OBC.s were more likely to vote for an OBC MLA than a higher caste politician. However, OBC political representation in Rajasthan is weak, with few OBC MLAs found in the State Assembly (Jaffrelot 2000).

¹⁵⁹ In the latest assembly and municipal elections in February 2015, in Udaipur district, a Meghwal man, a village elite, won the seat. He was given the party ticket by Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), one of two of the major political parties prominent in the South Rajasthan region, the other being the Congress party (Times News Network 2015).

position in the economic and political systems of the village-life” (Yadav 2002, 4495; Srinivas 1977). This also indicates that caste as a system of social and economic hierarchy has gone through an overhaul¹⁶⁰, indicative of the changes occurring at the level of household endowments, thus influencing the rural-urban interface.

5.3.3 Commuting: Impact of Urbanization and *Mandis*

The nature of self-employed enterprises that commuting households undertake are petty, often consisting of trading shops and small-time mills. I am interested in studying the commuting patterns of artisans and skilled workers, bearing in mind that Rajasthan encompasses extreme diversity in the household’s resource base, activity levels and livelihood patterns (Sagar 2010, 210). According to 2012 NSS-EUS survey results, each enterprise in India employs 2.4 individuals on an average, and they are termed as “own account enterprise” within the informal economy lexicon in economic surveys. There is a severe absence of industry in the vicinity -- an official government report on factories from 2005-06 notes that there are only 2 large or medium factories existing in the district of Dungarpur (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Institute 2011). Therefore, in the case of tribal district of Dungarpur, I focus on commuting opportunities available in market-towns or *mandis*¹⁶¹. I am especially interested in mandis that are settlements, consisting of one day or seasonal trades of food grains, livestock and so on.

The level of urbanization in India has been slow (Deshingkar and Anderson 2004) The urban areas in India are defined as census towns, statutory towns and outgrowths. In the maps shown in Appendix A13 and Appendix A17, the towns in Dungarpur and Udaipur district are represented respectively. Note that Udaipur district

¹⁶⁰ I follow Gupta’s lead (2000) in analyzing the social groups that undertake commuting on the basis of their class positions rather than the Hindu hierarchical structure of jatis and varnas. Gupta’s model is that pure hierarchy in the caste system does not exist. In fact, the arbitrariness of the hierarchy is always a result of the perspective of certain individual castes, the higher castes, most likely viewing it as a tool for social and political control (Gupta 2000, 130).

¹⁶¹ There are different temporal and spatial features of *mandis*, dependent on the nature of the district and its inhabitants. For instance, *mandis* in Jhadol block of Udaipur district, in one project report on the goat-rearing and development project for tribal households found that *mandis* were “informal roadside markets” where there were no market yards separating one trade/business from the other, nor was there any infrastructure to transport animals during sales days (Bendapudi 2015).

has about 5 “major” towns; Dungarpur district has “other towns” -- the block development towns such as Aspur *mandi* categorized as “other towns”¹⁶². Recent reports suggest that the rate of tracking urbanization is inaccurate and policy-driven (N. Mishra 2015). A recent market research report from Mishra et al (2013) in remote and non-remote panchayats of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan State argues that the outputs from local markets are changing rapidly: land prices have risen; connectivity via roads, ICT and railways are urging rural laborers to undertake commuting activities. FMCG products are being marketed widely and successfully, there has been a rise in rural wage rates, influenced not merely by NREGA wages (N. Mishra, Shankar, and Mitra 2013; N. Mishra 2015).

Road and cell phone connectivity is beneficial for local traders who acquire information first-hand and not through the channel of the broker¹⁶³. In its current form the mandis is a coming together of commercial activities anchored by old-school trades such as that of wheat and other grocery items alongside new ICT goods such as mobile phones. Krishnamurthy (2013) describes “*mandis*” as a site of rapid change in the agrarian and consumer patterns¹⁶⁴ of the nearby village communities and the rural households; viewing as it expands, the introduction of cash crops in the market, the growing exchange value of wheat, new regulatory systems, growth of formal credit and

¹⁶² Census towns are defined as follows: a population of 5,000 people, at least 400 people per sq. kms and at least 75% of the population engaged in full-time non-farm activities. In fact, according to reports from the latest classification of a census town in 2012, census towns in the current scenario help distinguish “small farming communities from large market-town type settlements that are experiencing rapid and haphazard growth”(Jenkins and Anusha 2012).

¹⁶³ ICT has changed the way markets function, making information easily accessible but they are yet unviable to small farmers and artisans. There are many new avenues to improve the access to development for poor households using ICT, civil society is already experimenting with it especially for microfinance projects and health services however there exist many challenges in spreading awareness and making ICT infrastructure available to the poor, who will be able to benefit the most from being connected through mobile phones and computers (Cecchini and Scott 2003).

¹⁶⁴ In Krishnamurthy’s thorough account, she notes that the produce in the mandis used to be sold by middlemen and brokers in an earlier day that negotiated prices with companies in big cities, however in the present day, the commission agents from the firms themselves manage the trade (Krishnamurthy 2013). The diminishing presence of “mates” in the migration market and the lack of middlemen to negotiate process, appear to have a similar pattern but I do not have empirical examples to prove this finding, it can be seen at best “observational” in its interpretation.

continued availability and dependence on informal credit, among other things (Krishnamurthy 2013, 207–213).

5.3.4 Skills and Commuting: Adapting to the Market.

Skills are an essential component of the enterprise culture in small market towns. Skills in the employment market are classified on the basis of education. Galliani and Sanguinetti (2003), looking at the wage-market of Argentina, define unskilled workers as those with at most a high school degree, semi-skilled workers as those who have at least finished high school and skilled workers with tertiary degrees (Galiani and Sanguinetti 2003, 500). Although not as clearly defined in the self-employed and own-account market, I define semi-skilled workers with high school education and generationally-transmitted trade skills that bring respect and reputation to households that undertake it as semi-skilled. However, the grammar of “skills” in rural labor markets has changed over time. At an earlier time, skills in the non-farm sector were defined in terms of the activities undertaken in the manufacturing sector, or measured in terms of manual dexterity or technical know-how. In contemporary times, especially in the light of service and retail sectors, skills encompasses personal qualities including grooming, presentation, knowledge of English and basic high school education (Nambiar 2013, 60–61). For the commuters who are able to “adapt” to honing their soft skills along with improving their knowledge of the technical know-how, commuting appears to be a strong income-earning opportunity. It appears that return migrants, having migrated over their lifetime as long-distance migrants to metropolitan cities, are able to marry soft-skills with their individual trades through informal training and tacit learning. Soft skills are also helpful for rural households to acquire formal credit (Jones 2008, 515)¹⁶⁵.

Social status, respectable employment and maintaining patriarchal values strongly resonate with many Caste-Hindu households. While patriarchal values also dominate tribal societies, the arrangement is far less flexible in Caste-Hindu households. Caste- *Hindu* households do not distribute the income-earning responsibilities equally. Instead, women are relegated to more specific non-income earning roles including household tasks and reproduction (Unnithan-Kumar 2004). The case of women in upper

¹⁶⁵ Jones (2008) talks about the absence of “soft skills” in the context of formal credit institutions such as banks that are unable to lure the tribal households who go to moneylenders for loans, Moneylenders have better “soft skills” than bankers, due to aspects of approachability, easy availability and so on (Jones 2008).

caste households is even more extreme. I explain their household arrangement in the migrating household in the next chapter on semi-permanent migration.

Within the patriarchal setup, social expectations about finding a job are absolutely crucial to the men's decision to migrate. Among respectable professions, it appears that Caste-Hindu households see government jobs, skill-based professions, and non-farm occupations including self-employment as respectable commuting opportunities, not accessible to all but promoting a healthy alternative to pursuing an urban and a modern lifestyle. A fitting example is that of the Raighar-Chamars, an SC/OBC community in Mohi village, Udaipur district. Sharma (1996) compares the social mobility of Raighars with Mochis who are traditionally shoemakers. Raighars, traditionally agricultural communities, were able to influence their livelihood directions towards a self-employment trajectory. Some of them own welding shops, flour mills, and even have government jobs. They are able to encourage their children to obtain a higher education. Such has been the rise of the Raighars that they are seen as a threat from upper caste Hindus since they own comparable land as the upper-caste Rajputs (C. Sharma 1996).

5.3.5 Commuters, Formal Employment and Private Services

The commuter often caters to the needs of the social groups that combine socio-economic considerations with their development needs. Alkire (2004) relates people's socioeconomic needs, as more powerful motivations than their development needs, a discourse that is often not contextualized (Alkire 2004). Commuting as a migrating strategy arose from people's needs to nurture market-towns and urbanity over rurality and familiarity. Private services that are run by local entrepreneurs are more accessible to rural consumers and are valued for lacking discrimination against anyone, especially on matters of caste, class or gender. Ironically, government jobs, including those of teachers and nurses in public schools and clinics, are the most sought-after due to the secure salaries and benefits that they offer. Jones (2008) argues that public sector employment remains the privilege of the higher castes since these jobs ensure regular pay and lucrative benefits. In comparison, he notes that the SC households of *Jogis* and *Bhils* from Chandrapur village, Dungarpur are involved in private sector "intermittent" non-farm jobs that require them to migrate longer distances over irregular time periods (Jones 2008, 513). As an alternative to both these salaried job options, rural households across caste groups are likely to seek self-employment in smaller market towns, where the

competition and stratification of the job market may not be as intense as in a metropolitan city. Self-employment in market-towns is seen as the next best out-migration trajectory for households.

Commuting trajectories of some rural households are intertwined with the growth and presence of private health clinics, private schools¹⁶⁶ and colleges in census towns and *mandis* that give access especially during emergencies, to migrants and rural consumers¹⁶⁷. For example, a private but local 888 Health Emergency Services has been running in Aspur block development town since 2011, a service that many households use, especially in remote *panchayats*. In Dungarpur district, there are only two hospitals in the district that offer allopathic services (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Development Institute 2011) but multiple private clinics at every market corner, many owned by local quacks, some of them famously belonging to OBC communities called “*Bangali doctors*”. Such professionals who have acquired a reputation among the local communities are fast to use their good networks to use the market-towns or semi-urban spaces to develop their skills. It is therefore no surprise that the presence of private service providers makes commuting an attractive possibility for return migrants and skilled workers.

5.4 Illustrations: Commuting

In 5.2, I have highlighted the key endowments that help rural households undertake commuting strategies. To rearticulate them, rural households employ skill-based trades or take up skill-based employment that favors a commuting migrant path. These households may be from specific OBC communities, which provides them 1) access to welfare entitlements, 2) they are small and marginal farmers, 3) they are more likely to access higher education, and 4) their horizontal social networks, caste networks are robust. These are the basic endowments that undergo changes in the stories that I present below.

¹⁶⁶ Private schools in rural India are low-cost, unaided schools, run by “edupreneurs” who are legally not allowed to run education institutions on a for-profit basis, but these private schools are increasingly popular among rural households and yet 50 percent of these schools in India are unrecognized (Harma 2011; Z. James and Woodhead 2014).

¹⁶⁷ This process is also viewed as commodification of welfare services that were previously seen as “entitlements” (Salam 2015).

In 5.3, I provide specific contexts and examples that highlight the changes inducing the rural households to undertake commuting strategies. In 5.4, I follow this with illustrations of how individual households and their members are able to adapt to specific migration strategy. As in the previous chapter, there are two parts to the analysis of individual vignettes. In the first part, I present the manner in which the endowments interact with the migration strategy, or commuting in this case, and in the second part, I analyze how the household or the individual members conceive of the changes occurring at the commuting level. Both processes deal with two aspects of the data analysis: capturing life stages of the migration strategy, and highlighting the process endowment mapping that occurs as they undertake the strategy. Having analyzed this, I then indicate the possible outcomes of the migration strategy. The illustrations are a representation of the household's journey through different phases, where the process of endowment-mapping is responsible for their present migration strategy.

5.4.1 Illustration 1: Surabhi and Her Family

In this case study, I speak with a young lady from the *Suthar* (OBC) community about her family's ability to commute, move base and influence their livelihood pathways.

Surabhi is a gentle woman who becomes a neighbor and a friend during my stay in Aspur market town in 2012. She wears a traditional saree, a dress that is different from other caste-women, especially *Rajputs* or tribal women. Unlike tribal women who usually wear silver jewelry, she wears gold in her ears and neck. She is 23 years old and has been married for three years. She studied until the senior secondary school but had to drop out when her older brother decided to study for college. Somebody needed to be at home to look after the younger children with her mother. She is a presently stay-at-home woman. She tells me about her recent move to Aspur market where her husband and she live "temporarily" in a rented accommodation. This move occurred in order to be close to his newly-opened shop in town. Her husband's ancestral village is in *Nandli Pahada*, a village only 12 kilometers from where they live currently. I ask her how they were allowed to live in a separate home given that

Caste-Hindu households live in “joint family setups”. She explains that her father-in-law recently bought a plot of land near Aspur town on which they are building a home; they live in the rented accommodation until that house is ready. She confides to me about her husband’s unfortunate involvement in a murder case of a friend with whom he used to migrate regularly as a long-distance migrant in his teens. She tells me that he is innocent, and the matter is sub judice. Nevertheless, it appears that after the incident that soiled his youth and law records, his father sold some land to help his son set up a furniture shop in Aspur block development town, which he manages with his older brother. Surabhi has been married for three years, but she worries that she has been unable to bear a child during this time. She tells me that she is very religious; there are some deities that she constantly prays to in her free time. She also has a family healer to whom her mother-in-law often takes her.

She discloses that her husband’s shop has started picking up regular business from at least one small-scale construction company, which allows them to plan their future. He hires two to three seasonal laborers from nearby village who do the manual work in the shop, but he is involved in aspects related to the design and finishing of household products. His older brother manages customer relations. She sometimes looks at his accounts--she is better at numbers than he is--but she says that she cannot take part in the shop. Her husband talks to her about expanding the shop, of maybe outsourcing some work to other workshops, but he is constantly worried about the investment.

Surbhi’s *peeyar* or maternal household is far from where she lives now; they don’t belong to the same socio-economic strata as Surabhi’s husband’s family but she talks to them on the phone sometimes. She views her husband’s commuting as an optimal solution to their diminishing outcome from their land. Moreover, it appears that most men from her community are now entering into long-distance, non-farm employment which has nothing to do with her

caste legacy of “carpentry” which she believes is “risky business”. She doesn’t want her husband to be involved in it, especially because “*he is extremely naïve*” she confides to me. She tells me that their future is in her husband’s village in Nandli Ahada. At the moment, her father-in-law is healthy enough to look after their land and their *kheti* (agriculture) but there will be a time when that won’t be possible. She likes living in Aspur town, next to her sister-in-law, who is also a friend. Surabhi comments on how the *mandi* has itself changed, that there were not so many options before, but she notes that there is more life here than in her husband’s village. It is also calmer for her than living with her in-laws where everybody constantly asks her when she will give them a grandson.

Analysis: It is the interaction of Surabhi’s husband’s family’s assets that had a role in orchestrating a positive migration strategy for her household. The trade-off of land at the initial stage, the availability of it in order to sell, combined with their existing skill-sets resulted in them setting up a furniture shop. This story differs from any other petty entrepreneurial venture for one main reason--Surabhi’s family belongs to the *Suthar* community. The fact that *Suthars* are traditionally wood-carvers is widely known in the labor markets, and carrying that reputation into self-entrepreneurship gives them an edge over others. This implies that potential clients come to their store with business, understanding that their generationally passed-on skill-sets mark their expertise and specialization in the profession. There are aspects of intra-household changes that have occurred in Surabhi’s life, indicating her role as a woman, her education exchanged for her brother’s and her growth exchanged for her husband’s professional ambitions. These aspects of patrilineal caste groups are also indicated in other parts of the story; her family’s demands for a grandson, for instance. It appears that Surabhi’s family has seen positive changes coming about via the process of commuting. There have been changes in their land assets. Due to her husband’s involvement in the murder incident, they had to temporarily stave off their family land to invest in the shop but it appears that they are able to now buy more lucrative land closer to the main state highway that may have more value to them. Despite their more settled life in Aspur town, their family’s livelihood pathway positions them in a more “temporary” situation at the place of work and place of residence. Agriculture is not the only reason for their temporary existence; it

is also family responsibilities and “taking care of your own” a sentiment that is unique to Caste-Hindu households. The future of commuting, involving a temporary relocation, as in the case of Surbhi’s family to locations closer to the district town, gives a clue into the possible future of this migration strategy, one that helps families temporarily adjust to the demands of their non-farm occupation¹⁶⁸.

5.4.2 Illustration 2: Mamaji

In the story of Mamaji below, I found a unique trajectory that did not follow the traditional occupational skill-set, but instead branched into self-employment that was unique to his own individual circumstances.

I meet Mamaji in 2011 when he is a tea stall owner in the market town of Aspur. He is 67 years old. He serves tea to three offices: an NGO office, a tailor’s shop and an insurance company. He runs his small tea stall in the same commercial space as his nephew who owns a mechanic shop in the same compound. He belongs to the OBC community of *Parmars*. They were never encouraged to go to school but he somehow completed high school; his nephew, who was sent to school, dropped out, joined his father’s apprenticeship and gathered some capital to open his shop. They are on good terms with the office employees; they usually pay Mamaji at the end of the month while he keeps a tab on the cups of tea every day in his notebook. Mamaji has migrated widely as a long-distance migrant, until he settled down to owning the tea stall at a commuting distance. He lives alone in his village of Baroda, a fairly large, non-remote caste-village on the plains. Mamaji was married to his first wife at 16 but she passed away without giving him any children, but his second wife left him a few years ago. He relies on his nephew, who he considers a son, for running his small tea shop. – He seems satisfied with the opportunity to be in the market-town and to interact with different people. Nobody knows his real name but they all call him Mamaji (uncle) as his nephew does.

¹⁶⁸ Jones (2008) views livelihood diversification that extends from the village to the village market to the district town as a “spatial continuum” (Jones 2008)

Mamaji started as a skilled laborer at a young age while training in diamond cutting at a factory in Surat. Most others during his time, the early 1970s, did not have that privilege. During those times, the mates facilitated migratory labor movements, guaranteeing food, clothing, shelter and a lump-sum amount. He was paid Rs.500 (a huge amount at the time) to learn the diamond-cutting skill, and for the next six months he remained at the diamond-manufacturing unit in Gujarat before moving to Surat. His upward mobility from being an unskilled young boy to turning into a skilled wage labor paid economic dividends. After his diamond training, he was paid just Rs.1 for each diamond he managed to cut. It was a huge leap in his economic and social status and made him confident to continue this profession. He talks about the change in diamond technology that has taken place in the last few decades, while in his times it was a health risk with people commonly experiencing corneal infections resulting from diamond cutting and polishing.

After many years in Surat, Mamaji followed the diamond business to Mumbai and worked there for several years in the same diamond manufacturing unit. He claims that the occupation pays more but values the labor less as equally cheap labor is available easily. The key to his changing employment locations was linked to the marginal economic growth he had gained from the previous employment. He was one of the first laborers from his village that developed skills usable in urban employment and ever since, he has helped many young boys from his *samaj* or community, facilitate their move into skilled employment at destination.

When he first migrated, there was no information forthcoming on the probable opportunities at destination. He only survived because he knew good people and they helped him during a time of need. Now with mobile phones, things are different. *“You depend less on people”* and *“Everybody has the same information”*. People migrate more now and do so in groups, so the social networks between them are maintained. Earlier, it was relatively more open and help was offered to whoever

needed it. He tells me that it weren't for people's goodwill; he would have never been able to flourish in his own *chai ki dukaan* (tea stall) in the Aspur town. Although he has had the tea stall give years, he tried different things before that. He was a contractor for NREGA in a neighbouring panchayat in 2010, he opened a shop in Aspur market town prior to the tea stall, but at the end, the tea stall worked out. He believes that his nephew's support has helped immensely. And it also his sister's family that lives in the same panchayat that helped him maintain his *kheti* or farm in his village during his long-term migration, although his land is miniscule, only about three bigha.

Analysis: Mamaji's story may be interpreted as an attempt to combine "soft skills" with entrepreneurship, negotiating the most successful bargains through commuting and using the available resources at the end of a long career as a semi-permanent, semi-skilled migrant. Mamaji also recounts the many changes that occurred in his past as a migrant, followed by changes in endowment-mapping before settling down into owning a tea stall in Aspur block development town. Mamaji's forefathers were involved in manufacturing leather-curing and manufacturing plant dyes in their village but instead he chose a different trajectory, focusing solely on non-farm occupations, skilled in his younger days and now settled into his own self-employed venture. Note that Mamaji argues that the differences of social networks during long-distance migration--When knowing the right people mattered, while demonstrating a separate, more family-based network facilitating his own current commuting success, with his nephew's support in this case. While a household arrangement involves direction from both men's and women's roles to make out-migration possible, Mamaji's is a rare case because extended family members and mates have remained his immediate contacts. Even though Mamaji's decisions to migrate were influenced by economic factors, they appear to have manifested into good relationships with the people who facilitated the arrangements, starting from his first boss in Surat to his relationship with his clients where he currently sells tea. He also has political capital in his village so his land is cared for, and to be able to apply for the post of a NREGA supervisor. He equates mobile phones with "universal access of information" (Cecchini and Scott 2003, 9). It provides one viable explanation for why people migrate in caste groups in the present time.

5.4.3 Illustration 3: Neetabhabhi

The question of the future of skill-based professions for rural households is explored in the following story of Neetababhi.

I meet Neetabhabhi¹⁶⁹ in 2011 as she is silting some sand for building a new roof for her household. Her *peeyar* is from Nandli Sagora village of Aspur block. She lives in a two storey joint family household with her brother-in-law's family and her in-laws. They are *Nais*, the OBC caste of barbers/hairdressers. Neetabhabhi's husband has a small haircutting roadside salon in the Aspur market originally started by her father-in-law. *"It isn't a shop; it is an informal arrangement with a tin roof and open entrance. He only charges Rs.10 for a haircut."* She completed school up to the 7th standard and then dropped out. Her sister-in-law Juna is relatively better educated and attended through the first year of college. Juna's husband also owns a haircutting salon in Udaipur city but earlier they used to have a haircutting salon in Ratlam *"where we still have good contacts; my mother's uncles live there."* Juna tells me that her father was a government employee. She traveled to many big cities as a child with her family on vacation. Juna has two young children, both sons, but Neetabhabhi is unable to conceive, despite being married for the last five years.

When I meet Neetabhabhi in 2012, she and her husband have just returned from Indore. Her brother-in-law and Juna's husband has opened a new hair cutting saloon there. Juna and her husband are supervising the construction of a bigger *pucca* (cemented) home in the same compound but Neetabhabhi will continue to live in the same house with her husband and her in-laws. Neetabhabhi has taken up work at NREGA this year along with working on her *kheti*; she tells me sadly that her husband's shop is not getting a lot of business in the last few months. When I ask her if her husband can pursue other professions than haircutting, she says he doesn't want to. He doesn't

¹⁶⁹ Literally translated, the word Bhabhi means elder brother's wife but when I visited in the village, everyone including her neighbors call her Bhabhi. It was expected of me to follow suit.

know anything else that *“this is what he learned all his life.”* Plus, there are many perceived financial risks that they would rather not take. Neetabhabhi’s sister-in-law Mamta is visiting them for the summer with her children. -- This is a common practice in the village. Mamta has just returned from Ahmedabad where her husband lives and works over the last five years as a construction artisan/mason. She launches a discussion of why her husband’s long-distance migration is detrimental to her needs. She sees him only once a month. She can only go visit him in the city during her son’s summer vacations. Mamta enjoys living in the city *“Living in the village there are only one or two grocery stores but in the city there are so many choices. It can educate the most ignorant people.”* She views hairdressing as a potential profession for her children but she wants them to be educated, to acquire formal employment and live in big cities. That’s why she sends them to English-medium, private schools.

Analysis: This narrative describes the idea of “traditional skills” as a process that is in evolution within the same family. It also represents the role of social networks for improving the chances of capitalizing on entrepreneurial opportunities. There are two distinct migration trajectories among the hairdressing community. The first one is represented by Neetabhabhi and her extended family that are involved in the family profession of hairdressing at a commuting distance. The second, her sister-in-law’s husband, is a long-distance migrant, having left his family profession behind to migrate to Ahmedabad. The individual situation of each of these *Nai* families within the joint family setup defines their endowment–mapping process through 2011 and 2012. In 2011, Neetabhabhi’s situation was stable but in 2012, when her husband does not make any profit, she was forced to use income diversification strategies, including participating in NREGA. In 2012, she lost access to regular non-farm remittances, having to trade-off her household chores for cash income.

In contrast, Juna’s family went through a different endowment-mapping process due to the her husband’s skills and entrepreneurial abilities, moving to a big city to establish a shop that had led to them improving their initial endowments significantly, letting them to invest in a new home. As far as Mamta’s family’s situation is concerned, her husband’s social mobility appears to have improved since his stable path of masonry

in Ahmedabad. Notwithstanding this result, Mamta views her family profession as a “proxy”--one that she doesn’t encourage her children to follow, but something they can fall back on during crises¹⁷⁰. These three scenarios provide a pretty good picture of the differential social status of an artisan household housing different families. It is also worth commenting on women’s roles in these situations.

Each of the women occupies a different social and economic role depending upon their own initial situation--constantly in motion, dependent largely on their husband’s trajectory. As the women use their own agency to maneuver their individual situations, it appears that they have little freedom for decision-making within the household. Mamta appears to use her husband’s remittances to influence her children to become educated and be able to gain formal employment. Juna appears to have a more positive influence on her husband’s trajectory due to her earlier access to big cities and networks in Indore, whereas Mamta’s role is a more practical one involving financial participation in her household due to its deteriorating condition.

5.4.4 Illustration 4: Political Power and Renu

In the following account, I describe the story of a household that belongs to the general caste system, not the *Rajputs* or *Brahmins* that are the higher castes. Their commuting strategy is linked to maintaining the status quo.

I meet Renu in her home; she is in her late 30s. It is a small one bedroom *pucca* home in the village of Nandli Sagora in Aspur block, Dungarpur district. She moved to the village after marriage 10 years ago. Her husband is a government school teacher, employed through the state government but commutes every day to the school in one of the tribal villages in Simalwara district. I meet Renu and her husband during the course of the interview. Her father-in-law works as a

¹⁷⁰ Recent empirical data correlates self-employment with caste-based professions among OBC households, on the event of loss of employment. Mhaskar (2015) studies the trends of Nhavi community (or Nais, barbers as named in Rajasthan) in Mumbai whereas mill-workers who lost their jobs due to the shut-down of the factories, many of them went back to their professions as barbers, some of them furnishing their reputation with new courses and fancy salons to make themselves marketable. Therefore, he highlights that knowing traditional skills stood in good stead for many of the people from this community, but may not be true in other cases (Mhaskar 2015, 123–124).

security guard in the neighboring district of Banswara and commutes to their village once a week. Her mother-in-law lives with them full time and Renu has two sons, eight and nine years of age. Next door to her family live her husband's brother and their family.

Renu is a stay-at-home mother but she is responsible for maintaining their field. They own four bighas of land, which remains their primary source of food. She also maintains cattle; three oxen are shared between them and her husband's brother's family next door. She explains that she was taught from a young age how to work in the fields but her sons have no interest or knowledge of it. She sends them to private schools. Moreover, she explains the problem of the drying water source and lack of fodder in their village, which endangers their agricultural livelihood. While most other households in her *phala* belonging to higher castes have remittance-based income, Renu's is one of the few households who own cattle and regularly plough their fields. She has attended some of the *gram sabha* meetings too, but she says that she has not seen many women there. She only goes there to understand how the water-related decisions go. She doesn't speak much at them, and usually keeps her scarf over her head like most other women, but attending the meetings is important to her.

Renu starts to tell me about the costs that they save by living in the village and not in the city. She believes that the ambience for studying and learning in the cities is beneficial to her children but they are happier here. She doesn't mind that they have no interest in farming, but she believes they should study and push themselves into better employment paths. Their community does not have a stronghold of their community like the higher castes have in the village; they are mostly poor households but known for their "pious" values. However, the only thing that places them above others is her husband's education, which helped him get the job. Renu's husband describes his perspective on formal sector employment. He explains that there are no non-farm avenues in the village; agriculture no longer

serves as a secure livelihood source, even though households rarely sell their land.

Renu's husband has never lived in a city; he commuted to Banswara district from his village to pursue his education, after which he lived in Banswara during his teacher training course. His father always urged him toward higher education and later used his contacts in the school administration to put his name on the list for formal employment. He gives me the example of his older brother whose family lives next door who has been migrating for twenty years, first in Ahmedabad and then in Rajkot, but always returned with little success every few years. In the village there are only two schoolteachers. All other households have unskilled, under-educated or illiterate men working their way through self-employment. He wonders out loud why it is that people in this village dream to become police officers or doctors or scientists? He explains that the only possibility people have is entering into low-skilled enterprise or wage labor. He believes that children in his school don't do well because their parents don't understand the value of education.

He didn't grow up in a household where they had food to eat every day. His father was a seasonal laborer, but he struggled through this period so he could give his children some direction. He attributed his family's improving situation on him being able to find a public sector job. At least he will have a pension when he retires. He explains that private school teachers get paid eight to 10 times less than government teachers, and there is no job insurance, nor any benefits.

Analysis: Had Renu's family been born into a household where there was no encouragement to further education, would his household have been on this trajectory? In other words, relating the story to the framework: the structural factors that are embedded within the household influence their endowments such as education. Therefore it is "habitus" that helps the household wield political power that puts them in a position of control of how and what way they access institutions and challenge existing structures. The power of education after all is what you are able to do with it, and it appears from Renu's husband's testimony that he and his wife are determined to find a

more secure, professional path for their children, not just by putting them through school but by virtue of their political position, of him being a schoolteacher. – He can be a participant to their growth.

Vaishnavas were originally traders or religious people but in the present time they are transitioning into full-time non-farm occupations. However, it appears that they are not involved in ownership-related ventures in non-farm employment, preferring to do salaried employment whenever possible. Renu's role in the household is crucial too, because unlike the other women we have discussed, she applies her agricultural skills to her livelihood and household arrangement. She takes her role as an informed parent and citizen seriously by attending the *gram sabha* meetings. In other words, while Renu and her family's situation puts them in a better position since his having ensured formal employment, their future livelihood depends on how they are able to save and adapt to the changing market structure around them.

5.5 Conclusions

Commuting, as migration strategy appears to be a by-product of different life changes occurring between households. It cannot be characterized as a migration pathway that the households “choose” and that it leads to the expansion of their reserve capital or is cash-inducing to begin with, but instead it is a process that is a result of many alternative options not working out or failing to function. I am particularly referring to long-distance, semi-skilled migration, as in the case of Mamaji.

It appears that caste is a crucial component in the formation of this migration strategy since the occupational trajectory is influenced by the caste-based trade skills. From the testimony of Neetabhabhi, I analyze that only certain OBC households are able to convert their migration trajectories into profitable ventures, while others are diversifying into other non-farm labour. It also appears that trade skills as a sole resource do not result in a positive commuting strategy. They must be embellished, combined with another endowment or intersecting factor with a supportive environment, connected to a thriving market space and/or social networks for instance.

In terms of positive employment streams, it appears that formal employment opportunities continue to be perceived as the most respectable jobs. There is also a lack of vision that emphasizes skilled migration and competitive spirit among rural households in the surrounding villages to Aspur block development town. Semi-skilled

households are constantly looking to improve their social mobility by influencing their endowment mapping. Unlike many tribal households - the presence of at least middle-school graduated women in households ensures that the children can be directed towards formal schooling. Education and urban-based, non-farm occupations appear to capture the attention of many of the households. There are examples of households that are able to capitalize on their caste-based networks as in the case of Neetabhabhi's sister-in-law Juna, but in other cases, it appears that family-based networks are the most powerful while undertaking commuting as a migration strategy. This is a generation in transition, toying with the idea of commuting and non-farm employment, trying to adapt to new consumer needs and defining a positive direction for their household's initial situation, influencing their outcomes from the chosen migration pathway.

Chapter 6 – Semi-Permanent Migration & Household Endowments: An Analytical Commentary

6.1 Introduction

Semi-permanent (SP) migration can be defined as long-term, consistent migrant movements that are male-dominated and undertaken as self-employment in the informal labor markets. In this chapter, I analyze the stories of a common migrant stream undertaking semi-permanent migration from a village in Aspur block in Dungarpur district of Southern Rajasthan. I identify some common temporal-spatial dimensions of households within these migrant groups, characteristics that may be generalizable in other contexts. For instance, many of these migrant streams regularly undertake intra-state travel, migrating to the western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra. This migrant stream encompasses internal and international¹⁷¹ out-migration undertaken by household members. The infusion of remittances from SP migration can likely lead to the expansion of existing household assets. There are two types of semi-permanent migrant streams following specific types of occupation at destination: 1) First stream includes migrants involved in self-employment, which are more lucrative opportunities at destination, 2) Second migrant stream involves secure, skill-based contractual jobs in factories. I explore the first stream that is more commonly practiced among the households from Southern Rajasthan.

The households I review include “rural elites” in Aspur block in Dungarpur district who were previous land owners or feudal landlords and have now diversified full time into SP out-migration. However, they do not possess generationally-transmitted specialized skills as do the commuting households, nor are they under pressure to defend their available assets like the seasonal migrants. They are able to diversify into full-time non-farm occupations by virtue of their entrepreneurial skills and the support of their

¹⁷¹ Several migration experts have discussed the process and implications of transnational immigration. Transnational migration refers to a process where international migrants straddle more than one cultural environment through their life experiences as migrants. This includes their introduction to globalization, awareness of local happenings back home and participating in the new physical environment that contributes to their development as a transnational migrant (Ballard 2004; Levitt 2001; Levitt 1998; Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1995). I am specifically referring in this thesis to transnational migrants who recurrently return to their source communities.

lineage/clan networks at destination in order to advance their household goals. In this thesis I will highlight how some of these households, based on the influence of their household endowments, are able to undertake semi-permanent migration. Many of these households belong to high castes that provide them with the “navigational capacity” to access opportunities, information and terms that are able to positively affect their outcomes from out-migration. In essence, the initial condition of the households following semi-permanent migration is relatively better than others. It appears that when the household’s main motivation for out-migration is not need-based, they are more focused on improving their social status in the village communities. The remittances from the SP migration trajectories orchestrate some fundamental changes in the manner in which the households transform resources and skill-sets. For instance, children from SP migrant households attend *English-medium* private schools instead of *Hindi-medium* government schools in the rural market-towns. They also attend computer courses, integrating them with ICT skill-sets.

In interpreting the SP migration strategy, I use Fisher’s (1997) articulation of two forms of SP migrant pathways based on his analysis of a village in Rajasthan¹⁷²: 1) **the life-time migrants** who return several times to their village during their productive migrant life cycle, continue to maintain ties with their siblings and relatives in the village, their wife and children may be reside with them at destination for a few years but it is given that they will return to their village homes upon retirement; and 2) **dual residences** who are part-time residents in the rural household whose immediate family, wife and children reside in the village full-time but they migrants themselves to maintain both residences, migrating for long-period for employment (Fisher 1997). The vignettes of SP migration that I analyze explore the stories of life-time migrants as well as migrants with dual residents, the latter being the more common of the two pathways.

This chapter is structured as follows; section 6.2 identifies the initial findings from the empirical chapter, 6.3 focuses on the interplay of endowments and SP migration strategy, providing contextual features of the strategy. From section 6.4 onwards, I

¹⁷² His research is based on his fieldwork in the village of Hinganiya in Western Rajasthan, where he finds that there are at least seven types of migrating households, a typology that corresponds to people’s perception of migration in the village, but one that they do not follow purposefully (Fisher 2014). A strategy similar to the one I have employed in this thesis.

discuss the specific story vignettes, providing an accompanying analytical commentary. In 6.5, I present the final conclusions of the chapter.

6.2 Initial findings

It is the “culture of migration”¹⁷³ that helps to explain how some households/individuals are more apt to migrate than others, despite changes in the conditions of destination and improvement of conditions at home (Kandel and Massey 2002; Ali 2007). The purpose of the findings of this chapter is to unpack this notion of a “culture of migration” in the context of the SP migrants in rural Rajasthan, through an analysis of their household’s endowment structures. I analyze semi-permanent out-migration as a strategy based on narratives of high caste Rajput and Brahmin families interviewed in the mixed-caste village of *Nandli Sagora* in Aspur block. *Nandli Sagora* (NS) is a medium-sized village, with a small number of castes. The differences in wealth between castes are large but even the most “elite” classes own no more than an average 20-25 *bigha* of land. There are maybe two or three large landowners in the village. A majority of the homes from the central *phala* of this village belong to the “elite” classes. The central *phala* of NS consists of approximately 500 households; smaller in-roads of the village may lead to insignificant number of SC and ST homes¹⁷⁴. Most of the households made of concrete cement, “*pucca*” homes, belong to the village elites. They prevail as economically and politically powerful in the village *panchayat*. As such, a majority of the men from these “elites” work or have worked as SP migrants in Mumbai city where they owned tea shops/ tea stalls/ hawking booths for tea at specific street corners.

¹⁷³ This theory emerged from the study of Mexican immigration from the US, one that attempts to understand some of the most dangerous illegal migrant movements around the world. “The essence of the culture-of-migration argument is that non migrants observe migrants to whom they are socially connected and seek to emulate their migratory behavior” (Kandel and Massey 2002, 983).

¹⁷⁴ The village is divided into two main settlements – while the central *phala* is an organized settlement, the second, tribal-dominated *phala* is scattered with no habitation structure. The central *phala* are directly connected by road, about 2-3 kilometers on the interior of the state highway whereas the tribal-dominated *phala* called “*Naya Gaon*” is remote, different in the make of homes, demographics and linked to the main *phala* by a *kachcha* road, washed away every monsoon.

My interest in analyzing SP as a migration strategy emerged from studying these households, but I found similar examples of petty enterprises in Mumbai among other households belonging to the *Rajput* caste (mostly belonging to the same lineage) across the district, as well as in *Banswara* district. I later tracked some of these tea shops back to Mumbai to locate the spots described during interviews and to find either the migrant or a family/lineage member running them. In Figure 12 below, I have listed the migrant locations of the higher castes (including Rajputs and Brahmins) and the work sectors that they are involved in. The analysis has been done from a sample of 3,040 households from 11 panchayats in Aspur block, by no means a complete data set but one, which is a random sample. In the analysis shown in the table, note that the majority of higher caste men are involved in migrant work in Ahmedabad, Indore and Mumbai, the three metropolitan areas that are accessible by road. The most popular work sectors include hotel and restaurant services, self-employed work and transportation. Refer to Appendix A6 to see the distribution of the male migrants divided by work sector, showing the dominance of hotel and restaurants over construction work.

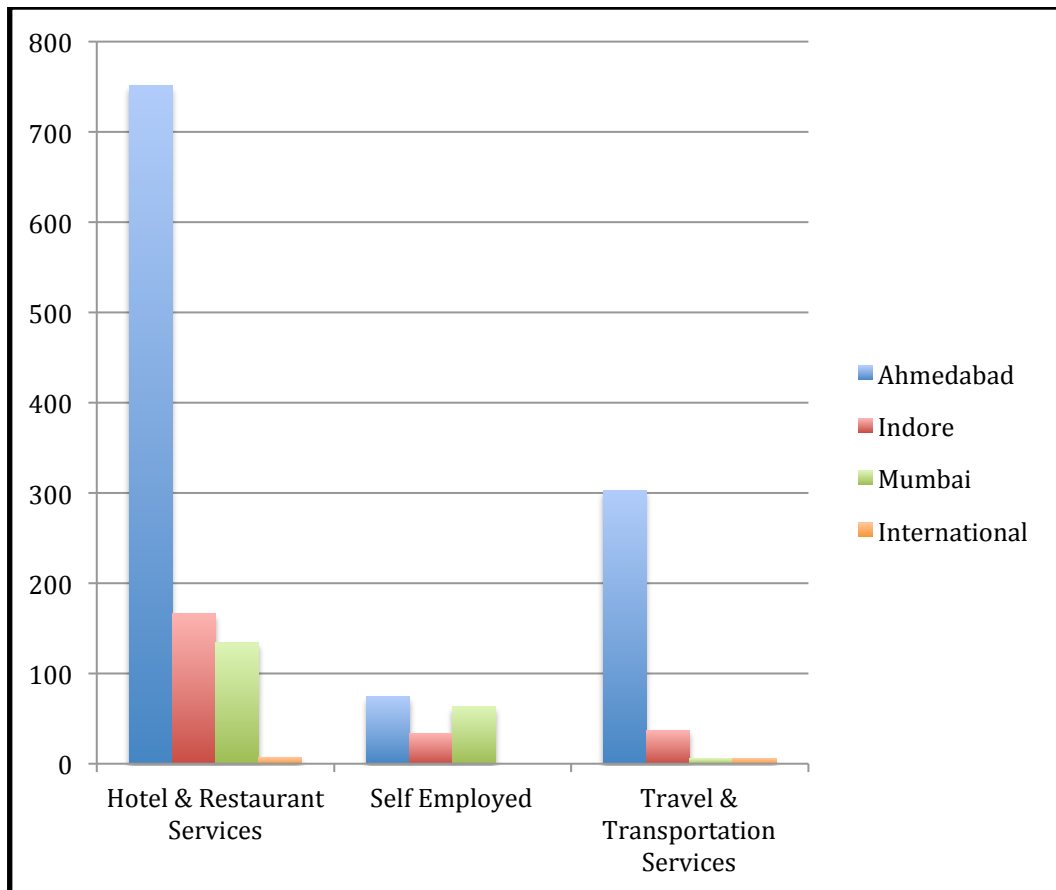


Figure 12 – Higher Caste Migrants, Migrant Locations & Work Sectors
(Data Source: Aajeevika Bureau, Analysis: Author)

Below, I indicate the dimensions of the household endowments for SP households from the village community of *Nandli Sagora*:

- 1) **Land:** Semi-permanent (SP) labour households are marginal land-owners, practice full-time agriculture, use mechanization tools for agriculture, and sometimes employ wage laborers. They own *pucca*, *semi-pucca* homes¹⁷⁵ in the village.
- 2) **Social networks:** Their immediate social networks consist of their lineage members, but they may also include caste-groups or other Brahmin groups. Rural-urban links are powerful but so are SP households' urban-rural networks and "giving back" at home is critical to the household type.

¹⁷⁵ *Semi-pucca* homes may be a single-storey home with wooden frames and thin walls, sometimes made of cow-dung, and may have dirt floors. Planning Commission reports or other government documents do not specify the specific amount of material used in a standard "*semi-pucca home*". *Semi-pucca* may not be an all-weather home but its appearance is more appealing than a tribal, *kachcha* home.

- 3) **Education:** It is common for SP migrants to have at least a high school education; but skill wise they are focused on advancing their goals of self-employment in the informal markets.
- 4) **Political capital:** Previously feudal lords, they continue to control political power in village communities but at destination. While some lineage groups have informal unions, they have little or no bargaining capacity. They are not eligible for any reservation benefits.

Based on the above dimensions of the household endowments, I will explore the out-migration trajectories of semi-permanent migration. I analyze six vignettes from the field, reflecting on their analysis. The main purpose is to analyze and describe the development of the household endowments of SP migrants in their village communities and to understand how they were able to use their endowments to their advantage. I will demonstrate through these stories how each of the households is able to transform their outcomes. In Table 7, I list the stories of specific SP migrant households that I have interviewed over a period of two years.

Table 7 – Migrant Stories on Semi-Permanent Migration

Participants	Migrant Location	Type of Work
Thari	Rajkot	Salaried cook, self-employed
Bunnu and Rethi	Mumbai	Tea stall owner, self-employed
Ramesh	Ahmedabad	Return migrant, self-employed
Manjubai	Ahmedabad	Left-behind lady, husband works in Ahmedabad
Mohan	Mumbai	Return migrant, previous tea shop owner
Tabassum	Dubai	IT professional

In the above stories, there are a number of similar and different aspects that affect the trajectory. The common feature in each vignette is the description of the life stages during the process of SP migration and the endowment-mapping process. In the story of Thari, it appears that her husband and her sons are both SP migrants, working in the informal market of a smaller city in Gujarat. In the story of Ramesh and Mohan I track

the endowment patterns of their households. At the time of the story, they were unemployed and not doing their usual SP migration to Mumbai. In the story of Bunnu, he has returned to the village in between his migrant cycles to look after his family's *kharif* crop. Tabassum describes her journey as a transnational migrant who overlooks the changes occurring in her family and comparing it with her relatives. Manjubai represents the voice of a Caste-Hindu woman who is left-behind and who is able to improve her access to her husband through the mobile phone.

6.3 Interface of Seasonal Migration with Rural Households

Semi-permanent migration diverges from seasonal migration and commuting in that the former is a result of income diversification among households whereas the latter is a result of the dynamics between semi-skilled¹⁷⁶, entrepreneurially-invested workers and their local environment. There are temporal and spatial differences between the two kinds of migration, but it is the interaction of the endowments during SP migration that all but guarantees positive outcomes from each of the strategies. These endowments are intertwined with contextual factors, macro-level changes, and institutional norms. I will systematically incorporate these factors, tying together the main migrant stream of SP migrants with existing conditions. Semi-permanent migration at initiation presents more costs and risks than the other two migration strategies, but is one that ensures that the remittances from just one or two trips lead to a sizable income. There are distinguishing personality traits that differentiate entrepreneurs (even if they may be petty) from salaried-individuals and wage-laborers, including a high risk-taking propensity, individual responsibility and effort (Beugelsdijk and Noorderhaven 2005). While this finding is significant, there are socio-cultural characteristics among the self-employed men from southern Rajasthan that result in a successful semi-permanent migrating move or moves. In the following sections, I will systematically outline the factors that propel semi-permanent movements in the region.

6.3.1 Socio-Cultural Characteristics of Semi-Permanent Migrants

For the purpose of this thesis, I have selected three caste groups that are more likely to undertake semi-permanent migration strategies from the region of Southern

¹⁷⁶ I define semi-skilled as traditionally trained in a craft but may not necessarily imply highly educated or professionally trained.

Rajasthan. Of the Caste-Hindu households, the two main higher castes that dominate the Southern Rajasthan region are Rajputs and Brahmins.

A brief historical background on Rajput households is needed to understand how their SP migration patterns have been sustained over the years. Rajputs are traditionally warring clans, having remained rulers or protectors of regions of Rajasthan through pre-colonial and colonial period¹⁷⁷. Unnithan-Kumar (1997) quotes Ziegler's (1978) work that identifies two key features of Rajput identity: brotherhood and marriage (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 48–64). Brotherhood or *bhaibamdh* is a unit of patrilineal descent represented by the clan (*kul*) and branch (*sakha*). These branches are spread across Rajasthan, including in *Mewar* region (where Udaipur district lies) and *Vagad* region (that includes Dungarpur district). Even today, the Rajput household functions on the principles of maintaining honor and prestige, and their SP migration outcomes reflect these values sharply. Fisher (1997) notes that there is no sense of caste solidarity among the Rajputs, and that the emphasis is more on extended families and lineages (Fisher 1997, 78). While Rajputs are not traditionally cultivating communities that are dependent on their kinship relationships, they have acquired large landholdings during independent India. Women in the Rajput lineage are instrumental for their "*transactional value*" between patrilineal clans during marriage alliances, to advance their economic and social interests through village exogamy¹⁷⁸. It is within this framework that practices such as *sati*¹⁷⁹ and female infanticide continue to be perpetuated in present day Rajasthan. However while tribal communities are mostly egalitarian, the women's status in Rajput caste has been decidedly inferior.

Brahmins are the highest castes in the Hindu *Varna* systems. They are formally religious priests but rest on the support of the powerful Rajputs in mixed-caste village communities. Brahmins are perceived as morally superior, and their strongest endowment lies in their skills of religious knowledge and access to education. In the

¹⁷⁷ Lyall (1907) in Unnithan-Kumar (1997) explains that kin relationships between powerful Rajputs were adversarial during the Mughal rule as it was governed by the desire to acquire more land holdings in order to maintain status and prestige (M. Unnithan-Kumar 1997, 48–64). Despite that, there are some lineages that still function on brotherhood terms, laying emphasis on group pride over individual ties.

¹⁷⁸ This is a common system where women belonging to a common lineage or caste often move from their natal village to the village where they are "arranged" to be married, thus forming an alliance between families.

¹⁷⁹ It is an age-old custom where widows immolate themselves in their husband's pyre.

background of out-migration, they follow the migration trajectories of the Rajputs. For instance, many of the households in the main/central *phala* of the village Nandli Sagora undertake self-employment in Mumbai and Ahmedabad. At present, there is a functional relationship between the Brahmins and the Rajput lineages. Each follows their customs and promotes their lineage prosperity through migration. In fact, a common anecdotal narration (a Brahman woman narrated it to me) on the formation of the village Nandli Sagora is that there was a village dispute during the late 19th century between the ST Minas and the Rajputs about where to set the boundary, considering those parts of the village only contained tribal households. The Rajputs won their bid to demarcate boundaries of the main *phala*; allocating land to construct their *mataji* (goddesses) temples¹⁸⁰ at the village *chaurahas* (crossroads) and they invited a first Brahmin household to hold the religious ceremonies in this village. At least 50 households belonging to the Brahmins in the Nandli Sagora village now live in the main *phala*. At the moment, the total number of Rajputs is about 200-250 families from different lineages, several large families segregated into different households across the area of the village.

In addition to Rajputs and Brahmins, there are other rural “elites” such as Bohra Muslim¹⁸¹ households, a rich but relatively small, close-knit community of entrepreneurs living in pockets across the region of Southern Rajasthan including Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara districts. They undertake international migration to the Gulf countries as self-employed or wage laborers in the informal markets, leading to many different forms of asset accumulation in their village communities where they return permanently. They have their own religious networks that facilitate the urban-rural networks, including the exchange of information, donation and promotion of religious activities.

6.3.2 Household Arrangements and Semi-Permanent Migration

Semi-permanent migration involves many productive, youthful years spent away from home for employment, six months at a time. There are social and economic

¹⁸⁰ Fisher (1997) quotes Carstairs (1957) anthropological account of Rajputs in Udaipur district, who notes that their “drinking, meat-eating habits and use of prostitutes are at odds with their religious values” especially noted among the elites (Fisher 1997, 55–56) – this account is important because it allows the reader an understanding of the Rajput lifestyle. Alcohol and meat-eating, both supposedly anti-Hindu activities are common among Rajput households. I will highlight this through the empirical evidence here.

¹⁸¹ It is a sect of the Shias in the Islamic religion.

ramifications on family life but this livelihood pathway is considered to be the most effective for the immediate and long-term improvement of the household condition. In an earlier chapter (5), I argued that the household configuration of “*Caste-Hindu*” households necessitates that women’s roles are strictly relegated to non-income earning roles, with household and reproductive responsibilities being considered the main focus of women’s work in a patrilineal society. This is also true among high-caste Rajput households in Southern Rajasthan. For instance, during fieldwork in 2012, I found out about a recent ban imposed on Rajput women prohibiting their participation in NREGA works¹⁸² or using a mobile phone outside their homes. This ban was enforced by the Rajput elders across the lineage groups in 54 villages of Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara districts because “*the women were seen as getting “frisky” due to their new-found consumerism.*” This ban also empowered other members of the different Rajput lineage groups to bring the “wrongdoing” women to task, announcing prize money of Rs. 5,000 for doing so.

Embracing the rural connectivity of a lineage or a descent group entails moral and instrumental elements within it—meaning that there are implications for the members that form a part of the lineage (Gugler 2002, 23)¹⁸³. The incident regarding women being prohibited from working in NREGA groups or using cell phones outside the home provides another dimension to Sivaramakrishnan and Gidwani’s hypothesis of “rural cosmopolitanism,” in which the dalit and tribals use consumerism through migration to escape their “repressive” caste identities and adopt more urbane, cosmopolitan role models (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003b). It may be, though, that the impact of migration is only skin deep when it comes to high-caste SP households

¹⁸² NREGS is not popular among higher-caste households due to their position of affluence due to SP migration pathways. There is evidence that although higher-caste households made job-cards, not many of them made themselves present at work on many work-sites (Singh, Joshi, and Joshi, K.N. 2012). There is also evidence that the higher wages since the inception of NREGS has led to policy-capture by the affluent (Jha et al. 2014). That being said, in my experience, a lot of older, destitute, higher caste women (including Rajputs) were present at NREGA work sites in villages of Dungarpur, a ban of this kind would impact their household situation negatively.

¹⁸³ Moral and instrumental elements imply protecting the community customs and values; this can include patriarchal norms that define women’s behavior, as in the example of the ban on Rajput women. It also implies forming close relationships with members in the lineage, helping underprivileged members of the lineage group during cash-deficits, as an instance.

because they attempt to control the impact of cosmopolitanism and modernization and to embargo their traditional structures and value-systems, a wall that is fixed in time and space¹⁸⁴.

The role of women in maintaining land resources is significant to the SP migration. In fact, Gulati (1987) provides examples of the all-encompassing participation of women in Kerala for their men's long-term migration to Gulf countries. From using her dowry money to auctioning off jewelry, allowing men to gather capital to migrate. Women are continuously burdened with responsibilities that expand over her lifetime (Gulati 1987). Even as the responsibilities increase, awareness and access grows among women who are left-behind for long period of time. However, De Haas and Van Rooij (2010) caution not to view this new awareness as emancipation. Left-behind women are constantly insecure about maintaining ties with their migrating husband, especially if he migrates to the city for longer periods of time. Mobile phone technology plays a significant role to empower women with daily information on their husbands. Due to village exogamy and availability of cell phones that are at the disposal of women, news of their kin in their natal village is easily accessible to them. Tenhunen (2008) argues that ICT improves kinship relationships due to women's access to their relatives, expanding and maintaining ties between villages and lineages (Tenhunen 2008, 523–524)¹⁸⁵.

6.3.3 Semi-Permanent Migration and Informal Markets

Informal labor markets are a dynamic place for circulating wage labor, facilitated by *nakas* and personal relationships with owners/contractors. There is a distinct stratification that exists within them, aided by these networks. The existing stratification in the informal labor economy poses many opportunities and challenges that migrants in metropolitan cities tackle on arrival and on a daily basis. In the city of Mumbai, the SP migrants self-employed as street vendors are forced to pay a bribe in cash and kind to the all the state functionaries (police, traffic police, BMC officials) in order to continue an illegal arrangement of hawking in public spaces (Anjaria 2011).

¹⁸⁴ Ali (2007) quotes Xiang's (2001) study on highly skilled IT professionals from Southern India in Australia whose families demand a higher dowry from prospective bride's families based on their status as migrants (Ali 2007, 40).

¹⁸⁵ This is especially true among Rajputs where territorially dispersed marriage alliances are preferred in order to expand economic positions across regions, providing employment opportunities for the groom's family (Fisher 1997, 74).

The street vending space is stratified among different social groups. Bhowmik's (2001) study on the informal street vendors in Mumbai city finds that 51 percent of street vendors are of OBC castes whereas 40 percent belong to higher castes (Bhowmik 2001)¹⁸⁶. Mhaskar (2015) finds that despite the apparent openness of the informal sector, small business and enterprise excludes the SC dalits in the city of Mumbai (Mhaskar 2015, 127)¹⁸⁷. Despite and because of this apparent stratification, self-employment in metropolitan cities encourages young, unemployed members of specific clan/caste groups to join their migrant family members in vending spaces. It gives them the "navigational capacity" to aspire (Appadurai 2004). Latest data on the participation of men and women in self-employment in big cities show a significant rise in the city of Ahmedabad in 2011-12 compared to 2004-05 (See Appendix A3 and A5). In my empirical study, I found only male hawkers, with women clearly defined as accompaniments or left-behind members. Bhatt (1989) states that the trade-off between the growth of industry and simultaneous informal expansion of street spaces in Ahmedabad city has made the position of the female street vendors especially vulnerable (Bhatt 1989).

To sum up, semi-permanent migrants as illegal hawkers face questions of urban public space, structural and institutional problems in the informal market space that arises from lack of legitimacy. They tackle these problems to defend their livelihood that is based on an illegal practice by negotiating different resources, including internal networks, financial resources and social support. There are many trade-offs between the resources that households undertake in order to maintain their "spot" in the city, which

¹⁸⁶ In this paper, Bhowmik (2001) also explains that the laws for hawking are the same in Ahmedabad and Mumbai, since the municipal councils (BMC in Mumbai) in both cities prevail under the Bombay Provincial Corporation Act 1950. The law on hawking in both cities demands that the street vendor procure a license from the municipal commissioner in order to hawk their wares in a public place, failing which their hawking material can be removed without notice (Bhowmik 2001). It is for this reason that hawkers regularly pay bribes to the police and the BMC to ensure their livelihoods (Saha 2011).

¹⁸⁷ In another example of closed employment scenarios in well-paying jobs, Barnes (2015) highlights the works of Holmstrom (1976) who grounded his work on factory workers in engineering factories in Bangalore, where the "workers formed a 'citadel' of relative economic privilege" such that within the citadel they fought to protect their wages and statuses, while trying to limit the entry of others from the outside (Barnes 2015, 56).

involves circulating young members of the lineage as the older ones return home permanently.

6.3.4 Semi-Permanent Migration: Urban-Rural Outcomes

Specific factors have facilitated long-distance, semi-permanent movements from underdeveloped regions. SP migration patterns may be attributed in part to the expansion of transport infrastructures, especially the presence of private service providers¹⁸⁸ for regular trips to the cities¹⁸⁹. Urban-rural connections in SP migration movements necessitates that the migrants on their return are expected to bring gifts-goods and/or cash when they visit. They also might sponsor the education and training of relative. The time of their return every year is also tied with their agricultural seasons or festival seasons, depending upon their household situation. These gestures appease the migrant's sense of alienation and confirm their sense of obligation to their family and at times, community (Gugler et al. 2006). The manifestation of long-term out-migration is the demonstration of social class within castes (Epstein 2007), and it also reflects increasing inequalities in rural communities (Waddington 2003). Positive migrant streams reinforce inequalities of opportunities in their village communities, sometimes alienating their own kin and most times, purposefully using their socio-political power to alienate the poor tribals and lower classes in the villages. While this rings true in mixed-caste communities of Aspur block in Dungarpur district, remittances from semi-permanent migration often reflect an exercise in projecting ubiquitous consumerism in the rural villages, such as building bigger homes (Ballard 2004).

Osella and Gardner warn us that accumulation by semi-permanent migrants must not be viewed as symbols of a new "social" order but merely as a beginning of economic and social transformation that continues to stand on old values and customs (Osella and Gardner 2004). For instance, an elite household in which every male member owns a bike may still yet indulge in sex-selection or demand a hefty dowry during marriages. Despite the apparent paradox, migrant remittances are seen as the best possible pathway for upward mobility, providing households the ability to buy more consumer goods that

¹⁸⁸ Here again, the presence of commuting households operating private bus service operators in market-towns plays an important role for SP migrants. OBC households or return Rajput migrants facilitate their movements back and forth to the big city.

¹⁸⁹ Refer to Appendix A9

help them follow a much-admired lifestyle. The duality of semi-permanent life is more accepted in communities where it is frequently practiced. In Mexico, village celebrations are more in tune with the cycle of SP migrant and their return patterns (Kandel and Massey 2002). In Nandli Sagora village, the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi¹⁹⁰, unknown to the community in the pre-migration era, is celebrated with much gusto, encouraged by the migrant's experience of the festival in big cities such as Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Summing up, semi-permanent migration results in household outcomes that reflect changes in individual and community outcomes along the way.

6.4 Illustrations: Semi-Permanent Migration

In 6.2, I explained the initial findings in the empirical study for semi-permanent migrants. Starting at 6.3 I discussed some fundamental aspects of semi-permanent migration as they interact with different household endowments, including sociocultural characteristics of the groups, household arrangements during out-migration, informal markets that impact endowments and possible outcomes from the movement. In this final section, I demonstrate each of these aspects through illustrations, using story vignettes to explore household situations during SP out-migration through different life stages.

The key endowments of rural households involved in semi-permanent migration are embedded in their political power, social networks¹⁹¹ and entrepreneurial abilities. Political power is demonstrated in their membership of caste/lineage institutions that give them institutional support for their needs, influenced partly by the age-old structure of Rajput princely regime that positions them better than other social groups in the region to acquire political power. Social networks pervade their patronage systems at destination and the process of accepting new migrants from the lineage/family circle includes providing them with training and passing on everyday skills at destination. Patronage is also reflected at home in both voters and their political leaders before election season in rural Rajasthan exchange “gifts”, not seen as bribes, but as providing a

¹⁹⁰ It is a 10-day celebration of Ganesh, the elephant-headed God that involves regular prayers during the period and practicing fasts. The idol of the God is mounted in the village temple and at the end of 10 days it is immersed in any body of water.

¹⁹¹ In fact, social networks characterized by caste may contribute to exclusion of certain types of people from positive migration streams (Start and Deshingkar 2003; Waddington 2003).

legitimate expression of solidarity to the common causes in the villages (Krishna 2002b). Their entrepreneurial abilities are unique to this group, even in small-time, self-employed causes that are often referred to as a “*gene*” among Rajputs and Brahmins¹⁹². In addition, land ownership has always been higher among the higher caste households, enabling them to undertake better trade-offs during crisis.

In the migrant stories that follow, I give empirical examples of two types of SP migrant homes (using Fisher, 1997) to show the household’s initial condition in the village of Nandli Sagora. Each household’s arrangement during migration for SP migration is unique. I study the specific endowments that were able to considerably influence their household condition.

6.4.1 Illustration 1: Thari

In the following account, I summarize the story of Thari who is an old Rajput lady, living in a *pucca* home with her daughter, daughter-in-law and grandson. Three of the male household members are migrants in Gujarat. Their story is important to understanding the upper-caste mindset but their migration trajectory goes through many lifecycles.

Thari lives in the village of Nandli, in the central *phala*. I interviewed her on a summer day in July 2012. Their home is a one bedroom house that has a fan, some posters of gods and goddesses, as well as images of the eldest son and his wife from five years ago. Her husband is currently employed as a cook in a Rajput restaurant in Ahmedabad but since somebody else owns it, presently he is paid a salary for it. The youngest daughter Manisha is sixteen years old and studies at the public school. She was one of the brightest girls in her class. Manisha tells me that her father had worked for last ten years in Ahmedabad but after having been driven out of work from there, he finally took a salaried job as a cook.

Thari explains that she was working for NREGA as a manual laborer in the last two years, however this year her name has stopped

¹⁹² This is also evidence that qualifies this narrative as “culture of migration”; the respondents called it a “gene”. The theory explains this predisposition of families to migrate as a result of peer-pressure, social environment and support systems that facilitate these trends.

appearing on the lists. She was underpaid, about Rs.55 but she believed that it accounted to some income. She laments that the recent decree banning Rajput women from participating in NREGA is detrimental to her self-sufficiency. However she doesn't have any intent to fight for her rights with the NREGA site-manager where her name stopped appearing, nor does she want to break the ban and disrespect the Rajput elders. Thari's voice was loud and aware.

In contrast, interviews with Rajput women were often futile. Many of them had no information about their husband's migrant location, and the women were usually very reluctant to speak about their perspective on the migrant process. Here, 16-year old Manisha joined in the conversation boldly and expressed her eagerness to complete college. She has just passed her 10th Standard with good grades but junior college is about 35-40 kms away from her village. She expresses her anger towards the ban on Rajput women. A lack of a phone is detrimental to her safety during her college commute. She is determined to get her college education anyway.

Thari's sons have recently started a tea canteen but the older son is preparing for a government job as well. While they worked on somebody else's canteen earlier, three months ago they finally started their own canteen in Rajkot city, Gujarat. Thari's youngest son studied and passed his M.A. exams recently. He also has a B.Ed., a formal teacher training degree. His dream of finding a government job did not reap any results, so he started working in the tea canteen with his brother. Thari explains that in the absence of being able to enter skilled employment routes, they fall back on this strategy to keep paying their debts. While most other Rajput men are primary or secondary school dropouts, Thari believes in the virtue of education. She wants her daughter Manisha to study until they find her a match. She understands that Manisha does a lot of housework.

While studying she takes care of their cow, bringing it fodder and milking it every day. Manisha wants to study accounts (finances for women can be beneficial, she explains) but it is not offered in the

college in Salumbar where she has acquired admission. Permanently moving to another city was not an option. Timely transportation is a problem for these households and private transport jeeps and buses are very expensive. Thari discusses a common worry in her community, that the Rajput community questions households that educate their daughters and asks questions about morality. Her husband is also not in favor of Manisha studying further. In Thari's words, the society is excessively unfair towards girls and their families wanting to give them education. Currently the most stable source of income for the family comes from Thari's husband's income as a cook.

Analysis: Thari's narrative appears to speak at two levels: first--the result of her family's financial situation based on their vision; and second--the impact of the Rajput community on their decisions. It appears that despite the low motivation for education among the Rajput youth, Thari's upbringing focuses on continuing to study and to carve out a different and respectable pathway for her daughter and her sons. Their prioritizing education has clearly not had the desired effect for both her sons' migration pathways, as they continue to undertake small-time enterprise in Gujarat. The lack of Thari's husband's current success in the informal market, including the continued insecurity of losing jobs and resettling in different locations may be another trigger to their insistence on education as an important entitlement for their children. This story is also important for understanding a woman's perspective on the migration process. Thari's vision of educating her daughter, something that is not supported in her community, is an act of rebellion against received wisdom. This act of rebellion manifests positively on Manisha's openness to talking to an outsider like me that indicates a probable positive influence for her and the family she will marry into. An earlier analysis indicates this kind of entitlement has the navigational capacity to allow the individual freedom of choice and well-being (Sen 2004; Appadurai 2004). However, the freedom is within the confines of the home (Tenhunen 2008, 527) and existing institutions.

This story indicates the influence of left-behind women on household decision-making. Allowing a daughter to study when her own husband is absent is a brave act of empowerment on Thari's part. Note that there exist many challenges that the household is not prepared to face, including overcoming sudden loss of income from remittances, and Thari's loss of NREGA remittances, and one of which could dampen this kind of

bravura. However, despite open resentment towards the ban on ICT on women, one that was finally allowing some freedom and security of information, there is no open rebellion toward them. It is clear that the fight of the women in this patriarchal setting is not against authority; it is a fight for everyday livelihood and for pursuing their individual goals, not about rejecting authority but reforming it one step at a time.

6.4.2 Illustration 2: Manjubai

In the following illustration, I explain how ICT influences the women's relationship with their migrant men. I summarize Manjubai's story and its impact on their household condition.

Manjubai belongs to the Rajput caste in Nandli Sagora village. She owns one mobile phone shared in the family of four from 2009 onwards. The phone has been bought mainly to communicate with the migrant father who returns home every six months from Mumbai. Her son studies in the eighth standard at the government school and knows many of its functions. Like the other children in the village, he is often found playing songs loudly on it. The school-going boys often use Bluetooth to transfer the latest songs from each other's phones. The son goes to Mumbai to learn work at his father's tea-shop during his summer holidays of two months and aspires to be an urban resident, Manjubai explains. They own about six hectares of land and Manjubai tills the land daily, singlehandedly apart from finding and doing occasional work at NREGA. She does worry about the *neelgai* or the Indian antelope that often eats up her harvest. She ponders how helpful it would be if her husband had employment at home and helped her taking care of such nuisances. Last year, she worked for NREGA during the *kharif* harvest and lost her own *kharif* harvest in the bargain. She is forced to make these decisions herself as her husband is away. She bought most of her home "ration"¹⁹³ from the market that season.

¹⁹³ Everyday household necessities including kerosene for the stove, sugar, salt, flour and food grains, among other items.

Manjubai's husband calls her daily, and like other women in her village she is unable to sleep if she doesn't hear from him every day. She admits that she has no information on where her husband works in Mumbai, nor does he tell her about his expenses. Their communication is centered on their household issues. Their talk revolves around their children's education, exchange of news about family members in the village, the state of their farm, and very often her husband asks her about financial expenses at home, if they need any money or if there are any emergencies. Earlier when the husbands migrated, the only way to keep in touch was through the village public phone and they were often interrupted or kept a watch over by the shopkeepers.

The concept of privacy does not exist, so Manjubai feels much more at ease to talk to her husband because of the mobile phone. When asked about the mobile recharge and how much of her daily expenditure is taken up on it, she concedes that normally they spend around Rs.50 (90 cents approximately) for a week. However the expense goes up in case of a death or marriage in the family. The idea is to be connected at all times and sometimes when they run out of money on the phone, they just give missed calls to each other to stay connected.

Analysis: This narrative is topical because of the manner in which Manjubai relates the role of the mobile phone in her life as a left-behind woman. The family's possession of the phone at home indicates an improvement in their household situation, one that aids and encourages the SP migration pathway for her family, while helping her husband maintain the urban-rural links. As Manjubai acknowledges that the lack of manpower comes with difficult choices, including losing a *kharif* crop, she appreciates that the phone soothes her emotional state. As a left-behind woman who looks after all the decision-making at home, Manjubai is at ease because of the virtual presence of her husband through the mobile phone.

In a community where women are not even high-school educated, where the peer group does not promote education, a step towards adapting to new technology is a positive change in the family. Her son also learns it through practice, thus adapting to

changes in communication around the world. The aspect of the story relevant here is the promptness and privacy of the conversation due to a mobile phone, one that aids the family during times of a cash crisis. Manjubai refers to this when she speaks about the things that she and her husband talk about on the phone daily. Phones are called a form of “*social logistics*”--one that allows a multiplicity of contacts and leads to effective communication (Tenhunen 2008, 530–31). A negative impact of NREGA becomes evident in this example. When she explains the loss of her *kharif* crop, the presence of a wage labor scheme can prove to be detrimental to the agrarian lifecycle of some households without men at home or their inability to hire laborers. This kind of a power structure may lead to the creation of instability in the household and possibly, in the society where the men migrate on a semi-permanent basis.

6.4.3 Illustration 3: Ramesh

In the following illustration, I will describe the story of Ramesh, a Brahmin man in Nandli Sagora village who lives and takes care of his brothers’ property next door. He describes how his household situation intersects with his semi-permanent migration strategies.

Ramesh has three daughters and one son -- he is 45 years old. Ramesh first migrated to Bombay where his elder brother already owned a tea stall around 40 years ago in the 1970’s when Mumbai was in a growing city, menial jobs were tough and profits were not easy to get but they made it somehow. He is currently unemployed and looking to migrate soon. Ramesh’s son did not go further than a higher secondary education in the local government school. He bought him books and pestered the school headmaster to encourage their son to finish his schooling but the son migrated secretly to Ahmedabad and did not return to education since the age of 15. His son currently works as a construction contractor in the city. His sisters use his books now but the oldest daughter -- who studied until 10th standard has been discouraged from further study. “*What will she do with all that education - - she needs to learn the household chores instead. Once she is married in a good family, I want her in-laws to decide if she should study further*” he tells me.

When I visit them, he tells me that his oldest daughter's marriage had been unexpectedly cancelled that week. She had been promised a hand in marriage to a postman's son from their Brahmin community in a neighbouring village. The reason why the marriage was withdrawn last minute was because the Ramesh found out -- through the village networks about two days before the wedding -- that the groom's uncle had committed suicide. This made the groom's family socially tainted. They explain to me how if their oldest one married in a "tainted" household, their younger daughters who were in their early teens would not be able to be married. Ramesh had returned last year in-between his migrant cycle to make the match happen, he invested all his remittances to improve his home. He had painted his small house for the occasion and even installed a toilet for the wedding guests, for the first time -- the wedding was going to take place in their courtyard.

They are traditionally religious priests however none of them practice their role as priests in this family at the present moment. His father never traveled outside his village to earn money -- his primary job revolved around two principle tasks, undertaking religious ceremonies for his home and in the village as well as overlooking their farming activities. Of a family of five brothers, just one brother makes a living out of performing religious services right now. All others decided to migrate to cities and open self-employment avenues such as entrepreneurship as in the case of his oldest brother. Whether the Brahmin households are rich or poor, Ramesh outlines only two routes for them -- continue as religious priests or migrate as contractors or self-employed people. Their social status does not allow them to enter into casual wage-labor employment in the cities like other lower Caste-Hindu homes (he names Chamars for that kind of a work).

Moreover, Ramesh explains that they have strong social networks in Mumbai spread through the little temples across the suburbs where the religious priests help them in every way to find

food, shelter and sometimes even work in the city -- something that they rely heavily on.

His oldest brother's sons, Ramesh's nephews -- whose homes are next-door -- have not passed their 10th/senior secondary exams. They now own their own shops and a temporary home in Bombay, the city where they started their first tea stall 20 years ago. His nephews have expanded their homes in the village side-by-side. As I stare out of Ramesh's balcony, I see that one of the nephew's homes is two-story high with around 5 rooms at the top but these homes are usually empty with their old mother living there by herself. His nephew's families live in Bombay along with them and their children study in English-medium schools there. Each of them have two children each unlike their forefathers and return to the village sporadically in the year in order to accomplish religious tasks such as weddings or death ceremonies. Ramesh and some other members of their extended family take care of their home, cattle and fields for them when they are unemployed.

Analysis: Ramesh's family and extended family's story demonstrates an important outcome from semi-permanent migration: an improvement in social status, as evident in the story of his nephews. Semi-permanent migration is a by-product of a heritage of networks as religious priests in the village and in the migrating cities, however there is variation even within the same family in how functional these networks are. Improved social status seems to have manifested for Ramesh's nephews but the present condition of Ramesh's household is vulnerable, especially with the recent break-up of his daughter's marriage.

Maintenance of social status appears to be an important priority of SP migration pathways. The first hint lies in the manner in which Ramesh used his remittances to "urbanize" his home by installing a toilet for his daughter's now broken engagement, and the opulence of his nephew's home who can best be described as *life-stage* migrants, currently living away from the village but making their presence felt in the village, setting up their retirement home in their native village. There are some changes in the skill-sets of the Brahmins' across the extended family. For example, religious roles are traded off for ones with more profit potential-, that of self-employed businessmen in the city.

Nevertheless, there is no indication of them “eliminating” their caste-based skills. Despite the apparent homogeneity of their roles in the informal market in the cities, their identity in the village community is embedded in their religious role as priests. In other words, their social ties dictate that the trade-off of employment-based skills is temporary, as is their stay in the city. In addition, it appears that irrespective of the economic position of the household, their social status must be maintained to suit their position in their village communities. This is also symptomatic of their semi-permanent status in the villages where they are forced to maintain their highest social status of Brahmin priests in their home village, ones that “naturally” possess a better navigational capacity than others in the fold of other Caste-Hindu households. Put differently, the cumulative impact of the migration strategy is a result of their need to maintain their social status in the village.

6.4.4 Illustration 4: Mohan

In the following story, I present the story of Mohan who is a migrant in the city of Mumbai but has returned home in the last three years, having lost his hawking corner due to a family dispute. This story is illustrative of how SPs view return migration in the backdrop of farming and lineage networks.

Mohan is a 53 year old man who is a return SP migrant currently at home due to the loss of his tea shop in the city. I interview him in July 2012 in his home. During the interview, he describes his experience of having worked as a migrant in Bombay for fifteen years as an owner of tea shop. He and his younger brother have been back from desperate but unfruitful attempts at self-employment to Mumbai over the last two years. He has not been able to harvest wheat to gain a profit during the Rabi season, but this year they have not been able to hire labor due to lack of capital. Having been forced to return to the village, they are more in debt than ever.

His oldest brother owns a tractor, one of the three people who own a tractor in the village. The entire lineage consists of 50 families and it is very influential in the village. Most of them have drinking water taps installed in their homes and have at least 12 hour electricity per day. The older brother used to be a political representative of the

village, has never migrated and appears to be a very powerful personality.

Mohan tells me that when they bag a big tea contract in Bombay, they contact people in their own family network first and distribute the amount of work along with the profits. It's a convenient setup and they all seem to benefit from it. While describing his journey to the city as a migrant, he tells me that they carry no money or utensils, relying on a relative to give them food and shelter, thereafter they hope to make money at the destination. Many a times, the most common strategy is to work in a tea stall of a relative so that once the opportunity to own his own stall presents itself, he does not run out of resources. But the truth is that the uncertainty that surrounds their hawking situation proves to be exceptionally hard on the migrant. There is an overwhelming sense among the Mohan's lineage that they are strongly connected with each other.

During our conversation, Mohan refers to almost all homes around him that belong to his outer lineage circle and whose life histories he is extremely privy to. At this point when I meet Mohan and his family, what stands out is their acute sense of abandonment by their own community even though in the 15 years in Mumbai, he recounts that if it weren't for their social networks, the support that they got from *within* the group, – it would have been a failure. There were some very good years, he says with a smile. There is a sense of pride and envy during the conversation that becomes evident during his descriptions of their climb into the unorganized market in Mumbai.

Mohan tells me about the custom in his community of keeping two wives if the first wife is unable to conceive a child, but he strongly rejects it. When his wife was unable to conceive for several years, Mohan and his wife traveled to Ahmedabad to go through fertility tests and operations so that they could conceive without using in-vitro. Now they have an eight year old son. He sends his son to the government school because not only can he not afford private school fees, but also he thinks they are all goons.

He talks about the political climate in their village. While some other neighboring villages have had shootings between members of political parties, they say that such violence is not common and if it existed, it would be motivated by personal enmity rather than politics. Generally though, the Congress party candidates have a monopoly in this *panchayat* and the district. The party has not changed from a long time and there is never extreme violence that has erupted during elections. There have been instances of family feuds that often become public through political affiliations, especially a decade ago, but it is very rare that political parties induce family feuds.

They describe how differently the politics function in Mumbai as compared to the village, they are constantly being harassed by the local “identity” politicians who treat them as strangers and the only way to avoid harassment is to pay them a *hafta*¹⁹⁴. He mentions another important nexus between builders and politicians that play a major role in deciding which self-employed worker can hawk where. Yet another person who benefits greatly from this nexus is the contractor or the middleman at whose mercy the hawker is, to provide them a suitable place to hawk. Mohan believes that the role of a contractor in a city like Mumbai is much-coveted one, best-filled by a permanent migrant.

Analysis: Mohan’s semi-permanent migration strategy is connected to many different changes occurring during his life time as a migrant. Mohan attributes a *lack of political power* that has led to a collapse of their SP migration pathway. At a deeper level, he tracks his lack to political power to the *lack of influence* to sway the tide in his lineage dynamics that supports his and his brother’s movement. Mohan, like other members of his community, views the source of his influence and power what he should automatically be entitled to by virtue of birth. Privilege that caste groups such as Rajputs have access to is sought and often acquired through their social networks. This lack of influence may result from lack of political leadership (like Mohan’s older brother) or

¹⁹⁴ An informal tax paid in order to continue the illegal activity of hawking, without any police or political interference, to the mutual benefit of all.

economic power in his lineage that leads to perks such as informal employment spots or even leads into other lineage kin's tea shop in the city. The conditions of what led them to their current state are unknown but I attribute their current poor condition to a possible breakdown of their access to and position within their social network, the outcome of which is reflected in their current state of indebtedness, and agriculture, as the only remaining livelihood channel, appears insufficient.

Mohan reasons that the SP migration strategy appears to be a significant livelihood pathway for members of their group, despite its uneven trajectory. He reflects on his journey in and out of self-employment in Mumbai, and on the role of the social networks affecting his position stronger at destination and at home. In his story of his older brother, who is rich, and other lineage brothers who keep "second wives" to assure male offspring, he also positions himself and his family as the "victims" of circumstances and lineage politics. Being in the village has not reaped any results, but going to the city is equally challenging without the help of their social networks. The "habitus" that embeds them within the system appears to provoke severe results during their time of economic failure.

Mohan's story is a good example of slumps that occur within the lifetime trajectory of semi-permanent migrants, weakening their endowment mapping ability, making the household condition vulnerable to shocks. Despite that, the condition of the elite households appears to be better than that of a seasonal migrant, due to their exposure to the informal market in the city and their experience of having worked in it for many years, attributed to their natural "navigational capacity".

6.4.5 Illustration 5: Bunnu

In the following story, the migrants have returned home temporarily to look after their agricultural land.

In a *pucca* home of Rajputs, three brothers and their family live together as the men of the family all migrate to Mumbai where they own teashops. They have a cattle shed behind the house, something not commonly seen in a Rajput household. The men, Bunnu and Reti, are on a short return before the *kharif* harvest season, right before they plunge into a search for a new location for their tea shop in the city. Bunnu narrates their story. Their father has recently been diagnosed

with early case of Alzheimer's. He cannot handle the farm on his own, so they were needed to be back home. They have hired a good quality tractor this year. Next door to Bunnu and Reti's home lives their older brother Raman's family. Raman's family had migrated briefly to Bombay but after Raman lost his tea stall over a family feud, they returned to the village and now he works in the town of Rajkot in Gujarat in somebody else's restaurant. The difference in their physical capital is stark: Bunnu and Reti have a *pucca* home with bathrooms and fans in every room whereas older brother's home is semi-*pucca* home. Raman's children are the brightest in the village government school but because of the uncertainty about their father's job, his wife survives mainly on agricultural income.

Bunnu has been working at his tea stalls in Mumbai (at three different locations on an informal contract with a local builder) for the last ten years and he plans to continue to do so till his body will no longer allow him to do so. Thereafter he plans to retire to his rural life with his wife and children. He believes that there are two kinds of jobs available to them. The first kind of job is of the public or a government job that assures security, stable income and perks along with status in the community and the second is self-employment in the city. Private salaried jobs seem to symbolize the opposite where there is uncertainty, low income and possibly lower social status. Bunnu believes that there is no other life direction for people in this part of the world apart from migration because there is no security of constant employment and income in full-time farming.

Bunnu believes that agriculture has no future for them in the district but they care about keeping their land fertile. *"What else do we have that we can fall back on after we cannot migrate anymore?"* he asks me. He recounts that last year was the first time in five years when they had regular rainfall while this year it has not rained at all: they are worried about the fate of their corn harvest but they have hired a water tank privately this year. They have more than 12 acres of land in all (excluding the divisions between the four brothers) but the land's

lowering output has left them with no choice for them but to migrate. They claim that they make Rs. 2,000 per day/ \$36 per day between the two of them on a regular day at their tea shop in Mumbai--it is a substantial amount. He declares that the biggest capital investment they made in the last few years since they began migrating is converting their cow dung home into cement one. Their homes have five rooms and are fitted with electricity, therefore providing their children access to the outside world through a TV.

Bunnu finds that the biggest threat to their agrarian livelihoods is not the lack of water but the lack of control over the manner in which water is distributed in the village. He tells me that local corruption finds its way into every available water source in the village. For instance, they became aware of an elite-capture of the school hand pump, depriving school children of water. He asks that, *"We may install extra taps or water pumps, but how does that matter when there is no water in the tank?"* The truth about migrants in the village is, as Bunnu says that they can never be a part of the community decision making because they are simply never present. However if they do need to get work done, they do it privately, whether it is resolving health problems by going to private clinics or employing private organizations to supply water.

Bunnu looks at skilled employment and migration for his children's future. Private education that his children have been taking up in the village requires a lot of long-term investment and he wants to continue making remittance income that ensures their education and care are taken care for in the village.

Analysis: Bunnu's narrative reflects the dilemma of semi-permanent migrants and their political influence in the village. -They may install taps and buy TVs but when local, non-migrants control the community resources, including distribution of water and electricity,, their situation is extremely vulnerable. In order to access the private service providers run by commuting households, they require a cash flow that only remittance income can provide. And this makes their migration patterns circular in fashion, where financial resources from remittances help circulate endowments at home, an

arrangement that is dependent on remittances but also rests on maintaining resources at home. For instance, Bunnu continues to organize his SP migration strategies around their agricultural seasons. It is clear that they have been able to make changes in their land maintenance, hiring a tractor, as an example. For this household, remittance incomes from SP migration and land maintenance are interconnected processes.

However, there is evidence of the lack of consistency in returns from SP migration in the extended family networks -- while Bunnu's household is able to build a home, his next-door brother's Raman's family, who lives in a *semi-pucca* home have been through a curve of having profited from SP migration but also having lost remittances along the way. An improvement in their living arrangement appears to be an important change through their remittance incomes. Breman (2003) notes the changes in the living conditions of the Patidar landowners in Gujarat, where simple houses have converted into those with modern appliances, all signs that signify a lifestyle of rural elite (one that is reproduction of the lifestyle of the urban elite).

The reason the rural elites diversify into full-time non-farm occupations come from their need to maintain or expand their home and land at home, as well as to ensure that the male offspring, after having gotten their education, are able to launch into self-employment or become owners of trades (Breman 2003, 28–29). Their need to acquire a more secure financial situation for their children also relates to Rajputs and in particular to Bunnu and Reti's family.

While they are still closely involved with their household's agriculture, in keeping with their semi-permanence, their children are barely involved in acquiring agrarian skills. Bunnu and Reti's incomes pool in all their resources to maintain their land and agriculture despite the obvious problems of corruption and lack of presence due to semi-permanence, while their offspring are focused on transitioning towards urban-based, non-farm skills that Bunnu hopes will lead them to more respectable, secure employment paths.

6.4.6 Illustration 6: Tabassum

In the following story of Tabassum Qadri, a resident of Banswara town, I was introduced to during my fieldwork in Aspur block in 2012, I am told about her father's climb into entrepreneurship and a change in her family's condition.

Tabassum is a 35 year old IT professional working in Dubai, but at the moment she is back in her village looking after her aging mother. She tells me her family's story. She belongs to a wealthy Bohra family from Banswara town. They have never lived a hand-to-mouth existence but in three generations her family has seen many changes. Her paternal grandfather started migrating to the Gulf as a personal chef. They were called *muskans* and they cook in large apartments for other migrants, which her grandfather did that for 15-17 years. Tabassum's dad and his older brother, after passing their 10th grade exams, made a fake passport to camouflage their legal age and traveled to Kuwait. Upon moving to Kuwait, her dad started selling *burkhas* (Muslim women's head scarves) door to door. He started with five dinars (\$20) gifted to him by her grandfather. He did not come back for two years. He made really good friends in the clothing business, and took risks every time he was able.

Her dad was a good salesman, picked up the Arabic language, and picked up the market dynamics slowly and steadily. While his older brother returned home during times of loss, her dad wanted to do more, but his business of door-to-door sales business was dying because building shops was getting popular by the time he started to gather some capital.

Her dad got married in Banswara. Tabassum's mom stayed back and Tabassum was born in Banswara. When her father came back when she was two, her dad bought new property for his parents in his village. The grandparents lived with them with pride on the new property but died within two years. At that point, her father decided to move his immediate family to Kuwait. Her community members thought it was the greatest luck that they were moving to Kuwait. The perception of the villagers was completely different from their reality. Tabassum remembers how she felt. She felt like she was in prison in Kuwait, where free movement was always restricted. But her relatives imagined that they were in heaven.

There were many ups and downs in their life in Kuwait. Tabassum's dad lost his business during Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. They lived in refugee camps until they had to return to their village but her dad went back once the political situations normalized and set up the business all over again. He again contacted his friends, and then went to China to learn their garment manufacturing business after taking a loan from his brother. He started to sell women's garments, women's pajamas and new born baby items during his second semi-permanent move to Kuwait. He opened his own shop this that started running very well in the Kuwaiti market. In 2010, her parents retired and returned to Banskara and her father passed his business on to his nephew.

Ties between families are important despite and because of migration, and this system comes from their family setup. Tabassum's mother grew up in a joint family; *"She gives her uncle the same respect as her father"*. Ties are very important; the third generation is still close to their cousins. There is a great sense of responsibility in joint families, and these ties are the biggest influence on people's social relations between Bohra's. Their thinking is that if they work with their cousin, their obligation is greater to the cousin than to his own family.

Business gives you the chance to do whatever you want. She reflects on her dad's keenness to do something on his own and not work under anybody's authority. This could be a result of his peer group, but mostly since he was not educated, the only possible pathways lead to self-employment. Moreover, Bohras are natural entrepreneurs. Their *maulana* or religious leader in the village tries to push people to start their own business, instead of earning a salary. In Tabassum's father's case, he had seen his father work for a salary as a chef but his vision was bigger. His peer group in the garment market provided him with impetus to look in the direction of self-employment. Moreover, Bohra's have always been a well-to-do, close-knit community; they lend money to people in their community at no interest rate. In exchange for money, the moneylender asks that the

household send their children to Muslim schools, or just madrasas but they have built an entire- primary and secondary school with Bohra trustees to support children's education.

The social values in Banswara haven't changed much since Tabassum has been back this time, even though people have adopted change. People in Banswara are trying to emulate lifestyle changes but they don't know how to maintain and respect relationships, these things are still lacking among them. These values of "*demonstrating wealth*" are so deeply ingrained in them that they have even impacted her cousins who have migrated away from Banswara. Even in religion, they value less and show more. For example, if one Bohra community members offers his *maulana*¹⁹⁵ with 50,000 dollars, the other member, possibly a successful migrant will offer 100,000 dollars. People are spending more. They borrow money in the village for coloring homes. They don't save and they want to consume more.

People don't pay attention to degrees in her extended families. Many of them just join their father's businesses. Her family's case was different because her brothers did not want to join the business. They studied. Going abroad does not necessarily ensure success. Tabassum explains that there is a new trend in her family whereby her cousins who go for education abroad come back without a degree. Her older cousins whose parents live in Banswara are studying something about computer codes, but lack ambition to pursue it. They migrate for the sake of migration and return home with a hope to fall back on their father's business in Banswara. These cousins have migrated to big, metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad where they had immense opportunities to study and use the exposure to grow but they did not use it. Despite her grandparents supporting girls' education, most other girls in her extended family are not interested. Opportunities were given, but people in general, are not interested in pursuing. Even though Tabassum fought for her own education abroad, most other cousins don't chart their own trajectory.

¹⁹⁵ Priest or religious scholar at the mosque

Analysis: Tabassum's story as a transnational migrant is open to many layers of analysis: at the centre of the story lies the journey of her family to establish their shop in a new country, over a period of turbulence due to the Iraqi war, but there are many peripheral aspects, including how they maintain ties with their native village, how the perceptions of the community creates a "culture of migration" among the members who aspire to get more. Nevertheless, the lack of education and patrilineal values prevails, even while acknowledging the fact that some women are unwilling to fight for their own empowerment.

Tabassum's perspective is a critical vantage point to the story. Her views on her community from afar, her analysis of the role of education or the disappointment to the changes that did not happen, the excessive interest in her Banswara town on "demonstrating wealth", are the views of a person who despite being an insider, takes the position of an objective outsider almost with disdain. The role of religious institutions, evidenced through the pooling in of remittance "donations" through the local *maulana* is also an indication of the institutionalization of urban-rural links, a possible outcome if semi-permanent migration continues in the region. Tabassum makes an important connection between education and lack of ambition among her younger cousins, a negative outcome that is embedded in a good "initial situation" of the household. The future of the Bohra community is interpreted as ambiguous. While the new generation is migrating for pursuing education, their upward mobility may depend on their family's occupation. The situated in contrasted with Tabassum and her brothers' climb into honorable professions, having undertaken professional degree courses, a transformational point in her family. This point, a trajectory or a navigational point occurred when her father decided to open his own shop on the foundation of his entrepreneurial ambition in a foreign land, despite his lack of education. The outcomes from Tabassum's life trajectory appear to be positive, with sustained social mobility in the family.

6.5 Conclusions

Semi-permanent migration affects households differently, and my findings are based on the current life cycle of the household and how the resource endowments help the migrants and/or household members navigate through them. The most obvious outcomes from the migration strategy are visible in the changes in the semi-permanent

migrant's village homes: the more the remittances, the better are the changes in their living conditions and its impact on their lifestyle. Semi-permanent migration also results in the rural "elite" trying to emulate the lifestyle of the urban elite at home (Bremner, 1994), including the consumer items that they often buy on making a big profit in their trades. In contrast, it appears that SP migrants are less successful in how they are able to influence education as a probable livelihood trajectory in the future, despite the intent to invest money in their children's education.

Semi-permanent migration may be the most dynamic, precarious and most profitable of all the three migration strategies, and one that helps address the household's need to improve their social mobility. The household arrangement among SP migration strategies involves an uneven segregation of work. The men, despite being absent for many months on end are involved in the changes and decision-making at home whereas the women are unaware of their men's conditions of work. The path-dependent trajectory of semi-permanent migration emerges from the interaction of the household endowments with each other. It is this endowment-mapping process that influences the outcomes of the household. 1) In Thari's story, higher education as an endowment did not improve the household's situation, 2) In Manjubai's story, the presence of a mobile phone facilitates her role as a left-behind member who takes care of her family's physical assets, 3) In Ramesh's story, with the absence of work and family circumstances, he appears to be a migrant in transition, awaiting his time to retain his social status through a semi-permanent move, 4) In Mohan's story, a sudden loss of social networks has derailed his self-employment goals as a SP migrant, leaving him without an alternative source of income and indebted, 5) In contrast to Mohan's story, Bunnu's story is manifested in good social networks at destination that allows him to protect their agricultural land and remain a SP migrant, 6) In Tabassum's case, her father's entrepreneurial spirit and his good contacts in Kuwait manifested in their family's upward mobility.

In most of the above stories, their window of perception towards SP migration emerges from how their caste/lineage views it. Therefore success of a SP migrant must be viewed in tandem with perception of their neighbor, an extended family member. Indeed, it is the social status and security of identity that is reinforced through these ties. The futility of them has been expressed in Tabassum's narrative, the perspective of a "life-stage" migrant. Not living in the community that she grew up in, she is unable to

affirm or protect the values that SP, high caste households, holds close to their heart. On the other hand, the inability of SP migrants to participate in local politics is detrimental to the goals of the household. Due to the additional income pouring into households through remittances, they are able to access private service providers that help them meet their emergency demands, also connecting livelihood maintenance between commuting and SP migrant households. Finally, the future migration pathway of SP migration lies in the ability of households to influence their children's future. There is ambiguity and continued uncertainty as to how education will translate into employability, whether employability will lead to well-being or capability, despite a better navigational map at the disposal of these landowning households.

Chapter 7 – Concluding Remarks

7.1 Introduction

In this thesis, I describe three non-permanent types of key migration strategies that three types of rural households are likely to undertake. I have outlined this conceptual framework in the context of rural Rajasthan to show the interplay of household endowments with their out-migration pathways. Such an analysis allows for the description of probable outcomes for the different strategies at the household level. Through 15 story vignettes of migrants and left-behind members undertaking seasonal migration, commuting and semi-permanent migration, I have highlighted the common pathways each of the three household groups are likely to undertake, notwithstanding their individual conditions.

Using Sen, I term this process as “endowment mapping,” where specific households are able to undertake certain trade-offs based on their initial endowments during the process of out-migration (Section 2.1) (Sen 1981). In addition, I also analyze the outcomes of the migration strategies based on Appadurai’s concept of “navigational capacity” to describe the impact of community values and cultural attributes on the migration trajectories of the three types of households. There are individual differences in each of the migration trajectories; the households, nevertheless, share comparable resources and life “conditions”. The findings also indicate that out-migration strategies are a reaction and a response to failing agrarian livelihoods.

In Section 7.2, I will briefly restate the main findings from the three earlier chapters, and present some limitations of the research in 7.3. In Section 7.4, I will analyze the significance of the findings, and then present recommendations for moving forward by discussing the latest policy instruments relate to migrants’ conditions and that of their households in in Section 7.5.

7.2 The Main Findings

I will analyze the three scenarios of the three migration strategies, showing the interplay of household endowments with the migration pathways.

In the first scenario, I explore the migration pathways of rural households undertaking seasonal migration who are more likely to use their available household

endowments to engage in wage labor as an income diversification strategy, in order to overcome “idiosyncratic shock” or to cope with immediate cash deficits. In the second scenario, rural households that commute are more likely to use their household endowments to become self-employed, semi-skilled or skilled labor in order to chart a profitable livelihood trajectory in the newly-developing market towns. In the third and a final scenario, the rural households that engage in semi-permanent out-migration strategies are likely to capitalize on their household endowments to undertake long-distance migration strategies that ensure asset accumulation. Seasonal migration as a process is often aided by the knowledge of “mates” whereas semi-permanent migration is aided by the knowledge of “patrons” at destination. Commuting as a migration strategy rests on the combination of skills and entrepreneurship whereas semi-permanent migration plays out against the household’s social networks and entrepreneurial ambitions.

I suggest that in each of these scenarios, it is the nature of the endowments, including interplay between them as well as the “navigational capacity” of the members of the households that define how their outcomes emerge from their migration strategies. The central novelty of this finding is the distinction I make regarding the migration strategies, all of them non-permanent in nature that rests on the defense, maintenance and development of their land and agricultural resources, despite diminishing returns from agriculture in this region. An extreme example of the “diminishing returns from agriculture” is especially evident in the case of BT cotton cultivation among rural household members undertaking seasonal migration, possibly decreasing the land’s fertility on small landholdings of tribal households. In fact, a majority of the migrating households in the typology that I have identified rely on their homes in the village communities, homes embedded in their caste/lineage networks, and are strongly motivated toward converting their living conditions in ways that mirror their cultural formation. The forms of household arrangement and especially women’s roles in these patrilineal contexts also influence the outcomes arising from out-migration strategies. All of the migration strategies are male-dominated. I found that while left-behind tribal women from seasonally migrating households were able to participate in income-earning opportunities, the Caste-Hindu households were focused more on household and own-farm-related activities. Family migrations to off-farm locations appear in seasonally migrating households, and are not reflected in the other two migration strategies.

While household conditions transform differently in the three migration strategies, it appears that the three types of migrants engaging with informal markets in metropolitan cities is a path laden with uncertainties and risks. The illegality, spurred by their informality, manifests in the migrant's roles at *nakas*, in the form of cash payments for daily employment/earnings and living in illegal shelters such as squatters and slums. Despite the illegal arrangements, petty entrepreneurs in informal situations are known to thrive, undertaking what Jeffrey and Young (2014) describe as *Jugād*, a term that refers to improvised jobs building on contacts and influence within the informal space (Jeffrey and Young 2014). This kind of situation is especially relevant to stories of self-employed workers who commute and who use semi-permanent patterns that I discuss in the empirical chapters. Since only rural elites or skilled entrepreneurs are able to undertake these strategies to improve their household outcomes, it appears that due to neoliberal economic changes, opportunities are accessible to some more than the others, influenced by their social networks as well as their political connections (Barnes 2015, 42; Jeffrey and Young 2014, 184; Roy 2003). Nevertheless, I also find that this process is not life-long and that it is accompanied by many risks and possible failures. I have demonstrated through vignettes representing households as they go through different life-stages of being migrants and unemployed--balancing their household needs, available endowments and the changing conditions at destination—that these anomalies exist in the informal migration networks.

There are also institutional and policy-level mechanisms that influence household conditions during migration. I have used NREGA as a consistent policy mechanism across the three migration strategies that left-behind and unemployed members (mostly women) use during out-migration. However, having access to many such social policies does not always benefit the vulnerable groups. It appears that their “voice”¹⁹⁶ is a vital part of their “navigational capacity” to overcome shocks and promote their aspirations. Alkire (2004) explains that in policymaking or project goals, this “voice” should be encouraged, not suppressed or ignored (Alkire 2004; Appadurai 2004).

How communities with individual cultural attributes balance “trade-offs” between their economic goals and their cultural capacities are a transaction that needs to be acknowledged if policymakers are to reach their targets. The main aim of policy, as

¹⁹⁶ In post-colonial studies, this voice has been identified as the “subaltern voice” (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003; Jeffrey 2005).

pointed out in many NREGA policy documents, is reducing out-migration, especially the distress-driven movements. Here, I find that there are cultural dimensions to the implementation of policy (for instance, Section 6.3.2) that reflect the manner in which different social groups trade outcomes from NREGA for out-migration, and the use of NREGA may not necessarily lead to reducing out-migration after all.

7.3 Reflections and Limitations of the Research

I have used specific parameters and rigor to study the out-migration strategies as they play out in specific household scenarios. While the results from the thesis are a result of choices made during the process of research, there are some limitations that I will reflect on in this section. There are four main points that I will highlight. First, I analyze the use of rural households as an analytical tool; second, I analyze the evolution of caste as a conceptual point; third, I reflect on the possible role of left-behind members in constructing migration strategies; and finally, I reflect on migration studies as interdisciplinary research.

- 1) **Rural households as an analytical tool:** In my analytical chapters, I present household story vignettes of migration experiences narrated by one member of the family. During the data collection process, there were sometimes logistical problems affecting the data collection process. For example, due to their unavailability or not having the time, it wasn't always possible to interview all the adult members of the household. As such, the data only presents voices of one member of the household, interpreting the situation of the others. Nevertheless, time and logistics permitting, these presented interesting opportunities to acquire richer narratives from individual household members and to analyze their own interpretations of the process of out-migration.
- 2) **Caste as a determinant for household type:** At the beginning of the process of field research, it appeared that caste would be a major determinant in the construction of the household typology. While the social stratification constructed by caste still exists, it became evident during the data analysis process that caste plays a diminishing role in the construction of household endowments especially as background influences on out-migration pathways, it turns out that

lineage/clan groups are more dominant than caste groups. It does appear that had caste been a controlled variable in the analysis of the out-migration strategies, the agency of higher castes in the dynamics of village communities would likely bring more refinement to the final analysis.

- 3) **Left-behind members:** During data collection, I found myself primarily focused on capturing migration stories, even while speaking to left-behind or returned members. In order to understand left-behind members and their condition or survival tools, I used methodological tools such as FGDs that capture a "snapshot" of the process but not the specific components of the process. It appears that this missing voice can prove to be an important indicator toward understanding changes occurring at the household level as out-migration becomes more constant and recurring among the different types of households. It will also be important in future studies to look at the impact of out-migration on the structure of patriarchal customs, and to study the impact of old, destitute left-behind members who stay behind to look after farming activities.
- 4) **Studying migration through an interdisciplinary point of view:** Migration is a sociological phenomenon but migration studies remain well-studied among economists, demographers and geographers due to their interest in large data sets linking generalizing trends in urbanization and globalization worldwide. While my research uses literature from interdisciplinary studies, it is largely embedded in a regional analysis of the out-migration phenomenon among the select rural households.

7.4 Significance and Implications of the Findings

In the context of constant mobility out of village communities in Southern Rural Rajasthan, it is important to explore the role of the village, tribal villages housing homogenous groups and mixed-caste villages housing diverse social castes and classes. In the background of transitioning livelihoods, the village is a geopolitical space in transition. Cultural anthropologists have previously argued that villages are neither self-contained, sedentary zones nor should villages be simply seen as nodal points for mobility of rural populations (Shneiderman 2015). There are village-based networks that

appear in some cases to be a nodal point for transnational and urban-based connections. Good social relations at home, for most permanent and non-permanent migrants remain central to their well-being and that of their household members. Fitzpatrick (2011) argues that the economic differentiation between different social groups due to an increase in livelihood diversification, including cash crop cultivation and international migration, has led to the creation of different class structures in village communities (Fitzpatrick 2011). In this thesis, I have hinted at a change in class structures and increase in inequalities between different classes, especially as out-migration pathways intersects with caste roles. An important trajectory for further research can be one that explores the interplay of class formation with the complex livelihood strategies at a household level, with the village as the key vantage point.

The outcomes from out-migration can lead to long-term structural changes in village communities. Portes (2010) observes that effects from migration practices can be experienced at two levels on source communities: circular migration influences surface-level changes in economic organizations, roles and norms whereas long-term out-migration¹⁹⁷ influences structural changes as the changes enter the culture, transform the value system and influence the distribution of power (Portes 2010, 1544). There are positive short-term outcomes, especially in the case of successful semi-permanent movements such as transfer of technical skills, health-enhancing information notwithstanding the strength of the urban-rural links. Negative long-term outcomes unfold as youth choose adolescent out-migration over education¹⁹⁸, lifestyle impacts on health and nutrition due to rapid urbanization (Popkin 1999; Shetty 2002). Not all out-migration patterns are able to influence long-term local institutional changes such as improvement in quality and access of higher secondary schools or timely services at the local health unit, but they do use their social remittances¹⁹⁹ to create and access alternative institutions in the form of private schools and health clinics (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011).

¹⁹⁷ He places this change as a migration movement resulting from permanent displacement.

¹⁹⁸ Arias (2008), Lopez Castro (2007), Lungo and Kandel (1999) describe this process as “marking time” by adolescents who wait for their opportunity to experience life as a migrant (Portes 2010, 1552)

¹⁹⁹ Social remittances consist of a cultural exchange of ideas and behavior patterns that migrants bring back to source communities that influence the future patterns of out-migration (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011).

Given that structural changes occur alongside short-term migration pathways, in this thesis I explore the implications of out-migration patterns on the influence of caste, especially in mixed-caste village communities. Frequent out-migration patterns have led to a positive remodeling in the background of migration, especially allowing the opportunity for lower castes to escape their poor household conditions, even if temporarily. I use Gidwani's and Sivaramakrishnan's characterization of *rural cosmopolitanism* to understand lower castes and OBCs embodying non-farm roles, that helps them to escape, at least temporarily, the burden of their caste-treatment (Gidwani and Sivaramakrishnan 2003). Nevertheless, I also theorize that there is a reverse effect of *rural cosmopolitanism* on higher-caste households, where despite their upward mobility and exposure to urbanism, it rests on age-old values and customs. In the light of these analyses, it appears that traditional social structures are in transition, even as they remain rooted in village communities. Land and agricultural seasons, the *kharif* crop as in the case of many households in rural Rajasthan, helps households to establish roots between their mobility patterns.

Education is a medium of social mobility, especially to challenge the established norms of social stratification. In addition to the interplay of socio-cultural attributes with outcomes from out-migration, I track the interplay of education and skills within the three migration strategies in the context of underdeveloped rural communities. Education can be conceptualized as capability and a path toward relative freedoms²⁰⁰ (Saito 2003; Robeyns 2006), but it appears that social inequalities in employment prevail among the unskilled and the impoverished (Jeffrey, Jeffery, and Jeffery 2004). An important finding in this thesis that also agrees with findings on formal education and employment trajectories in other contexts in India is that white collar jobs in government employment are seen as the best possible route to improvement of household security. Out-migration pathways are seen as the next best alternative for the educated, especially when they belong to higher castes without political power and access to affirmative action programs. Nevertheless, it also appeared that most out-migrating rural households lack vision, information and access to the right resources in order to influence their out-migration pathways leading to skilled employment (Krishna 2014).

²⁰⁰ In the context of an illiterate man in Nepal, it is implied that mobility and hard physical labor and not education is seen as an example of subaltern masculinity (Maycock 2015).

Social networks and out-migration pathways are closely intertwined. My analysis demonstrates that there are multilevel networks that migrating and left-behind members access across the three migration strategies. Krishna (2002) argues that notwithstanding differences in social networks between different groups, households develop social networks in order to surpass or facilitate access to state institutions such as the local panchayats (Krishna 2002, 170–173). From clan networks to the use of ICT, specifically mobile phone technologies, members of different groups connect in order to navigate the process of informal labor. Although, I have not systematically delved into the institutional framework of social networks²⁰¹, including formal and informal actors, it appears that from seasonal migration to semi-permanent migration, access to formal institutions grows exponentially. Better access to social networks results in the improvement of conditions at destination and this can be another trajectory for further research. It appears that left-behind members also use social networks and their technology to overcome obstacles of everyday living, improving the family well-being.

In this research, I reflect upon the complexity of gender, adding to the literature on women's roles in the migration process, specifically with regard to non-permanent movements. The role of left-behind women as they interact with household endowments is a critical area and one that has implications for the future of continued out-migration patterns (Hanson 2010). In areas where the migrant streams are largely gendered, as seen among the Caste-Hindu households from rural Rajasthan, left-behind women are now participating in public schemes such as NREGA. Remittances that migrating men send as well as earnings from NREGA, empower women to focus on two important areas: education and health. Nevertheless female immobility is enforced, sometimes for family honor (De Haas and van Rooij 2010) whereas their opinion on men's decisions to migrate is never taken into account. Such unequal intra-household structures are embedded in cultural norms, and the "voice" of left-behind women struggles to be heard: they want their children to be educated but lack any kind of real freedom or knowledge of livelihood pathways for them. As left-behind members, they manage a "patriarchal bargain" that ensures their security but allows them some room for negotiations within the established norms (De Haas and van Rooij 2010, 59–60).

²⁰¹ Krishna (2002) identifies them as middle-level institutions as "parties, unions, interest groups, trade associations" that help citizens make sense of markets and the State.

There are current and historical studies that reflect on the “in-between-ness” of non-permanent migrants, in the context of transnational studies more than in the case of circular migrants (See Grillo 2007), but there is a severe need in the literature to understand these movements in the context of growing urbanization and global movement of goods and services. These factors come together to shape household outcomes from out-migration, influencing the interactions of household endowments with opportunities for current and future employment. The path-dependent trajectories of migrating households depend on each household’s ability to predict the probable pathways of employment, manifesting changes as the condition of the household improves. Put differently, I characterize the non-permanent out-migration patterns across households as a way of “gaining time” as they each adapt differently to the process of urbanization and a changing rural topography.

7.5 Migration and Policy Instruments: A Way Forward

As a way of conclusion, I am interested in understanding how the complex trajectories of the migrating households are represented in the policy arena: including policy mechanisms, interests of lobbying groups and rights-based policies that address the issues specifically suffered. Throughout the thesis, there are huge implications on the status and conditions of migrating household members for social protection policies. For instance, the condition of shelter of migrants at destination is poor, evident in informal land tenure arrangements of some of the migrants (Refer to Section 4.4.1 as an instance). It is not relevant to analyze this aspect in a detailed manner here²⁰² and therefore, I will feature two such newly introduced policy instruments that have been briefly mentioned before: 1) the new scale of measuring census results as per India’s 2011 census (Refer to Section 2), 2) Unique Identification Number (UiD) or Aadhar Card (Footnote 29 in Section 1.6).

The Government released results of 2011 census survey that uses a new accounting scale called the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) which is to be

²⁰² Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux operationalize a scale for social protection in four distinct instruments: provision measures (social assistance programs such as targeted pensions for the poorest); preventive measures (social insurance such as health insurance, unemployment benefits); promotive measures (livelihood protection such as microcredit/NREGA); transformative measures (worker’s rights/social justice campaigns) (Sabates-Wheeler and Devereux 2007, 25).

substituted for the previously-used Poverty Line (PL) accounting in order to streamline all welfare schemes. While the PL used consumption and income as the primary indicator of the household eligibility for accessing welfare benefits, the SECC recommends that the exclusion criteria should be based on household assets and income status²⁰³. This is a significant shift in policy dialogue, one that is relevant to this thesis because it gives priority to the process of asset-building and places it at the centre of their condition and eligibility for welfare. Another pertinent feature of changes to SECC is the inclusion of 'caste' as a category of interest for understanding the current poverty demographics. I demonstrated in this thesis that caste is less of a structural feature of the rural society and that its effects vary from region to region. In the past, independent India has focused its policy on affirmative action to address the social wrongs done on the lower castes in the past. It is my opinion that including caste in the SECC is an important step toward reassessing the impact of caste on affirmative action in rural communities.

Unique Identification (UiD) card was conceived and implemented to provide a "digital identity" to the citizens of India. Aadhar ensures that the individual's identity was entered in an offline registration system based on their biometric and fingerprinted data. This is especially relevant to non-permanent migrants, linking a common address to semi-permanent migrants who live in at least two locations at a time and seasonal migrants that are multi-locational ((ICSSR) 2011, 2:177). The key purpose of UiD is to connect the beneficiaries of public welfare schemes with their entitlements, especially to tackle cases of "elite capture". For instance, the UiD number ensures all the records of a BPL worker who receives wages from participation in NREGA work puts his vote for the local elections of an MLA and receives free grain from the PDS and has all his information available in one place. A system such as this is especially beneficial to poor households in remote regions that are not registered through ration cards or other means of local identification. An introduction of Aadhar is also relevant for the temporary or seasonal migrants undertaking inter-state travels, who are often deprived of their citizenship rights at migrant destination, and are susceptible to all kinds of changes. It is definitely a step in the right direction to streamline the welfare entitlements with their outputs. Nevertheless such policy mechanisms are rightly described as "putting a cart

²⁰³ Despite some economists welcoming the SECC scale, the methodology for acquiring the data has been largely critiqued -- including allegations of using unverifiable data from some districts.

before a horse” because it does not ensure that the targeting improves, but instead may result in social exclusion of households not having access to UiD ((ICSSR) 2011). This possible exclusion automatically endangers the scrutiny and seriousness of the UiD among beneficiaries and officials alike.

Given that there are policy mechanisms such as SECC and UiD, as well as multiple lobbying movements, there appears to be a forces working to improve the system of targeting and creating better linkages between different institutions. I conclude that for intervention strategies to arrive at a point where they are targeted correctly, it is fundamental that migration is better linked with other existing development programs. Moreover, mechanisms such as SECC and UiD improve the tracking of migrants who often inhabit precarious spaces at destination, addressing the missing linkages between temporary migrants and their welfare entitlements. It is absolutely critical that each of the migrant tracking systems are streamlined, inclusive of different groups inhabiting it and holistic in their approach to providing for their needs. An implementation of better policy initiatives for tracking migrants also helps facilitate linkages between the left-behind members at source and the migrating members at destination: managing the continuous and non-permanent migrant movements in a systematic and reliable manner.

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