

## Internal Migration in India: Are the Underprivileged Migrating More?

*The present study revealed that both in- and out-migration rates had a significant positive association with per capita income, percentage of workforce and share of state gross domestic product in the non-agricultural sector. This means that higher income and the sectoral transformation of the economy from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sector tended to be associated with both higher in-migration and higher out-migration rates. By contrast, poverty was not found to be strongly related to increased out-migration at the state level.*

**By R. B.Bhagat\***

India embarked on its new economic policy, popularly known as the liberalization of the Indian economy, in 1991. The basic features of the new economic policy were a reduction in government expenditures in order to reduce fiscal deficit, an opening up of the economy for export-oriented growth, the removal of government control and licensing, and a push for private participation to enhance competition and efficiency. Both supporters and critics of the new economic policy believed that economic reforms would increase internal migration. Proponents believed that the new impetus would boost the economy and job opportunities, leading to increased pull factors conducive to accelerated rural-to-urban migration. By contrast, the opponents of this policy were of the view that economic reforms would adversely affect the village and cottage industries

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and impoverish rural populations, leading to increased rural-to-urban migration (Kundu, 1997). Although there was considerable success in achieving economic growth, from 2 to 3 per cent of growth in gross domestic product in the pre-reform era to over 6 per cent during the period 1991-2001, the impact of this enhanced growth on internal migration in general and rural-to-urban migration, in particular, has not been assessed. The latest census of 2001 reveals several interesting results in relation to internal migration, its regional pattern and the contribution of rural-to-urban migration to urban growth, as discussed by Bhagat and Mohanty (2009). They argue that the push factor has not significantly influenced internal migration. As a result, it appears inaccurate to state that the poor and disadvantaged are migrating more than those that are more well off.

Although migration is emerging as an important phenomenon from the economic, political and public health points of views (Bhagat, 2008), migration research has been accorded rather low priority among demographers in India. This is partly because, since the early 1990s, with a paradigm shift in the demographic research tilting to reproductive health-related issues, the interest in research on migration and on internal migration, in particular, has dwindled considerably. This is also reflected in the fact that the new data sets, namely the National Family Health Surveys - an Indian version of the renowned Demographic and Health Surveys - and District Level Health Surveys, did not consider migration as an important variable that could affect health status and, in particular, the reproductive health status of the population.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the wealth of data available from Indian censuses on migration has been grossly neglected by demographers, who tend to be busy collecting data for projects funded by external agencies (Bose, 2003). Thus, very few recent demographic studies on India's internal migration and its causes and consequences can be found. This study presents the trends in and patterns of internal migration during the last three decades based on census and National Sample Survey Organization data. It argues that people belonging to the lowest socio-economic categories are less migratory than others.

## Data and method

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, data on migration based on place of birth have been collected by Indian censuses. However, since 1971, migration data have also been collected on the basis of place of last residence and duration of residence at the place of enumeration. Thus, it is possible to study period migration

since 1971 compared with lifetime migration studied during earlier decades. The criterion of place of last residence provides information related to the last move of the migrants. It is also helpful to capture return migration. This study is based on the place of last residence criterion of defining migrants used in the Indian census. The villages and towns are the lowest units for determining the place of last residence. Any residence change within the village or administrative town/city is not considered migration. Data on migration were provided as a change in residence elsewhere in the district (intra-district), from one district to another within the state (inter-district) and from one state to another (interstate). Intra-district and inter-district data are combined in this study and represented as intrastate migration. Administratively, India is divided into 28 states, 7 union territories and 585 districts, as reported in the 2001 census. Districts are the lowest unit for which migration data are available. Interstate migration is generally long-distance, compared with intrastate migration, which is short-distance. Migration data based on place of last residence are also available by rural and urban area. International migrants (immigrants) are also enumerated, but the present study is confined to internal migration only. Moreover, the Indian census does not provide information on Indians migrating abroad (emigration). Thus, it is not possible to study net international migration from census data; it is possible, however, to do so for net interstate migration within India. In addition, since the 1981 census, reasons for migration have also been added to the census questionnaire. Apart from the census, the National Sample Survey Organization - a wing of the Ministry of Planning and Programme Implementation - also included a question on migration based on place of last residence as a part of its employment and unemployment survey. The place of last residence was defined as a place (village or town) where the migrant had stayed continuously for a period of six months or more before moving to the place of enumeration. In contrast to the information of the National Sample Survey Organization, census information did not limit the duration of residence in relation to the place of last residence. The latest (fifty-fifth) round conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization, in 1999/2000, provided information on migration by monthly per capita consumer expenditure, as well as migration of the socially disadvantaged ethnic groups known as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (India, 2001b).<sup>2</sup> Both census and National Sample Survey Organization data were used in this study.

The present paper is divided into three sections. The first section deals with the trend and pattern of migration using indicators such as proportion of migrants to total population, distribution of migrants by location and streams of migration, gender ratios and reasons for migration based on place of last residence data collected

in the census. The second section presents migration, development and poverty using indicators such as in- and out-migration rates at the state level based on place of last residence data from the 2001 census; migrants with a duration of residence of 0-9 years at the place of enumeration divided by the population of the respective states in the base year 1991 are correlated with factors such as per capita income, literacy rate, poverty ratio and infant mortality rate. The last section on migration and socio-economic characteristics is mainly based on National Sample Survey Organization data on migration based on place of last residence for the year 1999/2000.

### **Trend and pattern**

Migration on the Indian subcontinent has been low historically. Researchers such as Kingsley Davis have attributed this fact to the prevalence of the caste system, joint families, traditional values, the diversity of language and culture, the lack of education and the predominance of agriculture and semi-feudal land relations (Davis, 1951). Nevertheless, the rapid transformation of the Indian economy, the improvement in the levels of education and of transport and communication facilities, and the shift of the workforce from agriculture to industry and tertiary activities have contributed to the new impetus that has been influencing the mobility patterns of Indian people in recent times.

The 2001 census estimated the total number of internal migrants at 309 million based on place of last residence, representing nearly 30 per cent of the total population. Although the number of internal migrants has doubled since 1971, the proportion has continued to be about 30 per cent since 1971, except for the 1991 census, according to which it declined to about 27 per cent of the total population. It is generally accepted that migration slowed down during the decade 1981-1991 as a result of increased unemployment and sluggish growth in the Indian economy. By contrast, the proportion of immigrants constituted only about 5 per cent of India's population in 2001 – a decline of 3 percentage points from the level of 1971 (see [table 1](#)).

Most immigrants are displaced persons who opted for India during the partition of the country at the time of independence in 1947. Many also came to India at the time of the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. The declining proportion of immigrants shows that many of the older immigrants, who came to India half a century ago, have died.

**Table 1. Percentage of internal and international migrants based on place of last residence, India, 1971-2001***(Millions)*

Census	Total population	Internal migrants	Percentage (internal migrants)	International migrants	Percentage (international migrants)	Percentage of total population
1971	548.1	159.6	29.1	8.1	1.4	30.6
1981	659.3	200.5	30.4	6.0	0.9	31.3
1991	814.3	220.7	27.1	5.9	0.7	27.83
2001	991.8 (1 028.6)	300.9 (309.3)	30.3 (30.0)	5.0 (5.1)	0.5 (0.4)	30.8 (30.4)

*Sources:* Census of India 1971, series 1, part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, part V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, Part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1 (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

*Notes:* The census was not conducted in Assam in 1981 and in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991. The figures for India from 1981 to 2001 exclude these two states. The figures for the 2001 census including Assam and Jammu and Kashmir are given in parentheses.

**Table 2** presents the percentage distribution of internal migrants by gender and duration of residence at the place of enumeration. Nearly one third of males and one fourth of females reported a duration of residence of 0-9 years in 2001 compared with half of male migrants and one third of female migrants in 1981. The decline in the share of migrants with a 0-9 year duration of residence at the place of enumeration is accompanied by a large proportion of male (26 per cent) and female (10 per cent) migrants who did not report the duration of residence in the 2001 census. Of the 300.9 million internal migrants, about 44 million did not report duration and the majority of them (77 per cent) were short-distance migrants (intra-district migrants). It is possible that many of them were temporary and circular migrants who might be simultaneously holding residences at the place of origin and place of destination and, as such, have considerable difficulty in reporting the duration of residence at the place of enumeration.

**Table 3** shows that the majority of migrants are intra-district migrants (62 per cent). Most of the intra-district migrants are females who customarily change their parental households and join their husband's households after marriage (Srivastava and Sasikumar,

**Table 2. Percentage distribution of internal migrants by gender and duration of residence at the place of enumeration, 1981 to 2001**

Duration	1981		1991		2001	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than 1 year	8.5	3.7	5.0	2.2	4.5	2.1
1-4 years	26.1	17.0	21.5	15.3	18.0	13.9
5-9 years	16.6	14.7	15.3	14.9	13.2	13.6
10-19 years	20.9	23.6	20.6	24.8	18.0	23.9
20 years and over	20.9	37.2	23.3	36.4	20.0	36.4
Duration not stated	6.7	3.6	14.1	6.3	26.1	9.9
Total migrants (million)	58.7	141.8	59.5	161.2	86.5	214.4

*Sources:* Census of India 1971, series 1, part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, part V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, Part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1 (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

*Notes:* The census was not held in Assam in 1981 and in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991. Figures for India from 1981 to 2001 exclude these two states.

**Table 3. Size and growth rates of migrant populations by type of movement, India, 1971-2001**

Type of movement	Size 2001 (millions)	Percentage distribution 2001	Growth rate (percentage)		
			1971- 1981	1981- 1991	1991- 2001
Intra-district	193.5	61.6	24.9	8.3	37.0
Inter-district	74.6	23.7	44.3	13.7	26.3
Interstate	41.1	13.1	28.1	11.7	53.6
International migrants	5.1	1.6	-9.1	-6.1	-13.4
All migrants	314.3	100.0	27.0	9.8	34.7
Total population	1 028.6	-	24.7	23.7	21.4

*Sources:* Census of India 1971, series 1, part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, part V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1, (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

*Note:* Migrants unclassifiable by type of movement were excluded.

2003). The shares of inter-district and interstate migrants are 24 and 13 per cent, respectively. It may be noted, however, that the growth rate of interstate migrants was very high (54 per cent) during the period 1991-2001 compared with previous decades. There is no doubt that interstate mobility increased considerably during the period 1991-2001, coinciding with India's economic liberalization programme, which was initiated in 1991, but migration flows at the state level continued to be towards the developed states, namely Maharashtra, Haryana, Delhi, Punjab and Gujarat. The growth rate of interstate migration was 80 per cent in Maharashtra, followed by Haryana with close to 70 per cent, Delhi with 63 per cent, Punjab with 56 per cent and Gujarat with about 50 per cent during the period 1991-2001. Those states attracted people from almost all other states. By contrast, most of the remaining states had people out-migrating, although all of them were not poor. For example, the state of Kerala, which is India's socially and educationally most developed state, accounts for a large population out-migrating to the Gulf countries (Zachariah, Kannan and Rajan, 2002).

It is also important to examine internal migration by stream of migration in order to assess the role of economic and social factors in this phenomenon. The streams of migration are: from rural to rural, from rural to urban, from urban to rural and from urban to urban areas. From the viewpoint of push or pull factors, rural-to-urban migration is the most significant stream. The net rural-to-urban migration is also an important component of urbanization. It is estimated that net rural-to-urban migration (14.3 million) contributed up to one fifth of urban growth during the period 1991-2001 (Bhagat and Mohanty, 2009). By contrast, there were regional disparities in interstate rural-to-rural migration depending on the agricultural and infrastructural development of the regions. Urban-to-urban migration, on the other hand, showed increased movement from one city to another for reasons related to work and business. Although urban-to-rural migration seemed to be the least preferred stream owing to the gap in basic amenities between these two settings, rural areas in the proximity of metropolitan cities appeared attractive for many retired and rich people. Many of the urban residents may go back to their villages to look after their parental property, such as land and houses.

Table 4 shows the streams of migration by intrastate (intra-district and inter-district) and interstate movements. The rural-to-rural stream of migration constituted 68 per cent of all intrastate migrants, compared with 28 per cent in the case of interstate migrants. By contrast, rural-to-urban migration accounted for 15 and 39 per cent of intrastate and interstate migrants, respectively.

**Table 4. Size and growth rates of migrant populations by migration stream, India, 1971-2001**

Migration stream	Size 2001 (millions)	Percentage distribution	Growth rate (percentage)		
			1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001
<i>Intrastate</i>					
Rural-to-rural	161.0	68.6	19.8	10.7	16.8
Rural-to-urban	36.3	15.3	45.1	20.1	16.4
Urban-to-rural	11.0	4.7	32.9	10.1	-4.3
Urban-to-urban	25.8	11.0	57.9	5.2	43.1
<i>Interstate</i>					
Rural-to-rural	11.0	28.2	13.8	9.1	46.6
Rural-to-urban	15.3	39.3	42.5	16.6	76.4
Urban-to-rural	1.9	4.9	15.9	11.4	1.5
Urban-to-urban	10.7	27.4	28.4	15.5	28.0

*Sources:* Census of India 1971, series 1, part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, part V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1, (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

*Note:* Migrants unclassifiable by rural-urban status were excluded.

The growth rates of migrants by stream of migration show that there was a significant decline in the number of migrants from the decade 1971-1981 to that of 1981-1991, owing to the severe economic crisis India faced in the years close to 1991 when the new economic policy of liberalization was first introduced. The impact of the crisis was manifest in the slowing down of all streams of migration during the decades 1971-1981 and 1981-1991. By contrast, following the economic recovery in the early 1990s, a dramatic increase occurred in urban-to-urban migration within states, as well as in rural-to-urban migration between states, during the decade 1991-2001. Along with a very high growth in interstate rural-to-urban migration, other migration streams also maintained their tempo during the decade 1991-2001, except for urban-to-rural migration flows.

### Male versus female migration

In both short- (intra- and inter-district) and long-distance (inter-state) migration, women seemed to dominate the migration pattern. **Table 5** shows that the gender ratio (male/female) declined from

1971 to 1991 in all types of internal migration, which indicates that women were increasingly participating in this phenomenon in India. This was also found to be true when gender ratios were calculated by stream of migration, as presented in table 6. In India, women primarily migrate due to marriage or tend to settle down

**Table 5. Gender ratio of migrants by migration types, 1981-2001**

(Males per 1 000 females)

Migrant type	1971	1981	1991	2001
Intra-district	336	312	281	323
Inter-district	604	530	456	481
Interstate	1 059	914	802	865
International migrants	1 151	1 143	1 073	1 085
All migrants	473	430	383	422
Total population	1 075	1 070	1 078	1 072

Sources: Census of India 1971, series 1, part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, parts V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1, (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

**Table 6. Gender ratio by rural and urban stream, 1971-2001**

(Males per 1 000 females)

Stream	1971	1981	1991	2001
<i>Intrastate</i>				
Rural-to-rural	285	246	214	166
Rural-to-urban	920	849	748	750
Urban-to-rural	600	542	481	506
Urban-to-urban	913	819	716	783
<i>Interstate</i>				
Rural-to-rural	592	476	393	391
Rural-to-urban	1 719	1 478	1 278	1 392
Urban-to-rural	1 074	920	708	747
Urban-to-urban	1 189	1 025	912	923

Sources: Census of India 1971, series 1, Part II, D(i), migration tables; Census of India 1981, series 1, part V, A and B(i), migration tables (tables D1 and D2); Census of India 1991, series 1, part V, D series, migration tables, vol. 2, part 1 (table D2); Census of India 2001, table D-2, compact disk. All censuses published in New Delhi by India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner.

with the earning member of the household, unlike in South-East and East Asia, where female migration tends to occur as a result of pull factors generated by labour-intensive industrialization and the expansion of urban-based services (Skeldon, 1986). The gender ratios derived from the 2001 census, however, show a reversal of the increasing feminization of migration trends that could be observed until 1991. This is because, in recent times, males have increasingly taken part in most streams of migration. It is also related to the fact that males in the recent past may have benefited more than women from the growing prosperity and employment opportunities.

### Reasons for migration

It has been possible to observe the broad reasons for migration since the 1981 census, which proposed a list of reasons from which respondents could choose. The same list was used in the 1991 and 2001 censuses, with "business" being added to the list of reasons in 1991 and "natural calamities" being dropped from the list used in 2001. An additional reason, "moved after [having given] birth", was added in 2001, since it was thought that a large number of mothers relocated to either their natal residence or to a place with a better medical facility in order to give birth. Whereas women are not treated as migrants at these temporary places of residence, children are treated as migrants when they accompany their parents to their places of normal residence. Although this is technically migration, since the place of birth is different from the place of enumeration for the children born, it was found useful to separate these movements from other categories.

Table 7 provides details on the reasons for migration. It is to be noted that the reasons for migration varied significantly between males and females. Work or employment appeared as the main reason for males to migrate (28.5 per cent), whereas marriage seemed to be the main driver of female migration (70.1 per cent). About 5 per cent of migrants reported having "moved after [having given] birth". A comparison with earlier censuses reveals the increasing importance of employment or work as reasons of migration for both males and females. The number of male migrants with a duration of residence at the place of enumeration of 0-9 years reporting either employment or work as a reason to migrate increased by 49 per cent compared with a 24 per cent increase among females. This shows that the rate of increase in female migration linked to employment was much lower than that of males for the same purpose, which led to a reversal of the declining gender ratio of migrants in recent times, as discussed in the previous section.

Table 7: Reasons for migration, India, 2001

Reason for migration	Number of migrants (millions)			Percentage of total migrants		
	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
Total migrants	309.3	90.6	218.7	100.0	100.0	100.0
Work/ employment	29.4	25.8	3.6	9.5	28.5	1.7
Business	2.7	2.3	0.4	0.9	2.6	0.2
Education	3.3	2.3	0.9	1.1	2.6	0.4
Marriage	155.5	2.1	153.3	50.3	2.4	70.1
Moved after birth	15.7	9.2	6.5	5.1	10.2	3.0
Moved with households	40.9	17.0	23.9	13.2	18.9	10.9
Other	61.6	31.6	29.9	19.9	34.8	13.7

Source: Census of India 2001, table D-3, compact disk (New Delhi, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registrar General and Census Commissioner).

## Migration, development and poverty

In order to assess the role of economic factors in influencing migration, an attempt has been made to see if any correlation existed between the various indicators of poverty and development and in- and out-migration rates at the state level. Due to the limited availability of data, the analysis is confined to 32 states and union territories (out of the 35 states and union territories that exist throughout the country). The states Punjab and Maharashtra were the most developed ones in terms of per capita income, followed by Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. By contrast, the states of Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan showed a per capita income below the national level. In those low-income states, the economic growth was persistently slow throughout the 1990s and, as a result, the interstate disparity in income levels widened. Also, the low-income states derived a larger share of their income from agriculture, with the exception of Punjab and Haryana, which were in the high-income group (Economic and Political Weekly Research Foundation, 2003). Table 8 presents a correlation matrix between measures of in- and out-migration rates and those of per capita income, literacy rates, percentage of the non-agricultural workforce, share of the non-agricultural sector in gross state domestic product, proportion of the population below the poverty line (estimated by the Planning Commission based on

**Table 8. Correlation matrix showing relationship between migration, poverty and development variables at state level (N = 32), around 2001**

(Percentage)

Variables	In-migration rate (interstate) <sup>a</sup>	Out-migration rate (interstate) <sup>b</sup>
Urban literacy rate	0.084	0.009
Rural literacy rate	0.257	0.237
Urban infant mortality rate	-0.287	-0.169
Rural infant mortality rate	-0.260	-0.304
Per capita income	0.827 <sup>c</sup>	0.589 <sup>c</sup>
Share of non-agricultural sector in state gross domestic product	0.690 <sup>c</sup>	0.441 <sup>c</sup>
Urban poverty	-0.274	-0.209
Rural poverty	-0.454 <sup>c</sup>	-0.274
Non-agricultural workforce	0.640 <sup>c</sup>	0.491 <sup>c</sup>

Notes:

$$^a \text{ In-migration rate} = \frac{\text{In- migrants during 1991-2001}}{\text{Total population 1991}} \times 100$$

$$^b \text{ Out-migration rate} = \frac{\text{Out- migrants during 1991-2001}}{\text{Total population 1991}} \times 100$$

<sup>c</sup> indicates significance at 1 per cent level

calorie intake of 2,400 in rural and 2,200 in urban areas) and infant mortality rates. The per capita income is very strongly correlated with the in-migration rate and moderately correlated with the out-migration rate. This means that the higher the level of a state's income was, the higher the rates of in-migration, but also out-migration, were. For example, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the two states with the highest levels of out-migration (about 30 per 1,000 as per the 2001 census), yet those levels were similar to those of out-migration flows from Haryana, which has long been considered a state with mostly in-migration. In the same way, states with high in-migration or union territories such as Delhi, Chandigarh, Mizoram Goa and Punjab also displayed high levels of out-migration. Furthermore, the share of the non-agricultural sector in the state's gross domestic product and in the workforce also had a positive relationship with both in- and out-migration rates. Literacy rates, rural and urban poverty and infant mortality rates were not significantly

related with either in- or out-migration rates; a significant negative association existed, however, between rural poverty and the in-migration rate.

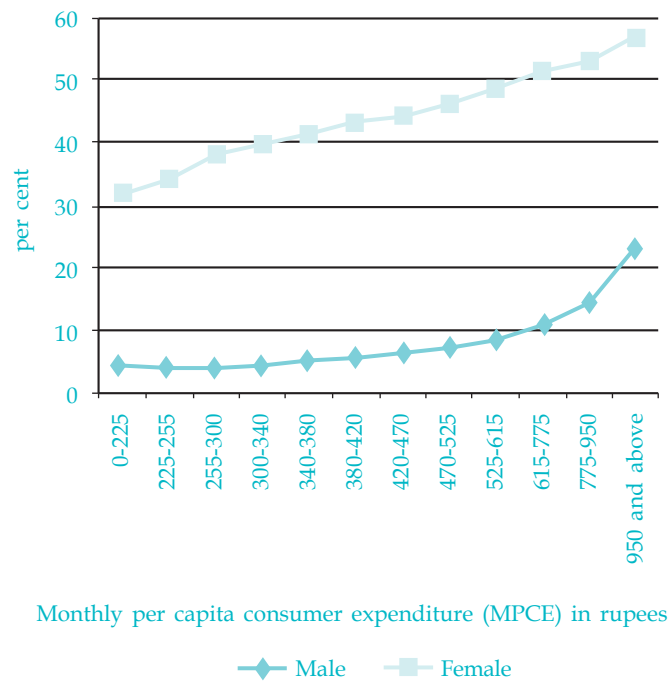
Although it must be admitted that the relationship between poverty and migration is a complex one (Skeldon, 2002), the insignificant relationship between rural poverty ratios and out-migration indicates that push factors were not very effective in accelerating out-migration from rural areas. This may be due to several factors, including the low level of education and skill among the rural population combined with the high cost of living in the cities, the lack of squatting places where the poor can encroach, particularly in large cities, and hostile authorities who may pass eviction orders against those that they declare are illegal occupants of city spaces on public litigation petitions. The public opinion on migration in cities tends to be very hostile towards poor and unskilled migrants, who are often blamed for many city woes, including those related to deteriorating transport facilities, environment and sanitation. In this situation, it is often difficult for poor and uneducated migrants to survive in cities. Earlier studies also pointed out that it is not the poor who move out of the rural areas, but those with some education and capital (Oberai and Singh, 1983; Skeldon, 1985).

### **Socio-economic characteristics of migrants**

The National Sample Survey Organization data provide information on migrants by monthly consumer expenditure of the households (India, 2001b, p. 37). The migration rate was as high as 23.3 per cent in the highest monthly per capita expenditure category in rural areas in 1999/2000. It went down systematically, with the rate being as low as 4.3 per cent in the lowest monthly per capita expenditure category (see figure 1). The same is true for urban areas, with corresponding percentages of 43.3 and 10.5 (see figure 2). This shows that migration rates were higher in higher expenditure/income groups and vice versa. It is also possible that some migrant households saw their income level improve after migration, but for the majority of them, this is a very unlikely scenario. The National Sample Survey Organization further reports that socially disadvantaged groups, such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, were not more migratory than the rest of the population (India, 2001b, p. 30; see figure 3).

According to the 2001 census (India, 2001a), about 14 million people had migrated for reasons related to work/employment during the period 1991-2001. The literacy rate among those rural-to-urban migrants who reported work/employment as a reason to migrate

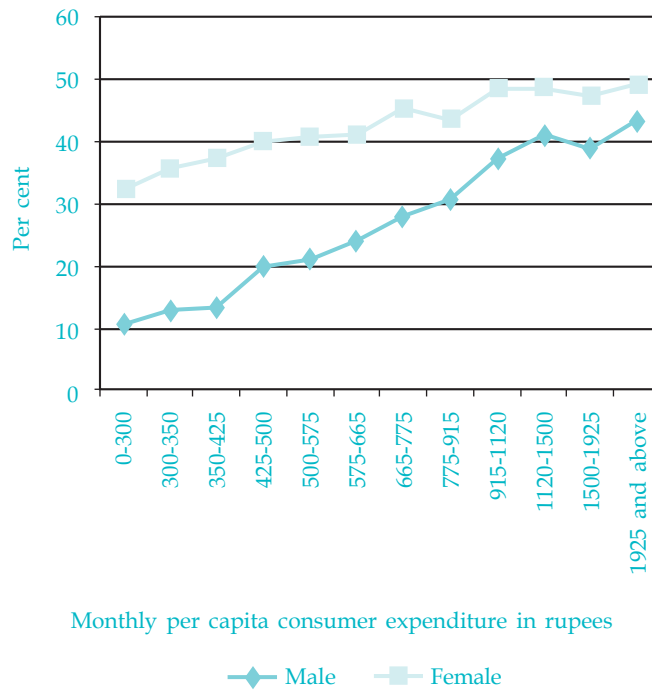
**Figure 1. Migration rates by MPCE in rural areas, India, 1999-2000**



Source: *Migration in India 1999-2000* (India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Sample Survey Organization, 2001).

was much higher compared with the rural literacy level in general. For example, the literacy rate was about 85 per cent among intra-state and 75 per cent among interstate rural-to-urban migrants, compared with a rural literacy rate of 58 per cent at the national level. The level of education of migrants was also found to be higher than that of non-migrants. For example, among migrants moving from rural areas, the percentage of migrants with 10 years or more of education was 41 per cent among intrastate and 30 per cent among interstate migrants compared with 18 per cent among non-migrants in rural areas in 2001. This indicates that the migrants belonged to higher educational status categories compared with their non-migrant counterparts. It is also because those who have higher levels of education or economic assets tend to find it easier to establish linkages with the urban economy through sociocultural channels, to find a foothold in the city and to avail themselves of the opportunity offered by migration (Kundu, 2007).

Figure 2. Migration rates by MPCE in urban areas, India, 1999-2000

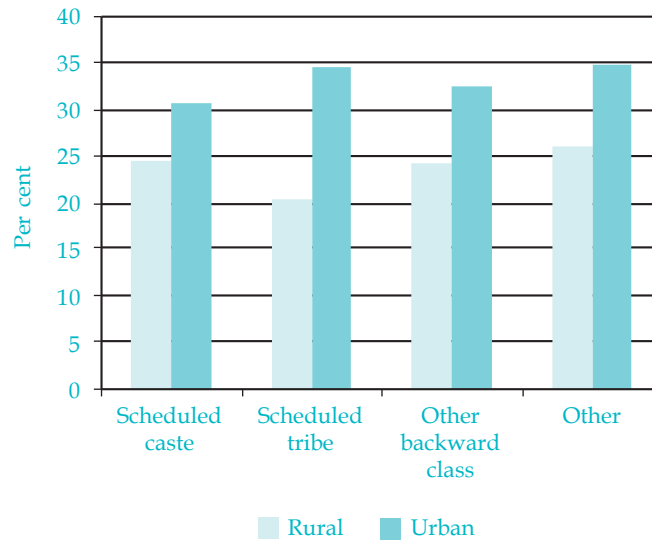


Source: *Migration in India 1999-2000* (India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Sample Survey Organization, 2001).

### Conclusion

Push and pull factors have dominated much of the discourse on migration. Factors such as low income, low literacy, high poverty and dependence on agriculture are cited as some examples of push factors associated with places of origin. By contrast, high income, high literacy, the dominance of industries, and services are among the pull factors associated with places of destination. The present study revealed that both in- and out-migration rates had a significant positive association with per capita income, percentage of workforce and share of state gross domestic product in the non-agricultural sector. This means that higher income and the sectoral transformation of the economy from the agricultural to the non-agricultural sector tended to be associated with both higher in-migration and higher out-migration rates. By contrast, poverty was not found to be strongly related to increased out-migration at the

Figure 3. Migration rates by social groups, India, 1999-2000



Source: *Migration in India 1999-2000* (India, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Sample Survey Organization, 2001).

state level. Neither per capita monthly expenditure nor social categories of households indicated that migrants largely came from disadvantaged sections of Indian society. It appears that those push factors were not as effective in influencing migration as is generally believed. Furthermore, the increased mobility of India's population after the liberalization of the economy in 1991 appeared to be confined to relatively better off sections of the population, which could better meet the requirements of emerging job opportunities.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Among the three rounds of National Family Health Surveys initiated in the early 1990s, only the third round (conducted in 2005-2006) included a question related to migration, such as “how long have you been living continuously in the current place of residence”. If the respondent answered “always”, that person would be classified as a non-migrant and otherwise as a migrant. This constitutes an important development and it could spur migration research focusing on migrant and non-migrant differentials in areas such as fertility, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and child mortality in the near future.
- <sup>2</sup> Scheduled castes are a group of castes declared by the President of India under the constitutional provision for Government support. Members of scheduled castes represent 16 per cent of India’s population. Similarly, scheduled tribes are a group of indigenous peoples declared by the President of India under the constitutional provision for Government support. Members of scheduled tribes constitute 8 per cent of the population. Types of Government support available to them include the reservation of jobs, admission into educational institutions and development programmes.

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