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RECENT TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN INDIA

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Recent Trends and Patterns of Internal Migration in India

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Abstract – Migration is a significant population attribute, helping to understand the ever changing space content and space relationship in any area. The study of internal migration assumes special importance in any country in the process of development. By its very nature internal migration, that is the movement of people within the country, is related to a process of changes occurring within the economic organization of space. Studies on internal migration have indicated almost a constant decline in population mobility up to some recent past. The introduction of new economic policy in early 1990s led to an intense debate regarding population mobility. One view which argued that new economic policy would lead to increasing inequality between regions visualized an increased migration rate in the country. The other viewpoint that saw free movement of capital in order to tap the advantage of cheap labour, argued that migration rate would decline during the post-reform period. The latest evidences do indicate an increase in internal population movement during the post reform period. The latest NSS data (64th Round-2007-08) shows internal migration in India has increased to 29 percent from 25percent in 1993. Census data also indicate an increase in migration rate by 3 percentage points between 1991 and 2001. Based on these evidences scholars have argued that migration rate has picked up during 1991-2001 after India's economic liberalization that was initiated in 1991. This proposition regarding increase in the rate of mobility in the country during the decade 1991-2001 on the basis of share of life-time migrants needs to be taken with caution as change in the share of intercensal migrants indicate otherwise. Interaction of various factors in the course of development can not only accentuate the pace of mobility but would lead to emergence of new migration patterns also. The present paper endeavours to provide a perspective on current trends and patterns of internal migration in India. The paper highlights emerging issues concerning internal migration in post reform era using the data drawn from both Census of India and various rounds of NSS.

INTRODUCTION

An absolute immobile population does not exist anywhere in the world. The phenomenon of migration is as old as human civilization. In early phases of history, geographical barriers played a significant role in giving dimensions to migration phenomenon. At that time migration was limited to an extent because of lack of means of transport. But now migration is a response to technological progress, industrialization, urbanization and is facilitated by the availability of easy means of transport. According to the Indian Census, a migrant is usually defined as a person who has moved from one politically defined area to another similar area. In Indian context, these areas are generally a village in rural and a town in urban. Thus a person who moves out from one village or town to another village or town is termed as a migrant provided his/her movement is not of purely temporary nature on account of casual leave, visits, tours, etc (Census of India, 2001).

TRENDS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION

One of the commonly used measure of rate of mobility is the share of migrants in a population at a given time point. Table 1 presents the share of internal migrants in India over the last four decades. Table reveals that only 30 percent of india's population is classified as migrants in 2001 census and further females are more mobile than males in the country. The point that emerges is that the rate of migration has declined upto 1991 but there is reversal in this declining trend of population mobility in 2001.

Researchers have attributed this decline in population mobility to growth in transport facilities, which has made commuting to workplace increasingly easier over the period (Hassan, 2007: 71). The volume of migration has decreased also due to increasing social and political constraints (Kundu and Gupta, 2002:

264). But in 2001 census the percentage of lifetime migrants has increased by 3.13 percentage points.

Table: 1

Internal Migrants as Percentage to Total Population in India, 1971-2001 (As per place of last residence criterion)

Census Years	Migrants	All Areas			Rural			Urban		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1971	Lifetime	29.12	17.46	41.66	27.18	12.88	42.25	36.92	35.00	39.16
	Intercensal	12.43	9.42	15.68	10.91	7.06	14.98	18.56	18.47	18.66
1981	Lifetime	30.30	17.22	44.30	28.29	12.06	45.34	36.80	33.24	40.84
	Intercensal	12.17	8.85	15.72	10.40	6.26	14.74	17.88	16.87	19.02
1991	Lifetime	26.94	14.05	40.85	25.56	9.71	42.45	30.91	26.28	36.10
	Intercensal	9.65	6.13	13.45	8.43	4.16	12.98	13.19	11.69	14.87
2001	Lifetime	30.07	17.04	44.05	27.98	11.14	45.79	35.51	31.98	39.44
	Intercensal	9.48	6.11	13.10	8.27	3.94	12.86	12.63	11.61	13.76

Note: Excluding Assam in 1981 and Jammu & Kashmir in 1991, where the respective censuses were not held. **Source:** Census of India, Migration Tables, Tables D-1 and D-2 for various years.

Importantly the decade also witnessed a profound change in our economic policy. The country adopted new economic policy in 1991 with the underlying principles of liberalization and privatization. Due to this policy private investments, both domestic and foreign, it has been argued, were attracted towards to the areas that were already developed and well-endowed with infrastructural facilities. As a result of the new approach, the interregional inequality in income levels has sharply widened (Bhagat, 2009: 1; Hassan, 2007: 69) and it seems to have affected the migration process in the country (Bhagat, 2009: 1; Hassan, 2007: 69).

Table: 2

Migration Rate (NSSO: 1983-2008)

(In Percent)

NSS Rounds	Years	All Areas			Rural			Urban		
		Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
38 th	1983	23.4	12	35.4	N.A.	7.2	35.1	N.A.	27	36.6
43 rd	1987/88	25.4	11.9	39.8	N.A.	7.4	39.8	N.A.	26.8	39.6
49 th	1993	24.7	10.8	39.6	22.7	6.5	40.1	30.6	23.9	38.2
55 th	1999/2000	26.6	11.7	42.4	33.0	6.9	42.6	24.0	25.8	41.8
64 th	2007/08	28.5	10.9	47.2	26.0	5.4	47.3	35.0	25.9	45.6

Source: Based on various NSSO Rounds.

Studies on internal migration have indicated a decline in population mobility up to 1990's (Kundu, 1996; Bhagat, 2009). Estimates from NSS also show a marginal decline in population mobility between 1987-88 & 1993 for overall population (Table 2). As per 43rd round (1987/88) 25.4 percent persons were considered as migrants who decreased 24.7 percent at the time of 49th round (1993). This decline is attributed to the process of economic liberalization which implies the greater movement of capital and natural resources and growing immobility of population as stated by some authors (Kundu and Gupta, 1996: 3391). A steady increase in internal migration has been witnessed in the post reform era from 24.7 percent in 1993 to 26.6 percent in 1999/2000 and 28.5 percent in 2007/08.

State-wise data on inter-state in-migrants and out-migrants as per place of last residence criterion are presented in Table 3. A separate column has been added to the volume of net migration in the state. A perusal of it helps us to identify the states, which are most preferred destinations. Census data on migration enables us to derive estimates on net migration for states and union territories. Based on 'place of birth' and 'place of last residence criterion' scholars have identified the gaining and losing states in the country in the post-independence period. Findings of the studies suggests that although the pattern of gaining and losing states has undergone change from one decade to another, states like Maharashtra and Gujarat appeared as gaining states while Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh have consistently been out migrating states (Bhende and Kanitkar, 2010: 386, Kamble et al, 2007: 157).

Table: 3

Inter State Net Migration in India, 2001

(Duration 0-9 years)

States	In Migrants	Out Migrants	Net Migrants	Gaining /Loosing States
Himachal Pradesh	188223	165776	22447	Gaining
Punjab	811060	501285	309775	Gaining
Uttaranchal	352496	354718	-2222	Loosing
Haryana	1231480	588001	643479	Gaining
Rajasthan	723639	997196	-273557	Loosing
Uttar Pradesh	1079055	3810701	-2731646	Loosing
Bihar	460782	2241413	-1780631	Loosing
West Bengal	724524	730226	-5702	Loosing
Jharkhand	502764	616160	-113396	Loosing
Orissa	229687	440893	-211206	Loosing
Chhattisgarh	338793	444679	-105886	Loosing
Madhya Pradesh	814670	842937	-28267	Loosing
Gujarat	1125818	451458	674360	Gaining
Maharashtra	3231612	896988	2334624	Gaining
Andhra Pradesh	421989	637360	-215371	Loosing
Karnataka	879106	769111	109995	Gaining
Kerala	235087	431821	-196734	Loosing
Tamil Nadu	270473	674304	-403831	Loosing

Source: Calculations are based on Census of India (2001), Migration Table (D-02).

Table 3 shows the net migration flow at the state level between 1991 and 2001 based on 'place of last residence' criterion. On the basis of net migration during 1991 to 2001 decade, difference between in migration and out migration in each state, Maharashtra stands at the top of the list with 2.3 million net migrants, followed by Gujarat (0.67 million) and Haryana (0.64 million) as per 2001 Census. Uttar Pradesh (-2.7 million) and Bihar (-1.7 million) are the two states with largest number of net migrants migrating out of the state. The net in-migration is mainly found in the developed states like Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh where pull factor is stronger. These states attract population from almost all states. 'Maharashtra has always been an in migrating state where flow of migration has increased almost three times. It may be because of better job opportunities, educational facilities and other developments in the state. In case of Madhya Pradesh, which is a Loosing state is because of separation in Chhattisgarh from Madhya Pradesh. West Bengal has also negative net migration reason may be collapse of jute industries (Kamble, 2007:156). On the other hand, most of the remaining states are net out-migrating but not all of

them are poor states. 'The notable example is the state of Kerala that is socially and educationally the most developed state of India. A large population from Kerala is also migrating to the Gulf countries' (Quoted in Bhagat, 2009:7).

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the population mobility in the country which was decreasing upto 1991, increased after the adoption of new economic policy. As per 2001 census, 30 percent of population is classified as migrants in India. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana are the three states of the Indian union which have attracted most of the inter-state migrants during the decade 1991-2001.

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