



Factors Affecting Migration in India: A Sociological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Migration, whether internal or international, is a complex phenomenon influenced by a multitude of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. This paper delves into the intricate dynamics of human migration, focusing on the rural to urban migration trend in India. Drawing from extensive literature, it explores the push and pull factors driving individuals from rural areas to urban centers, such as employment opportunities, economic prospects, access to education and healthcare, infrastructure development, and the allure of a better standard of living. Theoretical frameworks including neo-classical, human capital, network, relative deprivation, and circulation migration theories are examined to understand the motivations behind migration decisions. Additionally, the paper discusses the significant impacts of rural to urban migration on various aspects of society, including the economy, social networks, environment, health, and politics. While migration can lead to income gains, improved access to education healthcare, and political engagement for migrants, it also poses challenges such as income inequality, social isolation, environmental degradation, and political shifts. Furthermore, the paper emphasizes the need for holistic approaches to address the multifaceted impacts of migration, suggesting sustainable agricultural practices, infrastructural development, employment generation, and tourism promotion as potential strategies. Through comprehensive analysis and synthesis of existing literature, this paper provides insights into the complex nature of rural to urban migration and underscores the importance of understanding its diverse impacts for effective policy formulation and societal development.

KEYWORDS – Migration, Factors, Health, Education, Employment

I. INTRODUCTION

Migration is a complex human response to changing local conditions within a global economic system primarily influenced by economic factors, rather than a single mechanism. It involves the movement or relocation of people from one nation or region to another, with internal migration referring to movement within a nation's various states and regions. Both types of migration within a nation, whether individuals are entering (in-migration) or leaving (out-migration), are termed internal migration. For example, Bengali migration from Bihar constitutes inward migration, while Bihar migration represents outward migration. External migration, however, pertains to the movement of individuals from one nation to another with the intent of settling permanently. Immigration, a significant aspect of migration, occurs when individuals, families, or groups move from one country to another through formal procedures, typically facilitated by embassies. This process is termed immigration in the receiving country, such as the United States, and emigration in the country of origin, such as India. Whether migration occurs between nations or within the same nation, immigration and internal migration are distinct phenomena. In India, the Immigration industry is experiencing rapid growth due to various factors, including economic, political, and educational opportunities, prompting people to seek relocation to other countries (Divisha, 2017). However, internal migration remains a dominant human activity within India, influenced by diverse factors that warrant further exploration. Gross migration refers to the total number of individuals entering or leaving a nation during a specific period, while net migration represents the difference between those entering and leaving the nation (Divisha, 2017). Frequent movement of individuals from cities, towns, villages, districts, or states within India is a common observation. The motivations behind such internal migration may share similarities with international migration but require thorough investigation. Examining the



dynamics of migration entails delving into the societal fabric to understand the factors that encourage migrants to settle in a particular place for an extended period. It also involves identifying the pressures that prompt individuals to change their place of residence or livelihood. Internal migration in India is driven by a multitude of factors, as highlighted by Kewlani (2017). Additionally, factors such as the lack of non-farm employment opportunities and low agricultural productivity have led to an increase in seasonal migration. Migration patterns are influenced by various individual and household characteristics, including age, education level, wealth, and land ownership, productivity, and employment prospects. Social attitudes and supportive networks also play significant roles in shaping migration decisions, as emphasized by Kavitha and Valliammai (2020). According to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone possesses the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state, as well as the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country. The Population Division's estimates indicate a significant rise in international migration over the past few decades. In 2010, there were approximately 214.2 million international migrants worldwide, a notable

increase from 178.3 million in 2000 and 155.2 million in 1990. Of these migrants, around 127.8 million, or 59.6%, resided in more developed regions, while 86.4 million, equivalent to 40.4% of the global total, lived in less developed regions. By 2020, the global estimate surged to about 281 million international migrants, representing approximately 3.6% of the global population. This trend reflects a substantial increase over the past five decades, with the total estimated number of people living in countries other than their countries of birth in 2020 being three times higher than in the previous half-century (International Migration Report, 2011).

In the past two decades, there has been an increase in the global number of male foreign migrants compared to female migrants. In 2000, there were 88 million male migrants and 86 million female migrants, resulting in a male-to-female proportion of 50.6% to 49.4%. By 2020, this trend continued, with 146 million male migrants and 135 million female migrants, leading to a proportion of 51.9% male to 48.0% female. Since 2000, the proportion of female migrants has been decreasing, while the proportion of male migrants has increased by 1.4 percentage points (UN DESA, 2021).

International Migrants, by Sex, 2000 - 2020



Source: World Migration Report 2022 | IOM Publications Platform

With close to 51 million international migrants, the United States of America maintains its position as the leading destination for migrants, a status it has held for the past five decades. Following closely behind is Germany, which has become the second most sought-after destination

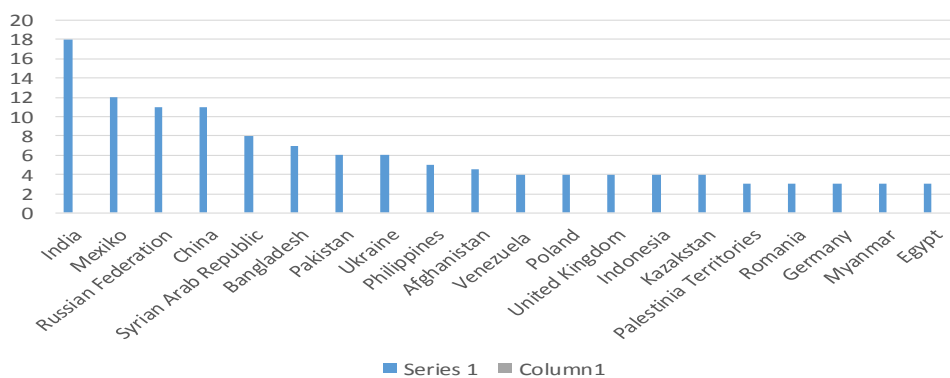
with nearly 16 million foreign migrants. Saudi Arabia secures the third spot with approximately 13 million migrants. Rounding up the top five destination countries are the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom, each hosting around 12 million and 9 million international migrants,



respectively. India holds the title of the world's largest emigrant country, with approximately 18 million individuals residing outside its borders, solidifying its position as the top origin nation globally. Following India, Mexico takes the second spot with nearly 11 million emigrants. China emerges as the third-largest origin country, with

roughly 10.8 million individuals living abroad, closely followed by the Russian Federation. The Syrian Arab Republic stands out as the fifth most significant nation of origin, with over 8 million individuals living abroad, mainly as refugees due to widespread displacement over the past decade (UN DESA, 2021).

Top 20 Countries where most of people emigrate in 2020 (millions)



Source: World Migration Report 2022 | IOM Publications Platform

Around 215 million individuals, accounting for approximately 3% of the global population, currently reside outside their country of birth. Despite this sizable figure, current migration rates are lower than those observed in the final decades of the 1800s. The United States, the Russian Federation, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Canada stand out as the primary destinations for immigration. In terms of immigration rates relative to population size, countries such as Qatar (87%), the United Arab Emirates (70%), Kuwait (69%), Andorra (64%), the Cayman Islands (63%), and the Northern Mariana Islands (62%) have the highest rates. Despite the challenges posed by the global financial crisis, it is likely that the United States experienced the largest influx of migrants between 2005 and 2010 (World Migration Report, 2022). The migration statistics from the 64th cycle of the NSSO (2007–08) and the 2011 census data highlight a significant increase in internal migration within India. The proportion of migrants residing in urban areas stood at 35%, surpassing the rate of migrants living in rural regions, which was 26%. Notably, about 91% of migrants in rural areas originated from other rural areas, while 8% came from urban areas. Conversely, among migrants in urban areas, 59% migrated from rural areas and 41% from urban areas. Therefore, rural-urban migration emerges as a significant migration

stream in India (Kumari, 2014). As of the 2011 Census, India's population stood at 1,210.19 million, marking an increase of 181.5 million since 2001. India, accounting for 17.5% of the global population, occupies 2.4% of the Earth's surface. Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state, with nearly 200 million inhabitants. Of the total Indian population, 37.7 crore reside in urban areas, while 83.3 crore (68.84%) live in rural regions. There are 45.36 crore migrants in India, constituting 37.8% of the country's total population, with 27.8 crore residing in rural areas and 17.8 crore in urban areas. Male migrants number 14.6 crore, while female migrants number 30.96 crore (Census of India, 2011). Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan are the primary states of origin for internal migrants, while Punjab, Delhi, Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, and Karnataka are the main destination states. UNESCO UNICEF (2012) identifies several migration corridors within the country, including those linking Uttar Pradesh to Maharashtra, Odisha to Gujarat, Bihar to the National Capital Region, Odisha to Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan to Gujarat. Due to its proximity to the national capital, Haryana is experiencing rapid expansion, with approximately 10.42 million migrants registered in the state, constituting almost 41% of the overall



population (Rahul, 2021). Rural-to-urban migration has emerged as the most prevalent migratory stream, alongside rural-to-rural migration. Push and pull factors, including political, social, and economic variables, have been identified as drivers of migration (Tyagi and Siddiqui, 2016; Prasad and Kumari, 2022; Urbanski, 2022).

THEORISING MIGRATION:

Gupta, 2020 examined migration theories from a number of perspectives. Neo-classical, human capital, network, and relative deprivation theories are among the theories linked to migration; they emphasize both the push and pull forces as well as human interaction with them. These are not the only hypotheses that have been differentiated; other theories have also been examined from a demographic perspective. The core of the issue was the push and pull factors—the tendency for unfavorable conditions in the place of origin to push people toward favorable regions, which operate as a pull factor—in the fundamental book on *Laws of Migration*, Ravenstein, 1885. According to Bouge's pull hypothesis, migration is driven by how strong the incentives are for those who choose not to migrate. Zelinsky's 1971 circulation migration theory continues to explain why migrants often travel for brief periods of time, oscillating between their point of origin and destination. Todaro (1969) Subsequently, in the *Model of Rural-Urban Migration*, it was emphasized that psychological considerations, greater work possibilities, and lower unemployment rates in urban regions are the main causes of migration, in addition to anticipated cash gains. According to Robert Merton's theory of relative deprivation, people move in order to increase their income as well as their status in the social hierarchy and in relation to other reference groups. Lee (1966) also study the factors influencing the volume of migration between the area of origin and the destination. For the less privileged members of society, migration provides an opportunity to improve their social status (Kaimal and Paul, 2020).

Factors affecting Rural to Urban Migration

Employment and occupational opportunity: A significant number of individuals from rural regions relocate to urban centers in pursuit of improved job prospects and higher incomes. Due to the limited employment opportunities offered by the agricultural sector in rural areas, many residents seek better livelihoods elsewhere. The primary drivers of rural-urban migration include the desire

for enhanced employment opportunities and increased earnings (Harris and Todaro, 1970; Henderson, Shalizi, and Venables, 2001). Moreover, urban areas often offer better prospects for career advancement, access to training and skill development initiatives, and the potential for upward social mobility. Migrants moving towards urban areas are predominantly motivated by employment-related factors.

Economic opportunities: Economic incentives serve as a driving force behind individuals' decision to migrate, as they seek to enhance their financial well-being and overall quality of life. The influence of economic factors on migration patterns is intriguing. A study by Meena et al. (2021) concluded that urban settings provide various avenues for improving one's economic status, including employment in factories, shops, offices, public services, as well as access to vocational, technical, and advanced education, better healthcare services, entertainment options, and other amenities not readily available in rural areas. As individuals migrate to urban areas, their socioeconomic conditions often improve, enabling them to pursue their aspirations. However, alongside the benefits, migration can also introduce socio-psychological stresses to family members left behind in rural areas (Kaimal and Paul, 2020). These opportunities act as magnets, pulling migrants from rural areas toward urban centers in search of better prospects.

Education and health facilities: Urban areas often boast higher-quality educational institutions, offering enhanced educational opportunities that appeal to individuals and families from rural regions striving for better education for themselves and their children. Likewise, urban centers typically feature advanced healthcare facilities, including hospitals, clinics, and specialized medical services. These opportunities contribute to a better quality of life and offer promising prospects for the future. The increasing demand for improved education quality may prompt rural households to seek educational opportunities by migrating to nearby urban areas or capital cities, based on their preferences, proximity, and capabilities (Acharya and León-González, 2018).

Infrastructure: Enhanced transportation systems, well-maintained roads, and efficient utilities in cities facilitate easier access to urban areas and various amenities for people. Improved infrastructure also ensures the availability of basic necessities such as electricity, water supply, and sanitation, which are crucial for comfortable living. Furthermore, upgraded infrastructure attracts



businesses and industries, thereby creating job opportunities and fostering economic growth, which in turn entices migrants seeking better prospects. Research has shown that the condition of infrastructure, including factors like the availability of electricity connections, has a positive influence on rural-to-urban migration at the city level. Additionally, economic conditions play a significant role in driving higher levels of rural-to-urban migration (Tripathi and Kaur, 2017).

Standard of living: Cities often present superior employment opportunities, higher wages, and access to enhanced infrastructure, amenities, and services such as electricity, water supply, sanitation, transportation, and recreational facilities. This can result in an elevated standard of living for individuals and their families. The promise of a better quality of life serves as a motivating factor for many individuals to relocate from rural areas to urban centers in pursuit of a brighter future. Additionally, urban areas typically offer a broader array of shopping options, entertainment venues, and cultural activities, further enhancing the quality of life. In comparison to their native state or region, the destination for migrants often provides better income, job prospects, and healthcare facilities, prompting laborers to venture away from their homeland (Kundu and Saraswati, 2012).

Security: Urban areas often boast more robust security measures, including well-equipped police forces, surveillance systems, and emergency services. These measures contribute to a sense of safety and security for individuals and families, which may attract them to relocate from rural areas to urban centers. Political upheavals and interethnic conflicts can compel people to flee their homes, leading to large-scale migration out of regions such as Jammu and Kashmir and Assam in recent years. Additionally, the recurring occurrence of natural disasters such as droughts, floods, and tsunamis often prompts people to seek refuge in safer locations. This was evident following the tsunami disaster in 2003 and the annual flooding of the Brahmaputra River, among other instances.

Marriage: Individuals may opt to relocate to urban areas upon marriage, particularly if their spouse already resides in the city. Recent urbanization trends have led to changes in socio-economic conditions, attracting migrants to urban centers. Male inter-state migration in India to urban areas has shown significant growth, indicating a migration pattern primarily driven by individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds, while a substantial proportion of female migrants relocate

mainly due to marriage (Kundu, 2018). The primary reason for female migration is marriage, which accounts for over half of all female migrants. This is attributed to the cultural tradition in India where women typically move to their husband's place after marriage (Bhati, 2015). In 2011, nearly half, or 49.5%, of individuals shifted residences following marriage (Bala, 2017).

IMPACT OF MIGRATION

Economic Impact: Migration from rural to urban areas can result in substantial income increases for migrants, particularly in developing nations where urban wages are typically higher. Nonetheless, this phenomenon may also exacerbate income inequality between rural and urban regions. Studies have introduced the notion of rural-urban migration as a logical decision influenced by the anticipated income disparities between rural and urban areas (McKenzie and Rapoport, 2011).

Social Impact: Migration from rural to urban areas has the potential to enhance access to education for migrant children, as urban settings typically offer improved educational opportunities. However, it may also result in social isolation and the erosion of traditional rural communities (De Brauw and Giles, 2008). Studies examining the impact of migration on social networks have revealed that migrants often maintain strong ties with their rural communities even after relocating to urban areas (Massey and Espinosa, 1997), with implications for social cohesion and identity as noted by Harris and Todaro (1970).

Environmental Impact: The study emphasized that migration from rural to urban areas can contribute to heightened urbanization and alterations in land use, potentially resulting in adverse effects on biodiversity and ecosystem services in rural regions (Seto et al., 2012). Research on the environmental repercussions of urbanization, including the influence of rural-to-urban migration on land use and pollution levels, indicates that urbanization leads to elevated pollution levels but also more effective land utilization (Glaeser and Kahn, 2010).

Health Impact: Migration from rural to urban areas can result in shifts in lifestyle and dietary habits, potentially influencing health outcomes both positively and negatively. While migrants may benefit from improved access to healthcare services in urban settings, they may also face increased exposure to air pollution. Research on the health implications of rural-to-urban migration in China indicates that migrants often enjoy enhanced healthcare accessibility in urban areas but are also



confronted with new health risks associated with urban living conditions (Lu et al., 2014).

Political Impact: Migration from rural to urban areas has the potential to induce shifts in political attitudes and behavior, with migrants potentially becoming more politically active and engaged in urban environments compared to rural settings (Mckenzie, 2004).

The effects of migration on agriculture entail a reduction in household agricultural labor sources in both communities with low and high migration rates, leading to increased reliance on hired labor for farm tasks. Research has shown that migration significantly influences agricultural productivity, resulting in decreased income and food production. It is imperative to create favorable and innovative employment opportunities in rural areas for residents, landless individuals, and disadvantaged communities (Dokubo et al., 2023). Recent rural communities have experienced economic decline, leading to poverty and food insecurity, while urban centers suffer from incidents of unemployment and declining wages due to economic instability. Rural-urban wealth inequality is exacerbated by the concentration of economic activities in urban centers, often resulting in the neglect of rural areas due to migration to urban centers. Studies have identified both positive and negative impacts on rural and urban areas, with regression coefficients showing strong significance at confidence levels of 0.01 and 0.05 (Gwanshak et al., 2021). Moreover, both out and in-migration have led to adverse effects, including land abandonment and ruined settlements in rural areas, as well as haphazard urban growth, the proliferation of slums, increased pollution, and road congestion in urban centers. To address migration, suggestions include implementing sustainable agricultural practices, developing infrastructural facilities, generating employment, and fostering natural/pilgrimage tourism (Sati, 2020). These studies highlight the intricate and multifaceted nature of the impact of rural-to-urban migration, emphasizing the necessity for comprehensive approaches to understanding and mitigating its effects.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, migration, whether internal or international, is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by a myriad of economic, social, political, and environmental factors. In India, internal migration plays a significant role in shaping societal dynamics, with rural to urban migration being a prominent trend. This migration is primarily fueled by the pursuit of better economic

opportunities, improved access to education and healthcare, and the desire for an enhanced standard of living. While migration can bring about positive outcomes such as economic growth and cultural exchange, it also poses challenges such as income inequality, social isolation, and environmental degradation. Thus, addressing the complexities of migration requires holistic approaches that consider the diverse impacts and factors influencing migration patterns. Ultimately, understanding and managing migration effectively is crucial for fostering inclusive development and ensuring the well-being of both migrants and host communities.

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