Migration in India & It's Impact

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Migration isn't a one-directional process; it's a colossal process that has been happening in all directions for thousands of years. **Mohsin Hamid**

Human Migration

Human migration is the movement of people from one place in the world to another. People can either choose to move (voluntary migration) or be forced to move (involuntary migration).The International Organization for Migration (The United Nations Migration Agency) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across **an** international border **or** within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of:

- Person's legal status
- Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary
- What the causes for the movement are
- What the length of the stay is

According to the International Migrant Stock 2019 report (released by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), India with 17.5 million international migrants has emerged as the top source of international migrants, constituting 6.4% of world's total migrant population. India's urban population is expected to grow from 410 million in 2014 to 814 million by 2050.

The number of migrants who moved from rural to urban areas stood at 52 million out of a total population of 1.02 billion, as per the 2001 Census. About 450 million of 1.2 billion Indians migrated within the country according to recently released Census 2011 data. Women outnumber men in making the rural-to-urban shift. Of the 78 million, 55% were females and they outnumbered males in 554 of the 640 districts. The share of male rural-to-

urban migrants in the total male population rose from 4.6% to 5.7%; for females, the share rose from 5.5% to 7.4%.

Rural to urban migration

In developing countries, urbanisation usually occurs when people move from villages to settle in cities in hope of gaining a better standard of living. The movement of people from one place to another is called migration. Migration is influenced by economic growth and development and by technological change (Marshall et al., 2009) and possibly also by conflict and social disruption. It is driven by pull factors that attract people to urban areas and push factors that drive people away from the countryside. About 89% of the migrants are from rural areas and over 50% of migrants, both male and female, are between 15-25 years old. Migration of youth is an important factor in shaping cities and towns.

Factors

- Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors but many other factors like social, political, cultural, environmental, health, education are included under the broader classification of Push and Pull factors of migration. A study by Arup Mitra and Mayumi Murayama (2008) revealed that 77% of the population i.e. nearly 840 million Indians live on less than Rs.20 a day

Push-factors Countries of origin	Migrants	Pull-factors Countries of destination
⇒ Population growth, young age structure ⇒ Inadequate educational institutions, medicare and social security	**Demographic factors and social infrastructure**	⇒ Stable population, population decline, demographic ageing ⇒ Welfare state benefits, educational institutions, medicare, social security
⇒ Unemployment, low wages ⇒ Poverty, low consumption and living standard	**Economic factors**	⇒ Labour demand, high wages ⇒ Welfare, high consumption and living standard
⇒ Dictatorships, shadow democracy, bad governance, political upheaval ⇒ Conflict, (civil) war, terrorism, human rights violation, oppression of minorities	**Political factors**	⇒ Democracy, rule of law, pluralism, political stability ⇒ Peace, security, protection of human and civil rights, protection of minorities
⇒ Ecologic disaster, desertification, lack of natural resources, water shortage, soil erosion, lack of environmental policy	**Ecological factors**	⇒ Better environment, environmental policy, protection of natural resources and environmental protection
⇒ Decisions of the family or the clan ⇒ Information flows, media,	**Migrant flows and migrant stocks**	⇒ Diaspora, ethnic community ⇒ Information flows, media, transferred picture of

- **Rural push factors:** Push factors are those that compel **a** person to leave a place of **origin** (out-migration) and migrate to some other place includes poverty, inequitable land distribution, environmental degradation, high vulnerability to natural disasters, and violent conflicts while

- **Urban pull factors:** Pull factors indicate the factors which attract migrant (in-migration) to an area (destination) includes better employment and education opportunities, higher income, diverse services, and less social discrimination in the cities.

Home away from home: Where Indians go

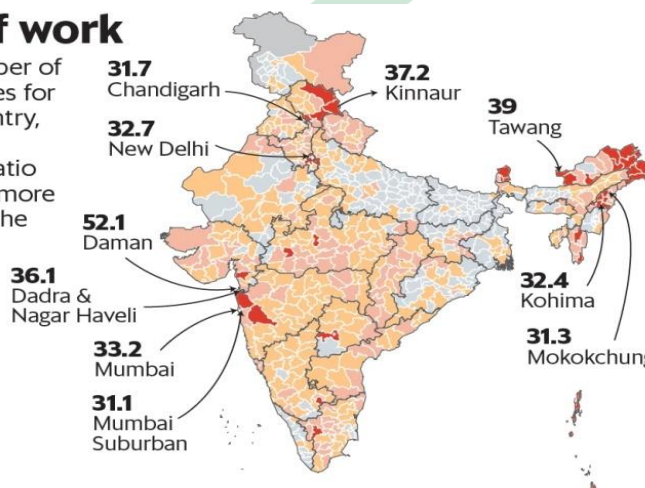| Rank	Country	No of Indians (in million)	% of total Indian diaspora
1	UAE	3.5	22.4
2	US	2.0	12.8
3	Saudi Arabia	1.9	12.1
4	Kuwait	1.0	6.4
5	Oman	0.7	4.5
6	UK	0.7	4.5
7	Qatar	0.6	3.8

Total **15.6** million

Types

People move for many reasons, based on which types of human migration include

a. **internal migration** (moving within a state, country, or continent)

b. **external migration** (moving to a different state, country, or continent).

In search of work

Despite a large number of people moving places for work inside the country, there are only a few districts where the ratio of such migration is more than 20%. Here are the top ten districts.

Those migrating for work/business as % of total migrants

- Below 5%
- 5-10%
- 10-20%
- Above 20%

31.7 Chandigarh
37.2 Kinnaur
39 Tawang
32.7 New Delhi
52.1 Daman
36.1 Dadra & Nagar Haveli
32.4 Kohima
33.2 Mumbai
31.3 Mokokchung
31.1 Mumbai Suburban

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Internal migration in India is primarily of two types:

- ✓ **Long term Migration,** resulting in the relocation of an individual or household.
- ✓ **Short term Migration,** involving back and forth movement between a source and destination.

- • **Key Source States:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh.

- • **Key Destination States:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka.

Internal Migrants: The largest recipient was the Delhi region, which accounted for more than half of migration in 2015-16. This is consistent with our finding that of the five million leaving agriculture per annum there were 3.5 million from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar alone. The Report by the Working Group on Migration has identified 54 districts with a high level of inter-State out-migration intensity. These districts account for half the male inter-State out-migration in the country. Of these, 36 districts are concentrated in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh has the highest share of rural-to-urban migrants in its population (39%).

- • **Female Migration:** Out of the total internal migrants, **70.7 per cent** are **women** (Census of India 2001) and **marriage** is one of the major reasons for **female migration** in both the rural and urban areas.

- • **Male Migration:** Migration for **employment-related** reasons is one of the prominent reasons for **male migration** in both rural and urban areas.

- • **Employing Sectors:** Migrants are mostly employed in **subsectors** like construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries, and agriculture.

- • **Urbanization:** Rates of urbanization influence **rural-urban wage** differences and an increase in the demand for labour in urban areas can push up urban wages and **increase migration.**

- ▪ **External Migration**

  External migration in India can broadly be classified as:

  a. **Emigration** from India to various parts of the world.

  b. **Immigration** of people from different countries to India.

  c. **Refugee Migration:** There had also been a significant trend of an involuntary or forced immigration to India in the form of refugees.

International Migration and Global action

In 2016 the United Nations General Assembly convened a high-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and prepared the report "Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants".

- United Nations member states adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which commits to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status.

- As a result of the New York Declaration, UN Member States agreed to cooperate in the elaboration of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in December 2018 in Morocco.

- Every year, 8th December is celebrated as International Migrants Day.

Positive Impact

- Labour Demand and Supply: Migration fills gaps in demand for and supply of labor.

- Economic Remittances: Economic well-being of migrants provides insurance against risks to households in the areas of origin, increases consumer expenditure and investment in health, education and assets formation.

- Quality of Life: Migration enhances chances of employment and economic prosperity which in turn improves quality of life. The migrants also send extra income and remittance back home, thereby positively impacting their native place.

- Social Remittances: Migration helps to improve the social life of migrants, as they learn about new cultures, customs, and languages which helps to improve brotherhood among people and ensures greater equality and tolerance.

- Food and Nutrition Security: According to the 2018 State of Food and Agriculture report by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), outmigration often leads to improved food and nutrition security for migrants.

- Climate Change Adaptive Mechanism: Migration has also emerged as a possible adaptive mechanism in the context of climate change and the occurrence of extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and cyclones.

Migrants and the SDGs

- The 2030 Agenda (with core principle to "leave no one behind," including migrants) for Sustainable Development recognizes for the first time the contribution of migration to sustainable development.

- 11 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contain targets and indicators that are relevant to migration or mobility.

- The SDGs' central reference to migration is made in target 10.7, to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

Negative Impact

- Demographic Profile: Emigration in large numbers can alter demographic profiles of communities, as most of the young men move out, leaving only the women and elderly to work on the land.

- Population Explosion and the Influx of workers in the place of destination increases competition for the job, houses, school facilities etc. and a large population puts too much pressure on natural resources, amenities, and services.

- Illiterate and Under skilled Migrants are not only unfit for most jobs, because of a lack of basic knowledge and life skills but are also prone to the victimization of exploitation, trafficking, psychological abuse, and gender-based violence in the case of female migrants.

- Increased Slum: Mass Migration results into an increase in slum areas, compromising quality of infrastructure and life at the destination, which further translates into many other problems such as unhygienic conditions, crime, pollution, etc.

- Brain Drain: Source state suffers from the loss of human capital.

Challenges

- Inclusion and Integration of Migrants: Internal migration is not viewed positively in India and policies are often aimed at reducing internal migration, as a result, there is a lack of integration of migration with the process of development.

- Psychological and Emotional Stress: Any person migrating to a new country faces multiple challenges, from cultural adaptation and language barriers to homesickness and loneliness.

- Employment challenges: Labor migrants are paid below their contract wage and may be forced to work long hours and denied regular time off. Systems like reservation of jobs in many states and countries for the locals (visa barriers in US, Saudi Arabia's Nitaqat law) pose as the main hurdle.

- Contract Wage System: The problems faced by migrants in destination countries range from contract violation, non-payment of salary, long working hours, and poor working conditions.

- Health Hazards: The poor and harsh living conditions coupled with difficult and risky working conditions, lack of information, and lack of medical health support also leads to several health problems of the migrants.

- For internal migrants also there is the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act (1979), enacted to prevent migrant workers from being exploited, but it is rarely invoked and the penalty is minimal.

- Exclusion from social benefits: The need to provide proof of address, ration cards, Voter IDs and Aadhaar cards, which is difficult due to the fluidity of their lives, deprive them from accessing welfare schemes and policies.

Way Forward

The Human Development Report by United Nation Development Programme (2009) highlights that migration is integral to the process of human development and it plays a very important role in achieving sustainable development goals, thereby preventing migration could even be counterproductive.

Hence India needs to formulate migration centric policies, strategies, and institutional mechanisms in order to ensure inclusive growth and development and reduce distress induced migration, thereby increasing India's prospects for poverty reduction and achieving Sustainable Development Goals. The government at Centre needs to provide amenities and social securities for the migrant population which is riddled with the issues of inadequate

housing; low-paid, insecure or hazardous work; extreme vulnerability of women and children to trafficking and sex exploitation etc.

For instance, schemes like Kerala government's Aawaz health insurance scheme, Apna Ghar project -accommodation for migrant workers, Portable Rights- ensures the basic rights to workers in their respective home state, even as they labour in other states.India's planners must manage these three processes much better over the next two decades as India's demographic dividend draws to a close by 2040.