

## Withered Village and Return Migration: A Sociological Study of a Western Himalayan Village

GARIMA BHANDARI<sup>1</sup> AND URFAT ANJEM MIR<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India

<sup>2</sup>School of Liberal Studies, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi, India

### Abstract

Traditionally, Indian villages are viewed as relics of the past—stagnant, isolated, and homogeneous. However, rural societies have become increasingly interconnected in the last few decades with broader global currents and cosmopolitanism. Circular and return migration is one of the reasons that contributed to this transformation, as it kept the villages and their residents connected to the outside world. There is a dearth of empirical studies to systematically analyse the implications of reverse migration. It is to fill this gap that an empirical field-based study was conducted in a rural village in the western Himalayas to comprehend this occurrence. This study aims to identify patterns of return migration within the village and examine how the returnees bring social and cultural transformations within the ecosystems to which they return. Returning migrants impact the various aspects of village life and the network of social and political relations. They also bring along innovative ideas to rejuvenate rural skills and resources.

*Keywords:* Return Migration; Rural Areas in Western Himalayas; Social and Cultural Transformations; Innovations