



Socio-Economic Profile of the Migrants in Guwahati City: an Empirical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The social and cultural fabric of a place is textured with the mixing up of several diverse cultures, customs, traditions, practices, languages and belief systems brought about by migration and settlement of people from across the world over hundreds of years. This paper is an attempt to examine the emergence of migration as the primary factor influencing the demography and growth of urban centers with reference to Guwahati City. Besides this an attempt has been made to examine the socio-economic background of the continuous and unending migration on its economy. This paper is an empirical study purely based on primary data.

KEYWORDS

Migration, Socio- Economic Status and Demography

INTRODUCTION

Migration is an age old concept. Human migration can be traced back to the time of human evolution when humans migrated across the globe in search of food, good weather, shelter and safety. However, in the present times such migration takes place for motives such as job opportunities, job relocation, entertainment, over population etc. Migration can therefore, be defined as a physical movement of humans individually or in groups from one place to another in search of better amenities or living conditions with an intention of temporary or permanent settlement.

Image 1: Map of Guwahati City



An overview of the contemporary literature on human migration in the Asian countries shows that this region is experiencing rapid urbanization and migration that would continue in the near future. Rural population is expected to decline during 2000-2030. While urban population is expected to double during the same period. Therefore, the 21st century will be the Asian urban century (Mohan Rakesh, 2006). Several countries in Asia are noted to be experiencing rapid growth in the mobility of people from rural to urban areas, increasing the urban population since the late seventies and thus the continent supports half of the world's urban population. Projections have been made that this growth will accelerate in the next few decades which would double Asia's urban population during 2000-2030, its share in global urban population going up from 48% to 54% (United nations 2005)

In Assam, total percentage of urban population increased from 4.29 percent (1951) to 11.24 percent (1991) and then to 12.90 percent (2001). Within the state, Kamrup district reflected the strongest urbanization process which increased from 7.65 percent in 1951 to 32.76 percent in 1991 and 36 percent in 2001. This extraordinary urbanization rate is fueled by the explosive growth of Guwahati city which accounts for 89.18 percent of districts urban population. This urbanization process is accompanied by migration which is an important and grim issue in the city, Interestingly out of the total popu-

lation 8,85,397 in 2001 of Guwahati, 3,78,657 are migrants, constituting more than one third of the population. In a study conducted by Chakravarty, (2011) out of 34,271 migrants 5409 male migrants came into the city in search of employment while 28,862 moved in for business purposes

It is very significant to study migration as it holds a very important place in the studies of population. It is responsible for the size, structure, characteristics and the rate of population growth of an area. It also has a great impact on the labor force both in the quantitative and qualitative terms. This section therefore, examines the emergence of migration as the primary factor influencing the demography and growth of urban centers with reference to Guwahati City.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCE

PERIOD OF STUDY

The magnitude of rural urban migration into Guwahati city is examined on the basis of Primary data enumerated for migrants for three decades (1991 to 2011)

STUDY AREA

The study makes an attempt to explore the extent of migration into the informal sector in Guwahati city. Guwahati city in Kamrup district has been selected for the study because Guwahati is the most urbanized city and it can be considered as the lone class-1 city with a remarkably high trend of urbanization. Migration is thus a formidable and grim issue here. Guwahati, the capital city of the state, is the largest urban centre in Assam with 23.89 percent of the total urban population of the state. Guwahati has been the capital of the reorganized state of Assam since 1972. The population of Guwahati metropolitan area has grown almost 6.5 times between 1971 and 2001. The municipal limit of the city increased from 7.68 sq. km. in 1951 to 14 sq. km. in 1961, which further increased to 43.82 sq. km. in 1971 and 216.79 sq. km. in 1991. The city achieved its municipal corporation status in 1974. Interestingly for the last ten years, Guwahati city has experienced drastic change in its land use and land cover. Guwahati has been able to attract migrants from all parts of the state as well as other states of the country. As compared to the other towns and cities of the state Guwahati attracts maximum number of migrants from within the state and different parts of the country. This has led to a rise in the population in the informal sector in the city. The percentage of informal sector employment to total employment was 87 percent in 2001 (Chakravarty, 2008). Guwahati is also the state capital which gives it an opportunity to host a large number of State Government, Central Government and Semi- Government offices. The city also

houses the regional head quarters of a large number of private companies. Guwahati also has a large number of formal and informal sector ancillary industries which have been set up in and around the city. Guwahati also has a large number of educational institutions which act as an inducement to a large inflow of students. The informal activities have a tendency to mushroom up in the surroundings close by to the offices, educational institutions, hospitals etc. The recent infra-structural development of Guwahati is an attraction for investments in the corporate sector which subsequently generate employment opportunities. Thus, greater livelihood opportunities facilitate migration not only from within the country but also from abroad.

DATA SOURCE

The study is based purely on primary data. For collecting primary data, interview schedules were used to gather relevant information related to the migrant's socio-economic status. After pre-testing certain modifications were made and the final questionnaire was put to use. The variables considered in the questionnaire are: (a) Demographic variables like; age, sex, marital status, community, literacy level, original settlement (whether a migrant or not) (b) Living condition variables like; housing and health facilities, accessibility to basic needs, difference in the living conditions at the place of destination and place of origin (c) work related variables like; working condition, working hours, training acquired, job satisfaction, desire to go back to the place of destination etc. The questionnaire is framed to cover all possible data required for the study.

SAMPLE SIZE

The size of the sample for the study under consideration is decided considering The Krejcie and Morgan table for (known) population. It says that for a population of 1,0,0000 and above, at 5% confidence interval and 95 % confidence level, the sample size required is 384. In 2011, the total employment in the city was 305173 out of which the formal sector employment was 33618 and hence the informal sector population was 271,555 or 89 % by residual method (Census 2011). It justifies the size of the sample at 384.

SAMPLING DESIGN

In order to have a good representation of Guwahati City, the sample has been collected from the Thirty one wards incorporated in the six divisions comprising the whole city. A few slum pockets were also visited deliberately to have a good representation of the migrant's population.

During the survey, the activities of the migrants in the informal sector were considered with great care in order to have greater utility from them. These activities undertaken for the study were stationary-cum grocery shops, furniture shops, book shops, vegetable shops, paan shops, tea stalls, street meal shops, rickshaw pullers, thelawalas, domestic helps, construction labours, and migrants involved in other petty activities like selling of; fish, eggs, home-made local sweets etc.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA SET

A data set of 384 respondents (who migrated to Guwahati city) were collected and tabulated. After tabulation the data was put to analysis. The primary data was first analyzed in terms of frequencies, percentage and cross tabulation to interpret the socio-economic profile of the sample in terms of various economic and non economic parameters. They were used for interpreting the findings pertaining to a migrant's behavior.

Various tools like contingency tables, graphic visualization etc are used as aids to understand the objectives of the study. Both qualitative and quantitative statistical tools have been used. Regression analysis has also been put to use.

SUMMARY OF COLLECTED DATA

A dataset of 384 individuals (migrated to Guwahati city) is collected and represented in form of table of count. The following document illustrates some statistical analysis tools like contingency tables, graphic visualization etc. for providing an aid to understand the objective of this study.

Based on the questionnaire almost all the dataset variables are categorical except. age of migration of an individual. The dataset contains individual of age 15 or above and having migrated within the period from 1990 to 2015. All statistical analysis are done in R.

This section is an attempt to analyze the socio-economic profile of the migrants in Guwahati city. This analysis is purely based on field survey where a total sample of 450 was collected out of which 384 were considered. In the survey the Inter-state migrants enumerated belonged to Bihar, North Bengal, Rajasthan and Meghalaya.

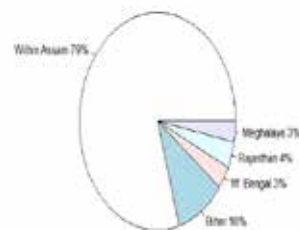
Table No.1: Migration to Guwahati City from Other districts of Assam and Other states of India

	Frequency	Percent
Other Districts of Assam	305	79.4
Bihar	39	10.2
W. Bengal	13	3.4
Rajasthan	15	3.9
Meghalaya	12	3.1
Total	384	100.0

Source: Field survey

Fig No.1: Intra-State and Inter-State migrants

Migration to Guwahati City from Other districts of Assam and Other states of India



The sample size for states (W. Bengal, Rajasthan and Meghalaya) is very small, therefore, for convenience it was these data sets were combined which reduced our analysis in two groups; interstate and intrastate migration.

CASE STUDY

The relationship within a group is analyzed using contingency and conditional probabilities. The gender based distribution of migrants within the group is very similar and equals to 20 % females.

Fig No.2: Distribution of Migrants based on Gender

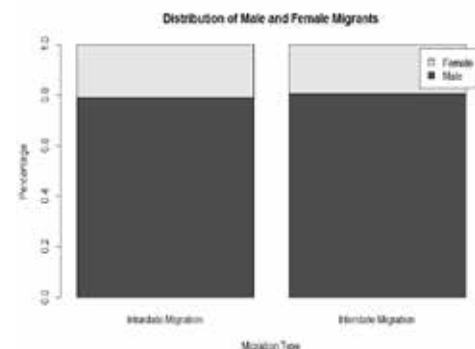
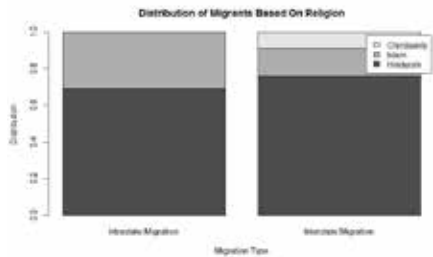


Fig No. 3: Distribution of Migrants based on Religion



In case of both Intra-State and Inter-state migration, more than 70 percent migrated people were Hindus.

Migrants by Educational Qualification:

In both the cases most of the migrants availed Primary education. This indicates the availability of free primary education provided by the Govt. through various policies to the rural poor. However, education gets discontinued in the upper sections where poverty stands as an obstacle to the continuation of education.

Fig No. 4: Intra-State Migrants by education

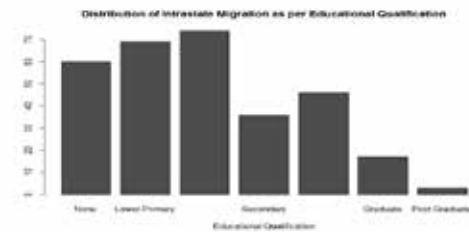
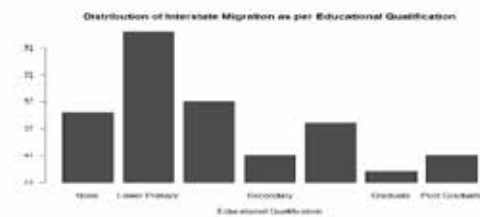


Fig No. 5: Inter-State migrants by Education



Distribution of Migrants by Age Group:

The age of migration for both the groups are normally distributed as such average age is more accurate a measure of central tendency. The average age for migration in case of Intra state migration is 18.5 and average age of migration in case of interstate migration is 17.4. The interstate migration data set is bimodal and shows that 12.6% of people have migrated at the age of 5 of below. This indicates associational migration of the dependants.

Fig No. 6: Intra-State Migrants by Age

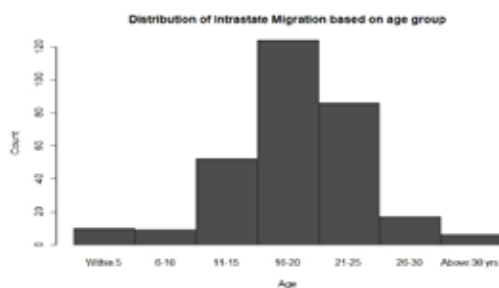
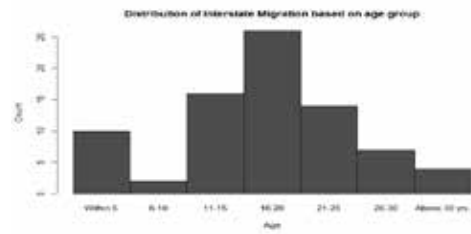


Fig No. 7: Inter-State Migrants by age



Distribution of migrants by ownership of residence:

It shows that more than 80 percent of the migrants in case of both inter -state and intrastate migration lives in rented accommodation. This indicates an easy access to rental homes in the city. The next figure shows the type of houses they (migrants) avail in the city. More than 80 percent of the migrants live in Kutcha houses which are indicative of cheap rentals with poor living conditions.

Fig No.8: Migrants by ownership of residence

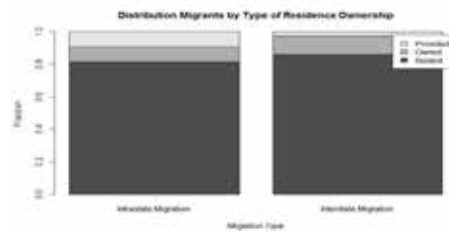


Fig No. 9: Migrants by type of residence

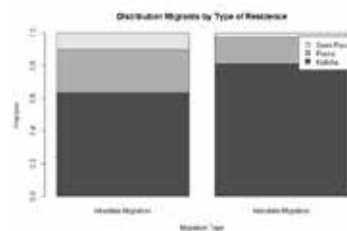


Fig No.10: Intra-State Migrants on the basis of Daily Savings

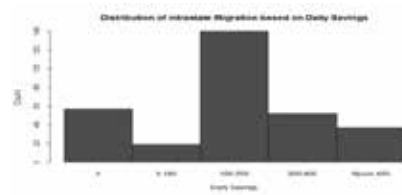
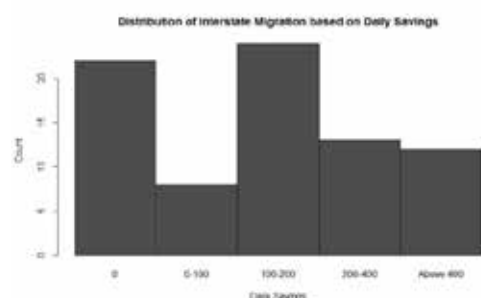


Fig No. 11: Inter-State Migrants on the basis of Daily Savings



In both the cases the maximum savings that a migrant engaged in the informal sector can make is Rs 100 to 200 and the interesting thing is that they can still survive in Guwahati. This is possible because of the cheap rentals at low living conditions for a living and also growth of illegal slum pockets for a stay in various parts of the city.

Migrant's access to basic amenities:

The graphs reveal that in both the cases (Inter-State and Intra State migrants), more than 90 percent migrants have an access to electricity. Drinking water here refers to water from untreated sources within the compound (tube well, Well etc. etc). They have a good access to transport facilities, and health facilities. This is indicative of the pull factors in the city that attract the migrants to the city's growing informal sector.

Fig No. 12: Inter-State migrant's access to basic amenities

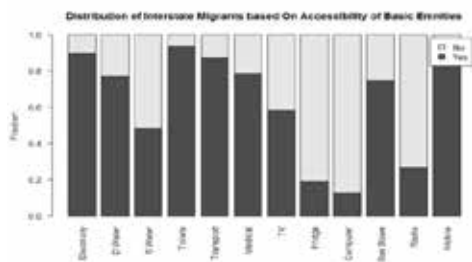
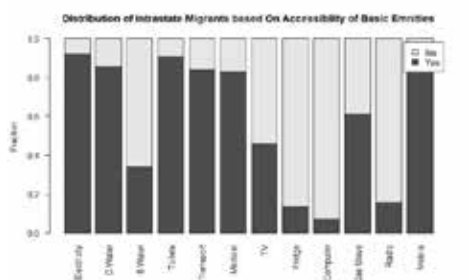


Fig no.13: Intra-State migrant's access to basic amenities



Budget Allocation of the Migrants:

In both the cases the migrants spend more money on food and accommodation from their estimated budget. The inter-state migrants have a bigger expenditure on transportation due to longer distance to their places of origin. Most of the migrants enumerated have admitted of annual visits to their places of origin. This shows temporary migration to the city as their families are yet in other states. It is also indicative of associational migration in the near future depending on the improvement in the migrant's economic status. The migrants spend insignificant percentage of their income on other necessities like clothing, medical and electricity.

Fig No. 14: Monthly Budget allocation of the Intra-State migrants

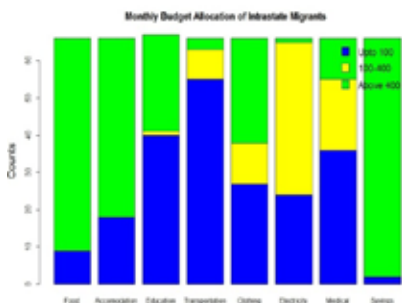


Fig No. 15: Monthly Budget allocation of the Inter-State migrants



REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Based on scatter plots of the intrastate and interstate migration to Guwahati; both of these events follow a strong, positive linear relationship over time. The intrastate migration increases by an average of 4 per year, while the interstate migration increases by an average of 0.12 per year. Because the intercept estimate is the value of migration of people when year is equal to zero, it is not interpretable in the context of the problem. The intercept value is -271.82 and the slope is 0.14. The linear models fit the data well, with R-squared values for the intrastate and interstate models equal to .967 and .890 respectively.

Fig No.16 Regression line for Intra-State migrants

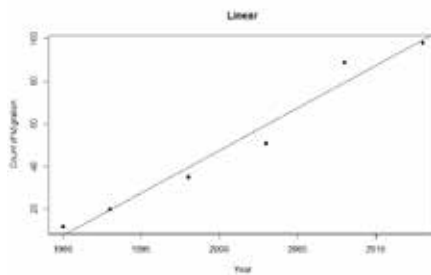
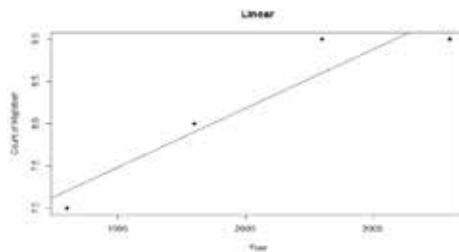


Fig No.17 Regression line for Inter-State migrants



SUMMARY

The migrants are influenced by similar socio-economic factors (be it Intra-State migration or Inter-State migration). The pull and the push factors that determine the volume of migration are almost same all over the country. Most of the migrants enumerated for the study have moved out in search of employment opportunities and business in the city, Associational migration of the dependents like families of the main migrants also took place. The living conditions of the migrants are identical. Although most of the migrants engaged in petty works in the informal sector are capable of supporting their livelihood due to diverged work generated in the urban informal sector which is absent in the rural areas, yet, an improvement in their standard of living is doubtful.

CONCLUSIONS

Migration has been a very contentious issue in the state of Assam and Guwahati city in particular. This has led to manifold increase in the issues of migration like; creation of slum pockets, increasing density of population, a formidable growth of

the informal sector, poor living conditions etc. Therefore, care should be taken to control this un-stoppable gush of migrants to the city. Policies should be framed in favour of the rural areas so that the people do not feel a need to move out to a new place. Employment opportunities should be created in the villages

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