

Migration Patterns in India

1.1 Introduction

Davis (1963) argued that migration is an adjustment to deal with the depletion (or exhaustion) of local resources commonly caused by population increase. It may be a response to several push and pull factors.

Migration is now recognized as an important factor in influencing social and economic development, and is defined in many ways. The United Nations defines migrations as “...a move from one migration defining area to another, usually crossing administrative boundaries made during a given migration interval and involving a change or residence (United Nations, 1993). It includes movement within a country as well as between countries.

Advances in transport and communication, and growing urbanization and industrialization have significantly influenced the migration process (Lusome and Bhagat, 2006). A trend of large-scale movement of people from villages to town and towns to cities accompanies industrialization and economic development in most countries. Technology and economic opportunities have resulted in the flow of migrants in today's globalized world (Sultana and Fatima, 2017). This is the reason why migration has become a universal phenomenon in the recent decades.

Although migration flow may vary from country to country and region to region, the determinants of migration remain more or less the same. India has a long history of international as well as internal migration; however, the volume of migration is low with most people moving only within state boundaries (Bhagat, 2011; Bhagat, 2016).

Migration from India in Pre-Independence Era: Indians for a number of centuries had been emigrating to promote trade, political and religious links with several countries. The trends and implications of migration from India varied from time to time. The tradition of out-migration of Indians could be traced back to 268-231 B.C. when emperor Ashoka sent messengers across the world to spread the message of peace given by Lord Buddha (Sahai and Chand 2004:59). However, systematic migration flows from India to various parts of the world were noted during the last two centuries and the origin of modern-day emigration was started in the 18th century under the British rule. During colonial period, the process of international migration from India had entered into a new phase. The Britishers after abolishing slavery system in the Empire replaced black slave labour with the Indian labour to work on plantations and in mines. The first batch of unskilled Indian labourers was transported to Mauritius for sugar plantation. Afterwards, more such labour force was recruited on contract to work on tea, rubber, sugarcane and palm plantation and in mines. The countries where Indian labourers migrated were West Indian colonies, Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma (Naidu 1991:349; Dewal et al 2004: 53). Apart from labour migration to the British colonies, a big number of Indians was also migrated to the advanced industrial countries like United Kingdom (UK) in Europe in the early 19th century and to North America in the 20th century. About 30 million Indians were migrated to different parts of the world between 1800 and 1945. About 22 million of these were migrated to Sri Lanka, Burma and Malaysia; 420,000 to East Africa and Mauritius; 400,000 to the West Indies and Fiji; and 50,000 to United States of America (USA), U.K. and Canada (Nangia and Saha 2003:2; Sinha and Ataullah 1987:113). This emigration was male dominated and temporary in nature but with the advent of 20th century women were also started migrating in a considerable number and therefore, it became more of a permanent character.

1.2. Migration Trends and Patterns in India

1.2.1 Migration trends after independence of India

There were two noticeable migration streams in post-independence India. Initially, it was mostly forced in nature, a result of the partition of the country in 1947 because of which about 14.49 million people migrated involuntarily between India and Pakistan. The second movement was voluntary and was driven by the rapid growth of industries in the port cities of the country—Calcutta (Kolkata) and Bombay (Mumbai). Small and medium-sized industrial centers became dependent on unskilled labourers coming from the surrounding countryside. For example, the majority of the workers in the Jute Industry came from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh (Mukhopadhyay, 1987).

1.2.2 Recent Trends and Patterns

The decades of 1971-1981 and 1981-1991 were marked by severe economic crisis due to a lack of growth in the manufacturing sector, and increased prices of petroleum. Its impact was visible in all types of migration streams (Bhagat, 2011). With the beginning of liberalization of the Indian economy in 1991, policy makers, supporters of liberalization and its critics expected an increase in internal migration.

Observation of trends in the two decades of post-liberalization period showed that when economy began to recover in the first decade (1991-2001), there was a moderate increase in the rural-urban migration between the states. With the exception of urban to rural streams, other migration streams, especially rural to urban, maintained the growth trend (Table 1). The percentage of international migrants was 1.4 per cent in 1971, which lowered to 0.9 per cent in 1981. In the next decade, i.e. 1991 the percentage of international migrants was 0.7 per cent, which further lowered to 0.5 per cent in 2001.

Table 1: Size of internal and international migrants based on place of last residence, India, 1971-2001 (in millions)

Census	Total Population	Internal migrants	Percentage of Internal Migrants	International Migrants	Percentage of International Migrants	Percentage of total migrants to total population
1971	548.1	159.6	29.1	8.1	1.4	30.6
1981	659.3	200.5	30.4	6.0	0.9	31.3
1991	814.3	220.7	27.1	5.9	0.7	27.8
2001	991.8 (1028.6)	300.9 (309.3)	30.3 (30.0)	5.0 (5.1)	0.5 (0.4)	30.8 (30.4)

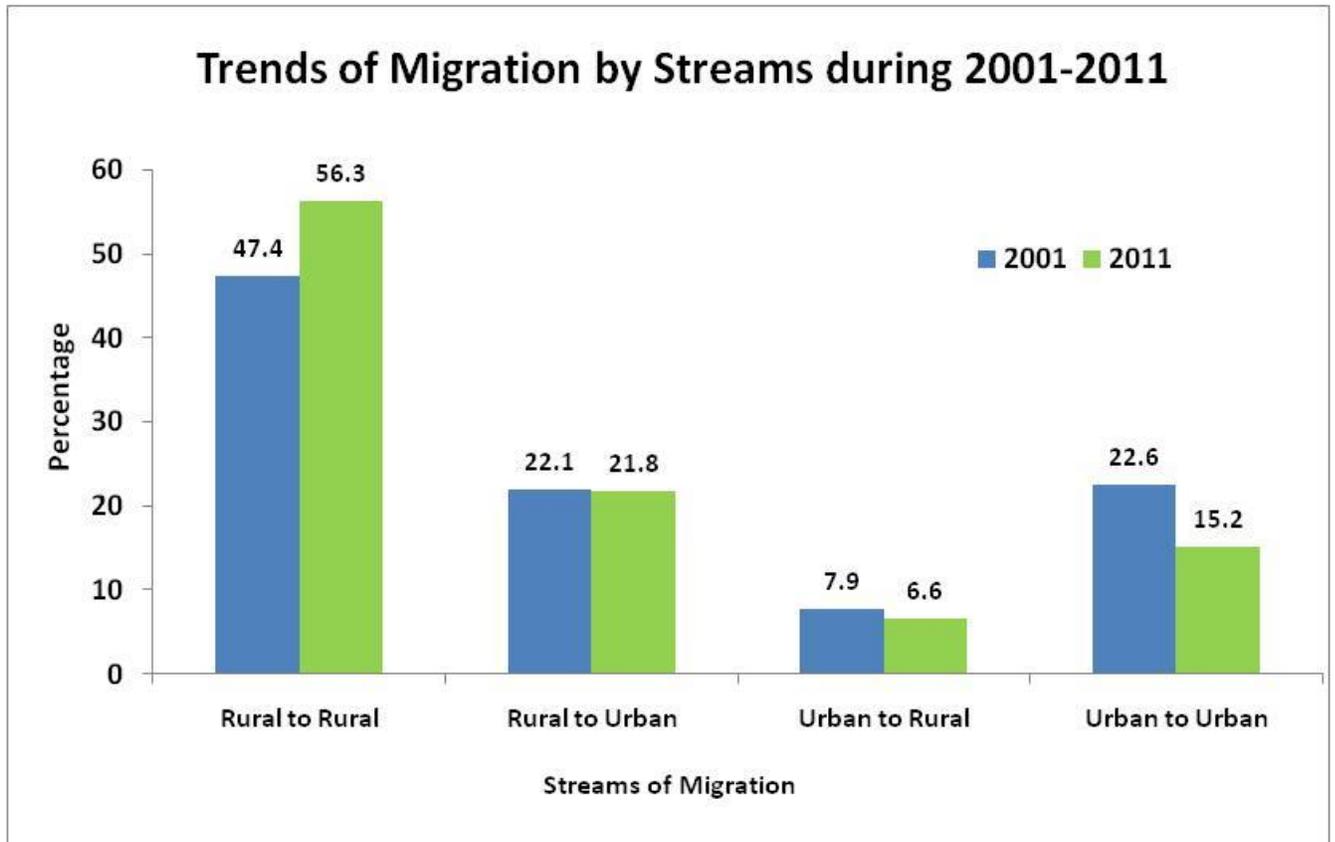
Source: Bhagat, 2009

Note: 1) The census was not held in Assam in 1981 and in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991. The figures for India from 1981 to 2001 exclude these two states. The figures for 2001 census including Assam and Jammu and Kashmir are given in parenthesis.

The second decade of economic reforms seemed to be less conducive to internal migration, according to migration data available in the 2011 Census. About 453.6 million persons (37.5 %) of the Indian population consist of migrants who settled in places of residence different from previous places of

residence (Census of India, 2011). In 2001, this figure was 314.5 million (30.6 %). It resulted in a significant increase of almost seven per cent in the last decade in the proportion of migrants. Additionally, we can also see a marginal growth in the rural to urban migration stream of 0.3 per cent; and a growth of 7.4 per cent in urban to urban stream of inter-state migration during 2001-2011 (Figure 1) (Census of India, 2011; Census of India, 2011).

Figure 1: Migration trends by streams during 2001-2011



Source: Census of India (2001-2011)

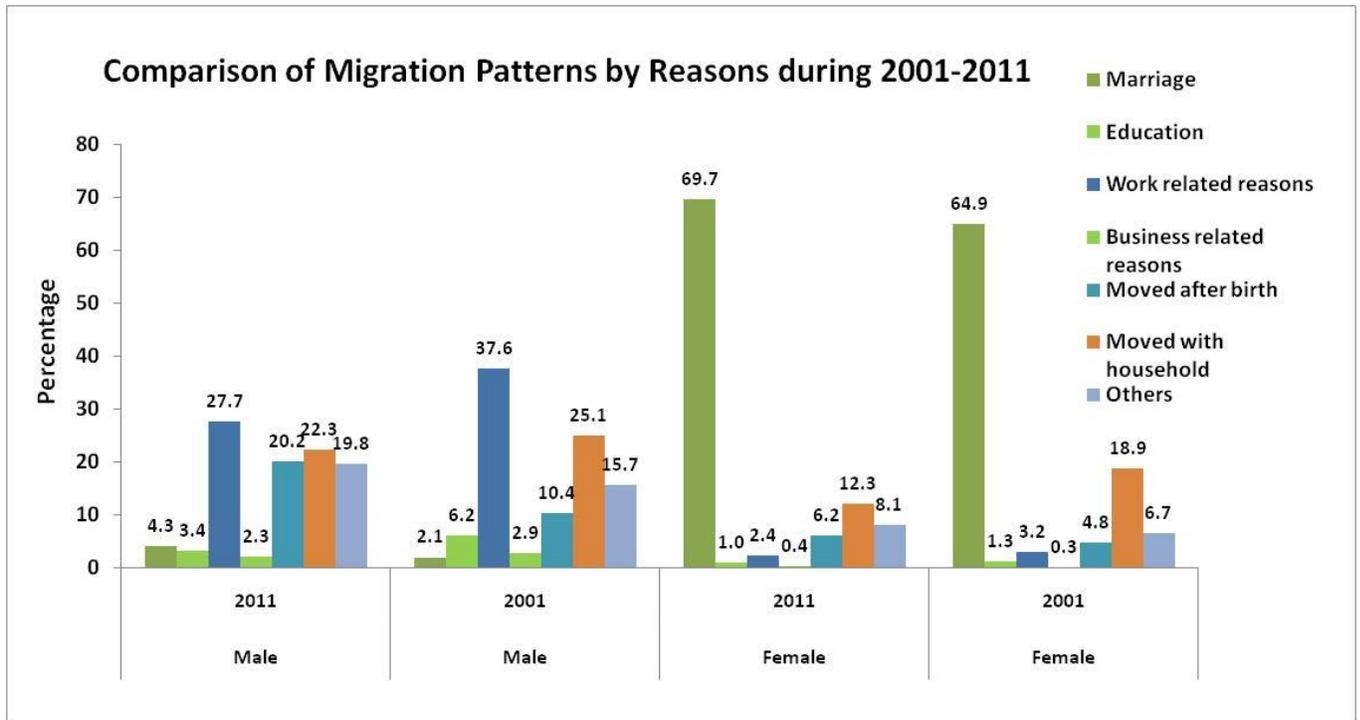
1.2.3 Reasons for Migration

The available data on reasons for migration are helpful for understanding the motivation for migration. The Indian census of 1981 had a question related to reasons of migration on the place of last residence (Lusome and Bhagat, 2006). In censuses of 2001 and 2011, the reasons for migration were classified into seven broad groups—work/employment, business, education, marriage, moved at birth, moved with family, and others. It is important to mention here that there is a significant decline in the number of Indians migrating for work or employment-related reasons—from 14.4 percent in 2001 to 10.2 per cent as per census 2011 (Figure 2). A plausible reason may be due to the effect of employment guarantee schemes of government like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA); however, this is yet to be studied.

In 2011, most of the migrants (about 71 per cent) were females. The dominant reason for migration (49 per cent) was marriage. Interestingly, 69.7 per cent women migrated due to marriage in 2011, which is almost four percentage points higher than what was reported in the previous census in 2001 (65.9 %). It is

also important to stress here that employment or work-related migration declined among women also—from 3.2 per cent in 2001 to 2.4 per cent in 2011 (Census of India, 2001; Census of India, 2011).

Figure 2: Comparison of Migration Patterns by reasons during 2001-2011



Source: Census of India (2001-2011)

1.2.4 Regional pattern in migration

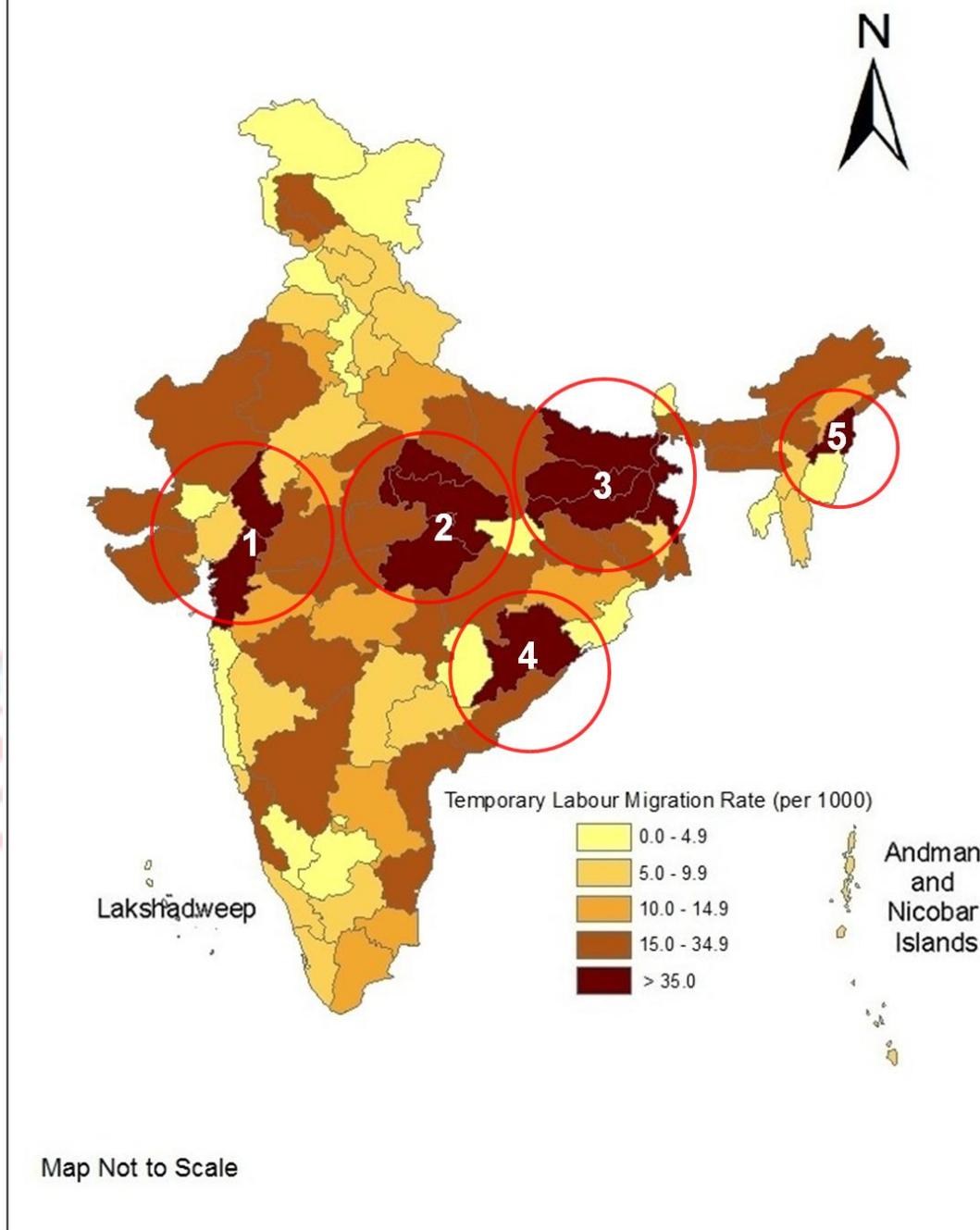
According to Census 2001, net migration based on the last residence of migrants, it was found that during 1991-2001, Maharashtra was ranked highest with 2.3 million net-migrants, followed by Delhi (1.7 million), Gujarat (0.68 million) and Haryana (0.67 million). On the other hand, Uttar Pradesh (-2.6 million) and Bihar (-1.7 million) were the two states with largest number of net out-migrants.

There is no doubt that inter-state mobility increased considerably during 1991-2001, coinciding with the start of India's economic liberalization in 1991. Figure 3 shows the net migration flow at state level, and with duration 0-9 years based on the place of last residence in the 2001 census. Net in-migration is mostly found in developed states like Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi where the pull factors are stronger. These states attract populations from nearly all states. On the other hand, most of the other states experienced net out-migration. However, not all of these, as exemplified by Kerala, are the 'poor' states (Bhagat, 2009).

Figure 4: Pattern of Temporary Labour Migration in India according to National Sample Survey, 2007-08.



Temporary Labour Migration Rate (per 1000 population)
according to National Sample Survey Regions, India, 2007 - 08



Source: Keshri and Bhagat, 2013

There were 13,076,510 temporary labour migrants in the year preceding 2007–08 (reference period of the 64th round of the survey) and the migration rate at the national level was found to be 20 migrants per

thousand (NSS, 2001-2008). Migration rate in the rural areas was considerably higher (26.4 per 1000) than that in urban areas (5.5 per 1000). The regional pattern of temporary labour migration shows that it occurs over a vast geographical spread in diverse socioeconomic environment and it is more or less predominant in the interior parts of the country (see Figure 4). Close look at the map (Figure 4) shows that there are five pockets of very high prevalence (>35 migrants per 1000) of temporary labour migration as by the darkest shade:

1. The southern region of Rajasthan and south-eastern region of Gujarat,
2. The southern region of Uttar Pradesh, and Vindhya and southern regions of Madhya Pradesh,
3. The largest pocket of temporary migration in India lies in the eastern India consisting of northern and southern regions of Bihar; Hazaribagh Plateau of Jharkhand; and, eastern plains of West Bengal,
4. The south-eastern part in southern Orissa,
5. Nagaland represents the last centre of high prevalence of temporary labour migration.

It is necessary to understand that temporary labour migration is a crucial survival strategy for India's rural. Its prevalence is highest in the country's northern and eastern states. It may also be inferred that temporary labour migration in India is largely distress-driven. Poor people migrate from backward regions for employment regardless of the state's level of economic development.

1.4. Summing up

We have seen that internal migration in India has been historically; however, it increased significantly in the last decade. Employment-related migration has declined among both male and female members of the population. It is important to note that migration due to marriage is the dominant characteristics of women's migration. But it is also necessary to note that women dominate in all forms of migration, particularly in rural to rural migration.

We have also observed that temporary labour migration is an important survival strategy of the rural poor in India. Such migration is more prevalent in the country's northern and eastern states, and its character is different from permanent or semi-permanent migration in the country.

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