



TRENDS, CAUSES AND IMPACTS OF LABOUR MIGRATION IN INDIA

Saruk Hossain

M.Phil Scholar, Department of Political Science

Raiganj University

Raiganj, West Bengal, India

ABSTRACT

Migration is the movement from one place to another but the movement is influenced by a variety of socio-economic factors. The people's migration from one region to another for improved living standards is a key feature of human nature. While some regions and birthplaces lack developmental support of populations, then people migrate to access the emerging better opportunities. Regional inequality arises due to various reasons. Among them some are natural and some are man-made disparity. It's quite a natural setting that investment would be attracted to development regions only. Industrialization widens the gap economy between rural and urban areas. This induces the labour migration force towards industrialized areas. There is extensive debate on the migration process that people shift to another region. Moreover, several studies show that the process of migration is also influenced by economic, social and cultural factors. The paper tries to highlight the trend of migration, probable causes and overall impact as discussed in the existing literature so far. Hence, the paper would serve as a useful guide to further future research in this area.

Keywords: Labour Migrants, Migration, Marriage, Remittances, Demographic Trends.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every economy is confronted with certain economic problems; may be internal or external problems. Among all the internal problems unemployment is the main reason, both in economic theories as well as in policy prescriptions. All individuals want to get employed to have a source of income; it may be high or low. Incomes provide the individual purchasing power of commodities for the improvement of standards of living. Therefore, if a person cannot find a job in their birthplace, then they can decide to move out of that place and relocate some another region in search of better employment. This phenomenon is known as the process of 'labour migration' in India. Migration is defined as a movement from one migration to another, usually crossing administrative boundaries during a given migration interval and involving a change of residence (The United Nations proposed this definition of migration in 1993). Basically, migration can be of two types one is internal migration and another is external migration. Internal migration means moving from one region to another region within a country and external migration means moving from one country to another country. In the global scenario, internal migration seems to be more significant than external

migration (The United Nations Development Programme 2009 has estimated that the number of migrants within the borders of countries is about four times the number of migrant labour).

One of the most important reasons labourers migrate from a particular region to another region is to search for better employment. Even in this situation where a person is indifferent between the two regions with employment opportunities, there can be an occurred migration. In that case, the wage pay difference between the two regions can be determined by the direction of migration. The labourers migrate from a lower wage rate region to a higher wage pay rate region. The continuous labour migration creates competition among the potential workers which sometimes lowers the wage rate. The migration process continues unless the wage gap between the two different regions is eliminated. Thus labour migration can achieve a balance between the two regions in the wage rate. This phenomenon in migration is known as 'convergence' in literature. Further, due to competition among the migrant labour finding a better job in another region involves an element of uncertainty. In this situation labourers calculate the expected earnings and if when it exceeds the present earning then they decided to migrate to other regions.

Moreover, job finding is not only the cause of migration. The migration also depends on other social factors like age, gender, level of education, caste, religion and socio-economic conditions of the migrants. For example, with the development of Mumbai City as an information technology (IT) many IT professionals person have migrated from different parts of India to Mumbai. Likewise, we observed that some regions are largely populated because they belong to a particular religious community. Gender is another factor in determining migration. Basically, Male workers migrate for search better job opportunities, females migrate mainly on account of marriage factors. Thus, these factors are also important in the migration process.

The extension of labour migration also affects the developmental level of a particular region. The classical development theories have shown that resources in the form of migrant labour can be used by an economy for its development purpose. The Lewis model development (1954) proposes that a surplus of labour migration from the subsistence farming sector to the urban manufacturing sector creates surplus labour in the latter sector. This surplus labour may be used for capital formation and development of the economy through reinvestment. The Harris and Todaro theory of development (1970) suggests of labour migration from the rural sector to the urban sector can achieve development. In their migration model, the earnings of the urban sector are high as compared to the earnings of the rural sector of labour migration.

The informal production systems are widely expanded in rural and urban areas. Finding a job is easy in the informal sector than in the formal sector. As a result, the number of migrant labour tends to increase in informal sectors. But in the general sense, the informal sector does not have very good environmental conditions for daily work. In the globalization era labour market is a higher premium on skilled migrant labourers. Moreover, in many situations, poor workers migrate from rural areas to urban areas for getting better employment through a chain of intermediaries. Hence, the intermediaries can be the exploitation of poor migrant workers.

The remittance and wages can be improved the standard of living of migrant labour of that region. Thus, the causes of labour migration, nature and effect have also an impact on the social, economic, cultural and political environment of the state. With the emerging trend of liberalization, in the labour market inequalities have widened the gap. At the same time, growth in India and the demand for different types of labour markets follow the need to generate capital at both national and global levels. On the one hand, the implication of this need is the demand for highly skilled labourers and on the other hand low skilled, low wages can easily be controlled by flexible workers. This increase in migration demand cannot be met by the local labours; therefore, an increase in worker mobility is required. On the one hand migration of labourers has highly segment increased. On the other side capitalist is seeking to acquire cheap workers through casual-based or through immobile home-based workers whose wage rate is very low. So, there is a need for

effective government policies for labour migration, at least in respect of providing good working conditions and social security to migrant workers.

The present study examines the overview of labour migration in India. Seeking to understand the trend and pattern of labour migration, the next section discusses different causes of migration. The article evaluates what are the impact of labour migration and finally conclude the research paper.

2. LABOUR MIGRATION IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

Migration from one region to another region in search of improved living standards is a key feature of human nature. When some areas and sectors do not capacity to support their populations then people migrated to the region to access emerging opportunities. The regional differences arise due to various reasons, among them some are natural and some are man-made disparity. Basically, industrial capital investment would be attracted in the development regions only. The process of industrialization widens the huge gap between rural and urban areas. There is comprehensive debate over the reasons for the shift in population from those emphasizing individual rationality and household behaviour to the structural logic of capitalist development (de Haan and Rogaly 2002). Several studies show that the process of labour migration is also influenced by social, cultural, and economic factors. The outcomes of labour migration can be different for men and women, and also different for groups and locations.

Primarily the source of early migration is based on agro ecological related to population expansion. During the British period, there is considerable information on different patterns of migration. Indian immigration or external migration was one outcome of the abolition of slavery and the demand for the replacement of labour. This was done through agreement, a type of contract labour whereby a person bound themselves for a fixed period of employment, normally four to seven years in exchange for payment of their passage. They moved to work on sugar plantations in British Dutch and French colonies and later on tea and rubber plantations in Southeast Asia (Tinker, 1974). Similarly, the demand for labour internally grew as tea, coffee and rubber plantations, coal mines and later modern industries developed. Urban areas like Mumbai and Kolkata attracted rural workers from Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka (Joshi and Joshi, 1976).

Even after independence, the historical pattern of labour migration persisted. Between 1951 and 2001 the proportion of the population from 17.3% to 32.8% total workforce living in the urban areas and 73.3% remaining in the rural areas. The percentages reduce marginally from 77.7% in 1991 and 79.3% in 1981. Given the size of India, regional disparities have existed. The ratio between the highest to lowest state per capita income of workers has increased from 2.6 in 1980 to 3.5 in 1997 (Srivastava, 2003). The Planning Commission estimate that 26.1% of India's total population lives under the Below Poverty Line (based on the National Sample Survey of 2000). The rural poor people are gradually concentrated in eastern India and rain-fed regions of central and western India. These regions suffer from lower productivity in the agriculture sector.

The previous studies have shown that large numbers of poor households participate in migration. More recent studies on migration have confirmed that labour migration is an important livelihood strategy for poor households in various regions of India.

3. TRENDS AND PATTERNS OF INTERNAL MIGRATION BY DIMENSIONS

The two main secondary sources of data on population mobility in India are Census and the National Sample Survey. These studies may underestimate some migration flows such as temporary, seasonal and convective migration due to empirical and conceptual difficulties. Moreover, migration data is related to population mobility, not to worker mobility. But economic theories of migration are mainly about labour migration. It is not easy to separate these. Firstly, both surveys define migrants in terms of changes from a place of birth to the place of last residence. According to such definitions, migrants are not always related

to employment. Secondly, the migration Survey gives only the main reason for migration and only the timing of migration. Secondary economic reasons may be masked in the case of married women, who will cite other reasons for movement. Another problem is that migration data relate to the stock of migrants and not to flows.

3.1 Population Mobility

In one view, population mobility in India is low (Kundu and Gupta, 1996). In the 1991 census using the concept of 'change in residence,' 17.4% of the population is considered to have moved which shows a significant decrease from 30.6% in 1971 and 31.2% in 1981. This is true for both male and female immigrants. It decreased for men from 18.1% in 1971 to 14.7% in 1991. It decreased for women from 43.1% in 1971 to 41.6% in 1991. However, recent evidence based on NSS surveys from 1992 to 2000 censuses suggests an increase in migration rates – from 24.7% in the late 1990s to 26.6%. This evidence also indicates a proportion of migrants of both sexes in rural and urban areas during the last decades of the 20th century.

3.2 Migration for Work

The primary purpose of migration is an important indicator of how mobility is affected by labour market conditions. As per the 1991 census, 27.4% changed place of residence, 8.8% moved for employment purposes and 2.3% had business purposes. The proportion of men migrating for economic reasons was higher (27.8% for employment reasons and 7.1% for business reasons) as compared with women (only 1.8% for employment reasons and 0.5% for business reasons). The high proportion of long-distance migrant workers is driven by economic reasons. Most male migrants move between states for economic reasons. Again, economic motives are more significant in urban migration flows, especially for men. Although only 49% of male migrants lived in urban areas, 69.2% of these individuals moved for employment-related reasons. There is a distinct regional variation in migrant work patterns. In the north-eastern states and some other migrants are mainly employed in the tertiary and secondary sectors of the economy. Elsewhere the primary sector attracts most migrants. An analysis of occupational categories of migrant workers such as; cultivators and agricultural labourers show that 43% of males are engaged in production-related work. A significant proportion of male migrants in the tertiary sector are employed as sales workers, followed by clerical and related work. All western states have a significant proportion of male migrants in secondary activities, and in southern and north-eastern states they are mainly employed in the tertiary sector. In the case of female migrant workers, 40% are in production-related work and a significant proportion is in technical and professional activities.

3.3 Short Duration Labour Migration

In terms of duration of migration Census of India in 1991, 56.2% of migrants were of more than 10 years duration, while 21.4% were of duration up to 9 years. Only 3.04% of the migrants were recorded as short (for a period of less than one year) duration. According to NSS data, there were 8.64 million short-term migrants in 1999, 3.24 million of them moved for economic reasons. However, 16.75 million was expected to be the total number of short-term migrants in 1992–1993, indicating a sharp decrease in the following years. The NSS 55th round estimated the number of short-term outlier migrants separately in 1999-00. About 10.87 million individuals spent 2 and 6 months away from their usual place of residence (UPR) due to work-related migration. There were 2.42 million people living in cities and 8.45 million living in rural areas. Out of 8.45 million short-term migrants in rural areas, 3.06 million are women and 5.39 million are men.

Numerous migrants worked in fish processing, brick kilns, quarries, construction sites, farming and plantation jobs. Several studies in the nineties also provided a rough estimate of seasonal migration in India. Empirical studies have been conducted on the scale and pattern of seasonal migration of workers to manufacturing regions. West Bengal in 1999 suggests that the number of seasonal migrants in the Burdwan

district exceeded 500,000 during the man harvesting season and has been increasing since 1980 (Rogaly et al. 2001). These migrant workers are mostly tribals, Muslims and other lower castes. A study based on the annual seasonal migration of tribal families from Khandesh (Maharashtra) to the sugarcane fields of South Gujarat in 1988–89 estimated that 100,000 to 150,000 workers were recruited from the region to work in nine sugar cooperative sectors in South Gujarat each year. Other states in the tribal areas in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhyapradesh also indicate high rates of out-migration (Teerink, 1995). Although overall migration trends are increasing day by day, a significant discrepancy in migration patterns across genders is observed. Since 1983 there has been a steady increase in female migration but male migration has been reduced except for 1993–1999. Such a pattern is more pronounced in rural areas. While male migration increased somewhat from 1987 to 1999 after declining slightly from 7.2 percent to 5.42 percent in 1983. A decline in male migration to urban as well as rural areas was observed in the early 1990s, but it increased slightly between 1999–00 and 2007–08.

One possibility of reduction in male migration may be due to employment generation through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) at the village level. This is expected to reduce rural-to-rural flows which will affect rural migration. On the other hand, research shows that despite the implementation of NREGA there is a reduction of employment in rural areas (Chowdhury, 2011). So another reason for the decline in male migration can be explained in terms of growth unemployment in the Indian economy. Further, a question arises as to why the immigration situation is different between the two periods. In which the employment growth rate was less than 1 percent in 1993–00 and the employment growth rate of 0.17 percent in 2000–08 (de Hann, 2011). This may not be the only reason for the increase in unemployment. Rather, it may be one of the reasons. Another possible explanation could be the underestimation of seasonal migration which may affect the overall increase in male migration. Shylendra and Thomas (1995) show that there is underreporting of internal migration data due to seasonal and circulating labour migrants. Who are concentrated at the lower end of the labour market spectrum and such dynamics have been increasing over the years. Given these possibilities, it is difficult to answer the exact possible reasons for the reduction of male mobility in the present situation. In contrast to male migration, a steady increase in female migration is observed irrespective of place of residence. The predominance of women in the migration process is often attributed to marriage. Emerging studies show that the background reason for women's migration is changing day by day from marriage to other reasons, especially economic purposes. These are followed by distance-wise migration to explore the causes of current trends in the migration process. Hence, it has become very important nowadays to look at other dimensions of migration (Sundari, 2005).

3.4 Migration by Long Distance

Migration in India is mainly short-distance, with about 60 percent of migrants shifting their residence within the districts and over 20 percent within the state and the rest across state boundaries. A large proportion of women migrate in the short-distances due to marriage. The percentage of male lifetime migrants is low in most poor states and high in most developed states. Evidence suggests that short-distance migration predominates. But it appears that this trend is slowly changing among urban migrants as well. For 2007-08 the ratio of male migration to urban areas was higher inter-district at 39.31 percent and inter-state at 31.09 percent. Similarly, females dominate the inter-district with 42.51 percent and inter-state with 38.32 percent migration flow. A decrease in inter-state mobility is observed along with an increase in inter-district and intra-state mobility irrespective of gender. And interstate male migration to urban areas increased from 23.57 percent in 1999-00 to 31.9 percent in 2007-08. The relative increase in intra-state migration is an indication that the trend of migration is moving for economic reasons. People are encouraged to pursue higher education in urban areas of developed states along with better employment opportunities. At the same time, a growing volume of micro studies shows that people from lower socio-economic levels in underdeveloped states move to developed states in search of employment. Such migration was prompted by poverty, social inequality and other environmental vulnerabilities.

Migration from rural areas is expected to continue to increase as employment opportunities are created in urban areas. The latest NSS data estimates show that 56 percent of rural-to-urban migration is for employment purposes. Salary/wage earnings of workers increased from 23 percent in 1999-00 to 32 percent in 2007-08 and other forms of employment were reduced. Various studies on this topic show that the increasing rural-to-urban migration in recent years is mainly due to economic reasons. They are mostly motivated by the availability of urban employment in the expanding informal sector. Some development analysts believe that the structural reforms undertaken in the country in the early 1990s. It has opened up employment opportunities globally connected in various sectors, particularly around the cities, and increased rural-urban migration. Like India, other South Asian and Southeast Asian countries are experiencing rural-to-urban migration in response to changes in the structure of the economy. This leads to a high degree of spatial mobility by creating regular and remunerative wage jobs in urban areas. Contrary studies argue that adverse effects of economic reforms, slow growth in the agriculture sector, poverty, unemployment, etc increase rural-to-urban migration. Besides poverty and unemployment, other factors such as environmental degradation. And labour migration to urban areas shows less impact of anti-poverty programmes on employment outcomes. Apart from economic factors, non-economic factors such as education and changes in administrative boundaries also influence rural-to-urban migration (Kundu, 1997).

Studies show that states with high levels of poverty, illiteracy, etc. generally have less inter-state mobility. However, recent years have seen an increasing outflow of people from underdeveloped states. These reflect the migration of unskilled and less educated people. It is found that the net migration rate is positive in developing states. These States are Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka and Punjab which indicates the flow of people to the states. This can be explained in terms of industrialization, availability of better employment and social development of the states. On the contrary, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and North-Eastern states supply a large number of migrant labours to economically developed states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Delhi due to high population density, inequality and poverty, etc.

4. CAUSES OF MIGRATION

The factors are also bound to vary due to the diversity in the nature of migration to India. Migration is influenced by social structures and patterns of development. The Intra-regional inequalities, disparities between different socio-economic classes and development policies adopted since independence have accelerated the process of seasonal labour migration. Most of the migration literature makes a distinction between push factors and pull factors, which do not operate in isolation from each other. Mobility occurs when workers in the birthplace face a lack of suitable alternatives for employment and there is some expectation that the situation will improve through migration. The improvement sought may be better employment or higher income, but also maximization of household employment or smoothing of employment utilization over the years. This is known as the 'pull factor' that causes individuals worker to migrate. At one end of the migration spectrum, workers may be trapped in a debt migration cycle, where earnings from migration are used to pay spending departments at home in the destination area, thereby cementing the migration cycle. This is referred to as the 'push factor' in the literature on migration. On the other end migration causes is largely voluntary although shaped by their limited choices.

The National Commission on Rural Labour has recognized the existence of this continuum for poor migrants by distinguishing between rural labour migration for survival and subsistence. Numerous lower caste, landless, and indigenous communities from economically disadvantaged regions migrate to survive, making up an important portion of temporary labour flows. The growth of intensive agriculture and the commercialization of agriculture since the late 1960s have led to periods of peak labour demand, often coinciding with a decline in local labour deployment. Wage differentials between source and destination have been considered the main reason for migration in the case of labour flows in the rice-producing regions of West Bengal. Moreover, the absence of non-agricultural employment has led to increased seasonal migration due to low agricultural production. Factors such as age, education level, wealth, land ownership,

productivity and work opportunities influence individual and household participation in migration, but so do social attitudes and supporting social networks (Rogaly et al. 2001).

Sugarcane cultivation in Maharashtra has high labour demand, but landowners hire workers from other districts for harvesting because they can exercise effective control over the labourers. Local labourers were thus forced to migrate to South Gujarat along with their families. Fishing by trawlers has destroyed marine resources in Kerala. This has led to large-scale out-migration of women due to unemployment in other industries such as cashew and rubber (Sardamoni, 1995).

5. THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION

5.1 On migrants and their families

Poor migrant workers have certain entitlements from their employers or Government authorities in the destination areas. They have few personal resources and suffer deprivation in the destination area. Migration to source areas has both negative and positive consequences for migrants and their families. Although the process of migration gives higher wages to migrant workers, but differences in living standards and adverse effects on health, education and family members would have a depressing effect on migrant's well-being. As a result, the conclusion is somewhat ambiguous.

5.2 On Living Conditions

The migrant workers whether agricultural or non-agricultural, live in society terrible conditions. There is no provision of safe drinking water or hygienic sanitation for labourers. Most live in open spaces or temporary shelters despite the contract labour act that stipulates that the contractor or employer must provide suitable accommodation for workers. Apart from seasonal workers, workers who migrate to cities for jobs live in parks and footpaths. The slum dwellers, who are mostly migrants, live in deplorable conditions with insufficient water and bad drainage area. Food prices are higher rate for migrant workers; they are not able to get temporary ration cards (Rani and Shylendra, 2001).

5.3 On Health and Education

Migrant labourers working in harsh conditions and living in unhygienic conditions suffer from serious occupational health problems and are vulnerable to diseases. The workers who work in quarries, construction sites and mines suffer from various health hazards they have mostly lung diseases. Migrant workers cannot access various health and family care Programmes due to their temporary status. There is no provision for maternity leave for women workers, forcing them to resume work immediately after childbirth. Workers especially those working in tile factories and brick kilns suffer from occupational health issues such as body aches, sunstroke and skin irritation. As there are no nursery school facilities children often go to the workplace with their parents exposing them to health risks.

They are also deprived of basic education, the schooling system at their birthplace does not take into account their migration patterns and their temporary status in the destination area does not eligible them to attend school there. The effects of male migration can be particularly adverse for women, who often have additional household responsibilities and care for younger siblings. The absence of male supervision further reduces their chances of achieving education (Srivastava, 2001). There are several cases where women participate in migration flows along with their male family members. In the labour migration process, it is usual such case is for younger siblings and older children to work with their parents. Family migration generally refers to the migration of younger family members, leaving the elderly to cope with additional responsibilities while protecting their livelihood and other basic needs.

5.4 On source areas

The main impact of migration on the source area is through changes in the labour market, income and wealth, and changes in expenditure and investment patterns. Although seasonal out-migration has a potentially employment-smoothing effect on the annual cycle, rural out-migration can under certain circumstances tighten the labour market. Although empirical evidence from out-migrant areas does not often attest to this. This may be because external migration often takes place in labour-surplus situations. There is also evidence of external male labour being replaced by female and even child labour.

5.5 On Remittance and effect on sending areas

While the impacts of out migration through the labour market have been reviewed above, other sources of change that need to be analyzed will operate through changes in income, income distribution, and patterns of expenditure and investment. Although we need direct evidence on the value of remittances from migrant workers, NSS surveys on migration and consumption and employment or unemployment can provide some indirect evidence. These surveys measure the percentage of out-migrant households receiving remittances and depending on remittances as a major source of their livelihood. The percentage of all rural labour families receiving remittance income is also fairly high in some regions of the country, approximately one-quarter to one-third of households receive remittances. Field surveys show that most of the seasonal migrant workers savings of their income. In many cases, a significant proportion of household cash income is attributed to migrant earnings. However, some of the accumulated cash income is utilized to pay off existing debts, and may not always increase the asset base of migrant households (Rogaly and Sengupta, 2001).

Income remittances are mainly used for purposes such as meeting expenses, loan repayment and other social obligations. These essentially constitute the first charge on the migrants' income. The evidence for investment, however, is mixed. It is usual for migrant households to invest in housing, land, and household items and they frequently use their earnings to cover their financial requirements in the agricultural sector. There is no evidence of extra successful farm or non-agricultural investments, but some studies claim that just a small percentage of migrant and return households are making such investments (Krishnaiah, 1997).

A major problem is the role of rural out-migration in the material and social reproduction of rural households and the relationship between them. Standing G. (1985) has argued that convective migration contributes to the stability of rural production relations in particular. He argues that circular labour migration has 'safety valve' characteristics and is often a process that preserves a social mode of production or at least reduces pressure on it. Temporary labour migration allows families to escape unemployment and meet debts and other obligations without having to sell their assets. Indeed the long history of rural out-migration in some source regions of India seems to confirm the stabilizing role of out-migration in combination with agriculture and rural stagnation. But labour circulation as well as other forms of rural migration can also disrupt pre-existing production relations. While the main influence on source areas appears to be through the labour market, recent evidence suggests greater mobility of rural labour households leading to a less fragmented and more general agricultural labour market and upward pressure on wages. There is also evidence of some effects through improvement in the wealth of labour migrant households (Srivastava, 1998).

5.6 On Destination areas

There are multiple rationales for using migrant workers in destination areas. While the shortage of local labour provides one important rationale, virtually all available evidence shows that the recruitment of immigrants is largely motivated by labour control and wage cost reduction strategies. Many cases have been documented where the same areas export and import labour in identical sectors. Migrants are preferred because their labour is easy to control and workers can be extracted from them in difficult situations. Furthermore, labour supply can be easily increased or decreased at a low cost to employers, and migrant workers can work long and flexible hours. The labour market segmentation, leading to greater

control over both migrant labour and local labour, is another outcome of the migration process. Finally, wage systems that grow around industries based largely on immigrant labour are particularly amenable to side-stepping minimum wage laws. Immigration thus lowers labour costs for employers.

The labour market outcomes generated by labour migration facilitate a certain type of growth and accumulation in the destination region, although this can be described as a low road to capitalism. According to Bremen (1996), the main rationale for increasing informalization, the two-way of labour and division is found in witnessing mercantile capitalist development in India, just as international migration is strongly related to the structure of international capitalism (Sassen, 1988). Capitalists operate in uncertain markets in which they are highly dependent on traders. Labour migration is one of the preferred strategies by entrepreneurs to shift both risk and production costs onto workers. Another reason for continued formalization is keeping businesses away from state surveillance. Thus most informal sector enterprises escape any form of regulation. Furthermore, employers in such destination regions rarely provide anything other than a livelihood wage requirement. Migrant workers have to fend for themselves to meet their health, food, shelter and other basic needs. The cost of population mobility has been considered in theory in terms of the large costs imposed by population density in large cities. The social, political and other consequences of migration, particularly where such migration is by linguistically, ethnically and regionally distinct groups, have not been considered in the growing economic literature on internal migration but figure prominently in parts of the sociological and political literature (Weiner,1978).

6. CONCLUSION

The paper highlights an important economic, social and political issue of labour migration. This issue is somewhat neglected in the economic literature in the sense that many areas remain unexplored compared to other economic, social, cultural and political issues. The paper therefore attempts to briefly present the causes, effects and trends of labour migration in India. We feel that this would be of great help to researchers in conducting further research in the areas unexplored by the literature. Between 1971 and 1991, immigration rates reduced for both men and women. But we grew at such a rate in the last decade of the nineties. The reason for such a trend is the rapid development and expansion of the informal sector which has absorbed large numbers of labourers from the rural areas. This implies workers were casualized. Since the 1990s, the rate of male migration for work has declined but that of female migration has increased. The reason behind such a phenomenon is the introduction and implementation of NREGA policy in various states. In terms of duration, short-term in-migration shows a declining trend. In terms of duration, the short duration of migration shows a declining trend. Short-term external migrants mostly belonged to rural areas and were mostly male. Finally, trend analysis shows that a higher proportion of men migrants over long distance and they are from rural to urban in nature. In contrast, women generally migrate within short distances and are rural to rural in nature. Marriage is the main reason behind short-distance migration.

The paper observes that uneven development is the main driving force behind labour migration. Apart from disparities in socio-economic conditions, disparities in wages and disparities in development policies also motivate individuals to migrate. Furthermore, two factors identified as 'push' and 'pull' factors, act simultaneously or separately to generate migration flows. If a person immigrates to get a better standard of living by getting higher wages/salary then it is called migration due to the 'pull' factor. On the other hand, individuals often migrate to the source area to repay old debts which is called a 'push' factor.

Finally, the paper discusses the probable impact of labour migration on migrants. Analyses his/her family member's conditions, source and destination areas. We conclude that migration has a negative impact on migrants' livelihoods. They and their family members are deprived of health, education and other essential public services. Especially they are deprived of basic facilities like sanitation, drinking water and so on. The migrant remittances are often used to pay off outstanding debts and support increased consumption.

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