



NATURE, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF LABOR MOBILITY

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of internal labor mobility in India plays an important role in the process of economic development and social transformation and shows an increasing trend of rural to urban flow over the years. At the same time, it shows falling trends in all other streams of migration include a set of socio-economic, demographic, geographical and environmental variables.

Keywords: *dynamic, economic, demographic, geographic, variables.*

INTRODUCTION

Mobility is one of the important aspects of human nature, which is often guided by socio-economic, political as well as environmental factors. The nature, pattern and direction of population of mobility may vary across the space. In this paper, we attempt to critically and objectively examine condition examine the condition and responses of interstate migrant workers. We have specifically chosen inter-state migration because they are especially vulnerable to exploitation. These people have left their homes out of compulsion to provide for themselves and their families. They live in an alien environment and hence are socially vulnerable.

We also examine in this research paper, the reasons as to why these people leave their homes and move to other states. An attempt has also been made to bring to the surface their economic and social vulnerabilities as well as the dangers they face at the work place. The role of the ILO has also been discussed.



OBJECTIVES:

This paper is aimed to address mainly the following aspects of spatial mobility within India.

1. Reasons for migration
2. To examine the condition and responses of interstate migrant workers.
3. Some insights on the determinants of internal migration in India.

METHODOLOGY

An analytical descriptive method has been adopted in this research paper.

HYPOTHESIS

We believe that the main cause of the urban-rural/interstate migration is the failure the rural economic structure. More so in the case of the weak and marginalized sections

Review of Literature:

“Gravity Model of migration in India”; where as the “Harris –Todaro Model” of rural urban migration has limited applicability in both inter-state and intra- state migration in India. This is first scholarly contribution to migration consisting of two articles by the nineteenth century geographer Ravenstein (1885; 1889), in which he formulated his “law of migration”. He saw migration as an inseparable part of development, and he asserted that the major causes of migration were economic. Migration pattern were further assumed to be influenced by factors such as distance and population density.¹³. This perspective, in which people are expected to move from low income to high income areas, and from densely to sparsely populated areas, that is , the general that notions migration movements towards a certain spatial- economic equilibrium , has remained alive in the work of menu demographers, geographers and economist ever since ²., and as we will see, is also the underlying assumption of push- pull theories.

Neo classical migration theory sees rural- urban migration as a constituent part of the whole development process, by which surplus labour in the rural sector supplies the workforce for the urban industrial economy³. By postulating that it is well-known fact of economic history that material progress usually has been associated with the gradual but continuous transfer of economic agents from rural based traditional agriculture to urban oriented modern industry⁴., neo- classical migration theory is firmly entrenched in “developmentalist” modernization theory based on teleological views interpreting seeing development as a linear, universal process consisting of successive stages³.



Todaro (1969) and Harris and Todaro (1970) elaborated the basic two sector model of rural-to-urban labor migration. This influential “Harris- Todaro model” has remained the basis of neo- classical migration theory since then. The original model was developed in order to explain the apparently contradictory phenomenon of continuing rural- to – urban migration in developing countries despite rising unemployment in cities. The model was born out of discontent with vague and amorphous explanations such as the “bright lights” of the city acting as a magnet to lure peasants into urban areas¹¹. Harris and Todaro argued that, in order to understand this phenomenon, it is necessary to modify and extend the simple wage differential approach by looking “not only at prevailing income differentials as such but rather at the rural – urban “expected “income differential, i.e. the income differential adjusted for the probability of finding an urban job”¹⁴.

Internal migration at macro level studies the relationship between aggregate migration flows and the presence of spatial heterogeneity among the different locations. The geographical differentials in terms of economic growth and development, is the main determinant of internal migration. The gravity model is the most common theoretical framework used in empirical analysis to study the spatial determinant of migrants. It argues that migration is directly correlated with the distance between the origin and the destination regions. Distance is the key variable, the proxy for all the migration costs, both psychological and monetary, that is spatially related to the sending and destination region. The population size is the sign of the rate of urbanization or the growth of urban sector⁷. However, not all people react in the same way to differences between places. The selectivity influence of migration characterizes the different propensity to migrate for different category of people. Young people in the working age have a higher propensity to migrate than people in the other age groups. Moreover, education is also an important selective factor. High skilled people tend to migrate more than low skilled people¹⁰.

98 million persons moved during the decade 1991-2001. Out of this, 33 million are males and 65 millions are females. Of the total intercensal migrants, 83 percent were intrastate migrants and 17 percent were interstate migrants. However, among the males 74 percent migrated within the state of enumeration while 26 percent moved between states. A corresponding percentage of females (13 percent) were recorded as significantly increased during the 1990s.

MIGRATION – WHY DOES IT HAPPEN

What is migration? Migration can be explained simply as the movement of people from their place of origin to other countries or regions. Migrations take place on a large scale in India and in other countries for various reasons. Migrations can be divided into internal and external migration.



External migrations are when people from a particular country cross their national border and migrate to other countries. An example of external migration is people from nations like Mexico, India and others to the United States of America.

Internal migration may be of different types. There may be rural to Urban, Urban to rural, inter-State and intrastate. Internal migration is when people from one State to another within a country. That is, people move from one region to other regions in search of work and other reasons. Rural migration to urban is the most prominent type of migration. People from villages and under developed regions migrate to more modern and developed metropolitan cities. Urban to rural migration is a very rare phenomenon. People may migrate from the cities and metropolitan areas to rural and under developed areas. These people migrate from the cities to rural areas for various reasons. The reasons for this type of migration are the excessive congestion and pollution of city centers. The standard of living in cities is also very high as compared to rural areas, so the cost of living is also very high. Some people may just migrate to escape the fast track of city life to the still and tranquil village life. The decline of health and the emergence of new diseases in metropolitan areas like A. I. O. S., Cancer, etc. There is also the problem of anonymity and depression caused by the sheer vastness of the city. People may also migrate from urban centers to rural areas as a result of new industries coming up in the rural sector.

Inter-State migration is when people from one state migrate to other states as a result of difference in the economic, political and social conditions in between these states. For example, people from Uttar Pradesh in India migrate to states like Kerala and Karnataka as there is a vast difference in the level of population in these states.

People also migrate within a state itself. A state may be having its rural and urban areas. Therefore, the resident of the different districts and regions which are fairly well developed attract people from those districts which are not very well developed.

Migration can also vary according to the time period. People who migrate and stay in their new surroundings for a long or permanent time are called long term migrants. There may also be short time migration where people migrate to other places only for a comparatively shorter period.

Why do people migrate? Now that we have dealt with what migration is, we should try and find out why these people leave their homes and move to alien surroundings. This question is very important as we can look at the failures and inequalities in our present system whereby these poor people are forced to leave their places of residence and move too far off places.

The principal factors governing their decision to migrate are:



1. Failure of Agriculture and Rural economy;
2. Economic state of Rural population and impact of development;
3. Natural causes;
4. Socio-Economic Discrimination and displacement of Backward classes
5. International Changes.

The first four deal exclusively with India as far as possible while the fifth point also talks about international population movements. These are all very broad based reasons for the migration of people. There are examples of specific incidents which are quite relevant.

1) **Failure of Agriculture and Rural economy :-**

India was and still is a primarily agricultural country. Major population of the country is still engaged in agriculture. The profession of agriculture is not very lucrative and there exists wide spread poverty among most farmers. The agricultural areas or states of a country are not very well developed and most of the agricultural land occurs in the rural areas. The agricultural sector is characterized by general poverty and low standards of living primarily because there are all too many people in this sector. With the advent of industrialization in India there has been a general negligence of the agricultural sector.

The pattern of Indian agriculture was originally feudalistic. The land was owned by the zamindars and most peasants did not have their own land. The farm workers were heavily dependent on their masters for their economic stability. They existed in conditions of bare living standards. The workers conditions were particularly bad when British India decided to delegate ownership of land to zamindars and land was confiscated from the peasants who owned lands. Even during the great droughts and famines it was the agricultural laborers, who had nothing to survive on, that suffered the most.

Under the various land reforms acts of post independent India there were the policies of ceilings on land holdings and redistributions of land. However, the land distributed was not really enough due to the large size of the peasant families. There was also unequal distribution of the land across different regions. The peasants could not afford to irrigate their fields and were dependants on the highly unpredictable rain for watering their crops. As the output of land in most places was not really enough, many peasants had to sell their land to larger farmers or money lenders under stress. This is called “distress sale” and is characterized by an unfair deal to the farmer.

Thus the dependence on agriculture as an almost exclusive source of livelihood for the rural population has been a matter of great concern for independent India. Between 1981 and 1991, the dependency of workers engaged in the agricultural sector has declined by less than 1 % to

remain at 80%. All the other states have shown a percentage of 70-84% of workers dependant on agriculture except for Kerala with 46.5%. In rural Bihar and Madhya Pradesh there is approximately 88% of rural workers dependant on agriculture. Gujarat, Haryana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are the states where dependence on agriculture declined for both male and female workers. 3 This shows that people are migrating to other sectors where agriculture is not the primary source of income.

Thus, we see that due to the lack of productiveness and employment in the rural agricultural sector, most people from those areas have to depend on secondary sources of income. This income is got by migrating to develop or developing urban centers where they work as construction workers or generally as casual labor.

2) Economic State of Rural Population and Impact of Development:-

An Important Cause of migration in India is the low economic state of the rural population. The majority of the rural workers are dependent upon agriculture as their primary source of income. Agricultural workers are faced with problems like disguised and seasonal unemployment. Disguised unemployment is when there is more than the required number of workers working on the same plot of land. This is due to the joint family system apparent in rural India. Seasonal unemployment is caused by the unavailability of employment for farmers between the sowing and harvesting seasons.

Generally farmers are poor and due to the meager yield of their small plots of land, most of the produce is consumed by the family of the farmer. The remaining portion of the produce is sold to the middle men at often unfair rates.

The amount spent on rural development to total plan expenditure was in the range of 6-7% in the Seventh and Eighth Plans, and expenditure on total plan ranged from 14-17% These small magnitudes on human development may not be sufficient to make a dent on poverty. 4 The total money allocated to these programmes may not even reach the poor. They may disappear on the way to them. Development programmes like the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP) have achieved limited success due to their excessive centralization in decision making and utilization of loans by the poor. The real amounts received by the poor are also quite modest.

The last published All-India Debt Survey and Investment Survey came in 1981-82. It showed that the average debt per agricultural household had shot up by about 13.9% in the decade covered by it.

In this context it is the marginal and landless laborers who are most severely affected. The marginal farmers are hard-pressed to support their families. They have to look for alternative sources of employment to remain even at the subsistence level the landless laborers are the most badly affected. "Land is a source of income and social stability. If a farmer owns land it weakens the dependency syndrome for him. "

The advent of Industrial development in India has also had its impact on the rural agricultural sector. With the introduction of new machinery into agriculture, the need for labour on farms is constantly decreasing. The landless workers who used to earn some money by tilling the land are deprived of it by the efficient machinery of production. Even marginal farmers who work on other farms as an alternative source of income are deprived of some very valuable income.

In the context of globalization, even the agricultural sector has now opened up to private investment from domestic and foreign sources. Land is bought from marginal farmers who then join the ranks of landless labor. Medium and large farmers are reduced to marginal and small farmers by these capitalists. The workers are deprived of work and they get no jobs at the production intensive farms because mostly machines are employed. These now landless and marginal laborers have to migrate to urban centers where there is more chance of them getting jobs as casual laborers.

3. Natural Causes:-

Migration may also be caused by the behavior of the force of nature. People may migrate from regions having extremes of temperatures or regions prone to natural disasters like earthquakes or violent typhoons. However, these are not very significant causes, as many people settle in these areas due to the unavailability of good land and large population and large population of India.

Rain, its occurrence and distribution, is the main cause of migration. The population of India is largely dependent on agriculture. Now due to the unavailability of irrigation facilities or perennial rivers in most of India's interiors there is a need for workers to find alternative sources of employment as agriculture is not properly developed.

4. Social – Economic Discrimination and Displacement of Backward Classes:-

A significant part of the migrants consist of backward classes like tribal's, 'advises', scheduled castes, and other Backward Classes (OBC's) to urban or developed regions in search of employment and escape from social persecution.



In most of Indian villages, there exists a system whereby people are discriminated on the basis of caste. Their low social status makes the low caste people extremely vulnerable socially and economically. They are given menial jobs and forced to live separately in their own communities. They are discriminated in education also and end up being rendered incapable through no fault of theirs.

Development so far has been proved more detrimental and harmful than useful to most Indian tribal's. Even the government discriminates against these tribal's.

As said by Menaka Gandhi, former Minister for the Environment, Then the Government offered a 50% reduction in company tax to those companies that would go to tribal areas, because the tribal's don't complain. They don't get jobs either. What happens is that islands of affluence came up where the company workers live. The company dispossesses the tribal's of their clean air, water and land, displaces them with no compensation; and all they get is work as chowkidars [watchmen] and road builders. If enslaves the tribal people.⁷

What happens to these displaced tribal people? They are forced to migrate to other regions in search of work and in search of a home.

Most of the previous reasons for migration are strictly in terms of India only. There may also be population flows in a large scale where people migrate from one country to the other (usually neighboring countries)

Governments or dominant ethnic groups may expel from their country ethnic or religious minorities. The minorities are made to flee from their country of residence because of intolerable living conditions. These people may be called 'rejected people'. A good example of this type of forced migration is the Indo-Pakistan refugee flows in 1947-48. Large number of Hindus and Sikhs moved from Pakistan, a Muslim majority area, to India. Muslims from India also migrated to Pakistan. This was due to the partition of India. These movements were characterized by violence along the borders which led to the deaths of approximately half a million people.

We have seen the main reasons for migration. We can, in the case of Indian internal migration, place the blame squarely on the shoulders of agricultural failure, social and economic inequalities and the existence of a large population of whom very little are educated and employed. Even the broader, international movements have been caused due to unemployment, political and religious reasons.

The majority of empirical works rise to investigate the impact of some economic variables on internal migration. A high economic prosperity also means more activities, services and

opportunities for people living in that area. Moreover, dynamic centers attract mostly young people, who are widely recognized to be highly mobile. The most representative economic invariable is the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as explain by green wood (1997). Internal migration has greater potential for poverty reduction, meeting the millennium development goals (MDGs) and contributing economic growth in developing countries than international migration⁴ the relatively poor and backward steps show large population mobility, which is primarily in search of livelihood. The mobility of male population is also found to be prominent in the relatively advanced states like Maharashtra and Gujarat as explained by Mitra and Murayama (2008). The labor market variable which are often included as explanatory variables in the migration analysis , are the unemployment by increased opportunities for higher earning implies and increase in the gap between rural earning and hence a cause of migration . The flow of migration to the major cities is the result of rural-urban dichotomies in income, employment opportunity and absorptive capacity as stated by Ullah(2004). Hossain(2001) found that while poverty, job searching and family influence were the main push factor for out-migration, better opportunity, prior migrants and availability of jobs were the main factors behind migration. The reason why people decide to move from one region to another is not just related to economic factors. A host of other factors play a role as well. The group of variables that can affect internal migration flows in quite board and is related with the quality of life. All these factors concern public safety, social services, environmental quality, as well as quality factors¹. According to Adrienko and Guriev, (2003), people move from poorer and job scarce regions with worse public good provision to areas that are richer and more prospering both in terms of employment prospects and public goods.

Migration influences the social, political and economic life of the people and no government can ignore developing a good statistical system on internal migration in a country. In India, migrants are not required to register either at the place of origin or at the place of destination. In absence of this, Census and National Sample Surveys (NSS) are two main sources of data on internal migration in the country.

CONCLUSION:

Migration will be much larger phenomenon encompassing half of the workforce in informal sector. The government is encouraging external migration for remittances and internal migration for cheap labor to meet the profits of finance capital.

The rural to rural migration has been the most important migration flow that indicates a steadily declining proportion, while the proportions of medium and long distance migrants have increased, suggesting that the long distance movements are more urban – oriented than short distance movements. The short distance migration is main migration pattern among

Indian females while long distance migration is often undertaken by the males. Marriage is the reason for a large proportion female migration where as in the case of males , the most important reason are employment , business etc. again, it is evident from the India Census that there has been a significant increase in migration to urban areas both among males and females during 1991-2001. The rural to urban migration may be due to the rapid growth of urban informal sectors in the recent years, which comprises about 93 per cent of the total employment in the economy. The movements from urban to urban area are also increasing considerably. This may be due to globalization and the quick expansion of the service sector. From the current trends and pattern of internal migration in India, it can be anticipated that long distance rural to urban and urban to urban streams will be the dominant migration streams in the future.

Migration in India is mostly influenced by social structures and pattern of development. The development policies by all the governments since independence have accelerated the process of migration. Uneven development is the main cause of migration. Added to it, are the disparities, Inter regional and amongst different socio- economic classes. The landless poor who mostly belong to lower castes, indigenous communities and economically backward regions of India intrusion of outsiders, settlements by the outsiders displacing the local tribal people and deforestation also played a major role in migration.

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