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# A BRIEF REVIEW ON RURAL - URBAN MIGRATION IN INDIA

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**ABSTRACT**
*Human migration is the movement of people from one place to another with the intentions of settling, permanently or temporarily at a new location. The movement is often over long distances and from one country to another, but internal migration is also possible; indeed, this is the dominant form globally. People may migrate as individuals, in family units or in large groups. The objectives of the article is to study the overview of rural-urban migration, pull and push factors, Causes, positive and negative impact of migration. The present study is based on secondary data collected from different sources such as professional magazines, reference books, newspapers, journals and published reports. The collected data was compiled and analysed for the purpose of the study. The process of urbanisation has positive as well as negative economic and social changes. The positive effects include economic development, and education. However, urbanisation places stresses on existing social services and infrastructure. Crime, prostitution, drug abuse and street children are all negative effects of urbanisation. Also there tends to be a lack of social support for children in school and home by their hard-working, usually poor, parents. Inadequate income, overcrowded housing and poor living conditions create a fertile ground for the development of violence.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Rural-Urban Migration, Census, Pull and Push Factor.*

## INTRODUCTION

Migration refers to the movement of people from one geographical place to another. This movement may be permanent or temporary. The people move from rural villages to urban cities in search of better economic opportunities to improve on their living standards. Universal analysis of migration is mostly negative. Internal migration creates a series of issues such as unplanned urbanization, neglect of agriculture in the rural areas, rural poverty, increased in urban crime. Most contemporary literature sees internal migration as a problem for development, which can be controlled or contained with the view that internal migration is associated with negativity .Despite the negative views associated with migration, it has been accepted that migration contributes positively to the development of the sending communities. Migration can have a direct impact on the livelihoods of rural poor households. It could serve as a social security mechanism for the poor vulnerable households who have low-income sources. Migration is a crucial part of the income diversification strategy by rural and urban households. Migration allows rural households to receive economic remittance, social remittance and accumulation of assets, and capital for investment. Social remittance refers to information, new practice, and ideas. However, internal migration in India is far more significant in the number of people involved and is vital in the amount of remittance to be sent. The remittances received have a high positive potential for poverty reduction among rural households. Remittances flow directly into the individual receiving households changing their financial position and increasing their purchasing power instantaneously.

## CONCEPT OF MIGRATION

In a layman's language, the world 'migration' refers to the movements of the people from one place to another.
**According to Demographic Dictionary**, "Migration is a form of geographical mobility or spatial mobility between one geographical unit and another, generally involving a change in residence from the place of origin or place of departure to the place of destination or place of arrival."

Such migration is called permanent migration, and should be distinguished from other forms of movement, which do not involve a permanent change of residence.

**Everett Lee**, a well known demographer, defines migration broadly "as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence". No restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary and involuntary nature of the act.

Migration, according to **Eisenstadt**, refers to "the physical transition of an individual or a group from one society to another. This transition usually involves abandoning one social-setting and entering another and different one."

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**Mangalam** also stresses the permanent shifting of people in his definition and considers migration as a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity, called the migrants, from one geographical location to another.

Since the early 1980s, it has been identified that migration plays a significant role in the livelihoods of migrant households. This has spawned much debate about the positive effect of migration on the sending communities despite the challenges presented by migration, such as urbanization. Migration is one of the actions taken by the rural household to fight against poverty. Rural-urban migration is the leading migration stream among the people in India. The rural dwellers move from rural areas to cities in search of social and economic opportunities to make a better life and improve on their living standards.

**Forms**

People may move within a country between different states or between different districts of the same state or they may move between different countries. Therefore, different terms are used for internal and external migration. Internal migration refers to migration from one place to another with a country, while external migration or international migration refers to migration from one country to another.

**a) Immigration and Emigration** : 'Immigration' refers to migration into a country from another country and 'emigration' refers to migration out of the country. These terms are used only in connection with international migration. For example migrants leaving India to settle down in the United States or Canada are immigrants to the United States or Canada and emigrants from India.

**b) Inmigration and Outmigration** : These are used only in connection with internal migration. 'Inmigration' refers to migration into a particular area while 'outmigration' refers to movements out of a particular area. Thus, migrants who come from Bihar or Uttar Pradesh to Punjab are considered to be immigrants for Punjab and out migrants for Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The term 'inmigration' is used with reference to the area of destination of the migrants and the term 'outmigration' is used with reference to the area of origin or place of departure of the migrant.

There are three important sources of information on internal migration in a country. These are national census, population registers and sample surveys. In India, the most important sources of data on internal migration are national census and sample surveys.

**c) Forms of Internal Migration in India** : Information on migration for India, as a whole, and its different parts is obtained through the use of the Census. Better and more detailed questions have been asked in recent census counts. They show improvements in the studies on migration.
Indian census gives information regarding migration streams made from 'birth place' statistics from 1872 onwards. However, in 1961, the birth place was classified as rural or urban, and put into four categories of space migration
(i) Within the district of enumeration,
(ii) Outside the district but within the state of enumeration,
(iii) Outside the state of enumeration, i.e., inter-state, and
(iv) Outside India.

The 1971 Census defined these statistics by including a question on place of last residence, and 1981 Census included a question on reasons for migration.

In India, the migrants are classified into four migration streams, namely, **rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural**. Rural to rural migration has formed the dominant migration stream since 1961. There have been substantial increases in the proportion of rural to urban, and urban to urban migration with the passage of time. Another important point is that the proportion of the females is much higher in rural to rural migration, while in the other three streams the proportion of the males is comparatively much higher. This is simply because the females change their residence on getting married, and new places could be in the neighbouring districts. Researchers have, from time to time, suggested various types of migration while taking into account space, time, volume and direction. On the basis of space, there are four important streams of internal migration. These are:
i) Rural to rural
ii) Rural to urban
iii) Urban to urban
iv) Urban to rural

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Indian census gives this fourfold typology. However, in some developed and highly urbanised countries there have also been migrations from cities to the suburbs.

The relative size and importance of these migration streams may vary from country to country. In some countries, rural to rural migration is the dominant type of migration, while in others it is rural to urban and yet in many others the highest proportion of migrants are found in urban to urban migration. In India, as stated earlier, rural to rural migration formed the dominant migration stream in the 1961, 1971, 1991 and 2001Census. However, there have been substantial increases in the proportion of rural to urban and urban to urban migration with the passage of time, the increase being much more during the decades of 1970s, 1980s and 1990s than of the 1960s. However the dominant form of internal migration in the country is rural to rural. In all other streams (rural to urban, urban to urban and urban to rural) there is dominance of rural to urban migration among the males could be due to better developed agriculture in certain states and districts, which may attract migrants from other parts of the country.

Development of industries in certain states or cities may be another important factor in rural to urban migration. Rural to rural migration is mostly dominated by the females. The female migration is largely sequential to marriage, because it is a Hindu custom to take brides from another village (village exogamy). According to the National Sample Survey, more than 46 per cent migration to urban areas is also caused by marriage. The custom of women returning to urban areas is also caused by marriage. The custom of women returning to her parents to deliver her first child also accounts for significant internal migration.

**Migration to Urban Areas**

India's urban population was 79 million in 1961 and increased to 377 million in 2011 in a half century. By 2030 it is likely to reach about 600 million (Ahluwalia 2011). The share of in-migrants (all durations of residence) in the population of urban areas has increased from 31.6 per cent in 1983 to 33 per cent in 1999–2000 to 35 per cent in 2007–2008, for which the latest data are available from National Sample Survey Office (NSSO 2010a). The increase in the migration rate3 to urban areas has primarily occurred owing to increase in the migration rate for females (see also Figure 1). Although females migrate on account of marriage, many of them take up work sooner or later, joining the pool of migrant workers in urban areas. On the other hand, the male migration rate in urban areas has remained constant (between 26 and 27 per cent), but employment-related reasons of migration for males increased from 42 per cent in 1993 to 52 per cent in 1999–2000 to 56 per cent in 2007–2008 (NSSO 2010a). This shows the increasing importance of employmentrelated migration to urban areas. When we disaggregate the reasons of migration by various streams of migration such as rural to rural, rural to urban, urban to rural and urban to urban, employment-related reasons go as high as 62 per cent in male rural to urban migration (NSSO 2010a; see also Figure 2). Further, within the rural to urban migration stream, there is an increasing importance of inter-state rural to urban migration for employment-related reasons (Bhagat 2010).

**Challenges of Migrants' Inclusion**

Exclusion of migrants is reinforced through ethnic polarization and prejudice about migration and its impact on urbanization. Migration is not recognized as an independent component in the planning process and in the various programmes of the government owing to the assumption that migrants are poor and therefore can be included with all those who are socioeconomically underprivileged. While this may be partly true, this assumption has obstructed mainstreaming migration in the development strategies of the country. There is a need to recognize the component of migration independently in national development strategies, because migrants are diverse groups whose vulnerability is determined not only by economic factors but also by a large number of non-economic factors such as political power, ethnic, religious and linguistic identities and their social and cultural life in the city. It is important to realize that promoting migrant's integration with the host community will be helpful in building a peaceful and prosperous city. A rights-based approach to building an inclusive city would help to develop strategies about whom to include, how to include, where to include, keeping in mind that enhancing migrants' inclusion deepens the notion of citizenship and expands the horizons of freedom and a sense of equity. This is the core that promotes and encourages human rights in general and the right to the city in particular. It may be noted that the inclusion of highly skilled and better-paid migrants is far easier to accomplish than the inclusion of low-skilled rural migrants to the city. Further, migrants belonging to religious and linguistic minorities need special attention.

**Inclusive urban policies and migrants' right to the city**

**1. Creating a positive attitude towards migration and migrants:** In order to build inclusive cities and to promote migrants' integration into the local populations, the recognition of migrants' right to the city by civic bodies, organs of governments, local elites and other stakeholders is fundamental. Building a positive attitude towards migrants and migration and recognizing their contribution to the city, although a long-term process, are essential. A sustained effort to educate political and community leaders, municipal staff and state bureaucracy through conferences, workshops and by electronic and print media would be helpful. A positive attitude towards migrants

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will pave the way for their political, economic and social inclusion in the city, reduce discrimination in accessing services of different government offices and save them from police harassment, etc.

**2. City Planning and Migrants**: City planning is virtually a failure in India because of which migrants are increasingly blamed for the declining civic amenities and for almost all the woes of the city. This not only creates a negative attitude, but even incites hatred and violence towards migrants. City planning is a very important instrument to realize migrants' right to the city. But in most cities, either there is no master plan or it is so obsolete and inadequate that it is unable to address the needs of the city inhabitants in general and of migrants in particular. The city master plan hardly reflects concerns of inclusiveness, because it is technically prepared and bureaucratically envisioned with little involvement of citizens. A right to the city approach would democratize the preparation of the master plan, bring inclusiveness as a core city-development strategy and provide opportunities not only to realize the inhabitants' (including migrants') rights within the city (for example, right to housing, right to water and sanitation, right to education and health, etc.) but also 'their right to change the city according to their heart's desire'. Doing so would require placing migrants at the core of the citydevelopment agenda.

**3. Migration and governance**: Migrants are often blamed for rising crime and law and order problems in the city. Sometimes they are even perceived as a threat to national security. The main reason for such perceptions is that many migrants are anonymous in the city, because of lack of identity and inclusion into urban citizenship. Political inclusion of migrants needs to be made easier through the involvement of NGOs and members of the neighbourhoods who could be allowed to certify the residential status of those migrants having no formal document, so that they can get a ration card, a bank account, and be entered in the voter list, etc., which are often seen as a gateway to urban citizenship.9 A proactive role of municipal bodies would further help the political inclusion of migrants in the city. In this respect the Citizen's Charters prepared and declared by several municipal bodies is a positive development.

**4. Government policies and programmes**: Government policies and programmes are silent on the issue of migration and protecting the rights of migrants. This is evident in the Five Year Plan documents. Both the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) and the Draft Approach Paper to the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017) recognize urban transition in a positive framework, yet no reference has been made to the migration issue in these documents, let alone to safeguarding migrants' rights in the city.

Urban development is a state subject in India, but the Centre formulates huge urban development programmes that give the states enough opportunities to take advantage of them. The Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) are two important examples. The Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) component of JNNURM and RAY are very significant steps in addressing the needs of the urban poor and slum dwellers. It is likely that those who have acquired some degree of legal or quasi-legal (recognized or notified slums) status will benefit. However, these programmes do not address the migrants' issues explicitly. For example, in Mumbai all those who have been living in slums but arrived after the year 2000 would lose the right to housing under slum rehabilitation programmes. These instances are indicative of the manner in which urban policies and programmes are discriminatory against migrants. These need to be changed in both their ideology and structure in consonance with the principles of right to the city in order to realize the vision of an inclusive city.

**Policy Recommendations**

Migration should be acknowledged as an integral part of development. Government policies should not hinder but should seek to facilitate internal migration. It should form the central concern in city planning, and city-development agenda should seek to include and integrate migrants politically, economically, socially, culturally and spatially. This requires enormous change in the attitude towards the process of migration and urbanization of those who appropriate and dominate cities. A historical understanding of the process of migration and urbanization and migrants' role in building cities will go a long way, but it needs to be communicated and propagated through workshops, conferences, print and electronic media in order to bridge the gulf between migrants and local communities.

Policy documents such as the Twelfth Five Year Plan, JNNURM, and City Development Plans should recognize the value of migration in very explicit terms and address migrants' concerns and their rights unequivocally.

It needs to be emphasized that the democratization of city governance and the political inclusion of migrants in decision-making processes are twin pillars of an inclusive city. A rights-based approach to city development would usher in a new era of freedom and human development; it must begin in the city, and must begin with migrants.

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**Challenges of Up-Scaling Creative Practices on Migration**

With the increasing centrality of labour and migration to Indian livelihoods, work on migration in India is only expected to grow further. Lately, the phenomenon has started to receive attention from both the practice community and the academia. A good amount of work has also been built up, demonstrating the possible solutions to various risks that the community faces, solutions that are also replicable and that can be taken to scale. There are, however, some serious impediments to scaling up of the solutions on migration. These bottlenecks need be cleared for framing an effective response to the phenomenon.

**1. Establishing Numbers :** One of the biggest impediments to design and delivery of services for migrants is lack of robust estimates on the absolute quantum of internal migration. The current numbers range from 30 to 100 million, indicating lack of analytical refinement in the way migration is defined. One cannot deny the complexity involved in capturing movement of this nature. Nevertheless, for the government to be able to reach out to this population, the importance of establishing numbers cannot be overstated.

**2. Ensuring Portability of Entitlements :** After establishing numbers, linkages need to be established between source and destination regions, which allow citizens to carry their basic entitlements as and when they move. The current barriers to access, such as producing proof of identity and residence every time a citizen needs to avail a basic public service, needs to be rethought and brought down considerably to allow uninterrupted access. Portability of entitlements, however, would require extensive inter-state coordination and cooperation, examples of which are not very common.

**3. Lack of suitable social security mechanisms :** There is a serious paucity of social security products that understand the vulnerabilities specific to migrant workers and that provide suitable protection. There are hardly any pension products available in the market for unorganized sector workers. The ones that are available do not reflect an appreciation of the work life cycle of migrants, who retire much earlier than other workers. A contributory pension scheme launched by Rajasthan Government, guaranteed pension only after the age of 60, while research shows that most informal sector workers are found to retire at the age of 35–40 years. With insurance products, the delivery mechanisms are highly deficient when it comes to serving highly mobile and less-educated populations. Lately, some welfare boards have come into existence, such as the Construction Worker Welfare Board or Social Security Board, which guarantee benefits to the unorganized sector labour. There is, however, no clarity on what welfare schemes would be delivered and how. Design of social security products for migrants is again an important area of work that requires attention from both the market and the state agencies.

**4. Absence of quick-response legal redressal mechanisms :** A serious anomaly in the unorganized labour market is that most violations against labour are never identified let alone addressed. The existing legal machinery is not sensitive to the nature of legal disputes in the unorganized sector where labour workers have little documentary proof of employment. It is seen that many informal sector disputes never make their way to court or keep languishing for lack of proof. Both the police and the labour administration are difficult to access for the common worker. This problem is further complicated for workers who move in from some other part of the country, lack a local support system and face language and documentation barriers. When it comes to application of important labour legislations such as the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, and Payment of Wages Act, 1936, the jurisdiction of the Labour Courts is limited within a state's physical boundary. This is a serious problem, as lack of a proper avenue for dispute redressal tends to normalize unfair labour practices, leading to severe distortions in the labour market.

**5. Urban development discourse heavily biased towards slum development :** This is another serious impediment in establishing migrant workers' rights at the destination. The existing schemes under the BSUP are primarily targeted at slum-dwelling populations. Shelter solutions in particular show little appreciation of the needs of seasonal workers who come to the cities for short periods of time.

**6. Resource scarcity faced by labour departments :** Much of the execution of existing provisions depends on the human resource capacity available with the labour departments and the total fund allocation made to them. A number of existing labour legislations remain poorly enforced for lack of a robust labour administration. The importance of a strong, robust labour administration in a growing economy cannot be understated, and there is a need to take serious cognizance of the resource and capacity needs of state labour departments and address them firsthand.

The examples shared in this paper primarily draw from civil society experiences in addressing social exclusion of migrant workers. It must be admitted that there is a limit to what these localized NGO-led efforts can achieve while addressing exclusion of such large magnitude. Civil society can demonstrate workable models and solutions; it is for the state and government machinery to take the solutions to scale through concerted policy interventions. Further, in this case the industry has and must play a bigger role. It is the

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primary beneficiary of cheap labour provided by the unorganized sector. It definitely needs to take greater ownership and make necessary contributions in making growth more humane.

## CONCLUSION

Migration is a cause as well as effect. Migration of people acts as a dynamic force which changes the dynamics not only in rural area but also in urban area. As everyone has the right to move and settle anywhere in the country so the flow of migration cannot be stopped. No doubt increasing flow of people from country side to the urban centers results into the development of slums but migration is essential for the process of urbanization and development of urban area. Slums are an integral part of the cities. Owing to lack of housing, rural migrants live in slums. The focus for development and investment should be given to those states and those areas which are lagging behind in development parameters. This may retain the labour force at the native place and thereby reduce overcrowding and congestion in cities. This will result in a more prosperous and balanced migration flow leading to a qualitative shift in the pattern and trend of migration flow in India.

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