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QUANTIFYING THE IMPACT OF REMITTANCES ON HOUSEHOLD LIVING STANDARDS : A CASE STUDY IN NADIA DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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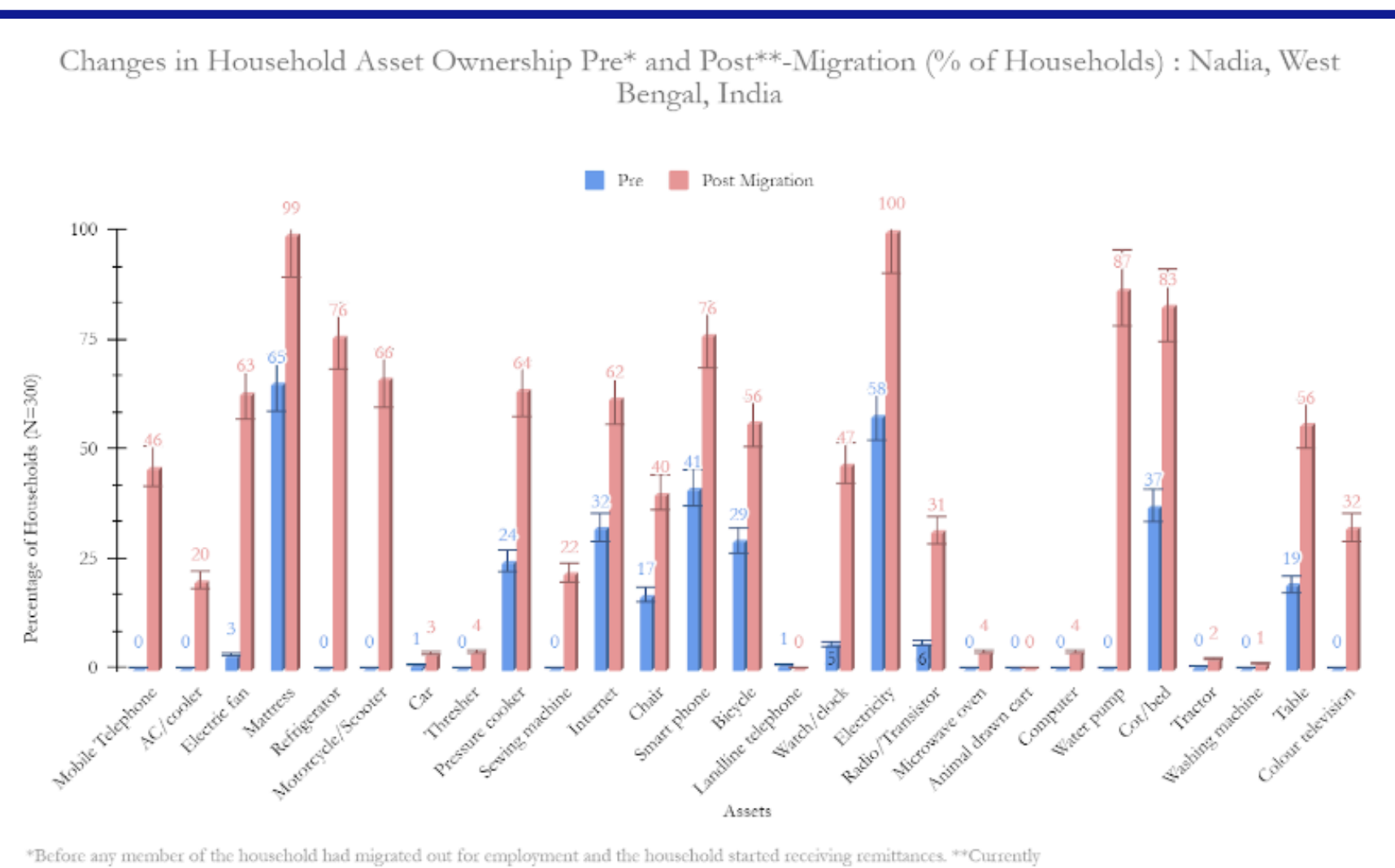
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Introduction

In India, regional disparities in employment opportunities across states and districts have led to significant internal migration, particularly for economic reasons. West Bengal's experience with out-migration due to economic and agricultural challenges. Southern states like Kerala and Karnataka have emerged as major destinations for internal migrants due to higher economic development and daily wages. Against this backdrop, this study examines the transformative influence of remittances on the living standards of households in the Nadia district of the state of West Bengal, India.

Results

Adoption of technological advancements with the acquisition of smartphones, computers, and internet access post-migration. Growth in access to basic utilities like electricity and water pumps after migration. The majority of items saw an increase, suggesting overall improvement in living standards after migration.



Objective

This study examines the transformative influence of remittances on the living standards of households in Nadia district, West Bengal, India, focusing on key indicators such as health insurance, healthcare preferences, transportation, type of education, and access to technology.

Methodology

- The study was carried out in Nadia district of West Bengal. The total geographical area of the district is around 3927 sq. kms and holds 11th position in the state in terms of size.
- The households were selected purposely based on the migrant status of the family members.
- 300 households from the sub-district of the Krishnanagar-II and Chapra were interviewed with members migrated not less than 2 years.
- Migrants whose reasons for migration are anything other than work or employment will be excluded from the study

Results

- Post-migration, there's a significant increase in children accessing healthcare services at district hospitals, private clinics (including doctor clinics), and anganwadis, while there's a decrease in utilization of medical shops and quacks.
- There's an increase in elderly individuals accessing district hospitals, private clinics, and quacks (Jhola Chhap), while there's a decrease in utilization of medical shops and home remedies.
- Post-migration, there's a notable increase in the use of cycles and rickshaws, whereas private two-wheelers and shared private vehicles emerge as new modes of transportation.
- The data also indicates that post-migration, more individuals have access to multiple technology facilities, such as combinations of mobile phones, smart mobile phones, and mobile internet, suggesting a higher level of technological integration in daily life.

Conclusion

- The examination of household asset ownership, healthcare utilization, transportation patterns, and access to technology pre- and post-migration demonstrates notable advancements in living standards following migration.
- Overall, the study underscores the transformative potential of migration in improving the lives of individuals and communities.
- Migrant laborers in urban areas often face employment in the informal sector due to low skills and illiteracy levels.
- This paper on the impact of remittances on household living standards in Nadia District, West Bengal, India, faces limitations including a small sample size of 300 migrant households and potential recall bias due to reliance on respondents' memory for pre-migration data.

RELATED LITERATURE

- Migration for work in India is often circular, especially among poorer groups, who move between multiple destinations during their lifetime (Deshingkar, 2006).
- The rural agrarian crisis has exacerbated migration from rural areas, particularly among landless agricultural laborers (Keshri & Bhagat, 2012; Rajan & Bhagat, 2017).
- West Bengal, historically a recipient of migrants, has experienced intensified out-migration due to economic and agricultural challenges (Das et al., 2016).
- Economic constraints, declining agricultural activities, and indebtedness have prompted rural inhabitants to seek opportunities elsewhere for survival (Gopalakrishnan & Sreenivasa, 2009).

