



## Causes of Rural Urban Migration in India: Challenges and Policy Issues

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### ABSTRACT

Rural to Urban migrations are caused by a variety of factors. In nutshell major factors of migration are 1-Marriage, 2-Employment, 3-Education and 4-Lack of Security. Urban centers provide vast scope for employment in various sectors and also offer modern facilities of life. Thus, they act as 'magnets' for the migrant population and attract people from outside. In other words, cities pull people from rural areas. This is known as "pull factor". People also migrate due to 'push factors' when they do not find means of livelihood in their home villages, they are 'pushed' out to the nearby or distant towns. Millions of people those migrated from their far-off villages to the big cities. Their home villages had virtually rejected them as surplus population which the rural resources of land were not able to sustain any longer.

### KEYWORDS

Rural Urban Migration in India, Factors of Migration, Impact of Migration, Policy Issues on Migration.

### Introduction:

Urbanization in India began to accelerate after independence, due to the country's adoption of a mixed economy, which gave rise to the development of the private sector. Urbanization is taking place at a faster rate in India. Population residing in urban areas in India, according to 1901 census, was 11.4%. This count increased to 28.53% according to 2001 census, and crossing 30% as per 2011 census, standing at 31.16%. According to a survey by UN State of the World Population report in 2007, by 2030, 40.76% of country's population is expected to reside in urban areas. With an urbanization level of 31.16 percent in 2011, India is the least urbanized country among the top 10 economies of the world. While rural-rural migration continues to be the largest in terms of magnitude, we also document an increase in two-way commuting across rural and urban areas. Further, there are a large number of short term migrants and an increase in return migration rate is also observed. Rural to Urban migrations are caused by a variety of factors including economic, social and political factors. In nutshell major factors of such migration are 1-Marriage, 2-Employment, 3-Education and 4-Lack of Security and 'Pull' and 'Push' Factors.

### Objectives:

The main objectives of this paper are given below:

1. To analyze the causes of rural to urban migration.
2. To examine the factors effecting rural to urban migration.
3. To examine the impact of Migration
4. To examine Challenges and Policy Issues and
5. To suggest some Policy measures.

### Methodology:

This paper is based on secondary data and information collected from different sources and on PURA project conducted in Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow.

### Major Causes of Rural to Urban Migrations:

Migrations are caused by a variety of factors including economic, social and political factors. They are briefly described as under.

#### Marriage:

Marriage is a very important social factor of migration. Every girl has to migrate to her in-law's place of residence after marriage. Thus, the entire female population of India has to

migrate over short or long distance. Among the people who shifted their residence more than half (56.1%) moved due to marriage in 1991. Although, the percentage of people shifted their residence was reduce after a decade in 2001 up to (43.8%).

#### Employment:

People migrate in large number from rural to urban areas in search of employment. The agricultural base of rural areas does not provide employment to all the people living there. Even the small-scale and cottage industries of the villages fail to provide employment to the entire rural folk. Contrary to this, urban areas provide vast scope for employment in industries, trade, transport and services. About 8.8 per cent of migrants migrated for employment in 1991 and 14.7 per cent of migrants migrated for employment in 2001.

#### Education:

Rural areas, by and large, lack educational facilities, especially those of higher education and rural people have to migrate to the urban centres for this purpose. Many of them settle down in the cities for earning a livelihood after completing their education.

#### Lack of Security:

Political disturbances and interethnic conflicts drive people away from their homes. Large number of people has migrated out of Jammu and Kashmir and Assam during the last few years due to disturbed conditions there. People also migrate on a short-term basis in search of better opportunities for recreation, health care facilities, and legal advices or for availing service which the nearby towns provide.

#### 'Pull' and 'Push' Factors:

Urban centres provide vast scope for employment in industries, transport, trade and other services. They also offer modern facilities of life. Thus, they act as 'magnets' for the migrant population and attract people from outside. In other words, cities pull people from other areas. This is known as "pull factor". People also migrate due to 'push factors' such as unemployment, hunger and starvation. When they do not find means of livelihood in their home villages, they are 'pushed' out to the nearby or distant towns. Millions of people who migrated from their far-off villages to the big cities of Kolkata, Mumbai or Delhi did so because these cities offered

them some promise for a better living. Their home villages had virtually rejected them as surplus population which the rural resources of land were not able to sustain any longer.

**Factors affecting Rural to Urban Migration:**

There are various problems affecting massive distressed migration of people from rural areas to urban areas which causes unbalanced urbanization and extreme urban decay in India. Due to mass migration poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment increases (Mukherji, 2001). Firstly, poor, landless, illiterate and unskilled agricultural labours and poor farmers from backward state moves to the urban cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and other big towns, which fails them to give them minimum employment. Due to such migration patterns, leads to urban slums and footpath dwelling and very poor level of living characterize such urban cities. Even has could lead to shortage of extreme housing, basic essentials for living like food, water, electricity, sewage and transportation (Ministry of urban Development, New Delhi, 1998). Secondly, due to unskilled migrants coming into urban areas, where in urban areas they have very limited employment-generation capacity under industrialization. So the migrants are paid less wages and mostly they are exploited due to lack of knowledge. Although such migration helps to avoid starvation but it does not improve their economic conditions. Thirdly, such cities are filled with slums with poor human developed index, which constitutes less sanitation, water and electricity. Lastly, Due to such metropolitan cities develop very fast becoming more economic inequality "where rich get richer and poor get poorer". This will lead to extreme social disorder, severe class conflict, crimes, widespread violence and urban civil war (Mukherji, 2000).

**Impact of Rural to Urban Migration:**

With the liberalization in full swing and its impact on all sections of economy we are witness to the inexorable urbanization of the country. Our development programs have been geared towards economic growth and GDP growth with the belief that once GDP growth occurs there would be a spin off in all areas like employment, health, education and living conditions. Our planners work for 9% growth while agriculture cannot grow faster than 2% at the most. As a sequel either the villages get relatively poor and disadvantaged and/or large scale rural-urban migration continues. If this trend is not reversed quickly the rural income would become a small fraction of urban income. The urban population will grow beyond manageable levels with most living in slums. Table-1 gives an idea of impact of different reasons on migration.

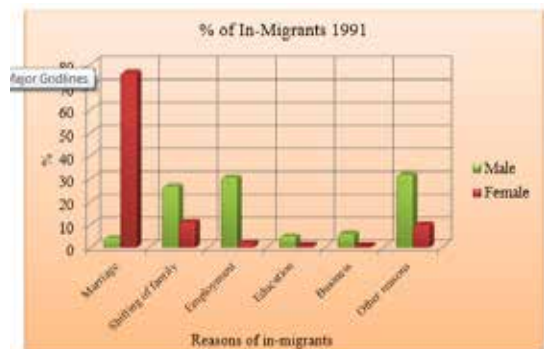
**Table-1: Reasons for migration of migrants by last residence with duration (0-9 years) India (excluding J & K)**

Reasons of Migration	Per cent of Total in-migrants		Per cent of male in-migrants		Per cent of female in-migrants	
	1991	2001	1991	2001	1991	2001
Marriage	56.1	43.8	4.0	2.1	76.1	64.9
Shifting of family	15.3	21.0	26.6	25.1	11.0	18.9
Employment	8.8	14.7	30.4	37.6	1.8	3.2
Education	2.0	3.0	4.8	6.2	0.8	1.3
Business	2.3	1.2	6.0	2.9	0.5	0.3
Other reasons	15.5	9.7	31.6	15.7	9.8	6.7

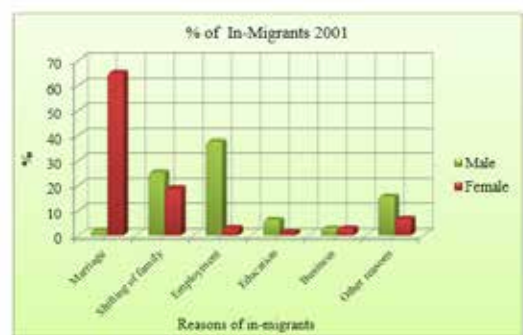
Source: Table D3, 1991 and 2001 Census

Figure 1 and 2 indicate that the changing pattern of in-migrant among males and females during the period of 1991 and 2001 census. It indicates that highest percentage of in-migrant among females were due to their marriages from rural to urban area in both the periods. But this trend reduced more than 10% during these two census periods. In-migrant among males was highest due to employment, shifting of family and other reasons.

**Figure- 1: Reasons of in-migrants 1991**



**Figure- 2: Reasons of in-migrants 2001**



Unauthorized slums spring up in every available space with no municipal facilities whatsoever. Such an unplanned squatter settlements is a clear index to the unbearable living conditions in the villages than to any planned urban development. These immigrants are prepared to put up with much hardship in the cities than face hunger in the villages. What does this transformation to the complexion of cities indicate? Is it development of cities or degeneration of the rural areas? It is felt that as cities expand without matching infrastructure and job opportunities, the poverty of the rural side just gets urbanized. The location merely gets changed with nothing better in living conditions to the displaced people happening. The appalling living conditions like slums, lack of safe water, absence of sanitation, overcrowding with the attendant increase in crime, insecurity for women, sexual abuse and exposure to frequent epidemics and AIDs are the immediate outcome of this population shift.

But then can the government forcibly stop the poor leaving the countryside for finding better lives though they end up on the platforms, bus shelters, shanty towns and inhabitable slums? How should the government prevent such outflow from villages and at the same time make their lives better. NREGs started with good intention are a feeble attempt and touches only the periphery of the problem. Firstly its coverage is minimal. There is no assurance of a lasting and steady job and there is no up gradation of their skills. There is no creation of lasting assets in the villages. NREG scheme is at best a temporary palliative even if the scheme were to be administered efficiently without the siphoning off the money in the middle man's hands. To enlarge this scheme as is contemplated may be politically convenient but economically without sense and socially purposeless. It is a waste of scarce public resources that could be put to better uses.

Villagers from rural areas should find that it is possible to make a decent living without migrating to big cities. The false lure of the cities as an attractive place for better living should be removed by making living in villages better. The government as a long term measure should promote economic prospects and required infrastructure development in rural areas. It should also cover the creation of market for support-

ing the agricultural economic activities and also development of sustainable agricultural practices in the rural sector. NREGs are mere doles in nature providing to limited people small amounts for temporary earth work jobs done for short period. The planners should take note of this and allocate substantial resources for developing villages (not villagers individually thro doles). Sadly the strategy of government is centered only on GDP growth without carrying the rural population along. It is hoped corrective measures would be taken before it becomes late.

Droughts and Floods sometimes occur in many parts of India, so many people migrate due to that reason. This was one of the reasons recorded in 1981 and 1991 census. This ratio has been dropped down tremendously according to 2001 census (National Sample Survey, 2001). Even the survey has given importance to the manmade disasters like riots and social disturbance as a reason of migration. Terrorism is also causing local people to migrate, who live on boarder areas of India. Thousands of people are getting displaced due to construction of highway, industrial establishment, and immigrating to foreign countries. In India woman give her first birth at her parental house rather than her husband's place. The baby born at parental house is a migrant. These are few main reasons why people migrate from one place to another.

### Challenges and Policy Issues:

There is often confusion between urbanization (the share of the national population living in urban areas) and urban population growth (the absolute number of people living in urban areas), which can lead to inappropriate policies. Internal rural-urban migration is a major driver of urbanization. On average, however, rural-urban migration accounts for less than half of urban population growth, as natural increase (the number of births exceeding deaths) can also be high, especially in countries with high fertility rates. Rapid population growth is a huge challenge for many cities in the global South which have severe housing, infrastructure and service deficiencies, as well severe overcrowding. But a growing urban population also has advantages.

It is hard to find sustained economic growth without urbanization, mainly because agglomeration helps to increase productivity. Providing infrastructure and services (e.g. water, sanitation, education and health) in densely populated urban centers is also generally cheaper than in isolated rural settlements. Given these advantages, restricting migration is not the answer. In fact, the problem is not so much rapid urban population growth, but rather the lack of proactive planning (and political will) to accommodate it.

Migrants are often blamed for increasing urban poverty, but not all migrants are poor. Migrants moving to urban areas looking for formal employment and education are often the wealthier rural residents. In many cities, however, migrants make up a disproportionate share of the urban poor and face similar disadvantages, including difficulties in finding adequate housing and in accessing services. Like the majority of the urban poor, low-income migrants work long hours in low-paid, insecure and unsafe jobs and are exposed to a wide range of environmental hazards because most low-income and informal settlements lack basic infrastructure and are located in dangerous areas where land is cheaper

But there is also a severe lack of data on migrants in urban areas. The conventional sources used to measure and monitor many aspects of poverty – the Demographic and Health Surveys and national household surveys – do not show much interest in migration. Censuses report on migration, but in most cases the information is not disaggregated at the city level. And at best, they are conducted every 10 years, and so miss the often large number of temporary migrants, in many cases the poorest ones, who continue to move between rural and urban areas.

This reflects the overall lack of data on urban poverty, and on

the diversity of the forms and severity of disadvantage experienced by different poor groups. When poor people set their own poverty lines (PDF) they highlight the importance of both income and non-income factors, and how these translate into several different levels of poverty. Poor migrants in many cases must send money home to repay debt and to support their families, and this makes it difficult to invest in housing and education in the city. For poor migrants coming from rural areas affected by drought and irregular rainfall, moving to the city can often mean living in informal settlements, where environmental hazards are extremely high.

However, government is running some Rural Development Programmes across the country like- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), Swachha Bharat Mission (SBM) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) etc. These programmes were also necessary for the development of the rural areas of the country but all are not sufficient to stop rural-urban migration. The Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) is one of the five major components of former President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam's dream, his vision 2020 for a developed India. The PURA defers from the conventional ideas of economic development of rural areas in different ways. *It aims at a comprehensive development of rural areas to generate urban level income and not mere poverty alleviation; also aims to generate employment for the educated, thereby, halt and even reverse rural-urban migration; It seeks modern industry investment in social and commercial service instead of rural handicrafts and agro-based small industry; It relies on private initiative for profit enterprise not dependent on subsidy from the government.* PURA programme is one of the best instruments which may help to check rural to urban migration effectively. Therefore, government should implement this scheme in all rural areas of the country. Paper is based on PURA Project conducted in Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow and on secondary data and information collected from different sources.

### Conclusion:

This paper concludes that the migration from rural to urban in intra state is been increasing slowly with industrialization and modernization in India. The main reason for migration is employment or business related migration. The ratio comparison of male and female migration; where male migration constitutes the highest level of migration in India. This shows that female usually migrates as accompanists of males through several other factors like after marriage or family transfer, but with the recent survey single females are also slowly increasingly moving out in search of a job (Mitra, 2003). Secondly we have seen reason of migration; the National Sample Survey (NSS) is trying to gather as much information about the migration. NSS is also collecting information about the employment and unemployment of the migrants. These all information could help India to develop its infrastructure, to adopt these kinds of migrants.

Then we have seen that how urbanization is affecting Indian societies. The rise in nuclear families; which has break-down the old traditional joint family system. Many men and women want to be independent and work into cities; this is a slow destruction of traditional family values, increasing in more number of working mothers in cities and single parents, even increase in cases of divorce rates. This has lead to neglecting of children and elderly people. Joint families cannot be afforded in urban cities so they keep their elderly parents in rural areas, which is an indication of danger for the collectivist families in India. Urbanization has caused other side effect like rise in domestic violence, practice of dowry. To save these kind of traditional values and institutions of family, there is a need of a set of strong, consistent policies to strengthen the Indian family system.

Finally we would like to conclude that this concerned migra-

tion and urban involution in India, we need to have a new research perspective, as well as new and alternative planning prescriptions. We should have a strong plans and their successive operation for the benefits of poor migrants is now very important. The only we will be able to handle the effects of urbanization and bring upward transformation.

#### **Suggestions:**

Even the small resources spent on villages are lost in microeconomic interventions like MGNREGA to help individual villagers and not the macro economy of the village as a whole. While the government invests in the macro economy of cities it is at the microeconomic level in rural areas. Most of the employment in rural areas is agricultural or dependent on agriculture. This often tends to be seasonal and therefore unreliable. For the villagers to overcome poverty, villages should provide economic opportunities throughout the year other than in the agricultural areas also. A large percentage of the rural population should be able to make decent living through non-agricultural occupations. All basic amenities like roads, electricity, safe drinking water, health facilities (health centers), electronic communication facility, job opportunities in business and service sectors should be develop by the government on the basis of PURA project as suggested by former President of India, Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam. To re-start, PURA-2 should be launched shortly where Central government should select the developers, while State government should choose the clusters for creation of infrastructure.

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