

MIGRATION STUDIES AND POVERTY SYNDROME: AN ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE EMERGING FROM RECENT DATA

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The development process in many countries in Asia, seems to have resulted in accentuation of spatial inequalities, measured in terms of per capita income, consumption expenditure and several other developmental indicators, across rural areas, small towns and metro cities. The interstate inequality in the country, too, has been going up, notwithstanding an upsurge in the income growth at macro level, in recent years. It is nonetheless argued within the neoclassical framework that the window of migration will provide an opportunity to the labour in backward rural areas to shift to growing regions and dynamic urban centres. Present paper reviews the policies and programmes at the national and regional levels in countries of South and East Asia, to determine if these are responsible for slowing down migration and ushering in an era of exclusionary urbanization.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the development literature characterize migrants as poor and people in distress, living in slums and squatters, denied of basic civic amenities, often forced into illegal and immoral business and reporting high incidence of Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS etc. It abounds in references to their not having the affordability for the basic civic amenities and not paying municipal taxes, thereby putting heavy burden on the finances of the receiving states and cities (Piel 1997, Satterthwaite 2005 and UN Habitat 2008). A high influx of migrant population is currently being associated with the problems of law and order, outbreak of epidemics and posited as a threat to local and national security (Ellerman 2003 and Ooi et. al. 2007). A negative perspective has, thus, been projected which implicitly endorses the standpoint that slowing down the migration would be desirable not only for the wellbeing of the population receiving them but the migrants as well. Even the researchers and administrators who take a pro migrant standpoint and fight for their access to basic services and equal right with the local population, generally concede that the best option for the migrants would be if their economic and social conditions can be improved at the place of their origin, eliminating thereby their need to migrate.

The development process in many countries in Asia, India being no exception, seems to have resulted in accentuation of spatial inequalities, measured in terms of per capita income, consumption expenditure and several other developmental indicators, across rural areas, small towns and metro cities. The interstate inequality in the country, too, has been going up, notwithstanding an upsurge in the income growth at macro level, in recent years. It is nonetheless argued within the neoclassical framework that the window of migration will provide an opportunity to the labour in backward rural areas to shift to growing regions and dynamic urban centres. The relevant question would, therefore, be, given the strong negative perspective on migration, how the stresses and strains in the labour market would impact on its mobility. More specifically, one would like to know if the unemployed and disguised employed in backward states, striving below or around the poverty line, particularly those in rural areas, would be able to move to dynamic urban centres and improve their socio-economic status.

Several global institutions have hypothesized that the less developed countries can reshape their economic geography by organising movement of labourforce from backward regions to select urban

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agglomerations and achieve higher levels of economic efficiency¹. It would be interesting to test this proposition and examine if there is an association between the adoption of the measures of globalization, high economic growth and acceleration in migration within the country towards its developed regions and large cities.

In the context of this broad macro concern, the present paper begins by reviewing the policies and programmes at the national and regional levels in countries of South and East Asia, to determine if these are responsible for slowing down migration and ushering in an era of exclusionary urbanization. This has been done in the second section which follows the present introduction. The next section analyses the trends and pattern of internal migration in India, considering the gender, rural urban categories and durations of mobility. It is based on the information from Population Census from 1961 to 2011² and National Sample Survey (NSS) from 1983 to 2007-08. Given the conflicting trends emerging through usage of different concepts and data sources, an attempt is made to understand the statistical discrepancies and difficulties in drawing ambiguous inferences. The fourth section enquires into the socio-economic factors behind labour mobility through cross tabulation of migrant men in the working age group, into various streams. The final section summarizes the findings and puts forward a perspective for ushering in a strategy of balanced regional development in the country.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES PERTAINING TO MIGRATION AND THEIR IMPACT

The programmes for intervention by South and East Asian countries including China can broadly be classified into two categories: (i) Interventions for stabilization of agrarian economy, checking RU migration and promoting a few globally linked cities through provision of high quality infrastructure, and (ii) Welfare schemes for urban migrant workers and their families to bring them into mainstream.

Stabilization of Regional economies and Promoting Globally Linked Cities

As per the United Nations study (2000), 44 per cent of the world's countries, of which 88 per cent are in the less developed regions, consider their settlement pattern to be a matter of national concern. Faced with the problems of metropolis-based growth, these countries have tried to disseminate infrastructure and basic facilities into rural areas and promote development there. Understandably, settlement policies have become synonymous with measures to reduce or reverse RU migration through balanced regional development.

China, for example, has launched measures for employment generation and industrial dispersal in rural areas with the objective of reducing rural-urban inequality within the framework of a 'socialist market economy'. This is accompanied by pro-rural reforms in the taxation system that had earlier favoured the large cities (Riskin 2007). These are helping to slow down migration from the villages. Scholars like Reuters (2005), Kahn (2005), Chan and Buckingham (2008), etc. argue that there is a good deal of rhetoric in the reforms aimed at abolishing the hukou institution, and that it continues to be the major factor preventing China's rural population from settling down in cities. In a way, they confirm the postulate of Wang (2005) that hukou system stands 'adapted and adjusted', but is very much 'alive and well' as a part of reality in China, which maintains rural-urban 'apartheid'.

Vietnam, too, has an elaborate and complex system of controlling migration into big cities through migration policies and household registration system (ho khai), despite economic renovations (Doi Moi) launched officially in 1986, abolishing much of this system (Dang 1999). India, while not implementing direct controls on population movement, has a number of policies for rural development which are expected to slow down migration. National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which promises 100 days of wage employment in unskilled work for every rural household is a major new initiative at the country level, and

is expected to check out-migration. Similar policies and institutional actions have been proposed by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (2003) in its 'National Strategy for Economic Growth, Poverty Reduction and Social Development'. It delineates programmes to reach out to the poor and remote rural areas that are vulnerable to adverse ecological processes, through micro-credit and other programmes, a few of these being promoted through Grameen Bank.

Philippines has the longest history of decentralization in East Asia with the introduction of the Local Government Code in 1991. It has launched the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan 2001–04, thereby encouraging the location of industries and large educational facilities to a distance of 50 kms. or more from metro Manila. Indonesia, which does not have a formal scheme for regulating population mobility, announced a big bang decentralization policy in 1999 to restrict RU migration by redirecting workers to rural areas or provinces that have labour shortages (Munir 2002). The national government of Thailand has adopted a two-track strategy of local self-sufficiency and selective global engagement to stall exodus from rural areas. Malaysia reports decentralization of industrial areas, opening up of new development corridors, including a 270 sq. km. multimedia super corridor, and the setting up of a new capital city. Mongolia launched a programme in 2001 devolving all government functions to the city (kota) and district levels, with the objective of developing growth centres as an alternative to Ulaan Bataar.

The second component of the strategy is to promote global cities with high quality infrastructure and, at the same time, contain their demographic growth through the development of satellite towns. Several of the South and East Asian countries are attempting to build quality infrastructure in their big cities and connect these with global markets for attracting international capital. The state and city governments are trying to attract national and multinational companies by simplifying the legal and administrative procedures for resource mobilization in capital markets, in addition to opening up the land market. They also take a pro migration stance as they would like to attract skilled manpower from within the country and abroad to ensure global competitiveness. The objective is also to create peaceful, multi-cultural and conflict free social environment through absorption of migrant population in decent physical setting.

Despite this positive and liberal perspective on migration, the state institutions have often gone in for 'sanitization drives', pushing out 'low valued' activities, including slum colonies, from the city core to the peripheries. A strong lobby has emerged in these cities for letting them function relatively independently of state and central level controls and create space for global companies and their staff. Decentralization of planning responsibilities, sought to be ushered in under the UN-Habitat perspective, is also helping the lobby, resulting in the privatization of many civic services and withdrawal of public subsidies, thereby hiking their prices. All these have helped socio-economic absorption of better-off migrants into the cities, but restricting the entry of those not employed by the companies and not having affordability for the market based delivery system. The poor migrants have often been forced to seek absorption in peripheries of these cities.

Webster (2004) underlines the importance of peripheral development around metro cities for understanding urbanization in less developed countries. He argues that peri-urban areas have experienced rapid economic growth as these can more easily absorb the migrants and provide space for new manufacturing structures. In addition, large segments of the existing poor, living in urban cores, are being pushed to the periphery by land market forces or drawn there by emerging employment opportunities. More importantly, informal activities along with other pollutant industries are also being shifted out to the 'degenerated periphery'. Most of the less developed countries in Asia can be seen channelizing investments and attracting global funds to their mega cities and national capital but at the same time discouraging immigration to these through direct controls and provision of incentives and subsidies in their backward regions.

Global Report on Human Settlements suggests that ‘beautification’ projects, immediately prior to global summits or mega sport and cultural events, are common justifications for slum clearance programmes (UNCHS 1996) in large cities. The examples of China and India may be cited as illustrations. China has seen fast growth of ‘urbanizing villages’ (Song et al. 2007) in and around its global cities for the 2006 Olympic Games. Migrants are allowed to stay in these settlements for the simple economic reason that they are a source of cheap labour. However, when their utility is over, they are systematically evicted. Similar is the modus operandi of the projects in India for the Commonwealth Games 2010 and related infrastructure development. In Indonesia, cleaning up the city of Jakarta and reducing its population growth have been taken up as a national goal, and the government is desperately trying to promote reverse migration. All these measures have decelerated the demographic growth in metropolitan cities despite significant improvements in the quality of their infrastructure, resulting in a decline in the overall rate of urbanization in many of these countries.

Welfare Programmes for Migrant Families

Many governments in Asia have launched programmes at the state and local levels to improve the general micro-environment in slums and squatter settlements. Civil society organizations and human right activities, too, have occasionally succeeded in forcing the government to provide basic amenities in these settlements by invoking the intervention of the judiciary. Many of these programmes require the migrants to meet certain requirements that are considered important from the perspective of law and order or health and hygiene in the cities. The requirements of formal documents, system of police verification, procedures of their registration etc. often act as impediments in their absorption. Ironically, a system designed to provide decent livelihood, access to amenities and to protect the migrants against discrimination often end up creating barriers in their becoming a part of the formal system, resulting in exclusion.

Westendoff (2008) holds that the state in China would never allow large-scale formal RU migration in order to avoid pressure on urban infrastructure and the social security system, despite the decline in agricultural employment that tends to push up the floating population. In India, the evicted squatters, pavement dwellers hawkers etc. whose land is taken over for certain project, mostly do not end up getting plots or flats, even when there are provisions for that. Furthermore, those who are allotted plots are mostly not in a position to hold on to these due to their acute short-term exigencies, growing land values, and relaxed legal and administrative environment.

The resource availability for the welfare programmes and their spatial coverage have gone down in recent years under the new systems of governance that stipulate reduction of subsidies to social sectors in most of the countries. Withdrawal of the state and local governments from these sectors and their becoming increasingly dependent on capital markets have affected their capacity to extend services to the poor. Economic downturn of the 1990s and the more recent one during 2008–9 have understandably weakened government commitment to these policies. Concerns of affordability, cost recovery, and participation of resident associations in better-off areas have been responsible for ushering in a process of elite capture. This has enabled upper- and middle-income households to corner a large chunk of the resources made available by national and international agencies that were meant for the poor.

There has been an avowed concern for the socio-economic upliftment of workers in the unorganized sector that absorbs the migrants in most countries, and yet nothing concrete has happened in terms of programmatic interventions. The lukewarm response of the private sector for providing social security or basic amenities, too, has contributed to the dilution of the pro-poor and pro-migrant thrust in public-private participatory programmes. Civil society organizations have of late become active in stopping illegal encroachment of public spaces, including parks, pavements, and so on, through public interest litigations. Judiciary too, is increasingly upholding the rights of ‘formal citizens’. All these have led to pushing poor

migrants either into marginal lands within the city or to degenerated peripheries, as noted above, resulting in increasing disparity in the quality of micro-environments, segmentation of urban space, and reduction in the percentage of poor in urban areas.

TRENDS AND PATTERN OF MIGRATION WITHIN A MACRO FRAMEWORK

The percentage of migrants by their place of birth (POB) can be noted to have gone down from 30.8 per cent in 1961 to 29.3 per cent in 2001, which gives no basis to hold that Indians have become more mobile over time (Table 1). It must be noted that the figure has gone up during the nineties after coming down to the lowest level of 26.5 per cent in 1991. The percentage of migrants has declined for the males from 18.5 to 16.4 while that for women, it has remained stable at around 43 per cent. The numbers and percentages of total migrants by place of last residence (POLR) are slightly above those of POB migrants in different years, as expected. However, a declining trend is observed in respect of POLR migrants among men during 1961-91¹ and then a marginal rise during 1991-01, similar to the pattern noted based on the data for POB migrants (Table 1).

Table-1 Internal Migrants Classified by Gender as per Population Census 1961-2001

	Percentage to total population					Migrants in millions
	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2001
Total Migrants						
Total migrants (PoLR)		29.1	30.3	26.9	30.1	309.4
Inter-censal migrants (PoLR)		12.4	12.2	9.7	9.5	97.6
Total life-time migrants (PoB)	30.8	28.7	29.4	26.5	29.3	301
Male Migrants						
Total migrants (PoLR)		17.5	17.2	14.7	17	90.7
Inter-censal migrants (PoLR)		9.4	8.9	6.1	6.1	32.5
Total life-time migrants (PoB)	18.5	17.2	16.6	13.8	16.4	87.2
Female Migrants						
Total migrants (PoLR)		41.7	44.3	40.8	44.1	218.7
Inter-censal migrants (PoLR)		15.7	15.7	13.5	13.1	65
Total life-time migrants (PoB)	43.9	41.1	43.1	40.3	43.1	213.7

Note: PoLR and PoB imply the place of last residence and place of birth respectively. The figures of interstate migrants for 2001 are computed by making adjustments for the newly created states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand. No other adjustment for reorganisation of states has been possible in the Table.

A similar trend is noted over the past three decades based on the data available from the NSS (Table 2). The share of migrants for men has declined from 7.2 per cent in 1983 to 5.4 per cent in 2007-08 in rural areas, the corresponding urban figures being 27.0 and 25.9. It is important to note that while the declining trend is striking during the recent period from 1999-00 to 2007-08 in case of rural areas, in urban areas, the figures have remained about the same. The trend for the percentage of women migrants, however, sharply contrasts with that of the men as the former shows a secular increase both in rural and urban areas¹, the figure going up from 42.2 in 1999-00 to 47.2 in 2007-08. Understandably, this has resulted in a

significant increase in female-to-male ratio among the migrants, manifest in an increase in sex ratio among the migrants².

Table 2: Percentage of Total Migrants in Different NSS Rounds in Rural and Urban India

Round(Year)	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
64 (07-08)	5.4	47.7	25.9	45.6
55 (July99 -June2000)	6.9	42.6	25.7	41.8
49 (Jan-June,1993)	6.5	40.1	23.9	38.2
43 (July 87-June 88)	7.4	39.8	26.8	39.6
38 (Jan - Dec,1983)	7.2	35.1	27.0	36.6

The percentage of intercensal migrants (changing their place of residence during the Census decade) obtained from Population Census, however, seems to suggest that migration has declined during the entire period 1971-01 (Table 1). The intercensal migration, not falling in line with other figures of migration, warrants probing³. Table 3 gives the percentage of migrants, identified by place of last residence (POLR) to total population, the gender wise breakup as also the share of migrants with different durations of stay at the place of enumeration to the total migrants including those with unspecified duration. It is important to note that the maximum increase is reported in case of migrants for whom information on period of stay could not be ascertained. This may be attributed to uneasiness on the part of recent migrants to admit their arrival date due to the apprehension that this may disqualify them from certain benefits in the context of tenurial rights and access to officially provided facilities. Also, the apprehensions of inviting wrath of civic administration and local population could be behind this deliberate misreporting.

The growth rate of migrants with less than one year duration, however, is higher than that of intercensal migrants. This is understandable because, for those who have just arrived at a place of destination, it is difficult to hide this fact. Also, a majority of them could be contract labourers or transitory population, who have not much stake at the place of their current residence. The growth is the lowest for those with 1 to 4 year duration, followed by those reporting 5 to 9 year of stay, and both these are significantly below those of the corresponding rural or urban population in the country. Conversely, the growth rates of migrants with 10 to 19 year and more than 20 year duration are much higher than that of the total migrants or total population. Understandably, the percentage of inter censal POLR migrants (with less than 10 years of duration) has declined both for men and women while it has gone up for the categories for longer duration of stay in 2001 compared to the figures in earlier decades.

This immediately raises an interesting logical question and puts forth a paradox for population professionals to resolve. How could the decade of nineties, which is supposed to have given a boost to migration - recording an increase in the percentage of POB and POLR migrants, report low growth of intercensal migrants? Also, how could this decade experience high migration rate because of high growth among migrants with more than 10 years of duration implying those who have come during eighties or in earlier decades?

Table 3: Migrants with Different Durations of Stay as Percentage to Total Population and Their Growth Rates

Residence	Total migrants – 1991			Total migrants – 2001			Annual Growth Rate (1991-2001)		
	Excluding J&K								
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total									
Total	27.43	14.64	41.22	30.63	17.57	44.62	2.98	3.66	2.71
Rural	25.84	10.12	42.6	28.37	11.5	46.19	2.53	2.82	2.45
Urban	32	27.41	37.14	36.5	32.98	40.41	3.97	4.46	3.54
Less than 1 year									
Total	0.84	0.75	0.93	0.87	0.79	0.95	2.22	2.36	2.09
Rural	0.76	0.64	0.89	0.82	0.71	0.93	2.27	2.54	2.06
Urban	1.05	1.04	1.05	0.99	0.98	1	2.1	2.03	2.17
1 - 4 years									
Total	4.71	3.19	6.34	4.6	3.12	6.19	1.66	1.63	1.68
Rural	3.99	2.13	5.98	3.9	1.98	5.94	1.38	0.83	1.58
Urban	6.76	6.18	7.42	6.42	6.02	6.87	2.13	2.36	1.92
5-9 years									
Total	4.16	2.27	6.2	4.1	2.28	6.05	1.76	1.92	1.69
Rural	3.7	1.45	6.1	3.61	1.3	6.06	1.38	0.54	1.58
Urban	5.49	4.61	6.48	5.37	4.77	6.04	2.45	3	2
0-9 years									
Total	9.7	6.21	13.47	9.57	6.19	13.19	1.75	1.83	1.72
Rural	8.46	4.22	12.97	8.34	3.99	12.93	1.46	1.01	1.61
Urban	13.3	11.82	14.96	12.78	11.78	13.9	2.26	2.58	1.97
10 - 19 years									
Total	6.45	2.99	10.18	6.76	3.15	10.64	2.36	2.36	2.36
Rural	6.04	1.85	10.49	6.26	1.69	11.09	1.97	0.65	2.2
Urban	7.65	6.21	9.27	8.08	6.85	9.45	3.2	3.61	2.89
20+ years									
Total	8.96	3.39	14.97	9.84	3.74	16.38	2.83	2.84	2.83
Rural	9.22	2.26	16.65	10.04	2.07	18.48	2.46	0.7	2.69
Urban	8.21	6.61	10	9.32	7.98	10.81	3.94	4.54	3.48
Duration not stated									
Total	2.31	2.05	2.59	4.45	4.49	4.4	8.35	9.61	7.14
Rural	2.13	1.79	2.49	3.73	3.75	3.7	7.12	8.86	5.55
Urban	2.84	2.77	2.91	6.32	6.37	6.26	10.58	10.85	10.3

Note: The percentage figures for 1991 pertain to India (excluding J & K) while those for 2001 are all India figures. The growth rates have, however, been computed by excluding the estimated figures for J & K from the all India figures of 2001.

It would not take J. K. Rowling to solve the paradox. The key to the mystery is that many people who have arrived during the nineties have falsely claimed their arrival date to be before ten or more years. The reasons for that apparently are the same that have forced them to keep their period of stay unspecified before the Census enumerator. This undoubtedly would create problems of data comparability in analysing temporal flow of migrants, particularly for urban areas wherein there are greater motivation for reporting longer duration of stay. Given this problem of misreporting, one would be disinclined to accept the proposition that intercensal migrants have declined significantly as a percentage of population during 1991-01, as revealed through Census data, without further probing.

Despite the data anomalies, one may like to argue that there has been marginal improvement in the internal mobility since the nineties, particularly into urban areas, which can partly be attributed to factors linked with globalization and changing family composition of migrants¹. And yet, the percentage of migrants in 2001 works out to be less than that in 1961 and 1971 for men, as per the Census data. The data from NSS for the period from 1983 to 2007-08, too, confirm this declining trend of male migration, both in rural and urban areas. This declining trend should be a matter of concern particularly since there has been an accentuation of regional imbalance and improvement in transport and communication facilities over the decades.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT MALE MIGRANTS IN A COMPARATIVE FRAMEWORK

An analysis of the socio-economic status of the adult male migrants in comparison with that of non-migrants has been attempted for identification of the factors behind migration as also its impact on their wellbeing. It is evident from the differential educational attainments of the migrants vis-à-vis the non-migrants in Table 4 that the former enjoy a higher social status compared to the non-migrants. The percentage of illiterates among the adult male migrants in rural areas was 25 per cent only compared to 35 per cent among the non migrants in 1999-00. The two percentage figures have declined to 20 and 25 in 2007-08.

A similar pattern is noted in urban areas as well. Conversely, the share of persons having higher secondary and graduation level of education among these migrants was higher than the non-migrants in 1999-00 both in rural and urban areas. What is, however, more important is that the figures have gone up much more sharply for the migrants than non-migrants during 1999-07. Further, the percentages of persons possessing technical education are higher for migrants than the non-migrants, both in rural and urban areas (Table 5). Here too, the former have gone up sharply over the period under consideration, increasing thereby the gap between the migrants and non-migrants. This could be due to skill selectivity in the migration process or the migrants having better opportunity of picking up skills at the destination than the non-migrants.

The distribution of households of the adult male migrants and corresponding non-migrants across expenditure categories brings out their differences in economic wellbeing very sharply. One can see that the percentages of migrants in the bottom six expenditure categories are much less than the corresponding figures for non-migrants, both in rural and urban areas (Table 6) at both the time points under consideration. The aggregative figures for the six categories in rural areas works out to be 43 per cent and 68 per cent for the migrants and non-migrants while these for urban areas are 13 and 29 in 2007-08 respectively. The figures in the top two categories, on the other hand, are significantly higher for the migrants than non-migrants. The figures for the migrants are more than twice that of the non-migrants both in 1999-00 and 2007-08.

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Adult Male Migrants and Non-Migrants as per their Educational Status

	1999-2000			2007-2008		
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Rural						
Illiterate	25.5	34.8	34	20.2	25.2	24.9
Below Primary	12.2	12.4	12.4	9.5	10.6	10.5
Primary	31.9	33.1	33	33.6	39.7	39.3
Secondary	15.1	11.2	11.5	13.9	13.3	13.3
Higher secondary	7.7	5.3	5.5	14	7.5	7.9
Graduate or above	7.6	3.2	3.6	8.7	3.8	4.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Urban						
Illiterate	11.8	13.8	13.2	9.5	10.3	10.1
Below Primary	8.3	7.8	8	6.1	6.1	6.1
Primary	27.7	33	31.3	27.8	32.4	30.9
Secondary	19.8	19.2	19.4	17.9	19.1	18.7
Higher secondary	12.9	11.8	12.1	17.1	15.7	16.2
Graduate or above	19.5	14.4	16	21.7	16.3	18
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Adult Male Migrants and Non-Migrants having Technical Education

	1999-2000			2007-2008		
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Rural						
Yes	3.1	0.8	1.0	4.2	0.8	1.0
No	96.9	99.2	99.0	95.8	99.2	99.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
Urban						
Yes	9.2	4.9	6.3	6.8	3.5	4.5
No	90.8	95.1	93.7	93.2	96.5	95.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100
All places						
Yes	5.3	1.4	2.0	7.6	1.8	2.6
No	94.7	98.6	98.0	92.4	98.2	97.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Migrant and Non-Migrant Households Across Expenditure Categories for Males in Age-Group 15-59

1999-2000				2007-2008			
MPCE (Household) decile class for all India	Percentage distribution by MPCE class			MPCE decile class for all India	Percentage distribution by MPCE class		
	Migrants	Non-migrants	All		Migrants	Non-migrants	All
Rural							
Less/Equal 246	6.2	10.5	10.1	Less/equal 378	6.0	10.6	10.3
246 – 294	6.3	11.0	10.5	378 - 451	5.8	11.5	11.1
294 – 335	7.6	11.2	10.9	451 - 511	7.0	11.4	11.1
335 – 376	8.1	11.5	11.2	511 - 573	7.1	11.6	11.3
376 – 421	9.2	11.2	11.0	573 - 642	8.9	11.7	11.6
421 – 477	9.6	11.4	11.2	642 - 727	8.3	11.4	11.2
477 – 549	10.2	10.4	10.4	727 - 849	10.0	11.1	11.0
549 – 659	12.9	9.8	10.1	849 - 1040	12.1	9.8	10.0
659 – 885	14.0	8.3	8.8	1040 - 1446	15.8	7.6	8.1
More than 885	15.9	4.7	5.7	More than 1446	19.1	3.2	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban							
Less/Equal 246	1.1	2.5	2.1	Less/equal 378	0.7	2.3	1.8
246 – 294	1.3	3.8	3.0	378 - 451	1.0	2.8	2.2
294 – 335	1.9	4.8	3.9	451 - 511	1.4	4.3	3.4
335 – 376	2.8	5.7	4.8	511 - 573	2.1	4.9	4.1
376 – 421	3.2	6.9	5.7	573 - 642	3.3	6.5	5.5
421 – 477	5.5	8.6	7.6	642 - 727	4.4	8.2	7.0
477 – 549	8.4	10.8	10.0	727 - 849	6.6	11.1	9.7
549 – 659	11.7	13.7	13.1	849 - 1040	11.9	14.1	13.4
659 – 885	20.5	18.2	18.9	1040 - 1446	21.8	19.2	20.0
More than 885	43.6	25.0	31.0	More than 1446	46.9	26.5	32.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
All places of residence							
Less/Equal 246	3.2	8.7	7.8	Less/equal 378	2.4	8.7	7.8
246 – 294	3.4	9.3	8.4	378 - 451	2.6	9.4	8.5
294 – 335	4.2	9.8	8.9	451 - 511	3.2	9.8	8.9
335 – 376	5.0	10.2	9.4	511 - 573	3.8	10.0	9.2
376 – 421	5.7	10.2	9.5	573 - 642	5.2	10.5	9.8
421 – 477	7.2	10.7	10.2	642 - 727	5.7	10.7	10.0
477 – 549	9.1	10.5	10.3	727 - 849	7.7	11.1	10.6
549 – 659	12.2	10.7	10.9	849 - 1040	12.0	10.8	11.0
659 – 885	17.8	10.6	11.7	1040 - 1446	19.8	10.3	11.6
More than 885	32.3	9.4	12.9	More than 1446	37.6	8.6	12.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Furthermore, average per capita household expenditures in all the quartiles for migrants are higher than the corresponding non-migrant figures (Table 7). More significantly, the figures for the migrants have gone up at a much higher rate than that of the non-migrants, at current prices. These clearly indicate that the migrants are at a much higher level of economic wellbeing and that their conditions have improved rapidly in recent years. One can thereby argue with a reasonable degree of confidence that economic distress is not the critical factor in migration decisions of men in rural or urban areas.

Table 7: Average Expenditure (in rupees) in Each MPCE Quartile Class by Migration Status and Place of Residence

	1999-2000		2007-08		Rate of change during this period	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant
Rural						
First quartile	283.58	249.51	443.90	380.95	57	53
Second quartile	425.30	353.21	675.95	532.50	59	51
Third quartile	595.88	459.17	1,002.52	685.56	68	49
Fourth quartile	1,171.17	767.19	2,668.92	1,139.19	128	48
All	618.79	456.49	1,197.01	684.51	93	50
Urban						
First quartile	426.60	336.50	705.99	535.11	65	59
Second quartile	678.72	513.47	1,151.69	824.03	70	60
Third quartile	971.96	724.75	1,675.56	1,201.41	72	66
Fourth quartile	1,812.80	1,427.49	3,546.36	2,392.02	96	68
All	972.25	750.23	1,769.53	1,238.12	82	65

The decline in the percentage of adult male migrants and their economic and social status being better and improving faster than the corresponding population among the non-migrants, could be due to barriers of mobility for the poor. With the present rigidities in the agrarian system, growing regionalism, higher skill requirements in urban labour market etc., the emerging production system and governance structure in the cities have become hostile to newcomers. These have made migration process selective wherein poor and unskilled labourers are finding it difficult to access the employment opportunities coming up in developed regions and large cities. A major factor responsible for persistence of high poverty in rural areas and backward states is the difficulty encountered by the poor to move into urban centres and developed states.

A PERSPECTIVE FOR FUTURE URBAN STRATEGY

Migration studies in general appear to be trapped in a negative syndrome, associating mobility with distress and deprivation at the place of origin and slums, ill health and law and order problems at the place of destination. An analysis of migration pattern and trend in recent decades suggests that there is a need to rescue migration research from this syndrome. An overview of the policies and programmes adopted by the governments in the countries in South and East Asia to create high infrastructure global cities and regions suggests that these have contributed significantly to the deceleration in interregional and RU migration and improving the socio-economic quality of the migrants. In the name of correcting distortions in spatial

hierarchy of settlements and promoting regional development, the governments have taken measures to discourage poverty linked migration into these cities and sanitize them through eviction of slums and informal activities, perceived as hazardous for the formal urbanites.

The declining trend in migration is noted in India from the data both from Population Census and National Sample Survey. This is stronger for adult males, manifest in the fall of percentage figures in all migration streams even for the latest year for which data are available from the NSS. Poverty induced migration has become a less important component in the mobility over time. The data further reveal that poor and unskilled male labourers are finding it difficult to put their foothold in urban centres. Urban poverty level being significantly below that in rural areas, as reported by Tendulkar Committee, confirms this proposition. The shares of women and children in all the migration streams, however, have gone up that can be attributed to earlier migrants now being able to bring in their family members or the new migrants moving with their families as they belong to higher income classes. Alternately, one can argue that migration process has an inbuilt screening system which is picking up people from relatively higher economic and social strata.

The deceleration of adult male migration into urban areas during the past couple of decades, despite opening up of employment opportunities in modern and highly remunerative sectors, linked with the high growth of national economy sustained over half a decade, is a disconcerting fact. Urban centres have become less hospitable and less accommodating for the poor, restricting their entry and thereby increasing RU economic inequality. This puts a question mark over the role of migration as an instrument of sharing the benefits of uneven growth across states and districts and between rural and urban areas. The strategy of spatially unbalanced growth through “dispersal of concentrations” and then reaching out to the poor through a human settlement strategy (World Bank 2009), therefore, needs to be examined with empirical rigour.

Many of the state governments have taken initiatives for creating the necessary policy framework and supporting infrastructural environment to attract private capital from within and outside the country. As a consequence, many of the less developed states have recorded high income growth. This, however, has resulted in regional imbalances and higher mobility across the states. And yet, the rate of growth of urban population has been very low. The initiatives at establishing a system of governance, improving law and order situation and providing quality infrastructure by the developed states to attract national and global investment have resulted in ‘sanitization’ in their large cities, responsible for their sluggish demographic growth.

Researchers and policy makers have regretted the slow pace of urbanization, exclusionary urban growth in large cities and lack of RU transformation of settlements. Despite a large number of villages having much more than 5000 population, (the cut-off point generally considered for identifying towns) and these growing rapidly over the years, not many have acquired urban status, due to their weak and volatile economic base. It would be difficult to explain the phenomenal increase in the number of new Census towns of 2532 during 2001-11, in contrast to the decline in the number by 330 in the previous decade, in terms of sectoral diversification in these villages. A few among these could indeed have become urban due to their workforce shifting from farm to non-farm employment. In any case, the central and state governments must recognize the possibility of urban impetus coming from the lower level by according “statutory” status to the new census towns, so that they get official recognition and support. They must also design a scheme similar to Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission to strengthen their infrastructure base and promote them as centres of ‘distributed and inclusive growth’, that can attract the surplus population in the agriculture and related sectors. This would necessitate revisiting the investment and sectoral scenarios projected for urban economy for the Twelfth Plan, partly based on the model of top heavy urbanization as advocated by the High Powered Expert Committee and the Mackensy Report.

Notes

1. World Bank (2009)
2. Migration data from 2011 Census are yet to be available.
3. The figures for 2001 have been reworked out after making adjustments for the three newly formed states. The migrants from (a) Jharkhand to Bihar, (b) Bihar to Jharkhand, (c) Uttar Pradesh to Uttarakhand, (d) Uttarakhand to Uttar Pradesh, (e) Madhya Pradesh to Chhattisgarh and (f) Chhattisgarh to Madhya Pradesh have been subtracted from the total interstate migrants in 2001 to make the data comparable with those of previous Censuses. No adjustment has been made for the data for 1961 which would imply underestimation of the inter-state migrants in that year as there was reorganization of states in 1966 resulting in carving out the state of Haryana.
4. NSSO (2011)
5. The urban centres, particularly large cities that historically had a very low sex ratio, have recorded massive increase in their sex ratio in the last couple of decades.
6. Annual exponential growth rates of intercensal migrants in rural and urban areas work out to be 1.4 per cent and 2.5 per cent per annum respectively that are less than that of the corresponding total population.
7. Many of the illegal migrants from neighbouring countries being recorded as interstate migrants could also explain the rising migration trend in the nineties.

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