

The Human Migration in 21st Century India: Intensity, Trends, Flow and Opportunities for Economic Development of Migrants

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KEYWORDS Internal Mobility. Determinants. Poverty. Regional Inequality. Remittances

ABSTRACT Migration has been an inherent part of human existence since the dawn of human civilisation, shaped by numerous socio-economic factors. Since 1991 India has been experiencing an upsurge in migration, largely affecting urbanisation, social transformation and economic development of the country. The objective of the present study is to analyse spatial-temporal variation in trends, pattern, and reasons for migration, and its impact on society. Based on secondary sources of information and simple statistical methods, the study finds that increasing trends of migration in the country are closely related to the liberalisation of the economy. Excluding marriage-related migration, migration is mainly a male dominated, employment oriented and long distance phenomena. Given the spatial variation in economic development, people migrate from under-developed regions to developed regions to improve their living conditions. Migration is a livelihood strategy for majority of the people and therefore, it should be viewed in the context of regional disparity in economic development.

INTRODUCTION

Human migration is the movement of people from one geographical location to another, either for short-time stay or permanent settlement at a new location that can be voluntary or involuntary. People may migrate to another country (international migration) or within a country (internal migration), as an individual, with family members, friends or in large groups. Migration is as old as human history and has been one of the foremost sources of human survival, growth and adaptation through centuries and millennia (UNDP 2009; World Bank (WB) 2016). In the early stage of civilisation, people migrated either to collect natural products or for hunting purposes or to avoid unfavourable climates/terrains or due to overcrowding. Later, it was overtaken by search for green pastures in the pastoral stage, for fertile agricultural land in the agricultural stage (Sinha 1987), and for raw material and availability of employment opportunities in industrial and post-industrial stages. In the contemporary world, migration is widely recognised as one of the major mechanisms of development that has been contributing significantly to the other processes of development, such as urbanisation, industrialisation, redistribution of human resources, cultural diffusion and social integration.

There are numerous socio-cultural, religious, political, and environmental motivating factors that have been playing a significant role in the process of migration across the countries and within a country. Globally, the scale of migration has increased in line with recent political, economical and environmental trends. Few best examples are, the internal displacement and international migration for asylum/refugee of millions of people due to conflict/war in the countries like the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Yemen, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, distress migration of millions of Rohingya for safety in Bangladesh because of religion based extreme violence in Burma, severe economic and political instability caused internal and external mobility in Venezuelans, and large-scale displacement triggered by natural hazards and disaster in the countries like Philippines, China, India and the USA in 2018 and 2019 (IOM 2019). As a result of these on-going social, economic, political and environmental phenomena, the number of migrants has been increasing tremendously worldwide from the last few decades.

Though, migration is on the rise, a very small proportion of the population migrates across borders, and majority of them prefer to stay within one's country of birth. Globally, internal

migration is much higher (four times higher) than the international migration (IOM 2019). India is no exception, the phenomena of migration in the country is mainly dominated by internal migrants. According to an estimate made by the Census of India 2011, the number of internal migrants in the country is 450 million, whereas the number of international migrants is 7.8 million. Compared to the percentage of migrants in the total population, the internal migrants account for thirty-seven percent of the total population and the international migrants constitute 0.67 percent of the total population. The country has been experiencing a rapid increase in the phenomena of migration, especially after 1991, closely related to the economic development policies and programmes. The new economic policy popularly known as 'Liberalisation of Economy' has steadily widened the gap between agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, and between rural and urban areas, as economic development programmes are progressively concentrated in a few areas/states. The increasing spatial inequalities in economic opportunities, and widening gap in living standards between sectors and areas, are fuelling the phenomena of migration in the country from the last few decades. As a result, masses of unemployed, underemployed, skilled and unskilled, educated and uneducated people from all socio-economic backgrounds of backward and poor regions are moving towards developed and prosperous regions, as their source regions fail to give them minimum sustainable employment opportunities (Mishra 2016; Kumar 2017; Manning 2020). The on-going phenomena of migration in the country can be considered instrumental in maintaining the balance between the population distribution and utilisation of resources, and have the potential to reduce the gap in socio-economic status between regions and areas through the remittances. Remittances that are sent by the migrants to their families or communities can help to evade poverty, stabilise or improve their living conditions, and determine the socio-economic development of society. Therefore, it is worth to analyse the phenomena of internal migration in the country in a comprehensive manner mainly for two reasons. Firstly, the strong heterogeneity across states in their levels of economic development and demographic characteristics, and secondly, the enormous implications of this phenomena in the socio-economic development of

the society. Earlier studies (Oberai 1983; Cashin 1996; Chan 2013; Rao 2015; Mishra 2016) have also identified the significant role of migration in the pattern of economic growth and social development in the source areas along with the development of the migrants' household. These studies further suggest that if this phenomenon were to be supported by appropriate policies and programmes, it could be beneficial for the source region and the region of destination, and can also benefit migrants and their families. This new "development mantra" considers migration as an opportunity rather than a negative outcome of poverty and deprivation (Kapur 2005). The question is how and to what extent migration has been playing this role in India.

A substantial body comprising researchers and policy makers has discussed the various aspects of the phenomena of migration, and recent and relevant studies highlighting the emerging trend, changing reasons for migration and implication of migration have been taken into consideration to identify the research gap. A study about the migrants in Delhi conducted by Premi (2001) highlights the role of the pull factor of urban centre on the flow of migrants. He found that eighty-five percent of the migrants in Delhi are mainly from neighbouring states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan and Punjab, and it is mainly employment oriented rural to urban migration. Deshingkar in her study (2004) identified temporary or seasonal migration as the main nature of migration in the country. She further emphasised that this type of migration helps migrants to improve their living condition through remittances. In her another study (2010) she documented high migration rate among extremely poor, who live in remote rural areas. She further explained that migration cannot make these poor non-poor, but due to this phenomena their socio-economic status, expenditure pattern and standard of living can improve. Bhagat (2009) in his study finds an increasing trend of internal migration during the 1990s and growing rate of inter-state migration instead of intra-state migration in the country. He identifies a significant relationship between spatial disparity in economic development and direction of flow of migrants, and insignificant relationship between poverty and out-migration. Further, he emphasised on the positive and strong

relationship between higher monthly per capita expenditure and migration rates at the national as well as state level. Shukla and Sanjay (2010) relate rural-urban migration with unequal economic development and the apathetic attitude of the government and development agencies. They further argue that the employment oriented rural-urban migration is causing serious social and environmental issues. Jayaraj (2013) made an attempt to provide an account of family migration and suggested that both, the growth theory ("Pull") and Third World urbanisation ("Push") versions play a significant role in explaining family migration. Chandrasekhar and Sharma (2015) tried to relate urbanisation with migration and highlighted that uneven development throughout the country is responsible for unequal trend and pattern of migration. Further, they identified a flow of migrants, especially from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to Haryana and Maharashtra and suggested planned development of rural areas to pace with modernisation and industrialisation to reduce the detrimental effects of uneven migration on a variety of services. Bhagat (2017) emphasised on the positive aspects of migration, mainly its potential to improve human development through reducing poverty, environmental and economic shocks, and improving income, health, and education of the migrants' family. He explained that the emerging pattern of migration in the country is not simply a rural to urban transfer of populations, but a complex process of changes in the characteristics of human settlements.

Most of these studies mainly focus on reasons, trends, patterns and impact of migration. Therefore, it is imperative to study the economic gains from the migration in the form of remittances and its impact on socio-economic conditions at the household level along with the changing trends and patterns of migration in a spatial-temporal manner.

Objectives

Considering these points the main objective of the present study is to provide an overview of key issues relating to changing characteristics of internal migration mainly the patterns, trends, reasons and flow of migration in spatial-temporal manner at the national as well as state level along

with the historical background of internal migration in the country. In addition to that, an attempt has been made to provide a discussion on the role of migration as a livelihood strategy with particular reference to the number, amount and the expenditure of remittances at the household level. By providing an overview of information on migration, the present study will enhance the understanding of internal migration across the economically developed and backward states in a comparative manner that may assist researchers in making better sense of the migration and its associate prospects and consequences.

METHODOLOGY

To understand changes in scale, emerging trends and shifting demographics, and to identify policy priorities for informed decisions, reliable data is very much crucial. The data for the present study is procured from secondary sources. While the migration data for the country is not as comprehensive or as recent as needed to see the whole picture of the emerging trend. So, various reports published by national and international bodies have been considered for the detailed information such as *Report of the Working Group on Migration 2017*, *World Migration Report 2020*, *Workshop Papers and National Sample Survey (NSS) Report* (MHU 2017; IOM 2019; ICSSR 2011; NSS 2010). Data pertaining to trend, pattern, and flow of migrants has been principally drawn from the decennial population census and the information about remittance has been obtained from the NSS report (R.N.533). Although, it is difficult to compare the NSS data with the census data, but the census does not provide the data about remittances. However, the NSS data can give an idea of the impact of migration on the society. For the analysis, the census of India's definition of a migrant has been considered that defines a migrant 'as a person residing in a place other than his/her place of birth (place of birth definition) or one who has changed his/her usual place of residence to another place (change in usual place of residence or UPR definition)'. The present work is descriptive in nature. So, the procured data has been tabulated and the percentage and growth rate have been calculated to infer valuable information about this phenomena.

Migration in India: A Historical Perspective

To make a comprehensive analysis of migration in India, it is very important to analyse the historical background of this phenomena. The country has a long history of migration, which shaped its tradition and culture, distribution of settlement and pattern of economic development. The numerous historical records show that initially Indians were migrating in groups for spreading the teaching of their religion and for trade (McNeill 1984). According to a study, the Indians first time out-migrated across the world around 268-231 B.C., when emperor Ashoka sent them to spread the teachings of Lord Buddha. Apart from it, in ancient and medieval India, people were also migrating within the country, mainly to great urban centres of that time such as *Patliputra, Mathura, Vaishali, Kaushambi, Ujjain* and many more. These urban centres were the pull factor for the majority of the migrants, and the resultant largely determined the internal mobility of the people (Sharma 2006). A significant increase in internal mobility of the people was observed during the Moghal era. The Moghal emperors during their military expeditions used to set out at several strategic locations with their soldiers and the large number of people. Such military expeditions not only formed temporary cities, but also increased the internal mobility of the people (Nehru 2004). The systematic migration in the country was noted during the British era. During the colonial period, the international migration of labour started. They were recruited to work in plantation farms and in mines in countries like South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, and Burma (Bhagat 2015). Apart from the labour migration to the British colonies, a large number of Indians also migrated to the advanced industrial countries, mainly to the United Kingdom in Europe in the 19th century, and to the North America in early 20th century. When it comes to the internal mobility during the British period, the movement of people was voluntary and mainly driven by economic and political factors. The British ruler developed industrial pockets in and around the port cities for trade, namely Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai). These three newly emerged port centres, along with Delhi as a capital city, reshaped the inter-regional

migration in the country. Apart from these strategic cities, many hill stations and cantonment cities were developed and popularised during this period that also played a significant role in internal mobility of the people during the late 19th and early 20th century. Around the middle of the 20th century, the country experienced a different kind of migration pattern closely related to the independence and the resultant partition of the country. It was basically involuntary in nature, lead to the displacement of about 14 million people between India and Pakistan (Dyson and Visaria 2004).

In the post-independence period two different trends of migration have been dominating the phenomena of international migration. The first one is, *Migration to the Developed Countries* that is in the early 1950s, engineers, scientists, doctors and technical workers, started to migrate to developed countries of the west. However, with the dawn of globalisation, the migratory flows increased to these countries and to also other developed countries like Australia, Germany, New Zealand Malaysia and Japan. The second one is, *Migration to the Middle East*, that is, the oil producing rich countries of the Middle East mainly Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE emerged during the 1970s as the most favourable destinations. Apart from Gulf countries, South East Asia and East Asian countries also emerged as new alluring countries. These two trends are still going on with positive and negative growth in the number of migrants in different decadal years. When it comes to internal mobility, the influence of three port cities along with Delhi in reinforcing regional pattern of population mobility has also been continued in independent India. Industries are flourishing in and around these cities and employment opportunities are concentrated in these cities, which are the great attraction for the people of economically backward regions. In general, regional disparities are widening in independent India and shaping the inter-state migration patterns gravitating towards the nuclei created by the colonial cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai along with Delhi.

RESULTS

Traditionally, Indians have been considered less mobile. But the latest data about this

phenomenon is showing a different picture. According to an estimate made by UN (2020), about 17.5 million people of Indian origin residing in other countries account for 6.4 percent of all international immigrants, and India has the largest share among all nations. Apart from the international migration, the country has also been experiencing phenomenal increase in the phenomena of 'inter-state' and 'intra-state' migration. According to the census of 2011, there are 454 million migrants in India, risen by 139 million, from 315 million in 2001 and 220 million in 1991, a doubling over the period of three decades (1991-2011). In terms of percentage, it has increased from 27.4 percent (1991) to 29.86 percent (2001) to 37.64 percent (2011), thereby recording the highest growth rate of about twenty-six percent during 2001-2011. As it can be seen from Table 1 that an incremental change is occurring in the percentage of migrant population since 1991 after showing a consecutively declining trend during 1961-1971, 1971-1981 and 1981-1991. Considering the major types of migration (internal and international migration) in the country, the data depicts that it is mainly the internal migration that has been dominating the trend of migration in the country. The number of internal migrants in India is estimated to be around 450 million as per the most recent 2011 census. This is an increase of forty-five percent over the 309 million in 2001, and in terms of percentage, it has increased from thirty percent in 2001 to thirty-seven percent in 2011. The share of internal migration in the total migrant population has been recorded between ninety-five and ninety-eight percent in different decadal years, whereas the percentage of international migra-

tion has been observed to be fluctuating between two and five percent. When comparing the share of internal migrants to the total population, it is clear from Table 1 that the highest growth rate has been observed during 2001-2011. Infact, it is highest (26.4%) for any decade since independence, followed by 11.17 percent and negative 11.4 percent during 1991-2001 and 1981-1991, respectively. In a similar fashion, the number of international migrants has also increased by 30.6 percent during 2001-2011 after recording negative growth rate for three decades consecutively. The declining trend of international migrants was observed for the first time in 1981, when the number of migrants was reduced by 2 million, from 8.1 million in 1971 to 6 million in 1981. In terms of the contribution to total population, it declined from 1.4 percent (1971) to 0.9 percent (1981). In the next two decades, it further declined to 0.7 percent in 1991 and 0.5 percent in 2001.

Migration streams in India differ in duration, origin, destination and migrant characteristics. Over time, the census of India shows that rural to rural migration has been the dominant stream of migration in terms of volume of migration, despite being recorded a negative growth rate of 18.77 percent during 2001-2011. The share of this stream of migration has been observed to decline from fifty-five percent in 2001 to forty-six percent in 2011. A cursory look at the data from the census 2011 (Table 2) indicates that employment is the primary driver of migration, but the share of people migrating for work and business has been depicting a declining trend, recorded negative twenty-two percent growth rate during 2001-2011. It is surprising that the counter stream,

Table 1: Size of internal and international migrants based on place of last residence, India, 1961-2011 (in millions)

<i>Census</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Total migrants</i>	<i>Internal migrants</i>	<i>% internal migrants</i>	<i>International migrants</i>	<i>% of international migrants</i>	<i>% of migrants to total population</i>
2011	1,210.9	455.8	448.0	36.99	7.8	0.64	37.64
2001	1,028.6	307.1	300.9	29.25	5.0	0.49	29.86
1991	838.8	230.0	220.7	26.31	5.9	0.70	27.42
1981	683.8	203.5	200.5	29.32	6.0	0.89	29.76
1971	548.2	166.8	159.6	29.11	8.1	1.48	30.43
1961	439.2	144.8	139.1	31.67	5.7	1.30	32.97

Source: Census of India

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.

which is urban-to rural migration, has recorded a positive growth rate of about twenty percent during the same period of observation. The share of this stream has increased from 6.6 percent in 2001 to 7.9 percent in 2011, experiencing the second highest growth rate after urban to urban migration. Urban to urban migration, which constitutes about 15.2 percent of the total migrant population in 2001, witnessed a jump of almost twenty-three percent in 2011, experiencing the most remarkable growth of 48.6 percent between 2001 and 2011. A cursory look at the data from the census 2011 (Table 2) indicates that rural to rural migration is the dominant stream of migration in the country followed by urban to urban, rural to urban and urban to rural. These respective streams have accounted for 47.4 percent, 22.6 percent, 22.1 percent and 7.9 percent of the migration, respectively. Among the reasons for migration, marriage has been the primary driver of migration, especially for female migrants, but the share of the people migrating because of this reason has declined considerably from 44.4 percent to 39.1 percent during 2001-2011. Traditionally, migration for employment has been considered an important reason for migration, but it has also declined by 18.1 percent during 2001-2011. Apart from this trend at the country level, when it comes to the state it is clearly visible from Table 3 that employment has been the main reason for migration for the majority of the people from Odisha (30.49%), Bihar (30.38%), Uttar Pradesh (30.3%), Himachal Pradesh (26.6%), Kerala (24.7%), Assam (24.4%), and West Bengal (24.3%). Business has been identified as a significant reason for migration, especially in Haryana (8.88%), Tripura (5.8%), Rajasthan (3.89%), Assam (3.2%), and Manipur (2.9%). Migration for education is mainly prevalent in the northeast states, namely Manipur (12.7%), Arunachal Pradesh (10.39%), Sikkim (7.66%),

Nagaland (6%), Mizoram (5.6%), Meghalaya (4.18%) and Tripura (3.09%). Marriage has been the most significant reason for migration in the country, but it varies differently in different states. The highest percentage of people migrating because of marriage has been observed in the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli (52.56%), closely followed by Haryana (47.89%), Jharkhand (47.7%), Madhya Pradesh (44.36%), Chhattisgarh (37.9%), Punjab (37.38%), Daman and Diu (36.2%), Rajasthan (36.6%) and West Bengal (32.63%). There are also a large number of people who migrated with the households, and the majority of them are in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (44.25%) Punjab (37.38%), Nagaland (35.77%), the NCT of Delhi (32.63%) and Arunachal Pradesh (32.3%). 'Other' as a reason for migration has been mainly observed in union territories, namely Lakshadweep (60%), Mizoram (56.5%), Jammu and Kashmir (35.89%), Goa (21.36%) and Andaman and Nicobar Islands (22.8%). 'Moved after birth' as a reason for migration is mainly observed in Pondicherry (36.2%), Daman and Diu (14.6%), Goa (12.27%), Karnataka (11.1%), Gujarat (9.88%), Maharashtra (8.9%) and Kerala (8.02%). Table 4 provides details of the average number of time remittances sent by the out-migrants and amount of remittances (in INR 00) during the last 365 days, at the all-India level. It has been found that on an average an out-migrant from rural areas, irrespective of whether the place of destination is in India or abroad, remitted five times with the average amount of INR 16,800 each time during the last 365 days. Out-migrants from the rural areas and residing in India remitted INR 13,000 compared to INR 57,800 by those residing abroad in the same frequency (5 times in a year). The frequency of remittances, for both, residing in India and abroad from the urban areas is slightly higher (6 times in 365 days). The out-migrants

Table 2: Stream and reason wise flows of internal migrants in India

Categories	Work & business		Education		Marriage		Family related		Others		Total	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Rural to Rural	9.3	6.4	1.9	2.7	61.2	59.0	19.4	24.1	8.3	7.7	56.3	47.4
Rural to Urban	29.9	24.3	4.9	4.8	21.8	22.4	34.5	40.6	8.8	7.9	21.8	22.1
Urban to Rural	14.5	8.9	3.0	2.7	28.1	25.5	42.9	55.6	11.4	7.3	6.6	7.9
Urban to Urban	21.8	17.5	4.3	3.4	21.9	18.4	42.6	47.9	9.5	12.9	15.2	22.6
Total	16.0	13.1	3.0	3.3	44.4	39.1	27.8	35.6	8.8	8.9	100	100

Source: Census of India, D2 Table; Census of India 2011, Provisional D5 Table

Table 3: Size of internal migrants based on all duration of residence and reasons for migration India, 2011

States	Reasons for migration						
	Work/ Employment	Business	Education	Marriage	Moved with households	Others	Moved after birth
Jammu & Kashmir	14.79	1.03	2.83	18.3	24.97	35.89	2.37
Himachal Pradesh	26.6	0.76	2.38	30.78	24.29	16.50	4.59
Punjab	16.39	1.39	1.28	37.38	37.38	12.33	5.42
Uttarakhand	23.26	0.66	1.48	33.6	27.4	11.5	1.8
Haryana	13.41	8.88	1.05	47.89	21.63	10.76	4.03
NCT of Delhi	5.83	1.36	1.4	27.92	34.8	15.34	3.24
Rajasthan	17.75	3.89	0.89	36.6	22.06	13.69	5.06
Uttar Pradesh	30.3	1.14	1.04	24.09	26.9	12.85	2.8
Bihar	30.38	1.96	1.58	24.39	26.59	12.74	2.33
Sikkim	14.1	1.36	7.66	35.16	20.85	19.7	1.8
Arunachal Pradesh	12.4	1.3	10.39	21.9	32.3	19.77	2.1
Nagaland	14.08	2.36	6.0	20.7	35.77	18.46	2.59
Manipur	22.06	2.9	12.7	12.4	31.4	17.6	1.19
Mizoram	8.2	0.65	5.6	7.04	21.3	56.5	0.57
Tripura	16.26	5.8	3.09	30.15	27.09	16.29	1.26
Meghalaya	15.38	2.09	4.18	32.63	27.6	16.3	1.7
Assam	24.4	3.2	2.3	25.3	27.14	15.6	1.9
West Bengal	24.3	1.8	1.1	38.8	19.72	11.72	2.3
Jharkhand	19.85	1.09	1.77	47.7	16.03	11.5	1.9
Odisha	30.49	0.97	1.02	31.25	18.87	14.3	3.05
Chhattisgarh	22.5	0.76	1.27	37.9	22.4	11.62	3.4
Madhya Pradesh	17.9	0.85	1.0	44.36	19.9	11.63	4.2
Gujarat	16	2.5	1.55	29.57	21.9	18.46	9.88
Daman & Diu	10.33	1.59	1.16	36.2	17.9	18.12	14.6
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	7.8	1.07	1.83	52.56	14.25	16.2	6.14
Maharashtra	15.13	1.66	0.87	32.8	23.2	17.3	8.9
Andhra Pradesh	20.74	1.39	1.87	31.2	22.17	16.89	5.6
Karnataka	17.26	1.0	0.95	33.69	18.8	17.02	11.1
Goa	15.5	0.84	2.66	24.9	22.4	21.36	12.27
Lakshadweep	5.7	0.38	4.03	14.3	12.45	60.0	2.45
Kerala	24.7	1.48	4.8	20.9	22.6	17.3	8.02
Tamil Nadu	23.8	2.03	1.19	26.09	23.9	16.5	6.37
Pondicherry	4.8	0.28	0.85	23.05	11.9	22.8	36.2
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	13.1	0.67	5.64	13.35	44.25	18.4	4.6

Source: Calculated from census of India 2011, D-3 Table (migrants by place of last residence, duration of residence and reason for migration – 2011)

residing in India remitted INR 26,300, compared to INR 35,100 remittances sent by those residing abroad. It is also observed that the out-migrants from the urban areas remitted a higher amount during the last 365 days, compared to those from rural areas. On an average, during the last 365 days, an out-migrant residing in India remitted INR 14,600, whereas those residing abroad sent INR 57,100 and in total they remitted INR 19,600 with the same frequency (5 times in a year). It is clear

from Table 4 that the amount of remittances sent by the out-migrants residing abroad was substantially higher than the amount sent by those residing in India. Table 5 makes it clear that the amount of remittances India received through international migration has also been increasing with the passage of time. India was in third position in 2005 with the amount of USD 22.13 billions, but after the short period of five years, it reached the first position in 2010 and retained the position in 2015 and in 2018

Table 4: Average frequency of remittances (no.) amount of remittance (rs.00) and uses of remittances by out- migrants during the last 365 days

Category of out migrant	Present place of residence of the out-migrant					
	India		Another country		All	
	Frequency of remittances	Remittance per out-migrant	Frequency of remittances	Remittance per out-migrant	Frequency of remittances	Remittance per out-migrant
Rural- Person	5	130	5	578	5	168
Urban-Person	6	263	6	351	6	369
All-Person	5	146	5	571	5	196
<i>A. For Household Consumer</i>	<i>Rural</i>		<i>Urban</i>		<i>All</i>	
1. Food item	756		713		750	
2. Education	305		335		310	
3. Household durable	203		189		201	
4. Marriage and other ceremony	48		36		46	
5. Health	377		355		374	
6. Other item of household consumer expenditure	455		427		451	
Sub total (srl. 1 to 6)	948		930		946	
7. For improving housing condition	91		64		87	
8. Debt repayment	103		90		102	
9. Financing working capital	11		10		11	
10. Initiating new entrepreneurial activity	3		2		3	
11. Saving/investment	54		126		64	
Others	56		54		56	
12. Any (incl. n.r.)	1000		1000		1000	

Source: NSS Report 2007-08

with the amount of USD 53.48, USD 68.91 and USD 78.61 billions, respectively. When it comes to the expenditure of remittances, it is clear from Table 4 that the households have been using remittances for one or more specific purposes. Nearly ninety-five percent of the households in the rural areas and ninety-three percent of the households in the urban areas have been using remittances for the purposes of household consumer expenditure. Among all the components of household consumer expenditure, use of remittances 'on food items' is

found to be very high as a very high proportion of the households, almost seventy-six percent in the rural areas, and seventy-one percent in the urban areas reported that expenditure. Use of remittances for 'health care' came next to the food item, as nearly thirty-eight percent of the rural households and thirty-six percent of the urban households had used the remittances for this purpose. 'Education of household members' also featured as one of the main uses of remittances and a significant proportion of households in both the rural and urban areas

Table 5: Top countries receiving remittances (2005–2018) (current USD billions)

2005		2010		2015		2018	
Name	Amount	Name	Amount	Name	Amount	Name	Amount
China	23.63	India	53.48	India	68.91	India	78.61
Mexico	22.74	China	52.46	China	63.94	China	67.41
India	22.13	Mexico	22.08	Philippines	29.80	Mexico	35.66
Nigeria	14.64	Philippine	21.56	Mexico	26.23	Philippines	33.83
France	14.21	France	19.90	France	24.06	Egypt	28.92

Source: IOM 2019

(nearly 31% of the rural households and 34% of the urban households spend their remittances for this purpose. The next important purposes for which remittances used are 'debt repayment' for rural households (10% of the rural households) and 'saving/investment' for the urban households (nearly 13% of the urban households).

DISCUSSION

Few international researches in the past considered Indians less mobile. According to them, this is so because of the predominance of agricultural based rural society, semi-feudal land relations, a rigid caste system, preference for joint families, the practice of traditional norms and values, and diversity of language and culture. But the latest data about migration is showing a different picture. According to an estimate made by UN (2020), about 17.5 million people of Indian origin are residing in other countries, and constitute 6.4 percent of all international immigrants, the largest share among all nations. In general, the migration in India is predominantly an 'inter-state' or 'intra-state' phenomenon, and indicating an increasing trend among the people to stay within the country is overwhelmingly the norm. This finding is in accordance with the study conducted by Srivastava (2011). He finds internal migration as a dominant form of migration in the country. Coming to the declining trend of international migration in the country during 1981-2001, the severe economic crisis globally, namely lack of growth in the manufacturing sector, and increased prices of petroleum may be the reasons for this trend. Due to this, the demand for manpower in different sectors of the economy was also reduced considerably (Bhagat 2011). The increasing trend during 2001-2011 has been attributed to increasing job opportunities due to economic growth and reform policies, trade liberalisation and long-term stability in the countries of destination (IOM 2019).

Concerning the determinants of the internal mobility of people in the country, a phenomenal increase in the trend of mobility has been observed since 1991, which is closely related to the pattern of economic growth in the country. Under the current trend of liberalisation, privatising and globalisation, the economic development policies are encouraging agglomeration economies in and around the pre-existing growth centres

and investment of capital, growth efforts, and establishment of production units in and around developed regions. Industries are concentrated in a few areas and in a few states, giving way to spatial inequalities in economic opportunities, and widening the gap between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors and between rural and urban areas. Developed states are becoming more prosperous and poor states are becoming poorer. Economic inequality accompanied by the availability of information and increasing means of transportation, encourages masses of unemployed and underemployed people to move from the poor and economically backward regions to prosperous and advanced regions. The relationship between the increasing trend of migration and economic development has also been highlighted by Srivastava (2016), Kundu (2009) and Mukherji (2013) in their studies.

Migration streams in India differ in duration, origin, destination and migrant characteristics (Fig. 1). The census of India has classified internal migration into four streams, that is, rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-rural and urban-urban based on the nature of place of birth and place of enumeration. Among the different streams of migration, rural-rural migration has been the dominant stream of migration in the country. This stream is mainly characterised by the predominance of female migrants, attributed to patriarchal residence after marriage (marriage migration is when a female has to move from her parents' residence to the residence of her in-laws). Apart from marriage, the other reasons of rural-rural migration in the country are demand for labour in newly reclaimed agricultural areas, casual employment opportunities at the construction site of roads, railway and buildings, and the availability of other miscellaneous jobs in various developmental projects during the lean agricultural season. It has also been realised in earlier studies that people tend to migrate from a densely populated area of low productivity to sparsely populated areas characterised by developmental activities (Gosal and Krishnan 1975 as quoted in Premi 1990; Bhagat 2006). Recently, it has been observed that despite being a dominant stream of migration, it is showing a declining trend. The on-going declining trend may be due to employment guarantee schemes of government like the Mahatma Gandhi National

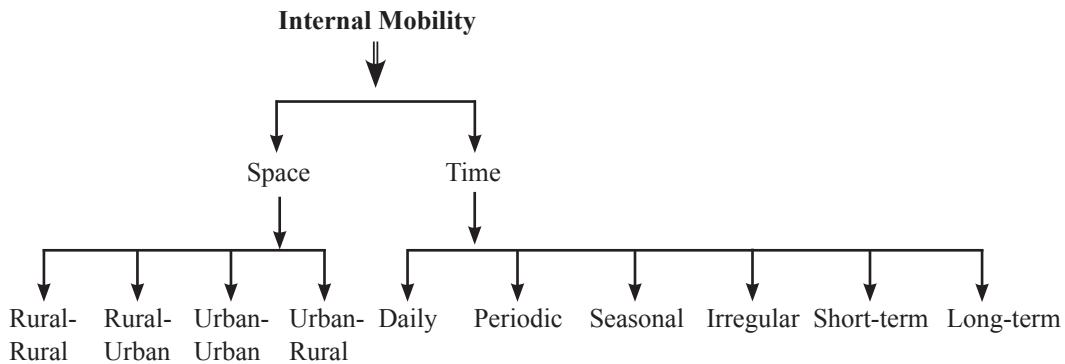


Fig. 1. Determinants of internal migrants

Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), and a speedier urbanisation in the country in recent decades. It is clear from the census of 2011 that for the first time since independence, urban areas recorded more increase in the absolute number of population than the rural areas. The level of urbanisation in the country also increased from 27.81 percent (2001) to 31.16 percent (2011), whereas, the number of towns also increased by 2,774 during 2001-2011. However, the impact of these two factors is yet to be studied in a comprehensive manner. In terms of the volume of migration, rural-to-urban migration is next to rural-to-rural migration. It accounts for about one-fifth of the total migration, and has remained almost stable from 2001 to 2011. Despite being the second most significant stream of migration, it has recorded a negative growth, especially for employment, and positive growth rate for marriage and family related migration during the observational period. In numerous studies it has been recognised that this stream of migration in India is mainly induced by both the push factors prevailing in rural areas and the pull factors of the urban areas (Kundu 2009; Mitra and Murayama 2008). People from the rural areas, mainly migrate because of its push factors, namely appalling poverty, underemployment/unemployment, low and uncertain wages, decline in the household industry, less remunerative agricultural economy, absence of off-farm employment opportunity and absence/lack of basic amenities and facilities. Visibly, the decreasing trend of rural to urban migration for employment indicates

that employment as a reason for migration has become less significant. However, this may not be the case. Indeed, the share of work-related migration has decreased and it may be attributed to the rise of family migration and marriage migration. It seems that the bread earner of the family first settles in the place of destination, and then they bring their family because of other social factors such as an increasing trend of the nuclear family system. On the contrary, urban to rural migration stream has depicted increasing trend in 2011 census. In general, such migration is associated with the advanced stage of urbanisation when urban centres start to face the problem of over-congestion, environmental pollutions, shrinking open/green space and high cost of living. No doubt, most of the cities in the country are confronted with these issues, but it is difficult to highlight them as a causing factor, because the rate of urbanisation in the country has been increasing phenomenally in the big and metropolitan cities and urban agglomerations. The other possibility is that it may be due to family related migration. There are very many possibilities that people prefer to settle in their rural native place after retirement from their work. Urban to urban stream of migration has also depicted phenomenal increase during 2001-2011. It is generally believed that this stream is mainly dominated by the middle class people and the people generally migrate for better employment opportunities and for better amenities and facilities to big and metropolitan cities. An increasing trend of inter-urban mobility can also be considered a sign of vertical mobility.

It is actually a step-migration, where people from the small towns migrate to big cities and they develop vacuum in small towns, which are later filled by the migration from rural areas. The unprecedented growth of class 1 cities in comparison to other towns is mainly caused by

such migration. This is the reason that the class 1 cities have been growing at a much faster rate compared to other towns in the country.

At the state level, the regional disparity in economic development has been depicted by the flow and rate of migration (Fig. 2). Uttar Pradesh

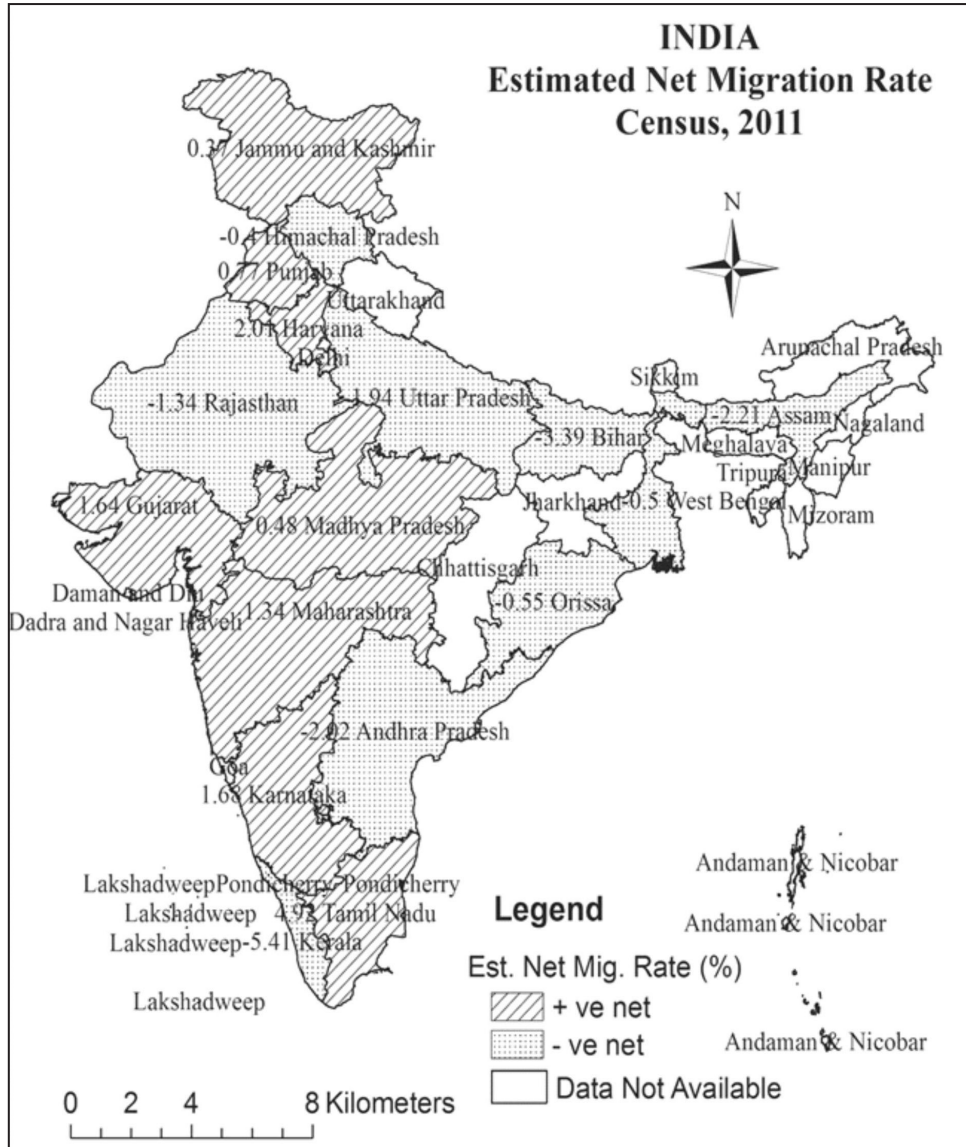


Fig. 2. Estimated net migration rate

Source: Census of India 2011

and Bihar have a disproportionately high number of out-migrants, mainly in the metros like Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. Nearly fifty percent of India's total interstate migrants originate from four states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, and the flow of these migrants are mainly towards industrial and agricultural developed states/cities such as Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Chandigarh, Kolkata and Haryana. The source states of migrants are almost at the bottom of India's economic development and very closely related to India's on-going economic policies. Under the current trend of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation, more and more resources, capital investment and growth efforts are polarised only in mega cities/port cities and in developed states, neglecting the development of the backward states. To make the matter worse, agriculture has become a capital intensive, high risk and less remunerative economic activity. The household cottage industries are rapidly diminishing and limited off-farm employment opportunities are available. Therefore, a large chunk of the population is reeling under poverty, unemployment, and under employment and also deprived of basic amenities and facilities to survive. They are attracted by distant promising urban areas as well as fertile agricultural bases and leave their place just for survival or to escape from poverty. Mukherji (1991, 1995), Kundu and Gupta (1996), Mishra (2016) and Kumar (2017) have also identified disparities in regional development and its relationship in the interstate migration at the national as well as state level.

It seems clear that migration for the majority of the people is a part of their livelihood strategies and a means of income security. Therefore, to some extent it is beneficial for migrants and their immediate family members, as they send remittances. Remittances play the decisive role in a migrant's life as the majority of them spend money to fulfil the basic need of their life, such as for food item, health care and education of family members. This study is in accordance with numerous earlier studies, highlighted a significant role of remittances in asset-building, poverty reduction, diversification of economic activities, increasing income, and higher expenditure on health and education (Bhagat 2010; Kumar 2017; Jha 2008; Mahapatro et al. 2015) in the area of destination. It is actually a family strategy wherein one or more members migrate

to escape from poverty and improve their living condition through household savings, increased investment in agriculture, food security, better investment in education and health care and credit worthiness (Deshingkar 2010, 2011; Lucas 1997; Katseli et al. 2006; Stark and Robert 1988).

CONCLUSION

Migration is an integral part of the process of human development globally. But, in India it is an important pathway out of poverty and an opportunity of augmenting income. Migration within the country has been the dominant form of migration with an increasing trend. Employment seeking migration from rural to urban areas and urban to urban areas are quite common forms of migration apart from the marriage related migration. Rural to rural migration, despite being a dominant stream of migration has declined considerably during 2001-2011. On the contrary, urban to rural migration has increased significantly a positive growth rate during the same observational period. In a similar fashion, migration related to marriage and work and business has also declined considerably, whereas, migration for education and family has increased considerably with a significant positive growth rate. The flow of migration depicts the regional inequality in economic development and is mainly from economically backward regions, namely Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha, to develop and prosperous regions, namely Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Delhi and Karnataka. Migration is a part of the livelihood strategy to augment the standard of living as well as social status at the household level for the majority of the people. Migrants generally send remittances regularly to their immediate family members that help them to increase expenditure mainly for better food quality, education and health care. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the phenomena of migration to some extent is beneficial for the socio-economic development of migrants at the household level, for the place of origin and for the place of destination at societal level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the positive aspect of migration, it is not viewed positively in India and policies are more exclusionary and often aimed at reducing

migration or hostile. But the matter of fact is that one cannot prevent migration, as it is their basic right granted by the constitution of India. In order to mitigate migration, a regional development policy and pro-poor development programmes are needed that can strengthen the livelihood base in the source areas, such as better irrigation facilities, improved basic social and physical infrastructure, creation of off-farm employment and development of household traditional and cottage industries. Employment and food security, and credit support for vulnerable groups may also obviate the poor to undertake distress migration. Ensured access to basic facilities, benefits of public programmes, and social security schemes through portable central government schemes can also improve the condition of migrants in the place of destination. Adoption and proper implementation of these simple measures through a development strategy and a coherent policy can optimise the utilisation of human resources both in the source area and in the destination areas.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present study has been funded by the Indian Council of Social Science (ICSSR-F. NO. 3-60/2017-18/PDF).

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Paper received for publication in December, 2020
Paper accepted for publication in January, 2021