

RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION IN INDIA: TYPES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

Rural-urban migration is rarely been studied at macro level despite its high prevalence in India. Drawing from the recently available Indian National Sample Survey (2007-08, 64th Round), this paper aims to study the factors influencing rural-urban migration, types, challenges and consequences of migration in India. Hence, rural-urban migration plays a very significant role in the present context. This study attempts to examine the transition of migrants from rural to urban segments and also factors influencing the same in India. The study finds that migration is largely a rural phenomenon dominated by rural to urban migration. However, lack of basic amenities and low status induce the rural poor to migrate to the urban areas.

Keywords: Migration, Rural-Urban, Transition, Basic amenities, India

1. Introduction

Human migration has become a very important issue for many developing and developed countries in the recent years. People have moved from one place to another within and between the countries due to global integration of economies. On the immigration side, historically, India has a substantial number of migrants from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan. In addition to this, the country continued to be a safe place for refugees from internally disturbed countries of Tibet,

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Bangladesh, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Myanmar in the post-independence period (UNHCR, 2016). Internal migration was an important pattern of migration in almost all countries. As per the United Nations Human Development Report (2009), around 740 million people migrated from one place to another within their own country. They comprised almost four times the total international migrants.

In India, such migration was encouraged during the British period but after settling down of the political and economic set-up in post-independence period, a new trend of internal migration gained momentum in the country. Landless labourers in large number moved to the urban areas for better employment opportunities and standardised living. This trend saw its origin in population dynamics and economic development of the country. At the same time, migration in India was largely fuelled by the increasing regional disparities, rural-urban development imbalances and urban bias in economic planning as well.

Rural to rural migration from poor areas to rich ones for agricultural production constituted the most dominant form of migration but there was also a steep increase in rural-urban migration in the recent years as more young people travelled to work on industrial and other urban economic activities (Srivastava and Bhattacharya, 2003). The labour class in India was not a homogenous class but the workers were drawn from all parts of the country and from all sections of the society. It was however significant to note that Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Kerala have been the out-migrant states since long because of higher density of population and absence of proper employment opportunities in these states. The migration from these states were directed towards the prosperous states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat and Punjab and mega cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Ludhiana and several other such cities which had shown uneven economic growth and subsequently, created more and more jobs in all fields including industrial and non-industrial economic activities.

The New Economics of labour migration theory says that the individuals migrate to other localities with a specific intention of increasing their earnings in a fixed period of time before returning home. It should be noted that it's the family or the household of the migrant who enjoys the better utility than the migrant himself. Migration is an important component of urbanisation in India. According to Census 2011, about one-third of the population lives in urban areas. Nearly 31 per cent of urban population comprising of 377 million people lived in 800 cities and towns spread all over India (Joaquin, 1993). The push and pull factors are important aspects of migration. While push factors are mainly due to lack of job opportunities and unfavourable living conditions, pull factors are the shortage of local workers, employment opportunities, and higher wages for unskilled workers that would help the migrants to lead a better life (Bodvarsson, 2009). Further, the signs of rapid

growth of cities and the increase in activities particularly in infrastructure and construction sectors are contributing considerably to migration (Haseena, 2015).

In India, the literature suggests that there is a connection between urbanisation and economic development of the nation (Bhagat, 2012). Moreover, 65 per cent of the GDP is generated from urban areas which comprises one-third of India's total population (31% urban population according to 2011 census). Although in India there are about 8000 cities and towns, which constitute 43 per cent of India's urban population who live in urban centres and are engaged in economic activities. Thus, rural to urban migration in India is most prominent and the out-migration towards urban areas develops a linkage between rural and urban region/areas (Bhagat and Mohanty, 2009). Particularly, India has experienced a rapid urban population growth as a result of the contribution of urban economic growth.

Circular migration or temporary migration rates are found high in remote rural areas, particularly in drought-prone areas with low agro-ecological potential and poor access to credit facilities. For example, an estimate made by Deshingkar (2003) revealed that around 3,00,000 labourers from the drought-prone Bolangir district of Western Odisha migrate to other places every year. In contrast to Bolangir district of Odisha, the state of Andhra Pradesh has experienced a substantial rise in migrant population between 1980 and 2001 due to higher wages in cities (Deshingkar, 2008). Keshri and Bhagat (2013) found that the rate of temporary workers' migration is seven times higher than the rate of permanent workers' migration. The study concluded that temporary migration is mainly a rural phenomenon and it is dominated by rural to urban migration. It also finds socio-economic differentials between the two forms of worker mobility, migrants belonging to poor and disadvantaged caste group with low educational accomplishment have a higher propensity of engaging in temporary kind of worker migration. It indicates that temporary migration is mainly a survival strategy for workers, which is different from the phenomenon of permanent worker migration.

Similarly, various push and pull factors are the reasons for rural to urban migration, which arises due to regional disparities among the states in India (Iyer, 2004). The major push factors for migration in villages are low daily wages, lack of job opportunities, water scarcity, family problems, migration of spouses etc. While the pull factors in cities or urban areas are high wages, immense job opportunities, access to basic amenities, comfort and convenience, and high quality of life.

It is well evident in the empirical literature that identification of migration is a complex process and has lots of problems. A critical insight into migration aspects with respect to age, caste, and gender has not been given/studied earlier. The trend of migration in urban India, which is seasonal out-migration and long-term out-migration, is largely for livelihood aspects and also for

socio-economic measures for migrant workers. It is the most prominent aspect in order to generalise the migration in the Indian context. Hence, in this study it is also demonstrated with pragmatic evidence.

The NSSO survey collected the information on migration particularly of the households which had migrated to the place of enumeration during the last 365 days. But migrants face several circumstances in the migration process which the data do not capture and present. So, this study demonstrates the types, challenges, and opportunities of the rural-urban migration.

This paper is organised into six sections. The first section discusses the introduction with literature of studies. The second section articulates the theoretical framework and the type of migration. This section sets the context in which migration is taking place. The third section elaborates on the data and methodology. The fourth section discusses the factors influencing rural-urban migration. The fifth section examines the social security for migrants in India and finally, the sixth section ends with the conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework of Migration

The basic model of Lewis (1954), Rains and Fei (1961), Todaro and Harris (1969 and 1970) argued that rural-urban migration will occur as long as the expected real income differential is positive because, according to them, an individual migrates for maximising economic gain. Mabogunje's model (2010) explained rural-urban migration in less developed countries by a system model, in which migration is taken to be a dynamic spatial process. The fundamental assumption of this theory is that, migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends, that is, the entire developmental space within which migration processes operate (Haas, 2010). He assumed two types of systems namely (a) the rural control sub-system and (b) the urban control sub-system. Of these two systems, the former controls outflows (e.g. family or community norms) and the latter controls inflows (e.g. through employment agencies). He argued that feedback is channeled to potential migrants and the background environment (social and economic conditions, government policies, transport, and communications infrastructure, etc.) also affects migration flows.

The neoclassical theories of migration explain migration as part of economic development. Internal migration occurs as a result of geographical differences in the supply and demand of labour, mostly between the rural traditional agricultural to urban industrial sectors (Hagen, 2008). The resulting differentials in wages cause workers to move from low-wage, labour-surplus regions to high-wage, labor-scarces regions. Migration will cause labour to become less scarce at the destination and scarcer at the sending end. Capital is expected to move in the opposite direction (Haas, 2010).

The criticism of the neoclassical theory of migration is that only few people prefer to migrate in other areas because migration occurs only due to poverty and backwardness of socio-economic status everywhere. Therefore, this theory can't be applied for entire migration population (Joaquin, 1993).

In the development phase, the modernisation theory has been mainly highlighting the advancement of people through uses of education as a medium of migration in society. The theory highlights the spread of modernity in the societies. It tries to point out the social context that contributes to social development and the process of social evolution. It emphasises the process of change and also looks at the dynamics in the process of social, cultural changes and adoption of new technologies. It implies that modernisation not only encourages migration, but also it brings socio-cultural changes in the life of the migrants. It is argued that modernisation is a process which leads towards betterment and the basic principles are derived from the idea of progress, which transpired in the 18th century. It enlightens the idea that people themselves could develop and change their society through their own efforts (Jaquette, 1982).

2.1 Types of Migration

Migration can be classified based on its direction and duration. Based on the direction, migration may be rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural (Sinha, 2005). And also, the movement of migrants may be restricted to inter-district, intra-district, inter-state or intra-state movements. Migration cycles range from a few weeks to a few months (4-6 months), and depending upon their distance, it may occur once or several times during the year (Srivastava, 2011). Migration is usually categorised depending upon the length of time. It may be short-term and long-term migration as well as temporary and permanent migration (Haan, 1999). On the basis of distance, it may be classified as short distance and long distance migration. Other types of migration are decision making of household members (voluntary and forced migration); movement of people based on interest; Involuntary migration: the movement of people from place of origin to new areas because of war (armed conflict), environmental degradation or natural disaster such as drought and famine, social organisation (family, class and individual migration), causes (economic and non-economic) and aims (conservative and innovative) (Sinha, 1983).

The types of migration are explained below:

Inter-Continental Migration: In this type of migration people move from one continent to another. This type of migration occurred during the period of 17th to the 20th century. Initially, it took place from the European countries where people moved to other countries in the process of colonisation.

International Migration: This type of movement happens when people cross the international borders. International migrations are further classified as legal immigration, illegal migration and refugees.

Inter-State Migration: People migrating from one state or province to another is known as inter-state migration. This type of migration is common in all over the world because of the citizen's right to free movement from one place to another.

Rural-Rural Migration: People moving from one rural area to another is called rural-rural migration. This type of migration usually occurs in developing countries where people move from a less or scarce resource rural area to highly developed agriculture driven rural area.

Rural-Urban Migration: It explains migration of people from agrarian economy to non-agrarian economy. Urban areas are found to have plenty of opportunities for jobs, modern facilities, and luxurious life. So, people in rural areas prefer to shift to urban areas. Primarily, rural-urban migration is common in developing countries and it throws a lot of challenges and opportunities in both sectors.

Urban-Urban Migration: This type of migration can be defined as people moving from one urban area to another. This explains a situation like persons changing their place for the reason of job transfer or posting.

Urban-Rural migration: This kind of migration happens when people get disgusted with their workplace and busy schedule of urban life and they want to move to rural area in search of peace.

3. Data and Methodology

The study attempts to examine the transition of migrants from rural to urban segments and also the factors influencing the rural-urban migration in India. The present study is based on secondary data collected from various published sources. This study can be useful for understanding the present scenario of rural-urban migration India. The data are reproduced from the National Sample Survey's 64th round (2007-08) for all over India and from various published sources.

Table 1 shows the transition of migrant population during 1999-2000 and 2007-08. During 1999-2000, huge male migrants' population between 25-34 years and 45-59 years were involved in migration activities. Similarly, in 2007-08 phase most of the male migrants of the age group 25-34 years and 45-59 years were involved in migration. Hence, it is evidently clear that there has been an enormous increase in the migrating population every year, but children's migration decreased as compared to previous decades.

Correspondingly, the female migration during 1999-2000 was lower than male migration, but migration was higher in the age group 25-34 years and

34-44 years than the male migration of the same age groups. Hence, as compared to 1999-2000, 2007-08 saw a decreasing trend in the female migration population.

Table1: Distribution of Migrants in Urban India by Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Male		Female		Total	
	1999- 2000	2007- 08	1999- 2000	2007- 08	1999- 2000	2007- 08
0-14	13.5	12.9	6.9	6.3	9.5	8.7
15-24	18.5	18.6	15.6	14.2	16.7	15.8
25-34	19.7	20.8	25.9	24.2	23.5	23.0
35-44	19.5	17.8	22.1	20.8	21.1	19.7
45-59	19.9	19.8	18.7	22.9	19.2	21.8
60 & above	8.9	10.1	10.9	11.7	10.1	11.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Unit level data of National Sample Survey (1999-2000, 2007-08)

The Constitution of India (Article 19) confers the right to all citizens to move freely all the way throughout the territory, to settle and reside in any part of the regions in India. In the existing condition, short-term or seasonal migration involves a back and forth movement between source and destination. The short term migration is estimated to have been increased from 15 million to 100 million during 1951-2001. Particularly, short-term migrants belonging to socio-economically deprived groups, such as scheduled tribes (STs) and scheduled castes (SCs) having less educational attainment or limited access to resource due to this reason, are engaged in high proportion of migration activity (Deshingkar, 2003).

Table 2 depicts the different social group-wise seasonal and long-term out-migration in the year 2007-08. Moreover, 20.1 per cent of the SC population is from rural areas and 3.5 per cent from urban areas. At the same time, about 23.7 per cent of ST population from rural areas and 17.5 per cent from urban area migrate to the different parts of the country. From the remaining population, 39.5 per cent of OBC category from rural areas and 43.6 per cent from urban areas migrate. Hence, a high number of people move from rural areas as compared to urban segment.

Despite this, long-term migration is also prominent in the Indian context – about 6.8 per cent of ST population in rural areas and 2.2 per cent in urban sectors migrate for long term while 11.8 per cent of SC population in rural areas and 17.9 per cent in urban sectors are involved in migration activity for long term. So, it seems that rural people are engaged in huge number in migration activity.

Table 2: Seasonal Out-Migration and Long-Term Out-Migration during 2007-2008 (in per cent)

Social Group	Short term (Seasonal) out-migrants			Long-term out-migrants		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
ST	20.1	3.5	18.6	6.8	2.2	6.0
SC	23.7	17.5	23.1	19.2	11.8	17.9
OBC	39.5	43.6	39.9	44.5	37.9	43.3
Others	16.7	35.4	18.4	29.5	48.0	32.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: National Sample Survey, 64th round (2007-08)

In the Indian context, migration is significantly dominated by rural to urban migration which is one of the major components of the urbanisation process. Above data demonstrate the migration pattern sex-wise during 1999-2000 and 2007-2008 in different streams. Rural to Rural male migration decreased as compared to 1999-2000 to 2007-2008 and rural to urban male migration drastically increased during 1999-2000 to 2007-2008. Because rural people have been moving to cities for employment and accessing better wages, this is the main component for the increase in the rural-urban migration. Similarly, rural to urban female migration also slightly increased, perhaps it may be due to push and pull factors (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of Migration in different Streams, 1999-2000 and 2007-2008

Stream	Male		Female	
	1999-2000	2007-2008	1999-2000	2007-2008
Rural to Rural	32.3	27.1	70.3	70.0
Rural to Urban	34.3	39.0	14.4	14.8
Urban to Rural	10.7	8.9	5.2	4.9
Urban to Urban	22.6	24.8	10.1	10.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Unit level data of National Sample Survey (1999-2000, 2007-08)

4. Factors influencing Rural to Urban Migration

Economic Factors: The economic factor is the most important reason for voluntary migration. The better economic opportunities pull the labourers from one place to another. There are other factors also that influence the rural-urban migration which are given in what follows:

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a) *Wage and Income Differentials:* Wage and income difference is the main economic factor in the rural-urban migration. Attractive high wages is an influencing factor for people to move to the urban labour market. An ILO (International Labour Organization) study (ILO, 1966) shows that high wage rate and income is the main push and pull factor influencing the rural to urban migration.

b) *Differences in Employment Opportunities:* The expanded urban sector has created huge employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled workers. Rural workers move to the urban areas for getting employment opportunities, as compared to urban workers to rural areas. It is observed that the employment opportunities generated in the manufacturing sector are one of the significant factors in the rural-urban migration.

c) *Technological Advancement and Farm Mechanization:* Technological advancement and mechanization of agriculture is one of the factors in rural to urban migration. Green Revolution in India resulted in input-intensive methods which require relatively more capital than labour. Penetration of capital-intensive methods of production into the agricultural sector, the substitution by factory-made tools and other articles for those produced by the rural artisans and mechanisation of certain processes, reduce the requirement of labour in rural areas.

Demographic Factors: The differences in the rate of population increase among different areas of the country as a result of internal migration. Fertility rate naturally increases the population more in rural areas than urban areas. The lack of economic resources forces people from the rural areas to move to cities. Migration following marriage is a major type of female migration in India as per Hindu tradition of bringing bride from another village. After marriage, women move to husbands' homes. According to the National Sample Survey, more than 46 per cent of the female migration to urban areas is caused by marriage.

Social and cultural factors influence rural to urban migration in India. The traditional constraint of social organisation, exclusion from the community, conflict among the family members etc. may cause migration in the present generation. Improved communication technology, facilities such as transport, television and cinema modernisation, and urban-oriented education increase the flow of migration. There are many social factors that also promote rural to urban migration, some of which are given below:

a) *Family Structure:* Size and composition of the family affects rural to urban migration. The larger the family size, greater is the probability to migrate. In a joint family system, a male member can migrate leaving his children and wife at home as the other members of the family can take care of them, whereas, in a nuclear family, such support system is not available and therefore, the probability of migration is quite low. Extended families are

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better able to promote migration than nuclear families. The broad structure of such families allows and encourages migration of its members as a means to create investment opportunities for the family.

5. Social Security for Migrants in India

Social security measures aim to provide protection to migrants and include government provisions, such as labour laws, for the welfare of the migrant workers. Social and economic distress is caused by an interruption or substantial reduction in earnings resulting from sickness, employment injury, maternity, unemployment, old age and death, lack of provision of medical care and provision of subsidies for families with children (ILO, 1989). Important labour laws recommended by the International Labour Organisation are as follows:

The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1979: The Act covers only inter-state migrants recruited through middleman or contractor and those who employ five or more workers on any day. All migrants should be registered with employers/contractors employing them and be provided equal wages for inter-state migrant workmen performing similar nature of work as local labourers.

Minimum Wages Act of 1948: Under this Act, Central and State Governments fixed the minimum wage rate for all workers and in some cases those who are working at home as per the schedule of the Act. The minimum wage ranges from Rs.143 to Rs.120 per day for work in the so-called central sphere. The state government has their own minimum wage schedules.

Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1952: This Act seeks to ensure the financial security of the workers in an establishment by providing for a system of compulsory savings. The Act provides for the establishment of a contributory Provident Fund (CPF) for workers.

The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970: The Act regulates the employment of contract labour in certain establishments and provides for the abolition of certain kinds of circumstances of the workers. In case the work requiring the employment of contract labour is likely to continue for such period as may be prescribed, the contractor shall be provided and maintained for the use of the contract labour, such as restroom, for the worker or such other suitable alternative facilities should be afforded.

6. Conclusion

Migration has been significantly changing the social and economic structure of the rural communities. The livelihood activities of the rural families are no longer farming and agriculture activities. In order to develop the industries

and trades, awareness is generated by the mass Media. Hence, rural people are shifting towards the urban areas. The lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas and enormous employment prospects, infrastructure facilities in the urban areas stimulate people to migrate to the different parts of rural areas.

In the rural conditions Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a significant factor that has successfully controlled labour migration through the provision of locally available work in rural areas. But in spite of its successes, the programme has failed to control migration fully. The limited impact of MGNREGA partially stems from the misconception of labour migration as an outcome of poverty and not merely a produce of push and pull economic factors (Akthar and Azeez, 2012). Labour mobility is not driven solely by economic considerations; there are two sets of reasons why people still prefer to migrate; namely, social factors and evolving perceptions of modernity. The poor people have aspirations which are not restricted to survival. This programme has benefited those who have little or no access to positive migration opportunities, especially Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but is unlikely to succeed in curbing labour mobility significantly. It may be a good way to curb distress migration.

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