



## INTERNAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT** A phenomenon as old the human civilization, migration is little studied in its qualitative aspect. Striking trends since the first censuses reveal how migration has been shaped to its present contemporary state. While a plethora of quantitative data supports this assertion, the qualitative studies reveal a different story. In 1991, India adopted a series of new economic policies, based on the principles of liberalization, globalization and privatization. The new economic policies aimed at increasing efficiency, achieving high growth rate, promoting exports, and attracting more and more foreign investment by easing up policy regulations. An unparalleled development of creation of the cosmopolitan cities forced the Indian population to cluster at these 'urbanized' centers. In view of the same, the present study endeavors to analyses the trends and patterns of internal labour migration in India. It also aims to intricately combine the existing quantitative data with an independent case study of the qualitative aspect. More specifically, it intends to associate the overwhelming numbers with the economic hardships at ground level.

**KEYWORDS :** India, Labour Migration

### I. BACKGROUND

Human migration is as old as human civilization. With the advent of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the phenomenon has been given a new dimension. Earlier restricted by geographical boundaries, inter-state dispersed populations are now mobile like never before. With the rapid growth of urbanization, industrialization, and advancements in technology, migration is today influencing the social and economic cultures.

According to the Indian Census, a person is considered as a migrant if his/her place of birth is different from the place where he/she is being enumerated or if the place in which he/she is enumerated during the census is other than his/her place of immediate last residence.

Though of a variety of categories, labour migration dominates in the study of reasons of migration. Recognizing the urgent need of addressal, the international community has built strong forces to protect the interests of the internally migrated due to employment and work reasons. The Sustainable Development Goals by United Nations Development Programme promote sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity and technological innovation. The Goal 8- "Decent Work and Economic growth"- aims to achieve full and productive employment and decent work by 2030 and stresses on the need of an "inclusive" world to protect the migrant labour, focusing on the female workers. The Goal 9- "Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure"- aims to build resilient infrastructures, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation with the idea of migration bringing in greater diversity. The Goal 10- "Reduced Inequalities"- has a direct aim of facilitating safe and regular migration of people through well-managed migration policies. And the Goal 17- "Sustainable Development"- explicitly targets to improve upon the data of "internal migrants" to effectively design better policies.

This paper attempts to bring into light the existing situation of labourers who migrated from rural to urban areas, in particular Delhi NCR, and tries to correlate interpretations from the existing sources and personal case study.

- Analyze the trends and patterns of internal migration in India
- Present a Case Study of Unskilled and Semi-Skilled Migrant Labourers in Delhi NCR
- Correlate interpretations from Primary and Secondary Sources
- Conclude and provide recommendations

### II. Trends and Patterns of Internal Migration in India

Table 1 gives the absolute figures (in million) of lifetime migrants and inter-censal migrants based on the place of last residence criterion. In 1971 census, nearly 160 million comprising of 50 million males and 110 million females, were termed migrants on the basis of place of last residence. This constituted 30.6 per cent of the total population of the country. In terms of total volume of migration, the figure had increased to 201 million in 1981, nearly 226 million in 1991, 309 million in 2001, and to 314 million in 2011. The percentages of migrants to total

population however declined to 30.3 per cent in 1981 and further to 27.4 per cent in 1991. It has however increased to 30.6 per cent in 2001, with a decline again in 2011 to nearly 26.

Sex wise differences have always been very prominent in Indian migration data. It is observed that majority of migrants are females.

**Reasons for migration (2011):**

- Work/Employment - 14.7%
- Business - 1.2%
- Education - 3.0%
- Marriage - 43.8
- Moved after birth - 6.7%
- Moved with household - 21.0%
- Other - 9.7%

**Table 1: Internal migrants by sex, India 1971-2011, Census of India 1971-2011**

Year	Lifetime Migrants (in millions)			Percentage of migrants		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1971	159.6	49.6	110.0	30.6	19.0	43.1
1981	201.6	59.2	142.4	30.3	17.6	43.9
1991	225.9	61.1	164.8	27.4	14.6	41.2
2001	309.4	90.7	218.7	30.6	17.5	44.6
2011	314.5	93.3	221.1	25.98	14.98	37.6

As per the place of last residence (0-9 yrs.) criterion, according to the Census 2001, marriage was cited as the predominant reason for migration among females. About 42.4 million migrants out of total 65.4 million female migrants cited this reason for migration.

Among males the most important reason for migration was 'Work/Employment', 12.3 million out of 32.8 million total male migrants returning this reason for migration.

Though a decline in total numbers from 2001 to 2011, the reason of 'Work/Employment' is the most common response received year after year.

### III. Case Study

#### III.1. INTRODUCTION

With 'Work/Employment' a major reason for Internal Migration in the nation, there has been little or no data on the present living status of the labour migrants. This case study attempts to survey a sample of labour

migrants in Delhi NCR, a major hub for employment opportunities, based upon the sole question - was migration beneficial?

**III.2. Method**

A survey of more than 100 semi-skilled and unskilled labourers was held for over 10 days in Delhi NCR, a major hub of migrant labourers [Questionnaire available in Appendix Section V]. The following types of labourers were surveyed in the survey:

- Semi-Skilled Labourers- Carpenter, Painter, and Construction Workers
- Unskilled Labourers- Porters, Rickshaw Pullers, and Housemaids
- Responses were noted and remarks were recorded on questions pertaining to health facilities, changes in income, changes in expenditure, and differences in quality of life.

**III.3. Findings and Observations**

An astounding 95% of the surveyed pool cited work related reasons for migration - male or female.

About 85% women surveyed cited 'Marriage' as a reason additional to that of 'Work' 80% of the people surveyed regarded Delhi as a place of infinite possibilities with ample of regular work.

What was more astonishing was the fact that over 88% of the sample cited nominal or zero improvement in the quality of life, despite about 65% attributing Delhi to increase in income.

A majority of the people surveyed regarded education and health facilities as both accessible and affordable in their hometown/village, contrary to our preset notion of Delhi as a leader in the provision of education and health facilities.

Little about 16% of the males recalled an incidence of exploitation in the city, whereas a majority of 77% females narrated incidences of exploitation- harassment, molestation, wage discrimination -in the city.

**IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study has revealed that a majority of migrants have migrated in search of employment opportunities/search of better employment opportunities only to find regular work with increase in income but with zero or nominal appreciation in quality of life. With a better quality of life at their hometown/village, labourers migrate to city only due to 'Work' related reasons – the study suggests. The study has also revealed the success of government schools and hospitals in villages, and their failure in city with respect to the migrant public.

A clear implication of the findings is the lack of work available in Indian villages, leading to the large scale labour migration in urbanized cities like Delhi. An important finding of the study is also the large scale exploitation against women migrants.

In light of the above mentioned findings, the paper suggests the following recommendations to the government:

- Ensure provision of employment in semi-rural and rural districts. Review the functioning of existing schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREGA).
- Create more awareness about the existing help groups and governmental organisations to address the issue of violence against women.
- Stress upon the need of Social Security Benefits and use the Real Income for reports and suggestions.
- Introduce Right to Health as an important provision for labour migrants, who in urbanised cities like Delhi still face the plight of unaffordable and inaccessible health facilities

**V. Appendix**

<b>Questionnaire</b>		
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Age:</b>	<b>Gender:</b>
M / F		
<b>Type of Labourer:</b>		
1. Carpenter		
2. Porter		
3. Domestic Helps		
4. Mistri		
5. Rickshaw puller		
6. Others: _____		

<b>Location of present place of residence:</b>
<b>Location of last place of residence:</b>
<b>Reason of migration</b>
1. Search of better employment
2. Studies
3. Social/Political Problems
4. Business
5. Natural disaster, if yes, then what _____
6. Displacement by development project
7. Take up employment
8. Healthcare
9. Transfer
10. Marriage
11. Proximity to place of work
12. Others _____
<b>Nature of Migration</b>
1. Permanent
1. With Family
2. Without Family
2. Temporary
Remarks:
<b>Quality of Living</b>
1. Regular Work: Yes / No
2. Improvement in Income: Yes / No, if yes substantial or not
3. Improvement in Standard of living:
4. Betterment in Access to Education for children (in case of with family): Yes / No
5. Betterment of family members at home (in case single migration): Yes / No
6. Betterment in Access to health facilities: Yes/No
7. Exploitation, if any

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