

Internal Migration in India: Its Socio-Economic Determinants

Abstract

Despite being characterised as a relatively immobile society, three out of every ten Indian households migrate, both internally and internationally. Internal migration in India exceeds migration across international borders. About 28.5% of India's total population constitute internal migrants, according to the NSSO Survey 2007-08. The present paper endeavours to analyse the extent and pattern of internal migration in India. The socio-economic factors and determinants that influence internal migration and in turn how they contribute to economic prosperity or adversity shall also be analysed in general.

Keywords: Internal migration, Regional disparity, Poverty, Livelihood, Unemployment

Introduction

India which is home to world's second largest population has often been categorised as a relatively immobile society (Davis, 1951). But the fact remains that three out of four households in India include a migrant (Srivastava & Sasikumar, 2003). With agriculture supporting 58% of its population (NSSO, 2011-12), even the fast pace of India's economic growth cannot take away the sufferings of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Forced by the circumstances and attracted by the adage that 'migration brings in prosperity', millions of Indians migrate out of their home-places with varied hopes. For some, migration turns out to be sole source of bread to sustain hungry bellies. Yet for others, it ushers wealth and paves the path to independence and self-reliance.

The factors that encompass social sector like health, education, unemployment, sanitation, and other basic needs are all inter-related in nature. The deprivation in one factor leads to deprivation in others. As such the vicious circle never breaks. Poverty has always remained a major factor in causing underdevelopment of the social sector. All others factors are in fact caused by poverty-led deprivation. Although it varies among states, majority of India's population lies affected. It has also been one of the major factors responsible for the migration of population in search of better livelihood opportunities. India's topography is such that it poses challenges like inaccessibility and remoteness. This when complemented with inadequate infrastructure, excessive dependence on primary sector, scarce information and illiteracy point out the factors that cause migration within India.

Objectives of the Study

The study encompasses following objectives,

1. To understand how social sector underdevelopment causes internal migration.
2. To underline the causes of internal labour migration in India.
3. To assess the extent and pattern of internal labour migration in India.
4. To show the existing level of poverty, unemployment, human development index and other basic needs in Indian states where migration is mainly taking place.
5. To bring out the problems being faced by labour migrants post-migration.
6. To give policy suggestions for better opportunities for migrants.

Review of Literature

Harris and Todaro (1970) postulated that migration was driven by non-economic and irrational motivations, termed as the bright city lights. Regarding developing countries, they observe that migration is much higher in terms of absolute numbers of migrants due to urbanisation than in developed nations. They emphasised that rural-urban labour migration in LDCs take place due to an individual's expectation of higher urban income.



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J.R. Rele (1969) has analysed the relationship among urbanisation, economic development and internal migration in a village of Maharashtra. The study observes that urbanisation results in shifting of urban labour from unorganised to organised industries and rural labour to sites where large-scale construction projects are taking place but Rele considers urbanisation as a poor index of economic growth in India due to its linkage with social framework. His study considers economic reasons as determinant of only male-migration because female migrate purely due to non-economic and obligatory reasons. It has also been noted that the households with higher income or with higher land-holdings, send most of the migrants. . Return migration, however, reduces the efficiency of migration.

Tapan Piplai and Niloy Majumdar (1969) have studied the distinctive characteristics of internal migration in India. While one-third of the total migrants came from the twin-states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the industrially developed regions of Maharashtra and West Bengal also gained about the same number of migrants. It has been found that people of North India excluding Jammu & Kashmir have a greater tendency to move; only 2.2 % of state's population were out-migrants then in 1961. This study argues that initially this influx of migrants especially skilled contribute in the economic development of the recipient area. However conflicts do arise between migrants and locals. This does not hinder the possibility of increase in migration though, owing to its contribution in economic development.

Ronald Skeldon (1986) while comparing data on migration from two censuses, laments the underestimation of labour-migration by Indian census data, which focused majorly on rural-to-urban migration, ignoring completely intra-urban migration. This paper reveals that migration is taking place by choice not by compulsion; employment being the single-largest. Most of the migrants are not the rural unemployed or landless because these classes tend to in situ owing to lack of means to finance the migration process.

B. K. Roy and Basheer K. Nijim (1991), in their comparison of mobility in terms of 'place-of-birth' (POB) and 'place-of-last-residence' (POLR) from two census data of 1971 and 1981 have observed that while females emerged out to be more migratory on account of marriage, majority of the male-migrants were driven by desire to get secure employment.

Ben Rogaly (1998) has covered seasonal-nature of migration and changing social relations in rural India. In an attempt to answer the complex question of migration-by-compulsion or by choice, his study reveals that employees recruited migrant workers in response to seasonal shortages of labour. His study also throws light on the problems faced by women and children. Women's security and lack of access of education to migrants' children is compromised with. Only a few workers benefit from seasonal migration; with majority struggling to pay off debts.

Haberfeld et al (1999) based their study on the seasonal-migration from Dungarpur district of

Rajasthan. Most workers of the district migrate during October-November after harvesting rain crops and sowing winter crops. A majority of those who migrated were men making up as manual and unskilled workers. This study also reveals that seasonal migration is a compensating mechanism used by disadvantaged households. The relatively better-off workers tend to be immobile according to this study.

Ravi Srivastava and S.K.Sasikumar (2003) throw ample light on internal and international labour migration in India. They have highlighted two distinct streams of international migration; people with professional and technical expertise emigrating to industrialised and developed nationals whereas semi-skilled and unskilled workers migrate to the Middle-East. Regarding internal migration, they pointed to its predominantly short-distance nature. About 60% of Indian labour migrants change their residence within own district, 20 % within state while the rest migrate across the state boundaries. Only 1 % of total Indian workforce, according to this study, migrates overseas. They assigned 'uneven development' as the main reason for migration and have recognised the importance of migration in poverty-reduction through income and assets, change in the pattern of expenditure and investments.

K. C. Zachariah et al (2004) study the conditions of migrant labour from India to the UAE, one of the principal destinations for Indian emigrants. The findings reveal that Indian emigrants with education below secondary level worked as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers and those with degree worked as professional, technicians and did clerical-related work. The major problems, according to this study, faced by several Indian emigrants in UAE include breaching of contract by not paying salaries and other benefits, freezing passport and non-funding of return journey. The study also found that migrants mostly lived in camps sharing room with at least four others.

Morse et al (2005) have identified that labour migration has become an irreversible part of livelihoods of rural *Bhil Adivasi* community in Western India. Owing to precarious nature of agriculture, only 12-20% of households rely solely on agriculture for livelihood. As such the tribals migrate to supplement their income sources besides feeding the moneylenders. The migration of 65% of Bhil workers contributed to 86% of the cash-income of all households. This study also reveals that only 3% of the surveyed have skills as masons or carpenters, all the rest worked on construction sites, stone quarries, brick-making and digging cable-trenches.

Naresh Kumar and A.S. Sidhu (2005) have studied the pull and push factors in labour-migration for brick-kiln workers in Punjab. Their study brought out six important factors viz. better employment opportunities living conditions in destination areas, fulfilment of self-aspirations that lure the migrants. On the other hand, lack of development, social tensions and unviable land holdings in sending regions push the migrants out. Economic factors are more significant in the process of migration, as per this study.

Sonalde Desai and Manjistha Banerji (2008) have tried to capture the impact of husbands' migration on wives. Taking cue from the Indian Human Development Survey 2005, they emphasise on the fact that 3.65 % of women in India have a migrant husband. In Jammu and Kashmir, only 1.09 % of women have a migrant husband however. In absence of husbands, women have to fill in the work earlier done by their husbands. In case of extended family, such women have little autonomy. Autonomy comes only if women are not in extended families. They emerge out to be more independent and autonomous in taking households' decisions.

Kunal Keshri and Ram B. Bhagat (2010) observe that large-scale temporary intra and inter-state mobility of labour is prevalent in various parts of India. With the help of 55th round of NSSO data, this study brings out number of temporary migrants per thousand. For Jammu & Kashmir, migration rate is low at 3.9 per thousand; 2 per thousand females migrate and 5 per thousand males. Regarding place of residence, 4.2 % per thousand come from rural areas and only 2.7 per thousand migrants come from urban areas in the state. This study throws light on the fact that temporary migrants are illiterate and they belong to low-income groups i.e. it is distress-driven migration.

Vijay Korra (2011) has focused on the nature and characteristics of seasonal labour migration in Mahabubnagar district of Andhra Pradesh. A majority of the households, it was revealed, depended on migration as the main source of livelihood. Of those surveyed, 38 % of the total migrants moved to rural destinations while the rest moved to urban areas. Rural migrants find work depending on contacts maintained with past employees, urban migrants however depend on friends and co-villagers. The small and marginal farmers, carpenters, tailors and blacksmith show higher tendency to migrate, as per this study. Most of the earnings are utilized in day-day expenses, conducting daughters' marriages and payment of old debts. Migration however fails to bring out the migrants from the vicious ring of distress.

Pratikshya Bohra Mishra (2013) has analysed the development effect of labour migration on agriculture in rural Nepal. This study reveals that remittances determine the level of development. It was found that agriculture is the most profitable area for productive investment like farm assets. The increase in the index of ownership of livestock and poultry after migration, also measures the effect of remittances. This study suggests that if environment is not conducive to farming, remittances will have insignificant effect on agriculture development.

Research Design

The present study takes cue from the decadal Population Census and National Sample Survey Organisation's migration surveys. Besides various research papers, newspaper clippings, journals have also been referred to for data and information on social sector development, estimates of poverty and unemployment and for an overview of health and sanitation state in the country. Estimates of Labour Bureau have also been considered.

Causes of Internal Migration in India

The economy on the whole is arguably impacted by internal migration. This form of mobility occurs due to umpteen reasons. The causes that determine extent and pattern are complex and intertwined. Poverty and inequality are as much responsible as is unemployment and unbalanced economic development. The growing linkages, owing to intensification of means of transport have been a pull factor one other hand. Moreover economic growth in specific sectors has raised demand for cheap-labour. On the flip side, the workers who migrate definitely earn higher than their expectations. Vast avenues of employment in urban centres magnetise or pull the migrant population and attract people from outside. On the other hand, they are 'pushed' out to the nearby or distant towns due to lack of livelihood sustenance. The NSSO 2007-08 data reveals that 28.5 % of rural and 55.7 % of urban men migrated for economic reasons. However, the decision to migrate was voluntary for 8 %. The 49th round of NSSO (1993) estimated that 477 per thousand rural males and 83 per thousand rural females migrated owing to employment related reasons. For urban areas, 415 men and 49 women per thousand migrated for the same reason. This trend has been reverted, as exhibited by the 64th round of NSSO (2007-08). There were 286 men in rural and 557 in urban areas (per thousand) who migrated for seeking employment. For the women, the numbers were a meagre 7 and 27 in rural and urban areas respectively

Extent and Pattern of Internal Migration in India

At this stage of economic growth and development where a demographic giant like India is striving hard to be counted among the most powerful nations, its internal state is chaotic. The unequal distribution of income and unbalanced development in the nation cause intensive internal migration. Although internal migration slowed down in the decade 1970-1980, it has increased to a significant level in the recent years. As such the study of the extent and pattern of internal migration holds great relevance. It actually makes it easier for the policymakers to tailor their policies accordingly. As per the census data 2011, the 1990s has seen the highest level of migration since independence. Over 98 million people have migrated from one place to the other.

Migration, in most of the cases is from rural to urban areas but it also takes place within rural areas due to competition for work. Over 5.7 million persons moved in search of jobs and migrated from rural to urban areas while other 4.5 million migrated within the rural areas looking for work. As per census 2001, in India about 307 million people have been reported as to have migrated from their place of birth of which about 259 million (84.2%), migrated from one part of the state to the other. Converse to the widely-accepted-insight that people migrate in search for jobs within their state, figure shows that 13.1% of the total migrants cross the state boundaries. An analysis of census data from 1981 to 2001 exhibit that 64.96% of internal migrants moved within their own district in 1981, with this percentage falling to 62.57 % by 2001. There were slight improvements in inter-district and

internal migration however. While there were 23.02 % inter-district migrants in 1981, the figures rose to 24.12 %. Internal migration lagged and still lag behind inter-district and intra-district migrations, with 12.02 % in 1981 and 13.31 % in 2001. The census 2001 data also reveals that migrations in India are largely intra-state. 85.3 % of total internal migration occurs within a given state, out of which one-fourth is inter-district and three-fourth is intra-district.

Migration in India shows a varied pattern. According to the census 2011, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are among the largest migrant-sending Indian states. They also have a high percentage of population living in rural areas. A significant number of migrants move from Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, and other states across northern and central India. Migrants from Bihar change place to the same destinations, with the highest numbers to Delhi and West Bengal. Other major states showing large number of migrants are Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa.

An analysis of 'state-wise-short-duration-out-migration' data by NSSO (2007-08) shows that Bihar and Gujarat has the highest out migration with 30 and 34 per thousand respectively. This is followed by Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil-Nadu and Uttar Pradesh show an average 10-20 per thousand. The states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab and Uttarakhand have an out-migration of 4-7 people migrating per thousand. Gender wise, Bihar has shown that Bihar has exhibited largest male out-migration with 57 per thousand. Among women, Gujarat has highest women out-migration with 24 women migrating per-thousand. Only 5 per thousand males migrated from Haryana, the lowest in India. On the other hand, no females migrated from Himalayan states of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

Extent and State of Poverty, Unemployment and Other Basic Needs in India

Poverty is a global phenomenon that has caused misery among people across the world affecting the lives of people in multiple ways. A significant proportion of population in India is affected by it. Although India has been successful in the reduction of poverty in the recent years still there is large population facing extreme poverty revealed by the annual report published by the Reserve Bank of India in 2013. The percentage of population living below poverty line based on MRP- consumption was highest in Chhattisgarh at 39.93% followed by Jharkhand (36.96%), Bihar (32.06%), Orissa (32.59%), Assam (31.98%), Madhya Pradesh (31.65%) and Uttar Pradesh (29.43%) which is even higher than the national average of 21.92% as per the same report. In terms of the poverty below national average in descending order, it was highest in Karnataka (20.91%) followed by West Bengal (19.98%), Maharashtra (17.35%), Gujarat (16.63%), Rajasthan (14.71%), Tamil Nadu (11.28%), Uttarakhand (11.26%), Haryana (10.16%), Jammu

and Kashmir (10.35 %), Andhra Pradesh (9.20%), Punjab (8.26%), Himachal Pradesh (8.06%) and Kerala (7.05%). Only 5.09% of population in Goa was affected by poverty, the lowest in India.

The other challenge that has been a major cause of internal migration and impeding factor for the development of social sector is unemployment. In recent years unemployment in India has shown a growing pattern due to innumerable reasons. According to the Fifth Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey (2015-16), Ministry of Labour and Employment, the unemployment rates per 1000 for 2015-16 was highest in Assam which is 178 followed by Kerala (125), Himachal Pradesh (106), Jharkhand (77), Uttar Pradesh (74), J&K (72), Rajasthan (71), Uttarakhand (70), Goa (69), Punjab (60), Bihar (58) and Orissa (50) which is same as that of national average. The unemployment rates per 1000 below national average was highest in West Bengal (49) followed by Haryana (47), Madhya Pradesh (43), Andhra Pradesh (39), Maharashtra (21), Chhattisgarh (19), Karnataka (15) and Gujarat (9) which is lowest of all the states in India. It is thus seen that the states that exhibit large scale internal migration are also worst-affected by poverty.

Since Human Development Index is a composite measure of life expectancy, education, and per-capita income wherein life expectancy depicts health condition and per capita income measures standard of living of people. Higher score in these parameters shows the extent of human development and hence social sector development too. HDI uses score of 0 and 1; the score closer to 0 represents the lowest level and that to 1 show highest level of human development. The HDI calculated by UNDP and published by the Government of India in 2015 shows that Kerala tops the list of states in terms of Human Development Index having score of 0.7117 followed by Himachal Pradesh (0.6701), Punjab (0.6614), Maharashtra (0.6659), Tamil Nadu (0.6663), Haryana, (0.6613), J&K (0.6489), Gujarat (0.6164) and Karnataka (0.6176) which is higher than the national average of 0.6087. The states having HDI value below the national average are West Bengal having 0.6042, Andhra Pradesh (0.6164), Assam (0.555), Rajasthan (0.5768), Madhya Pradesh and Orissa (0.5567), Uttar Pradesh (0.5415) and the lowest is that of Bihar (0.5361). The Human Development Index value is not available for all Indian states, as per the sources analysed. Such Indian states in which the extent of unemployment is widespread and there is absence of basic amenities, migration is also rampant.

In order to show the existing level of basic needs, data on electricity availability and availability of toilet speak on a greater extent, the latter being a key determinant of sanitation. Health, which is one of the most important primary components of basic needs, has been covered by HDI and is also reflected in population having access to toilets. As per Census 2011 report, published by Government of India, the percentage of household having electricity was highest in Delhi (99.1%) followed by Goa (96.9%), Himachal Pradesh (96.8%), Punjab (96.6%), Kerala

(94.4%), Tamil Nadu (93.4%), Andhra Pradesh (92.2%), Karnataka (90.6%), Haryana (90.5%), Gujarat (90.4%), Uttarakhand (87.0%), J&K (85.1%), Maharashtra (83.9%) and Chhattisgarh having 75.3% which is higher than the national average of 67.2%. The states having electricity availability of less than national average are Rajasthan (67.0%), Jharkhand (45.8%), Orissa (43.0%), Assam (37.0%) and Uttar Pradesh having lowest of (36.8%). It is pertinent to mention here that the states with least access to electricity experience large-scale out-migration, while states with most accessibility checks out-state migration.

Moreover, as per Census 2011 report, the percentage of population having no toilets was highest in Orissa (78.0%) followed by Bihar (76.9%), Jharkhand (78.0%), Chhattisgarh (75.4%), Madhya Pradesh (71.2%), Rajasthan (65.0%), and Uttar Pradesh (64.1%) which is higher than the national average of 53.1%. The states having population less than national average which do not have toilet facility is highest in Tamil Nadu (51.7%) followed by J&K and Karnataka (48.2%), Maharashtra (46.9%), Gujarat (42.0%), West Bengal (41.2%), Assam (35.1%), Uttarakhand (34.2%), Haryana (31.4%), Himachal Pradesh (30.9%), Punjab (20.7%), Delhi (10.5%) and Kerala having 4.8%. It cannot be said that availability of toilets have a bearing on internal migration but the data reveals that lack of basic needs such as this is prevalent among the states that push migrants out.

The data sources available reveal the unbalanced availability of the basic facilities. As such social sector development in some of the states makes people's lives better while in others worst. The interdependence of these given social indicators and hence social sector development affects the extent and pattern of internal migration which contribute to make societies excluded and disintegrated. Thus in order to do away with this vicious circle, balanced investment in the social sector needs to be complemented with social inclusion of the migrants.

Problems and Prospects

Besides the parameters of social-sector development that determine internal migration in India, there are innumerable miseries and problems that the internal migrants have to face. Unable to produce the proofs of identity and residence, internal migrants fail to claim social protection entitlements and remain excluded from government sponsored schemes and programmes. The growing slums and agglomerations, with shabby living conditions at the fringes of large cities speak of their problems. Lack of identification means migrants are not able to access provisions such as subsidized food, fuel, health services, or education that are meant for the economically vulnerable sections of the population. Children face disruption of regular schooling, which in turn badly affects the human capital formation. This contributes to the inter-generational spread of poverty. The migrants are often treated as a burden for society and not allowed to settle down and hence are excluded from urban planning initiatives. Other problems faced by them are inadequate housing, inadequate access to formal financial services,

widespread exploitation, lack of welfare services and social protection. Despite innumerable policies of the government to provide them with housing and 'rehan basera' sort of shelters, yet the problems do not seem to vanish away completely.

Suggestions and Conclusion

It is how the pros and cons of internal labour migration are balanced, that holds the key to a sustainable and economically secure future. Due to biases and prejudices at the receiving end and lack of social sector development at the sending end, the migrant workforce is bound to suffer. The political favour to particular groups and lack of proper government attention not just lead to political and social crisis but economic and environmental crisis too. Migration need not be checked. It needs to be properly managed. From promising and providing inclusive urban and regional development to pro-poor development in backward areas, things need to be in place. There should be a plethora of adequate non-farm avenues, food security and credit support measures for the migrants to ensure that their basic needs are met. Inclusive education facilities, identity documentation and ample employment opportunities with equivalent wages for the migrant workforce will not just ensure economically developed India but also prejudice-free nation.

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