

MIGRATION, MOBILITY, AND MARGINS: EXPLORING RURAL-URBAN SHIFTS IN THE LAMBANI COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

In India, rural-urban migration has long been a significant driver of socio-economic change, especially among historically marginalized communities. The Lambani, a nomadic tribal group, are undergoing profound transitions in the face of modernity and urbanization. This research investigates the socio-cultural and economic transformations within the Lambani community, focusing on Bhavihalli Tanda and Bellary in Karnataka. Drawing on qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, oral histories, focus group discussions, and ethnographic observation, the study captures the lived experiences of three generations. It reveals that urban migration has enabled educational and occupational mobility, particularly among the younger generation, contributing to improved economic stability and aspirations for social advancement. However, this shift also results in the gradual erosion of traditional practices, especially among women who were once central to cultural preservation through embroidery and oral traditions. Gender roles, while evolving in urban settings, remain constrained by structural inequalities. The study highlights the tensions between material mobility and cultural loss, emphasizing the need for development approaches that recognize and preserve indigenous knowledge systems while supporting inclusive socio-economic growth.

KEYWORDS:

Lambani community, Rural-urban migration, Intergenerational mobility; Gender roles; Cultural identity; Traditional embroidery; Socio-economic transformation; Indigenous knowledge systems, Karnataka, Bhavihalli Tanda, Bellary, Urbanization

INTRODUCTION

Migration has long served as a significant mechanism for socio-economic transformation in India, particularly among marginalized communities seeking better livelihood opportunities. Among these communities, the Lambani—a nomadic tribal group primarily residing in Karnataka have experienced substantial transitions in their patterns of settlement, economic activity, and cultural expression. Traditionally known for their vibrant embroidery, pastoral practices, and self-contained settlements known as *Tandas*, the Lambani community is now increasingly involved in rural-to-urban migration. This shift, driven by a combination of push factors such as poverty, lack of access to quality education, and climate-induced displacement, and pull factors like employment prospects and urban amenities, has introduced complex dynamics in their socio-economic mobility and cultural identity (Chattopadhyay & Roy, 2017; Deshpande, 2021).

This paper seeks to explore how rural-to-urban migration has influenced intergenerational mobility specifically in terms of education, occupation, and income within the community. It further examines how these spatial shifts have affected traditional social structures, gender roles, and indigenous cultural practices. While migration often brings opportunities for economic upliftment, it can also lead to cultural dilution and marginalization in unfamiliar urban settings. For the Lambanis, who maintain a strong attachment to their cultural heritage

and kinship networks, urban migration presents both a promise and a paradox: the promise of mobility and the paradox of cultural marginality (Baviskar, 2005; Sharma & Chari, 2019). Existing scholarship on migration and tribal communities in India often overlooks the specific trajectories and lived experiences of groups like the Lambanis. Furthermore, most studies tend to focus on either economic aspects of migration or cultural preservation in isolation, rarely considering their intersection. This paper attempts to fill that gap by adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines ethnographic insights with socio-economic analysis to better understand the consequences of migration across generations (Xaxa, 2008; Srivastava, 2020).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As the Lambani community increasingly engages in rural-to-urban migration, questions arise about the effects on their socio-economic status and cultural continuity. This study aims to explore these shifts through the following objectives:

- To explore the lived experiences of rural-to-urban migration within the Lambani community, focusing on how individuals and families navigate socio-economic changes across generations.
- To examine the role of migration in shaping intergenerational mobility, particularly in terms of education, occupation, and lifestyle transitions.
- To investigate how cultural identity is maintained, adapted, or transformed, with a specific focus on traditional practices such as Lambani embroidery in both rural and urban contexts.
- To understand the challenges and opportunities faced by Lambani migrants in urban settings, including their strategies for cultural preservation and community cohesion.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the interconnections between rural-to-urban migration, intergenerational mobility, and cultural identity within the Lambani community. The research was conducted in three specific locations within Karnataka, selected for their relevance to the study's focus areas. Bellary represents a semi-urban context where Lambani families have migrated and adapted to urban lifestyles. Sandur is known for the presence of Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra, an NGO that promotes traditional Lambani embroidery by integrating it into modern fashion. Bhavihalli Tanda (Sushil Nagar), located approximately 8–10 kilometers from Sandur, is a rural settlement.

Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method, ensuring representation from diverse age groups, genders, and socio-cultural backgrounds. Special attention was given to families comprising at least three generations, allowing the study to trace patterns of change and continuity in socio-economic roles, education, and cultural practices over time. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, oral histories, focus group discussions, and participant observation. These methods provided insights into personal narratives, community interactions, and the cultural significance of traditional practices such as Lambani embroidery in both rural and urban settings. Field notes, informal conversations, and visual documentation further enriched the qualitative data. The analysis was conducted through thematic interpretation, identifying recurring patterns, contrasts, and meanings within the data. The study emphasized the voices and experiences of community members, highlighting how migration influences identity, tradition, and social relationships.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature underscores the complex interplay between migration, socio-economic mobility, and cultural identity within the Lambani community. While migration offers opportunities for economic advancement, it also poses challenges to the preservation of cultural practices. This study builds upon these insights to explore the lived experiences of Lambani families navigating the dynamics of migration, mobility, and cultural identity (Chandra & Sharma, 2019; Banerjee, 2017).

• MIGRATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC MOBILITY IN MARGINALIZED

COMMUNITIES

Migration has long been a critical theme in sociological and anthropological research, often explored in relation to livelihood opportunities, urbanization, and socio-cultural transformation. In India, rural-to-urban migration has gained prominence as a survival strategy, particularly among marginalized communities facing limited access to land, education, and employment. While much of the existing literature focuses on economic drivers of migration, less attention has been paid to how such mobility intersects with cultural identity and traditional knowledge systems—especially among communities like the Lambanis.

Rural-to-urban migration in India is often a consequence of agrarian distress and the search for better livelihoods. Deshingkar and Start (2003) identify migration among tribal and marginalized groups as a form of coping strategy due to lack of rural employment opportunities. Breman (1996) highlights how migrant laborers are exploited in informal urban economies, lacking both security and legal protection. Connell et al. (1976) emphasize that such migrations are often cyclical and influenced by seasonal employment patterns. Tumbe (2012) provides a historical account of internal migration, linking it to macroeconomic shifts, while Srivastava (2011) underscores the informal and vulnerable nature of most such movements among Scheduled Tribes.

Migration is not just a physical relocation but a socio-cultural and psychological shift that influences identity, lifestyle, and community ties. According to Breman (1996), marginalized communities in India often migrate to escape agrarian distress, caste-based discrimination, and economic vulnerability. For Lambanis, migration has become a means of coping with socio-economic challenges, but it often involves a re-negotiation of identity in urban settings where their traditional lifestyle is not easily sustained. Vertovec (2001) adds that migration entails a process of "transnational belonging," where individuals may simultaneously engage with multiple identities and spaces.

Rao and Sutradhar (2021) observe that urban integration of tribal communities is often hindered by lack of access to formal education, healthcare, and dignified employment, reinforcing their marginality despite physical movement. The Lambanis in Bellary and Sandur experience such partial inclusion, wherein their economic participation does not always equate to cultural assimilation or empowerment. Studies by Mehta (2014), Thakur (2017), and Jadhav (2020) reinforce the notion that mobility does not automatically translate to empowerment but often results in socio-cultural alienation and identity crisis.

Structural inequalities continue to hinder socio-economic mobility for marginalized communities. Thorat and Newman (2010) illustrate how caste-based discrimination in labor and housing markets restricts upward mobility for Dalits and Adivasis, despite educational qualifications. Desai and Dubey (2012), using IHDS data, observe that while educational access has improved among tribal communities, this has not translated into proportional occupational advancement. Xaxa (2001) argues that socio-economic marginalization is deeply embedded in the tribal experience due to historical exclusion. Jodhka and Naudet (2019) critique the myth

of meritocracy in India, explaining how social capital and identity mediate mobility. Mehrotra and Parida (2019) also point to the persistence of informal employment as a major obstacle to sustained economic progress for these groups.

● GENDERED DIMENSIONS OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Women's experiences of migration and mobility are markedly different, shaped by their roles within family and community structures. A study by Bhagat and Mohanty (2009) reveals that for tribal women, migration is often circular, meaning they oscillate between rural homes and urban workspaces. In the Lambani context, women continue to play a central role in maintaining cultural continuity through embroidery, even as families shift to urban or semi-urban areas. Their economic contributions often go unrecognized, although their craftsmanship forms the backbone of cultural preservation efforts..

Sundar (1997) emphasizes the importance of viewing tribal women not merely as passive bearers of tradition but as active agents of cultural and economic change. Lambani women artisans demonstrate this agency by adapting their embroidery to suit modern markets while retaining traditional techniques and motifs. Similar observations have been made by Sharma (2016), Devi (2020), and Saxena (2022), who argue for the inclusion of gendered perspectives when studying migration among tribal populations.

● MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF MIGRATION

Migration is not merely an economic phenomenon—it encompasses questions of identity, marginality, and citizenship. Vertovec (2001) writes about how migration transforms cultural and individual identities, often leading to hybrid affiliations. Srivastava and Sasikumar (2005) highlight the exclusion of migrants from urban governance, creating a sense of statelessness within cities. Bhagat (2011) observes that the urban experience often results in social fragmentation for rural migrants, particularly in nuclear family structures. Singh (2013) emphasizes how cultural alienation occurs when traditional practices lose relevance in urban contexts. Rogaly et al. (2002) call for a rights-based approach to migration that acknowledges the emotional, social, and political dimensions of movement.

Rao and Sutradhar (2021) assert that urban integration remains elusive for many tribal families, who are caught in a liminal space: neither fully absorbed into urban systems nor rooted in traditional ways of life. The shift from rural to urban often brings occupational changes—from agricultural labor or artisanal work to informal service jobs—which are typically low-paying and unstable. Chatterjee (2015) emphasizes that for Lambanis, the transition to urban life does not erase caste-based discrimination; rather, it reconfigures marginality in new socio-spatial terms.

● INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Studies on intergenerational mobility in India have highlighted the challenges faced by marginalized communities in achieving upward mobility. Research indicates that while there has been some improvement in educational mobility among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, occupational mobility remains limited. Factors such as family income, educational status, and access to information sources significantly influence mobility outcomes (Kumar & Singh, 2020; Venumuddala, 2020).

In the context of the Lambani community, these findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions that address both educational and occupational barriers. By providing access to education and skill development, initiatives can facilitate upward mobility and help break the cycle of poverty and marginalization (Kannan, 2018; Rajan & Joseph, 2019; Desai & Kulkarni, 2008).

Vertical mobility—especially in education and occupation—has shown limited gains among tribal groups. While the younger generation may achieve higher levels of schooling or urban employment, their mobility is often fragile, precarious, and conditioned by their marginal location in the caste hierarchy and informal economy. Kumar & Singh (2020) argue that tribal youth often enter low-paid urban jobs, failing to secure dignified employment or long-term stability. Mahapatra (2016) further notes that for tribal communities, social mobility is constrained by persistent stereotypes and structural barriers that limit access to opportunity. Studies on intergenerational socio-economic mobility have shown that marginalized communities face entrenched barriers in accessing upward mobility across generations. Desai & Kulkarni (2008) found that Scheduled Tribes exhibit the least occupational mobility among all social groups in India, often stuck in manual labor and informal sectors. For the Lambani, even when younger generations attain higher education or urban employment, they often remain on the periphery of mainstream success, lacking stable employment or upward occupational transitions.

Venumuddala (2020) argues that without structural support—such as affirmative action, skill development, and inclusive urban planning—mobility at the margins remains illusory. In this context, the Lambani experience reveals how mobility and marginality are not mutually exclusive, but often co-exist in complex, overlapping ways.

• MOBILITY THROUGH MARKET INTEGRATION AND NGO INTERVENTIONS

Recent interventions by NGOs and women-led enterprises have attempted to transform cultural capital into economic capital, thereby linking mobility with empowerment. Sabala Handicrafts and Banjara Kasuti exemplify how grassroots initiatives can create sustainable livelihoods without demanding cultural assimilation. These organizations support Lambani women by offering training, market access, and financial independence, enabling them to remain in their villages while participating in global markets (Vogue India, 2023; Indian Express, 2023).

Such models show that mobility does not always require physical displacement; rather, it can be achieved through strategic engagement with markets, technology, and community-based networks. Scholars like Joshi (2021) and Pillai (2022) underscore the importance of culturally rooted development frameworks, which recognize and build upon existing knowledge systems instead of displacing them.

• MARGINS AND INTERSECTIONALITY: CASTE, GENDER, AND TRIBAL IDENTITY

The term “margins” in academic discourse refers not merely to physical peripheries but to social locations of exclusion and disempowerment. Tribal communities like the Lambanis live at multiple margins—geographical (rural, forested regions), social (outside the caste system), economic (dependent on wage labor), and cultural (underrecognized in mainstream narratives). Sundar (1997) and Sharma (2016) critique development paradigms that often fail to include tribal perspectives, treating them as passive beneficiaries rather than active participants in socio-economic transformation.

Lambani women, in particular, inhabit a complex space at the intersection of gender and tribal marginality. Their roles in sustaining cultural traditions like embroidery are often undervalued, even as they contribute to family income and cultural identity. Devi (2020) and Saxena (2022) note that while women are central to preserving Lambani traditions, they face restricted mobility and voice in decision-making, both within the community and in broader public spheres. This invisibility at the margins persists despite their tangible contributions to both cultural preservation and economic sustainability.

DATA ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS

This section presents a thematic analysis of the data gathered from fieldwork conducted in Bhavihalli Tanda (Sushil Nagar), Sandur, and Bellary, Karnataka. Through in-depth interviews, oral histories, focus group discussions, and participant observation, four key themes emerged that reveal the complex interrelation between migration, intergenerational mobility, and cultural identity among the Lambani community.

1. EDUCATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

In Bhavihalli Tanda, a rural settlement, access to education remains limited. Government schools are distant and poorly equipped, and there is a marked absence of infrastructure and support systems that can enable continuous and quality education. As a result, many children, especially girls, discontinue their education at an early age to assist with household responsibilities or contribute to family income through embroidery work.

However, urban migration has created new opportunities for the younger generation in Bellary. In the urban setting, education plays a pivotal role in transforming socio-economic outcomes. While grandparents and parents often have little formal education, there is a concerted effort to ensure that children receive schooling. Intergenerational mobility is visible in the increased educational attainment of the younger generation, with a growing number enrolling in higher education institutions or pursuing vocational courses. This upward trend in educational attainment has facilitated the shift from informal labor to more skilled and salaried occupations, thus empowering individuals to access more stable employment opportunities and move beyond subsistence work. Educational discontinuity is common, driven by both infrastructural gaps and traditional gender roles.

Education has thus emerged as a key factor in upward socio-economic mobility among urban Lambanis, enabling transitions from subsistence livelihoods to more stable occupations, while also redefining aspirations and identity across generations.

2. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

A striking contrast was evident in the occupational structure between rural and urban Lambani communities.

In Bhavihalli Tanda, economic life remains closely tied to traditional and agrarian systems. Men primarily engage in seasonal agricultural labor, working on nearby farms or as daily wage laborers. Their income is highly variable and depends on the agricultural cycle, monsoons, and availability of work, making financial stability difficult to achieve. There is a lack of formal employment opportunities, which limits long-term planning and savings, often forcing families into cycles of debt and dependency. Women in rural settings are predominantly engaged in Lambani embroidery, a culturally rich craft that has been passed down through generations. While this work contributes to household income and plays a crucial role in preserving cultural identity, it is often economically undervalued. Most women are paid on a piecework basis, resulting in low and irregular earnings, making it an unreliable primary source of income. Although some women receive direct orders from local agents, the majority depend on non-governmental organizations like Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra (SKKK) for training, access to raw materials, and market linkages. SKKK has created a platform for artisans to reach urban and international buyers, helping enhance visibility and demand for Lambani embroidery. However, despite these efforts, the financial returns remain modest, and the work continues to lack formal recognition, social security, or institutional support. As a result, women's economic contributions through this craft are often overlooked in broader development discourses.

In contrast, urban migration to Bellary has significantly diversified occupational opportunities. Lambani families who have migrated in search of better livelihoods have accessed a range of employment options—from construction work, housekeeping, and retail jobs to semi-skilled positions in the public sector. Education and urban exposure have also enabled younger members of the community to pursue salaried jobs, vocational careers, and small-scale entrepreneurship. This urban shift has resulted in greater economic security; regular income, formal employment structures, and access to financial services such as banking and credit have allowed families to invest in education, housing, and healthcare. Importantly, occupational changes have contributed to social mobility, as families transition from informal, precarious work to more structured and economically empowering roles.

This shift also brings new challenges. Many migrants work in low-paying, labor-intensive sectors, face job insecurity, and are often excluded from worker protections due to informality in urban labor markets. Nonetheless, compared to their rural counterparts, urban Lambanis experience greater economic diversification and improved prospects for intergenerational advancement.

3. GENDER ROLES AND CHANGING AGENCY

The study revealed that gender roles remain rigid in rural settings. In Bhavihalli Tanda, women primarily shoulder domestic responsibilities while also engaging in embroidery work, often for long hours. Despite being cultural bearers and contributors to the family income, their work is categorized as informal and is seldom acknowledged in financial terms.

Social and geographic mobility for women in rural areas is limited. Restrictions on movement, compounded by conservative social norms, prevent many from traveling outside the village for work or education. Household decision-making remains male-dominated, and women's opinions are often excluded from critical discussions about finances, children's education, or family planning. Access to formal employment or higher education is minimal, with most girls dropping out after basic schooling due to either financial constraints or cultural expectations.

In urban Bellary, however, women's roles are undergoing a subtle transformation. Though still bound by certain patriarchal structures, urban women have more exposure to formal education, vocational training, and job opportunities. Some are employed as teachers, health workers, or in small businesses. However, the cost of this urban shift is the erosion of traditional gendered contributions, such as embroidery and oral storytelling, which are no longer part of daily life.

As Lambani families adapt to urban life, traditional practices like embroidery, oral storytelling, and participation in community festivals are often lost or deprioritized. The younger generation, especially urban-born girls, do not learn embroidery, reducing the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. In some cases, urban life erodes the unique leadership and cultural agency women once held in rural community structures, where their roles as artisans and

tradition-bearers were more visible and valued.

While urban migration presents new avenues for empowerment, it also challenges the continuity of cultural practices and reshapes the identity and roles of Lambani women in complex ways.

4. CULTURAL DISPLACEMENT AND THE LOSS OF TRADITIONAL IDENTITY

The cultural dimension of Lambani life emerged as a critical lens through which the impacts of rural-urban migration can be understood. In Bhavihalli Tanda, culture is not a peripheral element but a living, daily practice woven into the fabric of community life. Lambani identity is expressed through vibrant embroidery, distinctive traditional attire, folk songs, ritual performances, and oral storytelling passed down through generations. Among these,

embroidery stands out as both a livelihood and a narrative form, where each motif and stitch reflects symbols of nature, spirituality, and community memory. It serves not only as a means of economic support but as a powerful tool for cultural preservation and transmission of indigenous knowledge systems.

Organizations like Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra (SKKK) have played a vital role in supporting this cultural ecosystem. By offering training in new design techniques, supplying materials, and creating access to national and international markets, SKKK helps women artisans sustain their craft while navigating contemporary challenges. These collaborations represent a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation, enabling artisans to preserve their identity while engaging with changing economic realities. Importantly, the communal nature of craft-making in rural tandas reinforces social cohesion and collective memory, embedding culture in everyday interactions.

In Bellary, the situation is markedly different. While socio-economic conditions have improved, cultural practices have become fragmented or symbolic. Traditional attire is rarely worn, and embroidery is not practiced except occasionally—often as part of school events or cultural functions. The community's younger generation, though more educated and mobile, often lacks a connection to the oral histories and artistic traditions of their heritage. This contrast suggests that urban migration facilitates socio-economic advancement—in terms of mobility, infrastructure, and income—but at the cost of cultural dilution and fragmentation. The intimate, intergenerational, and localized modes of cultural expression in rural tandas are being replaced by more formal, event-based displays of identity. Without deliberate efforts to integrate cultural education and community-based practices in urban settings, the rich tapestry of Lambani culture risks becoming symbolic or obsolete, surviving only in museums, markets, or tourism brochures.

This shift suggests that urban migration facilitates material advancement at the cost of cultural continuity. As Lambanis adapt to urban life, the intimate, collective expressions of culture are replaced by individualistic, competitive modes of living. The community's vibrant cultural tapestry, which is still alive in rural tandas, risks being erased or commodified in urban contexts.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal significant shifts in the socio-economic and cultural landscape of the Lambani community as a result of rural-urban migration. While urban migration has opened avenues for upward mobility, it has also introduced complex trade-offs that impact identity, gender dynamics, and traditional livelihoods.

• EDUCATION AS A PATHWAY FOR INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY

Education emerged as a key driver of intergenerational mobility, particularly in urban settings like Bellary. While rural areas such as Bhavihalli Tanda still suffer from inadequate infrastructure and limited access especially for girls, urban migration has created a more enabling environment for educational attainment. This aligns with existing literature which emphasizes the correlation between urban access and improved educational outcomes (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). The upward shift in educational achievements among younger Lambanis suggests a potential break from traditional patterns of marginalization. However, the uneven access between rural and urban contexts highlights persistent spatial inequalities.

• OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSIFICATION AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Migration has catalyzed occupational diversification, especially among men who have transitioned from seasonal agricultural labor to salaried employment in retail, services, and the informal urban economy. For women, traditional embroidery continues to serve as a source of

supplemental income in rural areas, supported by organizations like Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra (SKKK). Yet, despite these efforts, the craft remains undervalued in formal economic terms. In urban spaces, women's economic roles are evolving with access to vocational training and employment, although these gains are still shaped by patriarchal norms. This reflects broader patterns of gendered labor transition seen in other marginalized communities (Agarwal, 1994).

● GENDER ROLES: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

The gendered dimension of mobility is marked by both continuity and transformation. In Bhavihalli, rigid gender roles persist, with limited autonomy and mobility for women. Their contributions through embroidery are essential but unrecognized in formal economic terms. Urban settings offer greater exposure to formal work and education, yet the shift also entails a loss of traditional roles and cultural expressions. This duality underscores the tension between modern mobility and cultural continuity, particularly for women who straddle both domestic and public responsibilities.

● CULTURAL DISLOCATION AND IDENTITY NEGOTIATION

One of the most profound impacts of migration is observed in the cultural sphere. In rural tandas, cultural practices such as embroidery, oral storytelling, and the use of traditional attire are embedded in daily life and contribute to a strong collective identity. In contrast, urban living tends to individualize experiences and marginalize cultural practices, which are reduced to occasional or symbolic expressions. The generational disconnect from traditional knowledge and identity in urban spaces raises concerns about the sustainability of indigenous cultural systems. While organizations like SKKK attempt to bridge tradition and modernity, the commodification of cultural practices remains a challenge.

● NEGOTIATING MARGINS IN URBAN SPACES

Although urban migration offers economic mobility and new opportunities, it also brings with it experiences of marginalization in unfamiliar socio-political environments. Lambanis in cities often live in segregated neighborhoods with limited access to urban amenities and decision-making structures. Thus, migration is not a linear path to integration but a negotiation of new margins within urban hierarchies. This reinforces the idea that mobility does not automatically equate to empowerment unless accompanied by inclusive urban policies and support systems.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the multifaceted implications of rural-urban migration on the Lambani community, focusing on socio-economic mobility, gender roles, and cultural identity. The findings highlight that migration acts as both a catalyst for progress and a site of cultural and social negotiation.

Education and occupational mobility have shown considerable improvements in urban settings like Bellary, where access to schooling and diversified employment opportunities has facilitated intergenerational upliftment. However, such progress is uneven and highly context-dependent, with rural tandas like Bhavihalli continuing to face infrastructural deficits and traditional gender hierarchies that restrict mobility—especially for women. While urban migration introduces new avenues for empowerment and self-reliance, particularly through education and formal work, it simultaneously accelerates the erosion of cultural practices such as Lambani embroidery, oral storytelling, and traditional attire. The community's indigenous knowledge systems, especially

those upheld by women, face the risk of commodification or disappearance in urban environments.

Therefore, migration, while instrumental in improving material conditions, also displaces key elements of identity and community cohesion. The challenge lies in striking a balance between socio-economic advancement and cultural continuity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen Educational Infrastructure in Rural Areas; Improve access to quality education in tandas through well-resourced government schools, transportation facilities, and incentives for girls' education to address early dropout rates.
2. Recognize and Formalize Traditional Embroidery Work; Establish formal recognition of Lambani embroidery as skilled labor through certifications, minimum wage standards, and access to social security benefits. Support should also be extended to NGOs like Sandur Kushala Kala Kendra for capacity building and innovation.
3. Promote Gender-Inclusive Policies; Develop targeted vocational training and entrepreneurship programs for Lambani women in both rural and urban areas. Encourage their participation in decision-making processes at the household and community levels.
4. Cultural Preservation Initiatives; Launch community-based cultural preservation programs that involve youth in documenting oral histories, learning embroidery, and participating in intergenerational storytelling sessions. Schools in urban Lambani settlements could integrate cultural education into their curricula.
5. Support Migrant Integration in Urban Areas; Ensure access to affordable housing, healthcare, and employment services for migrant Lambani families in urban centers. Urban planning must be inclusive of cultural diversity and responsive to the needs of marginalized communities.
6. Further Research and Policy Engagement; Encourage longitudinal and participatory research to track mobility outcomes over time and guide policy interventions. Collaboration between academia, NGOs, and government bodies can help develop more sustainable strategies for Lambani empowerment.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While this study sheds light on the socio-economic and cultural transformations within the Lambani community amid rural-urban migration, several areas remain ripe for further exploration:

1. Impact of Government Schemes and Welfare Programs; More targeted research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of government interventions such as skill development programs, artisan welfare schemes, and housing or employment guarantees in improving the quality of life for Lambani migrants.
2. Gender and Leadership within the Community; There is a need to investigate emerging forms of female leadership in both rural and urban contexts—especially how urban exposure influences women's agency in community organization, education advocacy, and political participation.
3. Youth Perspectives and Aspirations; Understanding how Lambani youth perceive their identity, career choices, and cultural roots can provide valuable insights into the future trajectory of the community. This includes studying how digital media and urban lifestyles shape their worldview.
4. Urban Informality and Lambani Settlements; Research could further explore how Lambani migrants navigate urban informal spaces—such as slums or unregulated labor sectors—and how these affect their social networks, legal rights, and quality of life.

In conclusion, the experiences of the Lambani community at the intersection of migration, mobility, and marginality reveal the complexities of pursuing socio-economic progress while safeguarding cultural identity. Migration is neither a linear journey nor a uniform experience—it carries the promise of opportunity as well as the risk of loss. The insights from this study underscore the need for holistic, inclusive, and culturally sensitive development models that not only uplift marginalized communities economically but also affirm their identities, knowledge systems, and aspirations. As India continues to urbanize, ensuring that communities like the Lambanis are not merely absorbed but actively shape the urban fabric is crucial for achieving true equity and social justice.

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