

## **An Economic Analysis Internal Labour Migration In India**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Migration has been a historical process shaping human history, economy and culture. It re-emerged as a strong force shaping cities and urbanization since the time of industrial revolution in western countries, and is closely associated with urban transition influencing the demand and supply of labour, economic growth and human wellbeing. Internal labour migration is an overwhelming reality that underscores India's developmental landscape. Millions of people are on the move across the country, in search of a livelihood and adequate means of survival. While migration opens up new vistas of work and employment, creating new opportunities for many, yet, it also pushes people into unequal and highly exploitative work regimes.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Most of these issues have more or less direct involvement of people on the different scales apparent within globalization; either it is a migrating peasant, multinational capitalist or as street vendors. Their place in the ongoing development process inherent in India is unquestionable. Development should be seen as a multi-dimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the speeding up of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the abolishment of absolute poverty. This stand clearly involves a human aspect and as Arthur Lewis stresses it is all about achieving "freedom of servitude", "the advantage of economic growth is not that wealth increases happiness, but that it increases the range of human choice" The concept of human freedom, he says, is that it should include all various components of political freedom, freedom of expression, political participation and equality of opportunity. Some of these factors are already a part of the Indian society, but then again many are lacking to a smaller or larger extent.

### **MIGRATION: DEFINITIONS AND TRENDS**

**Census** : A labor migrant is one residing in a place other than his or her place of birth or one who has changed his or her usual place of residence (residence for six months or more), having moved primarily for economic reasons.

**NSSO** : A labor migrant is identified by the change in usual place of residence definition, as described above, with the principal reason for moving being employment-related.

### **CAUSES OF MIGRATION**

Given the diversity in the nature of migration in India, the causes are also bound to vary. Migration is influenced both by the pattern of development, and the social structure. The National Commission on Rural

Labour, focusing on seasonal migration, concluded that uneven development was the main cause of seasonal migration. Along with inter regional disparity, disparity between different socioeconomic classes and the development policy adopted since independence has accelerated the process of seasonal migration. In tribal regions, intrusion of outsiders, the pattern of settlement, displacement and deforestation, also have played a significant role. Most migration literature makes a distinction between ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors, which, however, do not operate in isolation of one another. Mobility occurs when workers in source areas lack suitable options for employment/livelihood, and there is some expectation of improvement in circumstances through migration. The improvement sought may be better employment or higher wages/incomes, but also maximisation of family employment or smoothing of employment/income/consumption over the year.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE MIGRATION**

The decision to migrate for economic reasons is typically driven by the spatial earnings gap, although the ability to migrate is influenced by a range of individual and household characteristics. The evidence on rural-urban migration consistently highlights differences in earning opportunities between rural and urban areas as the predominant factor driving relocation. Much of this evidence on the spatial gap is about differences in wages or rates of pay, although the likelihood of finding employment is also represented. At the same time, internal migrants may have widely varying degrees of education and income levels, as well as varying profiles in terms of caste, religion, family composition, age, and other characteristics.

## **GENDER AND MIGRATION FOR WORK**

Recent attempts to disaggregate data on labour migration by gender on a global and regional scale have shed some light on the magnitude of women’s migration for work. According to data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) 2015, the Indian migrants stock in GCC countries increased from just under 2 million in 1990 to 8.2 million in 2015, with growth prominent among both male and female migrants in all countries (see Table 2 below). Women comprise just less than one-fourth (23.9 per cent) of the total Indian migrant stock in 2015. The male–female proportion in the total Indian migrant stock has remained more or less the same during the past two decades, with the exception of Qatar where the number of women migrants has increased yet their proportion is much lower when compared to their male counterparts. However, administrative data shows declining numbers of women departing with emigration clearance for work to Gulf countries.<sup>16</sup>

## **RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

The primary target of this thesis will be to figure out how migrants cope with life in an urban setting in relation to personal economy, work relation and the relation to those “back home”. One of the major challenges facing migrants in India today is the very low wages earned by migrant workers in the urban sector. Because of this migrants move mainly as single individuals, and not as whole families. At one end of the migration spectrum, workers could be locked into a debt-migration cycle, where earnings from migration are used to repay debts incurred at home or in the destination areas, thereby cementing the migration cycle. At the other end, migration is largely voluntary, although shaped by their limited choices. The NCRL has recognised the existence of this continuum for poor migrants by distinguishing between rural labour migration for survival and for subsistence. The landless poor, who mostly belong to lower caste, indigenous communities, from economically backward regions, migrate for survival and constitute a significant proportion of seasonal labour flow.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The present study identifies the push and pulls factors which play important role in migration decision. For this purpose, study used the NSSO data on migration and various socio economic variables. The study has examined these factors and identified the factors which are significantly explaining variation in the internal migration.

## **2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The present study has following objectives:

1. The present study makes an attempt to analyse the trend and changing pattern of internal migration in India.
2. To study the changing pattern of internal migration in India.
3. To identify factors causing internal migration in India.
4. To make policy suggestions to improve status of migration labour.

## **DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on the secondary data. Data on migration has been taken from the NSSO three rounds 49th round, 55th round and 64th round. Data on socio economic indicators of the major seventeen states have been taken from NSSO 64th round, Data-book Compiled for use of Planning Commission, Handbook of Statistics on Indian State, Economic Survey and Agriculture Statistics.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. The study could not be extended beyond 2007-08 as NSSO data is available upto this year only.
2. Analysis has to be restricted to 17 major states as comparable data is available for these states only for all the NSSO rounds included in this study.

## **3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Das and Saha (2013)** found that workers migrate from economically less developed states to relatively more developed states. The growth rate of migration has increased during the period 1991-2000. Poverty shows negative and statistically significant relation with in migration rate. The volume of in-migration is positively correlated with per capita bank deposit, per capita bank credit to industry and urbanization.

**Malhotra N and Devi (2014)** found that migration in India has raised labour force participation rates and employment rates for both males and females. Migration is normally more productive utilization of labour force and hence contributes towards economic growth. Per capita net state domestic product and human development index show positive and significant relationship with interstate in-migration rate.

**Bell et al. (2015)** show that India ranks last in a sample of about 80 countries. The low level of migration in India relative to other emerging economies is also reflected in the country's relatively low urbanization rate. The urbanization rate in India was 28 percent in 2000, 15 percent less than in countries with comparable GNP

levels (Deshingkar and Anderson, 2004). And this only marginally increased to 31 percent in 2011 (Sharma and Chandrasekhar, 2014).

**Kone et. al., (2016)** Internal migration rates in India have been largely static and low in recent times compared to other countries. As per India’s Census of 2001, the flow of internal migration in the five years preceding 2001 accounted for less than 3 percent of the population.

**ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

**TABLE 1 INTERNAL LABOUR MIGRATION**

Residence	Duration of Residence	Last Residence Rural/Urban	Total Migrants		
			Person	Male	Female
Total	All Durations of Residence	Total	31332870	12584328	18748542
		Rural	15238655	5216313	10022342
		Urban	12317222	5734806	6582416
	Duration of Residence Less than 1 Year	Total	1696696	765304	931392
		Rural	659572	286380	373192
		Urban	743948	359627	384321
	Duration of Residence 1-4 Years	Total	5784930	2433867	3351063
		Rural	2512238	947890	1564348
		Urban	2639108	1215787	1423321
	Duration of Residence 5-9 Years	Total	4917555	2017976	2899579
		Rural	2210856	792052	1418804
		Urban	2181804	1001794	1180010
	Duration of Residence 10 Years and Above	Total	18912199	7355775	11556424
		Rural	9852147	3188217	6663930

Note : Figures are provisional.  
All durations of residence includes unspecified duration.  
The place of last residence unclassifiable as Rural or Urban is included in Total.  
Source : Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India.

2011 Indian census estimated the population of India to be 1.21 billion.<sup>8</sup> Approximately 309 million of people constitute as internal migrants in India which is 30% of the India’s total population. The National Sample Survey Office of India estimates around 326 million to be internal migrants (28.5 per cent).<sup>10</sup> The internal labour migrants are projected to be more than 10 million (nearly 6 million of intra-state migrants and 4.5 million of inter-state migrants) in the country. The labour migrants are mainly employed in plantation and cultivation, construction sites, quarries, brick-kilns, fish processing, transportation and manufacturing units. Further, the leading source state of migration in India includes Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and the destination places are mainly Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka, Gujrat and Maharashtra. There are also main corridor of migration within the country mainly Odisha to Gujarat, Odisha to Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan to Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, Bihar to National Capital Region Delhi and Bihar to Haryana and Punjab.

The current projection estimates that the internal migrants may increase to 400 million<sup>14</sup> which far exceeds the estimation made by the Indian governments i.e. 11.4 million. However, some scholars argue that the actual number of internal migration in India is grossly underestimated as the Indian census and National Sample Surveys do not adequately capture the data on rural-rural migration, short-term migration, and women's migration which occurs due to non-marital reason and trafficking- all of which tremendously contribute to migration. In India, among every ten individuals, three are internal migrants and the government has given low priority to internal migration.

There are mainly two types of migration in India: (a) long-term migration and (b) short-term migration/ circular migration. Long-term migration is defined as the relocation of an individual or family members, whereas short term or seasonal/circular migration is defined as both coming and going movements between origin and destination place. Estimation suggest that the number of short term migration in India ranges from 15 million<sup>10</sup> to 100 million. In addition, seasonal migration has been rising in recent years where women are usually employed as house maids and head-load transporter and men choose manual labours. Women are also constituting an overwhelming number of internal migrants: 70 percent based on Indian Census of 2001 and 80% according to NSSO (2007-08). Further, marriage is mentioned by women participants as the most frequent reason for migration, quoted by 91.3 percent of women respondents in rural areas and 60.8 percent from urban areas. <sup>10</sup> Around 30 per cent of youth in the age group of 15-29 years and 15 million of children are internal migrants. Further, studies argue that circular migration are frequently representative of the vulnerable sections of the society such as the Scheduled Casts (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Castes (OBCs) who are poor and face economic and livelihood deficit to live and prosper.

There are two types of international tool on migrant rights: first is the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that mainly protects human rights and its facility apply universally; and second is the CMW and the ILO conventions that primarily focus on migrants. Despite of such several efforts, migrants are still continued to be protected under the umbrella of general internal law, international law and labour law, human rights law. However, with the adoption of CMW, the provisions of protecting migrants obtained formal sanction. The CMW was adopted in the 45th session of the General Assembly on 18 December 1990.

The United Nations International Convention on the protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and their family members came to force on 1 July 2003. It establishes a compressive international treaty that aims at protecting migrant workers' rights and emphasize on building a link between migration and human rights, which later on increasingly seen as a crucial policy issue globally. The main objective of this convention is to protect migrant workers and their family members and promotion of migrant rights in each country.

The Government of India has launched a programme called 'ADHAR' – a biometric based Unique Identity (UID) for the inhabitants of India. Under this programme, migrants have the opportunity to get an ADHAR card which can be used as a residential proof and identification and helps in accessing welfare schemes of government. In this process, many migrants have found to be lacking supportive documents for their identification. For facilitating the inclusion of migrant workers in the UID programme, a memorandum of understanding has been signed with National Coalition of Organization for Security of Migrant Workers, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and a group Non-government Organization (NGOs). However, the current governor of Reserve Bank of India, Mr Raghuram Rajan has allowed migrant workers to open bank accounts without producing residential address documents.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

- India runs several central government sponsored vertical health programmes in the areas of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. These programmes are often set for long period and need constant supervision to improve its quality. At the same time, it poses challenges in maintaining quality services and monitoring health outcomes among migrant populations.
- At present, a very few government run programmes have data on migrants; almost no other health programmes have data too. Even if data remains, it is only confined to labour market. There is an urgent need to channel and store all information pertaining to migrant health and develop proper tracking mechanisms for better health outcomes.
- India faces tremendous migration and need to formulate proper policies and programmes to improve migrants' health. The existing programmes need to be expanded and upgraded and effective implementation of these programmes as well as their integration of source-exit destination levels would be crucial in improving the status of migrants health.
- Further, migration policy should not be viewed as a labour policy but need to be incorporated with city development plans and programmes as it is increasingly clear that rural to urban migration is predominate in India.
- In addition, social security benefits must be embedded in labour policy as 90 per cent of the workforce employ in informal sector. Access to health services and decent living conditions must be included in the migration policy ensuring that migrant rights prevail and that they should not deny access to basic services such as housing and health.
- The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) prepared by Planning Commission of India sees rural to urban migration as a 'distress migration' which mainly arise due to poverty and thus, implementation rural development programmes are crucial in curtailing rural to urban migration.
- Further, sensitization and capacity building workshop for policy makers, experts and stakeholders concerned with migrants health such as ministry of health & family welfare, Non-Governmental Organizations, Urban development, Labour and Employment, Employees association of migrants, financial institutions and insurance companies needs to be carried out in a large scale to deal with the complexities and problems among migrant population. It is therefore a high time to mainstream migrant programmes and policies for better inclusion of migrant development.
- The study takes up an important socio-economic and political issue – labour migration. This issue is somewhat neglected in the economic literature in the sense that there are many areas which remain unexplored as compared to other socio-economic-cultural and political issues. Hence the paper attempts to present in a nutshell trends of labour migration in India, its causes and impacts.
- As the migrants are an integral part to Indian development these aspects are more or less intertwined. Internal migration rates for those who moved for economic reasons are similarly low, although new evidence suggests that labor mobility is higher than previously estimated. The stated reasons for migration span a wide range, including employment, marriage, study and moving to join one's parents and/or the earning member of the family who has previously migrated.
- According to the 2011 Census, 3.5 million migrants who moved within the last one year stated economic reasons for migration. The corresponding numbers for the 2001 and 1991 Census, respectively, were 2.2 million and 1.4 million. A new Cohort-based Migration Metric (CMM) developed in the Government of India's recent Economic Survey shows that annual interstate labor mobility averaged 5 million to 6 million people between 2001 and 2011. It also includes the first-ever estimates of internal work-related migration, which using railway data for 2011–16, indicate an annual

average flow of close to 9 million people between states. Both these estimates are significantly greater than the annual average number suggested by successive Censuses.

- The present study makes an attempt to analyse the trend and changing pattern of internal migration in India. The study also attempts to identify factors causing internal migration in India. Based on NSSO survey data, during the period 1983 to 2007-08, the study found that migration rate increased over the time but male migration rate decreased over time. It has been found that the share of rural-rural migration has been a dominant migration stream and on the other hand rural-urban migration has been increased.
- The study shows that higher migration rate and higher rural to rural migration is due to female migration marriage. Inter-state migration rate for rural to urban stream and urban to urban stream have increased while the intra- state migration rate have declined during the period 1999-2000 to 2007-08.
- Analysis of reason of migration shows that migration to urban areas has been mainly for employment purposes for males, whereas marriage is major reason for migration of females in rural as well as urban areas. The study found that in migration was the highest in the state of Maharashtra followed by Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Haryana. The out-migration was the highest for the state of Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar and Rajasthan. Net migration rate was the highest for Maharashtra followed by Haryana, Punjab and Gujarat.

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