

The Effects of Migration on Living Strategy of Poor Indian People

Jayabrata Ghosh

Abstract - Migration is known as one of the best strategies adopted by individuals to boost their livelihoods. Migration refers to movement of an individual from one place of living to another. Otherwise, this movement of people may be defined as i) Immigration and ii) Emigration. The movement of individuals into a country is called immigration and the movement of individuals from their home country is called emigration. Net migration refers to the balance between emigration and immigration. The factors which influence the decision to migrate are varied and complex. It affects individuals with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics. Migration in the Census of India is enumerated in two ways, one is migration by birth place and the other is migration by place of last residence. Causes of migration may be divided into two categories: (a) Pull factors i.e. the factors which attract people to new destinations. They include various job opportunities, better educational facilities, better weather, peaceful condition of environment etc., and (b) Push factors i.e. the factors which force individuals to leave their countries. They include political pressure, lack of jobs and educational facilities, cold weather, high income taxes, natural calamities, war etc. Huge movement of people from Bangladesh to India started in the early part of the twentieth century and still continuing. Initially movement of people from Bangladesh was confined to the adjacent states like West Bengal, Assam, Tripura etc. thereafter it extended to even far off states like, Tamilnadu, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Maharastra, Delhi etc. Migration has also been viewed as a dimension of persistent poverty, although it is not clear exactly what causality is implied (i.e. poverty drives migration or migration causes poverty or both). This paper attempts: i) to discuss historical aspects of migration in rural India after independence, ii) to understand whether migration is a preferred option within the diversified livelihood strategies among the poor in India, and iii) to review the existing evidence on migration- poverty relationship in the light of the macro level studies in India.

Index Terms — India, Livelihood, Migration, Poor, Poverty

1. Introduction:

Movement of people from one country to another country is a world-wide natural phenomenon. In general, international migration flows are found to be from poorer countries to richer countries. Migration refers to movement of an individual from one place of living to another. There are two basic types of migration as studied by demographers:

- a) Internal Migration: This refers to a change of residence within national boundaries, such as between states, provinces, cities, or municipalities. An internal migrant is someone who moves to a different administrative territory.
- b) International Migration: This refers to change of residence over national boundaries. An international migrant is someone who moves to a different country.

International migrants are further classified as legal immigrants, illegal immigrants and refugees. Legal immigrants are those who move with the legal permission of the receiver nation, illegal immigrants are those who move without legal permission, and refugees are those cross an international boundary to escape persecution.

Otherwise, this movement of people may be defined as i) Immigration and ii) Emigration. The movement of individuals into a country is called immigration and the movement of individuals from their home country is called emigration. Net migration refers to the balance between emigration and immigration.

The factors which influence the decision to migrate are varied and complex. It affects individuals with certain economic, social, educational and demographic characteristics. Causes of migration may be divided into two categories:

- i. Pull factors i.e. the factors which attract people to new destinations. They include various job opportunities, better educational facilities, better weather, peaceful environmental conditions etc., and
- ii. Push factors i.e. the factors which force individuals to leave their countries. They include political pressure, lack of jobs and educational facilities, cold weather, high income taxes, war etc.

In India migration is enumerated by the Registrar General & Census Commissioner and presented in the Census Report in two categories one is migration by place of birth and the other is migration by place of last residence. When a person is enumerated in census at a place other than the place of birth, the person would be treated as a migrant by place of birth. When a person is

enumerated at a place other than the place of immediate last residence, the person is considered as migrant by place of last residence. This paper is a minor attempt to highlight the historical aspects of migration of our country, to understand migration as a livelihood strategy in the eye of poor and to review the strength of migration-poverty relationship in Indian context.

2. Historical View:

Basically involuntary migrations are harder to study because in most cases they are forced by sudden extraordinary or uneven happenings like, war, partition, religious or ethnic conflict etc. This type of migration involves a large number of people within a very short period. Collection of demographic information of this type of movement is very hard. Huge movement of people from Bangladesh to India started in the early part of the twentieth century and still it has been continuing. Initially movement of people from Bangladesh was confined to the adjacent states like West Bengal, Assam, Tripura etc. thereafter it extended to even far off states like, Tamilnadu, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Maharastra, Delhi etc.

History of independence of India shows the largest and rapid migration within four years into India, Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Detailed information is available before and after independence. While outflows are not enumerated directly, we use region specific population projections to find out total outflows. The India-Pakistan refugee flows in 1947-48, involved nearly 15 million Hindus and Muslims; the exodus of Burmese Indians numbered about 1 million during 1948-65; the exodus of Sri Lankan Indians and Tamils to the tune of about 1 million since 1954 onwards; the flight of almost 10 million from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) to India during 1971 Indo-Pak War; flight of about 0.1 million Chakmas from Bangladesh to India in 1981; the unwanted population flow from Bangladesh to Assam in India and the two-way flow between Nepal and India. In 2000, India with its net migration being 6.3 million persons ranked the sixth among the top ten countries in the world with largest international migrant population (Times of India, September 12, 2006). The Census of India 2001 Report on migration (D-Series) shows that about 6,051,965 persons who live in India were born in other Asian countries, out of which more than 56 per cent (3,742,883) were from Bangladesh, followed by Pakistan (1,305,707), Nepal (640,862) and Sri Lanka (183,183). Thus, the movement of the population from Bangladesh to India is not unique, as India has been receiving migrants from other countries also. Also, the Census of India 2001 Report on migration (D-Series) shows that more than 30 lakh persons in the state of West Bengal were born in other Asian countries out of which more than 98 per cent were from Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh migrate to West Bengal due to similar geographical condition, socio-cultural and racial-linguistic relation. In addition to that easy accessibility of the border acts as an additional impetus to the Bangladeshi migrant.

The volume of Bangladeshi migrant of West Bengal particularly in the district of Nadia is significant.

It should be noted that historically, numerical data on migration has been collected since 1872. Up to the year 1961 information of the people regarding place of birth only has been collected. The scope of collecting information on migration was enlarged by including the rural-urban status of the place of birth and duration of residence at the dwelling place in 1961. The scope was further enhanced since 1991 Census by including the information of the place of last residence in addition to the information of place of birth. The information of the reason for migration was started to include from the Census of 1981. The pattern of data collection in the Census of 1981, 1991 and 2001 were almost same except that in 2001 Census the rural-urban status of place of birth was not collected. Also 'Natural Calamities' one of the reasons for migration was excluded and a new reason 'Moved at birth' included.

As per Census of India, 2001, there are about 315 million migrants in the country by place of last residence and 307 million migrants by birth. This amounts to roughly 30 percent of the total population in the country. The number of migrants has increased by one third as compared to the census of 1991 (excluding J&K, as 1991 census was not conducted in this state). However, the proportion of migrants to total population of the country has largely remained constant since 1971 (Table1). The proportion had declined to 27.4 percent in 1991 but has come back to 1971 levels in 2001.

Table 1: Trend in Total Migrants in India by Place of Last Residence, 1971 – 2001

Year	Male (in Million)	Female (in Million)	Total Person (in Million)	% of total population
1971	53.9	113.9	167.8	30.6

1981	62.5	145.2	207.7	30.4
1991	64.3	167.8	232.1	27.4
2001	93.4	221.2	314.5	30.6

Source: Census of India

Less developed states like UP and Bihar and politically disturbed states in north eastern region including Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam were the out migrating states than the rate of in-migrants. The prosperous states like Maharashtra, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat and Goa were the hot destinations for migrants from Bihar, UP, Orissa, Rajasthan, etc. Generally, most of the inter-state migrants were moved to the neighbouring, relatively more developed states or to distant metropolitan cities. Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa were the states in western zone which received highest number of migrants. Maharashtra was the main destination for migrants from UP, Karnataka and Gujarat, while Gujarat was preferred by the persons of Maharashtra, followed by UP and Rajasthan. Migrants from Karnataka, Maharashtra and UP migrated towards Goa. Another significant zone of net in-migration comprised the states of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi in the northwest region marked by a high degree of agriculture and industrial growth, expansion of urbanization and growth of metropolitan cities (**Table 2**).

Table: 2 India: Inter-State Migration, 2001

State/Union Territory	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Description
Jammu & Kashmir	165084	224236	Out Migration
Himachal Pradesh	344373	451153	Out Migration
Punjab	1752718	1647840	In Migration
Chandigarh	534799	151758	In Migration
Uttaranchal	866894	926125	Out Migration
Haryana	2672929	1743134	In Migration
Delhi	5318362	747105	In Migration
Rajasthan	1730776	2749776	Out Migration
Uttar Pradesh	2807680	9607897	Out Migration
Bihar	1582339	5440584	Out Migration
Sikkim	52985	11904	In Migration
Arunachal Pradesh	170626	20899	In Migration
Nagaland	85550	155676	Out Migration
Manipur	18529	53626	Out Migration
Mizoram	38570	36182	In Migration
Tripura	62890	67666	Out Migration
Meghalaya	92088	51129	In Migration
Assam	515924	667056	Out Migration
West Bengal	2238269	1740348	In Migration
Orissa	658984	949794	Out Migration
Madhya Pradesh	2236686	2065903	In Migration
Gujarat	2520676	1339736	In Migration

Maharashtra	7756307	2150873	In Migration
Andhra Pradesh	1029252	1627609	Out Migration
Karnataka	2107806	1976358	In Migration
Kerala 412849	412849	1220801	Out Migration
Tamil Nadu	794148	1737579	Out Migration
Goa	263653	86397	In Migration

Source: Census of India 2001, Migration Data

As per **Table: 3** below, Migration by Place of Birth as per the Census 2001 is 307 million (or 29.9 %) out of the total population of 1028.6 million persons. These people were born outside the place of enumeration. Out of these migrants 216.7 million were females and the male counterparts were only 90.4 million due to change of their residence for marriage. The number of migrants who had migrated to the place of enumeration from within the district or the State were about 181.7 million and 76.8 million respectively. The 48.4 million migrants were from other States or Union Territories including 6.1 from abroad.

Table: 3 In-migration by place of birth and sex: INDIA* - 2001

Category	Persons	Males	Females
(a) Total Population	1,028,610,328	532,156,772	496,453,556
(b) Born in India	1,022,442,977	528,981,861	493,461,116
(c) Born in place of enumeration	721,460,171	441,746,082	279,714,089
(d) Total migrants (a-c)	307,149,736	90,410,496	216,739,240
(e) Born within the state of enumeration	980,101,274	509,306,087	470,795,187
(i) Born elsewhere in the district of enumeration	181,799,637	42,781,678	139,017,959
(ii) Born in other districts of the state	76,841,466	24,778,327	52,063,139
(f) Born in other states in India beyond the state of enumeration	42,341,703	19,675,774	22,665,929
(g) Born abroad	6,166,930	3,174,717	2,992,213
(h) Unclassified	421	194	227

Note: *- India excludes 2001 Census data on population and other characteristics for Mao Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur
Source : Table D1, Census of India 2001

3. Migration as a livelihood strategy of the poor in India:

The word “population” is gaining importance day by day. The world population is increasing rapidly but the earth which accommodates the entire population is limited. The whole world is thinking about the population explosion. According to the U.N. Population Division, the world population surpassed the 7 billion mark on October 31st, 2011. The population of India according to the Census Report 2011 is 121,08,54,977 (i.e.1.21 billion). India is the second most populous country in the world after China (19.4%). India contains 17.5 percent of the world population (6.91 billion) on its meager 2.4 percent world surface area of 135.79 million square kilometers. At the time of independence country’s population was 342 million. The country’s

population size had grown from 361 million in 1951 to around 846 million in 1991 and 1210 million in 2011. Population increased 3.35 times during the last sixty years from 1951 to 2011.

Let us, try to know who are poor out of this large number of population or what poverty is. In natural way our population has been divided into rich and poor. Some people have substantial access to resources while some others may not have that power to the same extent or may be deprived of resources. They remain poor. In a democratic country Government tries to reduce the gap in resource holding pattern and wants to redistribute the resources which are limited in supply and limitations are there. For efficient distribution of resources it is essential to identify the poor. To find out the poor, some sort of benchmarks are needed. Those who fall below the benchmark will be considered as poor. At the outset public distribution system of government support was general. In this system all people were supposed to be benefited from public distribution system of government. From 1990's due to fiscal constraints targeted support was adopted for deserving poor. During this period subsidized food was meant only for below poverty line people and determination of poverty line started to gain importance since then.

Poverty line is determined by the Planning Commission of India on the basis of information supplied by the Nation Sample Statistical Organization (NSSO). NSSO carry out survey at every five year to collect information on consumption expenditure pattern of a state or a nation through representative sample. Sample size is selected in such a manner that various sections of the society are covered by the sample. Depending on the data provided by NSSO, Planning Commission with the help of expert groups determines the basic minimum need of a person to survive. This amount of need is expressed in terms of monetary figure. This is taken as benchmark or standard poverty line. People whose consumption expenditure is below the poverty line will be considered as poor. Thus, we can estimate the number of poor people in our country. This is expenditure based approach of determining poverty line. There is another approach, called income based approach of determining the poverty line. On the basis of income level of the people of a state or a nation, benchmark poverty line is determined. But due to variability of income of people and complexity of income determination of the population most of the expert group opine in favour of expenditure based approach.

Now, livelihood may be defined as a means of securing the basic necessities like, food, shelter and clothing of a person. It may be sustainable when it enables people to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses like, natural disasters, economic or social disruptions and improve their well-being and that of future generations without undermining the natural environment resource base.

Below is the table 4 which shows the state wise population that belong to below poverty line for the year 2011-12 classified into rural and urban with the percentage of the poor in total of the respective states.

**Table: 4 No. and % of Population Below Poverty Line by States – 2011-12
(Tendulkar Methodology)**

Sr. No.	States	Rural		Urban		Total	
		% of Persons	No. of Persons (Lakhs)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (Lakhs)	% of Persons	No. of Persons (Lakhs)
1	Andhra Pradesh	10.96	61.80	5.81	16.98	9.20	78.78
2	Arunachal Pradesh	38.93	4.25	20.33	0.66	34.67	4.91
3	Assam	33.89	92.06	20.49	9.21	31.98	101.27
4	Bihar	34.06	320.40	31.23	37.75	33.74	358.15
5	Chattisgarh	44.61	88.90	24.75	15.22	39.93	104.11
6	Delhi	12.92	0.50	9.84	16.46	9.91	16.96
7	Goa	6.81	0.37	4.09	0.38	5.09	0.75
8	Gujarat	21.54	75.35	10.14	26.88	16.63	102.23

9	Haryana	11.64	19.42	10.28	9.41	11.16	28.83
10	Himachal	8.48	5.29	4.33	0.30	8.06	5.59
11	Jammu & kashmir	11.54	10.73	7.20	2.53	10.35	13.27
12	Jharkhand	40.84	104.09	24.83	20.24	36.96	124.33
13	Karnataka	24.53	92.80	15.25	36.96	20.91	129.76
14	Kerala	9.14	15.48	4.97	8.46	7.05	23.95
15	Madhya Pradesh	35.74	190.95	21.00	43.10	31.65	234.06
16	Maharashtra	24.22	150.56	9.12	47.36	17.35	197.92
17	Manipur	38.80	7.45	32.59	2.78	36.89	10.22
18	Meghalaya	12.53	3.04	9.26	0.57	11.87	3.61
19	Mizoram	35.43	1.91	6.36	0.37	20.40	2.27
20	Nagaland	19.93	2.76	16.48	1.00	18.88	3.76
21	Odisha	35.69	126.14	17.29	12.39	32.59	138.53
22	Punjab	7.66	13.35	9.24	9.82	8.26	23.18
23	Rajasthan	16.05	84.19	10.69	18.73	14.71	102.92
24	Sikkim	9.85	0.45	3.66	0.06	8.19	0.51
25	Tamil Nadu	15.83	59.23	6.54	23.40	11.28	82.63
26	Tripura	16.53	4.49	7.42	0.75	14.05	5.24
27	Uttar Pradesh	11.62	8.25	10.48	3.35	11.26	11.60
28	Uttaranchal	30.40	479.35	26.06	118.84	29.43	598.19
29	West Bengal	22.52	141.14	14.66	43.83	19.98	184.98
30	Andaman & Nicobar	17.06	0.69	6.30	0.55	9.69	1.24
31	Chandigarh	1.57	0.04	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.04
32	Dadra Nager Haveli	1.64	0.00	22.31	2.34	21.81	2.35
33	Daman & Diu	62.59	1.15	15.38	0.28	39.31	1.43
34	Lakshadweep	0.00	0.00	12.62	0.26	9.86	0.26
35	Puducherry	0.00	0.00	3.44	0.02	2.77	0.02
	All India	25.70	2,166.58	13.70	531.25	21.92	2697.83

Source : Databok for Planning Commission, 22nd December, 2014

Migration plays a significant character in livelihood strategies of the poor. Movements generally occur in reaction to the situations actual as well as potential and perceived, which people face in their home communities and in areas outside their home. Migration is not predictable and occurs in response to a wide range of factors which involve people differently and to which they do not respond in identical ways. Motivation is an important characteristic of migration whether it is induced by pull factors or by push factors. Much of the migration literature suggests that migration is development induced and is reflected by uneven development. The levels of motivation are different and affect migration related decision differently. Most large scale population movement is from disadvantaged areas to those which are assumed to have greater economic opportunities. The emphasis remains on economic migration and more particularly on labour migration and employment.

Some studies have recognized migration as a routine livelihood strategy adopted by individuals, households or communities to enhance their livelihoods. This strategy is much more common than is often assumed, and has been so throughout history. Migration can improve cash flows within households, which can be used to repay debt, purchase healthcare, finance marriages

and other important social events and ultimately reduce poverty and vulnerability. In fact, circular migration is often linked to debt cycles and the need for money for repaying debts, covering deficits created by losses in agriculture or meeting expenditures of large magnitude on account of marriages, festivals, ceremonies, etc. This section describes evidence of the contribution of migration to livelihoods, in terms of poverty and inequality. Poverty is not necessarily the main cause of migration, and poverty- migration links are complex and context-specific. The contributions of migration in reducing poverty are equally complicated. There is consensus that migrants tend to help to increase the welfare in the areas of destination. Migrants often contribute much to the economy of the host society, have high rates of labour force participation, and tend to be skilled. But there is little evidence that migration helps to reduce economic inequalities between areas of origin and of destination. Economic expansion may be dependent on cheap migrant labour, while the areas of origin may suffer a decline in agriculture in the face of the loss of young wage-earning men. Migration helps to reduce poverty, even though in many cases it does not radically improve living conditions. But as access to opportunities is not randomly distributed, it may also contribute to increasing inequality. In the case of Indian rural to urban migration, it has been emphasised that better-off migrants are 'pulled' towards better job prospects, while the poor are 'pushed'.

4. Migration-poverty relationship:

Migration has become an integral part of present global economy. Both internal and international migration can have development and poverty implications for individuals and as well as their families of origin and their destination areas and also for national economies. Migration is a livelihood strategy for many poor people in India. The role of migration in sustaining or moving out of poverty is mostly decided by the social, geographical, cultural and financial inclusions experienced by the poor. Migration and poverty have a dynamic relationship. Conditions of poverty may compel one to migrate for livelihood and on the other way depressive migration may drag people into poverty. Generally, migration is associated with upward mobility. Migrants move from regions of scare livelihood areas to industrial and urban areas in searching of better livelihood opportunities. This generally helps them in improving income levels, enables expenditure on health and education and in this way improves the conditions of poverty. Migrants having minimum education, skills etc. may attain substantial improvements from migration.

On the other side, illiterate agricultural labourers, small peasants and children are mostly affected by migration. Children miss their proper education, illiterate people fail to get better opportunities and women in the family are burdened with the responsibility of the family as their male counterpart migrates.

The poverty and migration has a close relationship with each other. Poverty shows the way of migration and this is true particularly in rural areas. Landlessness, seasonal unemployment, marginal small farmers, under developed village industries, lack of job opportunities in rural areas etc. induce people to migrate from rural areas to urban one in the hope of better job opportunities. The holistic approach of Government with schemes, like housing for all, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihood Mission etc. are trying to reduce the negative effect of migration.

Migration results in urban poverty. As the cities are already full with employment, the migration from rural segment to this area causes ingestion of job aspirants and cause disguised unemployment. This situation leads to involvement of excess labour in unethical activities and corruptions. Ultimately the excess labourers are trapped by poverty. As the manufacturing sectors absorb excess labour, the situation may be improved by increasing the manufacturing sector in urban economy. The causes of migration and poverty are so intermingled and complicated that generalization is not possible. The each case of migration and poverty should be considered in its own perspective and only then the true relationship among them is possible.

5. Conclusion:

Migration is widely accepted as livelihood strategy, whether it is local, national or international. People at different age groups migrate. Migration is resorted to for better livelihood. But the result of migration may not always be favourable to the migrants. Rich people may have the capacity to absorb the unfavourable situation, but the poor people may fall in great distress. Government introduces several schemes at different times which help the poor people. More and more Government schemes are to be introduced to widen the coverage of Government help in favour of poor. Young migrants face many challenges particular to their age and yet little attention has been given to young migrants. Migration is desirable when it is seen as an opportunity for development, serving the interests of capital, modernity and progress, a way out of poverty and as a form of population control. But migration is undesirable when it is seen as a constraint to development, leading to greater poverty, causing political, social, economic and cultural instability.

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IJSER

Jayabrata Ghosh is the Assistant Professor of Commerce of
Ranaghat College, West Bengal, India.