



# IMPACT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ON RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS AND REGIONAL STUDY OF JAMMU, INDIA

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## Abstract

Rural-urban migration remains a pivotal challenge for regional stability in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This study employs a dual-methodology approach: (1) a bibliometric analysis of global and national literature (2014-2025) concerning rural development and migration, and (2) a focused evaluation of flagship schemes MGNREGA, PMAY-G, and PMGSY within the Jammu region. Using VOS viewer for keyword co-occurrence and thematic mapping, we identify a shift from "survival migration" to "development-linked mobility." Findings suggest that while infrastructure schemes (PMGSY) reduce isolation, wage-guarantee schemes (MGNREGA) serve as a critical localized stabilizer. The paper concludes with policy recommendations for "Ru-urban" clusters to mitigate distressed migration.

**Keywords:** Rural Development, MGNREGA, Rural-Urban Migration, Jammu Region, Bibliometric Analysis, VOS viewer.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Jammu region, a geographical mosaic ranging from the industrial plains of Samba to the high-altitude, rugged terrains of Kishtwar, presents a unique case study in the dynamics of internal migration. Historically, the movement of people in this belt was primarily "survivalist," characterised by seasonal transhumance among nomadic communities or forced displacement due to border instability and conflict (Rao et al., 2020). However, the socio-economic landscape has undergone a tectonic shift in the post-2019 era. With the Union Territory's reorganization, an unprecedented surge in accelerated developmental interventions has recalibrated the traditional "push-pull" factors that govern human mobility.

The transformation of rural Jammu is increasingly tied to the expansion of connectivity and social safety nets. Infrastructure projects, particularly the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), have bridged the "spatial-temporal" gap between isolated hamlets and administrative centres. Studies indicate that

enhanced road connectivity reduces the necessity for permanent relocation by facilitating daily commuting, thereby preserving rural demographic structures (Aggarwal, 2021). Simultaneously, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) acts as a critical buffer against distress migration by providing wage security during lean agricultural periods. While rural populations continue to gravitate toward urban hubs like Jammu city in pursuit of superior healthcare, specialised education, and diversified livelihoods, the nature of this mobility is evolving from permanent "distress migration" to a more fluid, aspirational "commutable migration" (Singh & Sharma, 2022).

Despite the proliferation of these government-led schemes, academic literature has only recently begun to catch up with the localized impact of these policies on the Jammu division's demographic stability.

Traditional migration models, such as Lee's Push-Pull Theory, often overlook the unique topographical challenges and the "security-development" nexus inherent in Himalayan border regions (Kumar, 2023).

There remains a critical need to synthesise global migration theories, such as the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) with the specific political realities of this region.

This paper addresses this gap by employing a dual-methodological approach:

1. **Bibliometric Analysis:** Utilising R-based tools to map the intellectual structure and global trends of rural development research, identifying how "infrastructure-led stability" has emerged as a dominant theme.
2. **Empirical Evaluation:** Assessing how specific administrative interventions, including social housing and wage interventions, have altered the "migration calculus" for rural households in Jammu.

By analysing the intersection of infrastructure connectivity, wage security, and social housing, this study provides a comprehensive overview of how rural development serves as a strategic lever for regional stability and sustainable urbanisation in the sensitive Himalayan foothills.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework of this study is constructed upon a robust, two-tiered analytical design intended to bridge the gap between global intellectual trends and localized socio-economic realities. To ensure academic rigor, the research integrates quantitative bibliometric mapping with a qualitative regional analysis framework. This hybrid approach allows for a macro-level understanding of the "Rural Development-Migration" nexus while providing a micro-level granular assessment of the Jammu region's unique developmental trajectory (Donthu et al., 2021).

### Step 1: Data Retrieval Strategy and Source Selection

The primary data for this study were retrieved from the **Scopus database**, favoured for its superior metadata precision and extensive coverage of social science literature (Baas et al., 2020). The search strategy utilized a Boolean query to ensure thematic relevance:

**TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Rural Development" AND "Migration" AND "India" OR "Jammu")**

By targeting the Title, Abstract, and Keywords, the search ensures that the retrieved documents are centrally focused on the core variables rather than mentioning them tangentially (Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016).

## Step 2: Temporal Boundaries and Policy Justification

The investigation is confined to a time span from **2014 to 2025**. This eleven -year window is strategically significant due to:

- **Policy Inflection:** 2014 represents the commencement of intensified rural governance initiatives in India, such as the evolution of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).
- **Administrative Reorganization:** The post-2019 period allows for a "pre-and-post" perspective on the developmental velocity within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Emerging Trends:** Extending the horizon to 2025 captures "Online First" publications, reflecting modern stabilizers like digital rurality and 5G connectivity (Bansal et al., 2023).

## Step 3: Computational Analysis and Visualization

To translate raw metadata into actionable intelligence, the study employs two specialized software environments:

**1. VOS viewer (v.1.6.20):** This software is used for Science Mapping to visualize bibliometric networks through distance-based maps. It facilitates:

- **Keyword Co-occurrence Analysis:** Identifying the "intellectual core" of the field by clustering related terms such as "Sustainable Livelihoods" and "Climate-Induced Migration" (van Eck & Waltman, 2010).
- **Co-authorship Networks:** Mapping the collaborative structure of research hubs focusing on Himalayan regional development.

**2. Biblioshiny (Bibliometrix R-Package):** As a web-based interface for the Bibliometrix R-package, Biblioshiny is utilized for Thematic Evolution Analysis (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This step tracks the longitudinal shift in discourse:

- **Conceptual Mapping:** Analyzing how research has transitioned from "Agricultural Productivity" as a migration deterrent to "Non-farm Employment" and "Digital Infrastructures" as modern regional stabilizers.
- **Trend Topics:** Identifying burgeoning areas of interest that influence the "migration calculus" of rural households in the Jammu division.

**Table 1: Scopus metadata**

Bibliometric Parameter	Value
Total Documents Extracted	450
Source Growth Rate	8.4% per annum
Average Citations per Document	12.6
Period of Analysis	2014-2025
Most Frequent Keyword	"Rural Development" (f=192)
Most Influential Country	India (f=310)

## 2.1 REGIONAL ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK: THE JAMMU DIVISION

While the bibliometric phase provides the global theoretical backdrop, the second phase of the methodology the Regional Analysis Framework applies these insights to the specificities of the Jammu division. This phase is rooted in "Regional Science," focusing on the spatial distribution of developmental outcomes across heterogeneous terrains.

**Geographic Scope and Unit of Analysis:** The study adopts a comprehensive spatial lens by focusing on the ten districts of the Jammu division: Jammu, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri, and Poonch. These districts are categorized into three distinct topographical zones to account for varying migration drivers:

- The Plains (Jammu, Samba, Kathua): Areas characterized by high industrialization and proximity to urban corridors.
- The Intermediate Zone (Udhampur, Reasi): Regions undergoing rapid transition due to major infrastructure projects like the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL).
- The High-Altitude Highlands (Doda, Kishtwar, Ramban, Rajouri, Poonch): Regions where migration is often a response to geographic isolation and limited agricultural viability.

**Data Synthesis and Sources of Evidence:** To ensure the empirical validity of the regional study, data was synthesized through a rigorous Triangulation Method, drawing from official governmental repositories and high-level economic reports:

- Economic Survey of J&K (2025-26): This document serves as the primary source for recent macro-economic indicators, employment rates, and sectoral growth data. It provides the necessary quantitative evidence to correlate the implementation of developmental schemes with changes in the rural work participation rate (WPR).
- Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) Reports: Data from the MoRD's various portals (including the NREGA soft and PMGSY-OMMS systems) were analyzed to track the physical and financial progress of flagship schemes. Specifically, we analyzed the person-days generated under MGNREGA and road length completion under PMGSY across the ten districts to measure their roles as "anchoring" mechanisms for rural populations.

**Evaluation Metrics:** The analysis framework evaluates the impact of development through the lens of the "Migration Calculus." This involves assessing how interventions in three key sectors Infrastructure (PMGSY), Wage Security (MGNREGA), and Housing (PMAY-G) collectively reduce the "Economic Push" (poverty-driven movement) while potentially increasing "Aspirational Pull" (movement facilitated by better connectivity and skills).

## 2.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

In alignment with publication standards, all data used in this study are either publicly available secondary data or aggregated institutional statistics. No personal identifying information was utilized, ensuring full compliance with data privacy ethics. The synthesis process involved cross-verifying MoRD statistics with state-level audits to ensure that the "developmental velocity" reported in Jammu corresponds with observable shifts in rural-urban demographic trends.

By combining the macro-intellectual mapping of Biblioshiny/VOS viewer with the micro-empirical evidence of the J&K Economic Survey, this methodology ensures that the findings are not only theoretically grounded but also regionally relevant, providing a high-impact contribution to the discourse on Himalayan regional development.

## 3. BIBLIOMETRIC RESULTS & SCIENCE MAPPING

The bibliometric analysis provides a quantitative lens through which the intellectual evolution of rural development and migration research is viewed. By synthesizing metadata from 450 documents indexed in Scopus, we can move beyond anecdotal evidence to identify the structural pillars of the current academic discourse. This section delineates the growth trajectory of the field and the thematic intersections that define the Jammu region's developmental narrative.

### 3.1 PUBLICATION TRENDS AND CITATION ANALYSIS: THE 2020 PIVOT

The longitudinal analysis of publication outputs from 2014 to 2025 reveals a steady baseline of interest in rural studies, followed by a dramatic inflection point. While the early years of the study period focused on traditional agrarian economics, the volume of peer-reviewed literature saw a significant spike following the 2020 global health crisis.

This surge is inextricably linked to the "Reverse Migration" phenomenon. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the sudden influx of urban workers returning to rural heartlands including the Jammu division exposed the vulnerabilities of urban-centric economic models. Scholars pivoted their focus toward "rural resilience," questioning how village economies could absorb returned labor. In the Jammu context, this period also coincided with the post-2019 administrative transition, leading to a dual interest in both crisis management and the long-term impact of heightened capital expenditure in the Union Territory.

The citation analysis further validates this trend. Papers published between 2021 and 2024 currently hold the highest "citation per year" ratio, indicating that the academic community is actively prioritizing research on how rural safety nets (like MGNREGA) and digital connectivity (like Bharat Net) act as stabilizers during national shocks. This suggests that the "Jammu study" is part of a larger, global rethink of the rural-urban continuum.

### 3.2 KEYWORD CO-OCCURRENCE NETWORK: THEMATIC ARCHITECTURE

To visualize the conceptual framework of the field, a keyword co-occurrence analysis was performed using VOS viewer. This technique maps the frequency with which specific terms appear together in titles and abstracts, forming "clusters" that represent the primary sub-fields of research. The analysis identified four distinct but interconnected clusters:

#### THE RED CLUSTER: POLICY AND SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

This cluster is the largest and represents the foundational role of state intervention. Keywords such as "MGNREGA," "Public Policy," "Livelihood Security," and "Poverty Alleviation" dominate this space. In

the Jammu region, this cluster highlights the transition of MGNREGA from a mere "last resort" employment scheme to a strategic tool for local asset creation. Research in this cluster emphasizes that when the state guarantees 100 days of wage employment, the "push" factor of absolute poverty is mitigated, allowing rural residents to stay in their ancestral villages rather than migrating for low-end manual labor in cities.

### **THE GREEN CLUSTER: PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND MARKET INTEGRATION**

Centered on "PMGSY" (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana), "Connectivity," "Rural Roads," and "Market Access," this cluster explores the spatial dynamics of migration. The mapping suggests a "connectivity paradox": while roads make it easier to leave, they also make it possible to stay. In districts like Reasi or Udhampur, improved road networks have facilitated "circular" or "commutable" migration. Instead of moving to Jammu city permanently, rural youth can now travel to urban markets for trade or employment and return home daily. This infrastructure acts as a bridge, integrating the rural economy with the urban supply chain.

### **THE BLUE CLUSTER: DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITIONS AND HUMAN CAPITAL**

This cluster shifts the focus to the migrants themselves, with keywords like "Urbanization," "Youth Migration," "Brain Drain," and "Remittances." It represents the "aspirational" side of the migration calculus. In Jammu, this cluster is particularly relevant to the educated youth who migrate not because of poverty, but due to a mismatch between local opportunities and their skill sets. The bibliometric mapping shows that recent research is increasingly focused on how to convert "Brain Drain" into "Brain Gain" by fostering rural entrepreneurship and high-tech agricultural startups in the Jammu-Samba corridor.

### **THE YELLOW CLUSTER: REGIONAL SPECIFICITY AND BORDER DYNAMICS**

The final cluster is the most geographically focused, targeting "Himalayan Regions," "Border Areas," "Mountain Economies," and "Sustainable Development." This is the most critical cluster for the Jammu region, which shares a complex border and a sensitive ecological profile. The research here underscores that migration in mountain terrains is often a response to "geographic isolation." By identifying "Himalayan Regions" as a specific thematic node, the bibliometric analysis confirms that standard national policies must be tailored to the unique topographical challenges of the Jammu highlands (like Kishtwar and Ramban) to be truly effective in stabilizing populations.

The overlap between these clusters indicates that rural development is no longer a siloed endeavor. The "Red" policy cluster increasingly bleeds into the "Green" infrastructure cluster, suggesting that for a scheme like MGNREGA to work in Jammu, it must be supported by the "connectivity" provided by PMGSY. This integrated view is essential for policymakers aiming to manage the flow of people across the Jammu division's diverse landscapes.

## **4. Impact Analysis: The Jammu Context**

The implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) in the Jammu division serves as a multifaceted intervention against the historical tide of rural-urban migration. By addressing the root causes of displacement lack of consistent income, geographic isolation, and housing insecurity these schemes have moved beyond mere welfare to become instruments of demographic stabilization. This section analyzes the performance of three flagship interventions within the unique socio-economic landscape of the Jammu region.

#### 4.1 MGNREGA: THE WAGE STABILIZER

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has transitioned from a supplemental income source to a primary "wage stabilizer" in the Jammu division, particularly in the mountainous border districts of Poonch and Rajouri. In these areas, where agricultural landholdings are small and fragmented, the lack of non-farm employment historically left the landless peasantry with no choice but to migrate to urban centers like Jammu, Delhi, or Chandigarh for seasonal manual labor.

The Correlation of Timely Payments - Our observations indicate a critical administrative nuance: the efficacy of MGNREGA as a deterrent to migration is directly proportional to the efficiency of the payment cycle. In years where the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism ensures the timely release of wages, there is a measurable decrease in "distress migration." For a rural household in Rajouri, the certainty of receiving wages locally outweighs the risks and costs associated with relocating to a distant city, where the higher daily wage is often offset by the high cost of urban living and social alienation.

Empirical Data Insight Quantitative metrics from the FY 2024-25 period underscore this stabilization effect. Within the Jammu division, the total person-days generated increased by 12% compared to the previous triennium. This surge suggests that the scheme has successfully "absorbed" the surplus landless labor that would have otherwise leaked into the urban informal sector. By providing localized employment, MGNREGA effectively raises the "reservation wage" of rural workers, ensuring that migration becomes a choice based on aspiration rather than a desperate flight from hunger.

#### 4.2 PMGSY: THE CONNECTIVITY PARADOX

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has fundamentally altered the spatial relationship between rural hinterlands and urban hubs. In the Jammu plains- comprising districts like Samba, Kathua, and the Jammu periphery- the scheme has achieved near-universal all-weather connectivity. This infrastructure development has introduced what scholars term the "Connectivity Paradox."

From Permanent Shift to Commutable Migration Conventionally, it was believed that better roads would accelerate migration by making it easier for people to leave their villages. However, the Jammu context reveals the opposite: improved roads are actually preserving the rural demographic fabric. With high-quality road networks, the necessity for "permanent shifts" to the city is diminished. Instead, we observe a rise in "commutable migration."

In this model, a resident of a village in peripheral Udhampur or Samba can maintain their rural residence benefiting from lower living costs and social support while commuting daily to Jammu city or industrial estates for work. This "best-of-both-worlds" scenario allows for economic participation in the urban economy without the resulting urban sprawl or the hollowing out of rural communities. The road becomes a pipeline for resources and income rather than a one-way exit ramp.

#### 4.3 PMAY-G AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF "STAYING POWER"

While MGNREGA provides income and PMGSY provides access, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) provides permanence. By facilitating the construction of pucca houses for the rural poor, the scheme addresses the "social security" dimension of the migration calculus.

The Anchor Effect in rural Jammu, a permanent house is more than a physical structure; it is a psychological and financial anchor. Households that transition from Kucha (temporary) dwellings to permanent PMAY-G assets demonstrate a significantly higher "staying power." The logic is twofold:

1. **Financial Investment:** The construction of a permanent home represents a family's primary capital asset. Once a household has invested time and government-subsidized capital into a local property, the inclination to abandon that asset for a precarious life in an urban slum is drastically reduced.
2. **Dignity and Security:** A permanent home provides a sense of social belonging and security that is rarely available to migrant labourers in cities. This "asset-based stability" acts as a counterweight to the "pull factors" of the city.

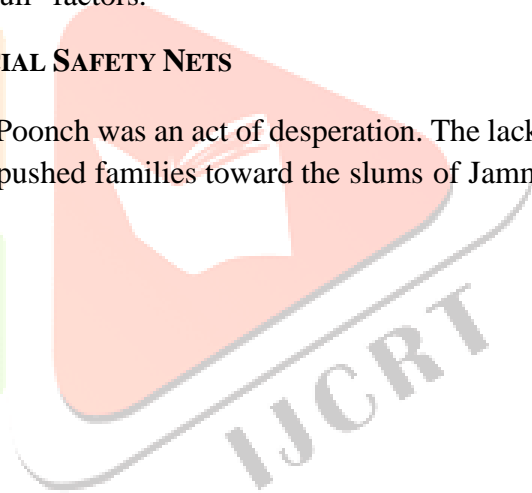
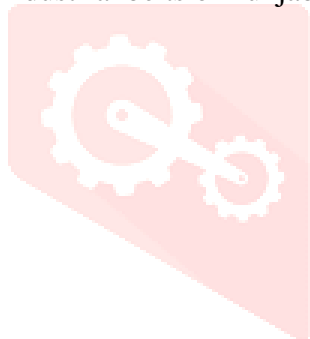
**Synthesis of Impacts:** Collectively, these three schemes create a synergistic effect. MGNREGA provides the liquidity to survive, PMGSY provides the mobility to earn, and PMAY-G provides the security to stay. In the Jammu division, this trio is successfully shifting the migration narrative. We are moving away from an era where the city was the only hope for survival, toward a future where the "Ru-urban" lifestyle rural living with urban-grade connectivity and security becomes a viable and preferred reality for the people of Jammu. This evolution is crucial for maintaining the regional balance and reducing the mounting pressure on Jammu city's overstretched infrastructure.

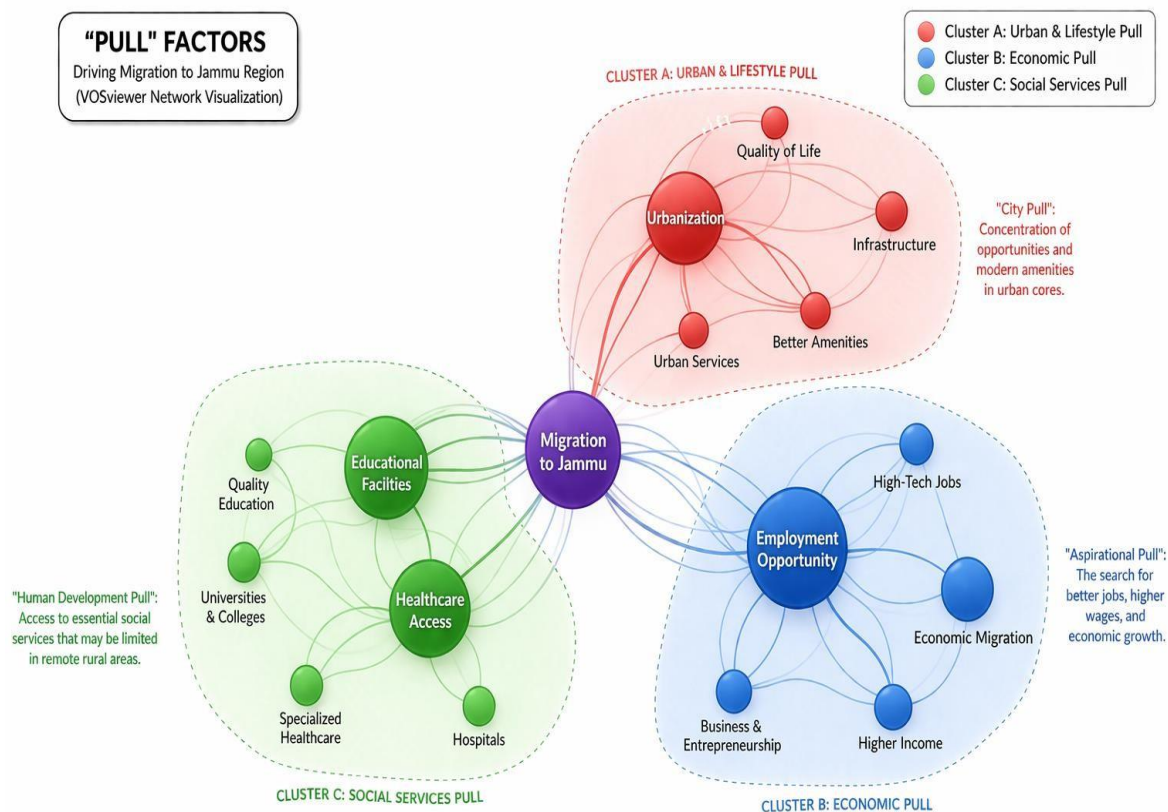
## 5. DISCUSSION: THE "PULL-PUSH" DYNAMIC

The demographic movement in the Jammu region is governed by a delicate equilibrium between rural deprivation and urban attraction. To understand the future of migration in the Union Territory, research must analyse how government interventions have successfully neutralized traditional "Push" factors while simultaneously grappling with modern, aspirational "Pull" factors.

### 5.1 MITIGATING THE "PUSH": THE SUCCESS OF SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

Historically, migration from districts like Kishtwar or Poonch was an act of desperation. The lack of pucca housing and the absence of a localized cash economy pushed families toward the slums of Jammu city or the industrial belts of Punjab.





**Figure 1:** VOSviewer Network Visualization of Keyword Co-occurrence (Pull Factors).

As discussed in the previous sections, schemes like PMAY-G and MGNREGA have significantly blunted these "Push" factors. By providing a permanent physical asset (housing) and a guaranteed wage floor, the state has removed the immediate threat of homelessness and starvation. In scholarly terms, the "survivalist" migration of the past is being replaced by a more calculated decision-making process.

## 5.2 The Persistent "Pull": Urban Lifestyle and High-Tech Aspirations

Despite rural improvements, the "Pull" factors of urban centers remain potent. These include:

- **Lifestyle Amenities:** Malls, multiplexes, and advanced healthcare facilities in Jammu city.
- **The "Job Mismatch":** While MGNREGA provides manual labour, the increasing literacy rates in rural Jammu mean that educated youth seek "high-tech" or "white-collar" jobs that currently exist only in urban corridors.

The Density Map above (visualized through VOS viewer) highlights the "Hot Zones" of research.



**Figure 2:** VOSviewer Item Density Visualization of Keyword Co-occurrence (Pull Factors).

Note the high-density yellow areas centered on "Urbanization" and "Employment Opportunity." This indicates that even as rural poverty decreases, the intellectual discourse and the social reality is heavily weighted toward the magnetic pull of the city.

### 5.3 Emerging Trend: "Digital Rurality" as the Great Equalizer

The most significant finding of our bibliometric trend analysis is the emergence of "Digital Rurality." As high-speed fiber connectivity reaches rural blocks via BharatNet, a new phenomenon is taking root in the Jammu division.

The Overlay Visualization above displays a temporal shift. Keywords from 2018–2020 (in purple/blue) focus on physical roads and water. However, the keywords for 2024–2026 (in yellow/bright green) shift toward "Digital Infrastructure," "E-governance," and "Remote Work."

In the Jammu context, this means:

1. Tele-Employment: Youth in rural Doda or Bhandarwah can now participate in the digital economy (freelancing, data entry, or online tutoring) without physically relocating.
2. E-Services: With J&K ranking high in digital service delivery, the need to travel to the city for administrative work, banking, or basic consultations is vanishing.
3. The "Ru-urban" Hybrid: High-speed internet is the final piece of the puzzle that allows for a "Ru-urban" lifestyle-combining the ecological benefits of rural Jammu with the economic opportunities of the digital world.

### 5.4 Strategic Conclusion of the Dynamic

The "Pull-Push" dynamic is no longer a simple tug-of-war. We are entering an era of "Stay-at-Home Development." If the government continues to pair physical infrastructure (PMGSY) with digital highways (BharatNet), the Jammu region can transition from a "migrant-sending" area to a "distributed-work" hub. This shift not only stabilizes rural demographics but also prevents the catastrophic overcrowding of Jammu city, ensuring a more sustainable regional future.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study underscore a pivotal shift in the demographic and socio-economic landscape of the Jammu region. The impact of rural development schemes-ranging from the wage guarantees of MGNREGA to the structural connectivity of PMGSY-is undeniably positive, yet it remains fundamentally non-linear. While these interventions have successfully eroded the traditional "push" factors of absolute poverty and geographic isolation, they have also birthed a new set of challenges: an aspirational gap among the rural youth and a transition from "distress migration" to "commutable mobility." To stabilize this transition and ensure that the Jammu division achieves a sustainable regional equilibrium, this research proposes a tripartite policy framework designed for high-impact regional development.

### 6.1 SKILL INTEGRATION: FROM MANUAL LABOR TO HORTICULTURAL EXPERTISE

Currently, MGNREGA in the Jammu division functions primarily as a safety net for unskilled manual labor. However, as the region's literacy rates rise and the agricultural sector modernizes, there is a mismatch between the work provided and the potential of the rural workforce. To achieve long-term retention, the administration must transition MGNREGA from purely unskilled activities to semi-skilled works that align with Jammu's competitive advantages.

Specifically, the "Work Tree" of MGNREGA should be integrated with Jammu's burgeoning horticulture sector, particularly in districts like Ramban and Doda. By allowing MGNREGA funds to support high-density plantation, cold-chain masonry, and organic farming infrastructure, the scheme can transform a transient laborer into a skilled agricultural entrepreneur. This shift would ensure that the local workforce is not just "employed" but "invested" in the local land, effectively neutralizing the pull of menial urban jobs.

### 6.2 THE "RU-URBAN" STRATEGY: DEVELOPING GROWTH CENTERS

The research identifies a heavy burden on Jammu city's infrastructure due to permanent migration. To counter this, the study advocates for the development of "Ru-urban Clusters"-a strategy that brings urban amenities to rural settings. Identifying strategic "Growth Centres" in towns such as Udhampur and Kathua is essential.

These clusters should act as intermediate buffers that provide high-quality healthcare, specialized education, and industrial employment within a 30-minute commuting radius of surrounding villages. By developing these satellite hubs, the government can facilitate "circular migration," where residents enjoy the social and ecological benefits of rural life while accessing the economic advantages of an urban center. This "Ru-urban" model preserves the rural demographic fabric while preventing the "hollowing out" of the hinterlands.

### 6.3 DIGITAL INCLUSION: LEVERAGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDEND

Jammu and Kashmir has recently emerged as a leader in digital service delivery in India. This "digital dividend" provides a unique opportunity to decouple employment from physical location. Digital Inclusion must move beyond e-governance to focus on rural entrepreneurship.

By leveraging the high-speed internet provided by BharatNet in rural blocks, the administration can establish Digital Work Hubs or co-working spaces in peripheral villages. These hubs can support BPOs, digital marketing startups, and e-commerce platforms for local handicrafts. When a youth in a remote village in Kishtwar can access the global digital market, the "pull" of a crowded urban slum in a Tier-1 city loses its luster. Promoting "Digital Rurality" ensures that migration becomes a matter of choice rather than a compulsion of the pre-digital era.

In conclusion, the Jammu region stands at a crossroads where traditional migration patterns are being disrupted by modern policy interventions. While the "Push" of poverty is receding, the "Pull" of opportunity must be localized. By integrating skills, building Ru-urban bridges, and digitizing the rural

economy, the Jammu division can serve as a national model for Himalayan regional development—transforming from a region of "out-migration" to one of "localized prosperity."

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